

Leaders & Learners



CASSA-ACGCS
Promoting Quality Education for Our Students

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WILL WE SEE YOU IN WINNIPEG FOR THE 2016 CASSA CONFERENCE?

Message from the President: Leadership and the New 3R Paradigm

ALTHOUGH IT IS the shortest month, February is among the busiest. This month, I was fortunate to attend two incredible professional development events that shaped my thinking about educational leadership in new ways.

The first was the annual conference put on by the Leadership Committee for English Education in Quebec (lcee.q.ca). This two-day event brought together over 700 educators from various English-speaking educational institutions in Quebec: private/public schools, adult education, vocational training centres, colleges and universities.

Together, we explored the themes of diversity and equality. When looking at education through this lens, we realize there are still many barriers to success that we need to dismantle, whether they are related to socioeconomic situations, trauma, or discrimination emanating from misunderstandings of learning differences, race, and sexual orientation.



Cindy Finn
President

To level the playing field for learning, systems need to be responsive and respect a student's right to an education. As system leaders, the onus is on us to create the conditions that prioritize learning in a safe and welcoming environment. The common thread from speakers such as **Russ**

Quaglia, **Rick Lavoie** and **Chris Koch** was the call to make learning relevant and to hear what students and families have to tell us about their educational journey. By listening attentively, we then can respond appropriately.

These ideas were reinforced a few days later when **Manny Scott** and **Shawn Achor** addressed the second event I attended, the AASA National Conference on Education. It was held in Phoenix this year. This impressive professional development event is a gathering of over 3,000 superintendents from the US and Canada. This year's theme, Leading

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OUR PURPOSE

CASSA is the Canadian organization of school system leaders that promotes and supports quality education for the success of all students.

OUR MISSION

CASSA strengthens the capacity of school system leaders and influences the directions that impact education and student learning.

Message from the Executive Director: Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Across Canada

THE CASSA BOARD of Directors recently had a successful winter planning session. What made the meetings such a success? We had excellent representation with topical presentations and updates from eight provinces and two territories.

We had exemplary presentations from **Dr. Kathy Short** and **Dr. Bruce Ferguson**. Dr. Short is the Director for School Mental Health ASSIST, a provincial team designed to help Ontario school boards support student mental health and wellbeing. She is also a member of the national School-based Mental Health and Substance Abuse Consortium, and led the Knowledge Translation and Exchange



Dr. Kathy Short leads a presentation.

Team for this association of Canadian researchers and school mental health practitioners on a national project for the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

Dr. Ferguson is a Senior Consultant and the founding Director of the Community Health Systems Resource Group at the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids).



Ken Bain
Executive Director

We also heard from **Karen Edgar**, a practising superintendent with the Thames Valley District School Board in Ontario who shared her board's student mental health and wellbeing journey.

The CASSA board drafted some recommendations to be released later in the term. We look forward to continuing to support the creation of healthy communities across Canada. Check www.cassa-acgcs.ca for mental health and wellbeing resources.

Message from the President: Leadership and the New 3R Paradigm, continued

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for Excellence, also challenged us to think about the impact we have as system leaders in education.

Manny Scott, one of the original Freedom Writers, shared his personal journey from being a student caught up in domestic abuse and gang violence on the verge of dropping out to becoming a graduate student and father of three with dreams to change the world. He credits both his high school principal and his high school English teacher (**Erin Gruwell**) for having confidence in him so that he could turn his life around. (Many of us may have seen Manny and Erin's story in the 2007 movie *Freedom Writers*.)

Manny's story is a powerful reminder that relationships are at the heart of building resilience. He counselled us that while "we cannot lead horses to water and make them drink, we can certainly make them thirsty." Educators, he reminded us, have the tools to make students thirst for knowledge and empower them to follow their dreams.

**Educators have the
tools to make students
thirst for knowledge.**

Shawn Achor's talk emphasized the importance of realistic optimism. He cited much of the current positive psychology research that shows that our attitudes influence how we do in life. He convincingly argues that if we focus on the positive, we will be able to use happiness and joy to our advantage.

How do we create this positive, sustainable change? He recommends various activities such as expressing gratitude, engaging in daily physical activity, meditating and performing conscious acts of kindness. All of these

are skills that need to be developed into habits, and once they become habits they will have a lasting impact on how we view and ultimately experience the world around us.

Long gone are the days when education was simply about the 3 Rs we used to know. Although academics are important, the notion of student success is infused with many other elements, which also happen to begin with the letter R: relationship, relevance, resilience and realistic optimism. These two professional development events were reminders of the significance of this new R lexicon in educational leadership.



Hearts & Minds
Creating a Culture of Caring
Conference
July 7 - 9, 2016
Winnipeg, Manitoba



Faces in the Crowd: Profiles of Leaders

Gregg Ingersoll is the Superintendent of the Anglophone East School District in Moncton, New Brunswick. Anglophone East has 38 schools with 15,600 students and 2,500 staff.

Gregg joined School District 2 (now known as Anglophone East) in 2000 as a school principal. He later worked for several years as a district-level supervisor where he managed a variety of portfolios including Student Services, Leadership, Professional Development, Beginning Teachers and Positive Learning Environment. Gregg assumed the role of Director of Education in the spring of 2008.

He has a master's degree in educational administration. He earned both that and his undergraduate degree from the University of New Brunswick. He is passionate about providing opportunities for professional growth for educators. He



Gregg Ingersoll

believes that the secret to providing the best possible education experiences for students is to have highly trained teachers that are up to date on the most effective teaching and assessment strategies. These teachers need school-based leadership that supports their efforts. Professional development for principals and vice-principals will always be a priority as well.

A lifelong learner himself, he enjoys sharing his leadership experiences outside of his role by teaching master-level leadership courses for teachers at the University of Moncton.

