

Leaders & Learners



CASSA-ACGCS
Promoting Quality Education for Our Students

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Nominations are now open for the Xerox EXL Award, Honourary Lifetime Membership and Distinguished Service Award.

**WE WISH YOU
A PEACEFUL
HOLIDAY SEASON.**

Message from the President: Updates On Executive Activities

IT IS EXCITING to write my first newsletter column as President of CASSA because this is an organization that I respect tremendously and am so pleased to serve.

CASSA is the national voice in education that serves educators across the country. Its mission is to strengthen the capacity of school system leaders and influence the directions that impact education and student learning.

The CASSA Board of Directors meets monthly by teleconference, has regular newsletters and develops the cutting-edge *Leaders & Learners* magazine. CASSA participates in various organizations, committees and conferences across the country and beyond. We are proud of our great educational partners and sponsors, which are posted on our website.

It was my pleasure to emcee the 2016 CASSA conference in Winnipeg, which focused on the theme of Hearts and Minds: Creating a Culture of Caring. We hosted over



Anne O'Brien
President

30 spectacular workshops led by speakers and session leaders from across the country. From all accounts, participants were pleased with the quality of the featured speakers and breakout sessions. In particular, visiting the Canadian Museum for Human Rights topped off this event and

drew together the central themes of the conference.

Since September, I have had the opportunity to participate in the Canadian Education Association meeting. We explored educational issues and opportunities across the country. I was excited to attend the CEA annual conference in Vancouver, which focused on Indigenous education, on behalf of CASSA.

The Right Honourable **Paul Martin** was our featured speaker. His address was followed by workshops presented by speakers from across the country that tied this

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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: Healthy Students and Healthy Schools

“The research is clear: Healthy students are better prepared to learn, and education is a key determinant of health. Elevating well-being as a goal for education in Ontario recognizes its fundamental importance to our learners and their futures.”

*~ Healthy Schools: Foundations for a Healthy School,
a companion resource to the K-12 School
Effectiveness Framework*

THERE CAN BE no doubt that healthy students—physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually—result in healthy schools, and that healthy schools are part of a healthy community and a healthy future.

The Canadian Association of School System Administrators Board of Directors is committed to seeking to improve the health and well-being of our students, schools and communities.

This past year, we held a very successful annual conference in which we addressed social justice and student responsibility, including a mental health strand. Please check the CASSA website to see a number of the presentations that were offered in Winnipeg. Make use of them for your leadership growth.

In 2017, we are convening in Halifax, Nova Scotia, from July 5 to 7 to examine how schools and communities can work together to create a healthy future.

I want to express my thanks in advance to everyone who will take the time to submit workshop/presentation proposals for consideration.

Watch your email inboxes or check the website to learn how and when you can submit proposals. Your professional contributions to the national conversation are very important.

Finally, I wish to extend warm holiday wishes to all of our members across the country.



Ken Bain
Executive Director

Message from the President: Updates On Executive Activities, continued

Continued from page 1

central theme of First Nations education to well-being and student achievement in all schools. Spectacular talent from the students and traditional Indigenous song and dance was a highlight for all.

Twenty-first century education in Canada is so diverse and yet so similar. It is a pleasure checking in each month across the country, networking on current issues, concerns and opportunities. Please stay tuned to our website, which is updated regularly, to keep in touch with our news and views.

As well, watch for your copy of the *Leaders & Learners* magazine, which is focused on data-driven education trends across the country.

If you are advanced planning, be ready to book your vacations early as we are hosting our annual conference in beautiful Nova Scotia from July 5 to 7, 2017. It promises to be an outstanding event centred on the theme *Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities, Healthy Future*.



Ontario Assistant Deputy Minister of Education Catherine Montreuil met with CASSA President Anne O'Brien and Executive Director Ken Bain at the Ontario Principals' Council International Symposium, which was held this fall in Toronto.