Gregg grew up on Grand Manan Island in the Bay of Fundy. He is married to Janice, who is also an educator. They have two sons; both attend the University of Moncton. In his time off, he enjoys following his sons' sports activities and relaxing at his cottage on Shediac Bay.



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2016 American Association of School Administrators National Conference on Education



AASA President Elect Gail Pletnick joined CASSA Executive Director Ken Bain to address the Canadian contingent.



Ken Bain with Frank Kelly at the AASA opening ceremony. Frank served as CASSA's Executive Director for many years until his retirement in 2012.



Above: The Northwest Territories team. From left to right: Terry Jaffray, Simone Gessler, Claudia Parker, Curtis Brown, John Bowden.
Left: Gail Pletnick speaking to CASSA representatives.

2016 American Association of School Administrators National Conference on Education, continued



John Crocco (centre) with CASSA's Board of Directors: Simone Oliver, Shawn Moynihan, Ken Bain, Barry Litun, Cindy Finn, Barry Wowk, Curtis Brown.



Niagara Catholic School Board members with Cindy Finn and Ken Bain: Frank Iannantuono, Giancarlo Vetrone, Simone Oliver, John Crocco, Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells, Ted Farrell, Cindy, Ken, Yolanda Baldasaro.



Left: John Crocco.



Right: Barry Wowk and Simone Oliver.



Above: The conference's location in Phoenix provided a warm escape from winter. Left: John Crocco and his team from the Niagara Catholic School Board. John was honoured as the Canadian Superintendent of the Year at the conference.

CASSA Leadership: The 2015-2016 Board of Directors

President

Cindy Finn
Lester B. Pearson School Board
cfinn@lbpsb.qc.ca

Past President

Roger Nippard
Foundations for the Future Charter Academy
roger.nippard@FFCA-Calgary.com

President Elect

Anne O'Brien
Durham Catholic District School Board
anne.obrien@dcdsb.ca

AASA Western Representative

Barry Wowk
St. Albert Public Schools
barry.wowk@spschools.org

AASA Eastern Representative

Simone Oliver
Ottawa Catholic School Board
simone.oliver@ocsb.ca

CASS Representative

Barry Litun, Executive Director
College of Alberta School Superintendents
barry.litun@cass.ab.ca

CASS Representative

John Waterhouse, President
College of Alberta School Superintendents
john.waterhouse@westwind.ab.ca

NWTSA Representative

Metro Huculak, Chair
Northwest Territories Superintendents Association
metro.huculak@yk1.net.ca

NWTSA Representative

Curtis Brown, Executive Director
Northwest Territories Superintendents Association
curtis_brown@southslave.learnnet.nt.ca

MASS Representative

Barb Isaak, Past President
Manitoba Association of School Superintendents
bisaak@sunrisesd.ca

MASS Representative

Ken Klassen, Executive Director
Manitoba Association of School Superintendents
ken.klassen@7oaks.org

OPSOA Representative

Warren Kennedy, Executive Director
Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association
wkennedy@opsoa.org

OPSOA Representative

Shawn Moynihan, CASSA Representative
Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association
shawn.moynihan@peelsb.com

OCSOA Representative

John Kostoff, Executive Director
Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association
johnkostoff@ocsoa.ca

OCSOA Representative

Loretta Notten, Past President
Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association
loretta.notten@wcdsb.ca

AAESQ Representative

Steven Colpitts, President Elect
Association of Administrators of English School Boards of
Quebec
scolpitts@lbpsb.qc.ca

ADGESBQ Representative

Howard Miller, Secretary
Association of Directors General of English School Boards
of Quebec
howard.miller@essb.qc.ca

NLASSA Representative

Eldred Barnes, Executive Director

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CASSA Leadership: The 2015-2016 Board of Directors, continued

Newfoundland and Labrador Association of School System Administrators
ebarnes@nlassa.ca

NLASSA Representative

Jeff Thompson, President
Newfoundland and Labrador Association of School System Administrators
jeffthompson@nlesd.ca

NBSSA Representative

Gregg Ingersoll
New Brunswick School Superintendents' Association
gregg.ingersoll@gnb.ca

Director at Large (PEI)

Cindy Fleet, Superintendent of Education
English Language School Board
(c/o Executive Assistant) cjmaclea@edu.pe.ca

Director at Large (Manitoba)

Reg Klassen, Chief Superintendent
Frontier School Division
reg.klassen@fsdnet.ca

Director at Large (Nunavut)

Shelly Pepler, Executive Director
Kivalliq School Operations, Nunavut
Department of Education
spepler@gov.nu.ca

Director at Large (Yukon)

Penny Prysnuik, Superintendent
Area Two Public Schools Branch, Yukon
Department of Education
penny.prysnuik@gov.yk.ca

CASSA Executive

President

Cindy Finn
Lester B. Pearson School Board
cfinn@lbpsb.qc.ca

Past President

Roger Nippard
Foundations for the Future Charter Academy
roger.nippard@FFCA-Calgary.com

Executive Director

Ken Bain
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
ken_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca

President Elect

Anne O'Brien
Durham Catholic District School Board
anne.obrien@dcdsb.ca

AASA Western Representative

Barry Wowk
St. Albert Public Schools
barry.wowk@spschools.org

AASA Eastern Representative

Simone Oliver
Ottawa Catholic School Board
simone.oliver@ocsb.ca

CONTACT CASSA

1123 Glenashton Drive
Oakville, ON
L6H 5M1
Canada

T: (905) 845-2345

F: (905) 845-2044

ken_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca

www.cassa-acgcs.ca

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Tara Lee Wittchen
tarawittchen@eastlink.ca

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Photos provided by Cindy Finn,
Simone Oliver and Gregg
Ingersoll.