**Healthy Schools,
Healthy Communities,
Healthy Future.**

HALIFAX - JULY 5-7, 2017

Interested in presenting a session
at the next CASSA conference?

Watch the CASSA website in
the new year for details on
how you can apply.

Meeting CASSA's New President: A Q&A with Anne O'Brien

Where were you raised and educated?

I was raised in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

Where did you receive your post-secondary education?

I received my Bachelor of Arts at St. Francis Xavier University, my Bachelor of Education at Acadia University and my Master of Education at the University of Toronto.

Why did you decide to get into the field of education? What sparked your interest and why?

My mother was a teacher and many of my relatives were teachers.

Having family so immersed in education and sharing the stories and profound privilege of supporting the development of children was inspiring and clearly guided me in my path to education.

Your early years in education were spent as a special education teacher, and you later worked in the field development office of York University teaching special education qualifications. What drew you to work in special education and to train others in this area?

From a very young age, I have always had a sincere care and intense interest in special education. Both my B.Ed. and my M.Ed. specialize in special education.

I feel we are all more alike than we are different, and all children belong together with their age-appropriate peers. Children and adults with exceptional

needs are a great example for all of the value of perseverance and tenacity.

Teaching children with exceptional needs brings me joy and fulfillment. Teaching additional qualifications in special education to teachers was a spectacular opportunity to share my enthusiasm and knowledge in the field, and to promote inclusion, well-being and student achievement for all learners.

How has education changed the most since you first entered the field?

Education has been opened up with the onset of technology. Children today have the world at their fingertips, and can explore and learn about anything that interests them. Personalization and precision in education is easier in this digital era, and engagement and collaboration in the classroom is magic.

What has remained essentially the same?

The formation of the whole student in school: the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of each child, and the essential relationship between the teacher and the student in promoting optimal student achievement.

What are some of your own personal achievements in the field of education?

The ability to work with students in all grades with various levels of ability. The opportunity to be an administrator in the elementary and secondary school.

I have always had a sincere and intense interest in special education. I feel we are more alike than we are different, and children belong together with their age-appropriate peers.

Meeting CASSA's New President: A Q&A with Anne O'Brien, continued

Serving in various portfolios beyond my Family of Schools, such as special education, safe schools, alternative education, continuing education and student success has given me wide and varied experience.

Outside of your work in education, what are some of your interests or hobbies? Again, outside of work, what is your greatest achievement or most proud moment?

My interest and greatest achievement is being part of a family: raising four remarkable children, who are my greatest joy, with my husband.

What is the greatest lesson you have learned as a teacher or an administrator in education?

I learned that all children can learn and achieve success with the appropriate instruction and support.

How did you learn it?

I learned this lesson from my early days in special education classes, and was in awe of the tremendous achievement of students who experienced interest-based, student-centred instruction.

How many years have you been involved with CASSA?

I have been involved with CASSA for five years on the executive.

How did you first become involved with CASSA and what made you want to work with the organization at the executive level?

I became involved in this national organization as the President of the Ontario Catholic Supervisory

Officers' Association. I want to be involved with CASSA because it is a national voice for education and serves causes that are common across the country.

All children can learn
and achieve success
with the appropriate
instruction and
support.

What are you most looking forward to as CASSA president?

What are some of your goals or visions for CASSA during your term and beyond?

In CASSA, I am looking forward to being involved in various organizations across the country with common interests in education, and bringing the best evidence-formed research to the profession. We have a particular interest at this time on mental health, human rights and Indigenous education. We have a strategic plan and annual working goals that are guided by the Board of Directors.

Finally, your early years as a teacher were actually in Nova Scotia, where next year's CASSA conference will be held. What can you tell CASSA members they can look forward to?

Nova Scotia is known as Canada's Ocean Playground. There is something for everyone. Halifax is a city with tremendous history, with Citadel Hill and Pier 21, the first point of landing for many Canadian immigrants. Nova Scotia boasts amazing Celtic traditions with its highland dancers, bagpipers and step dancers. The scenery is second to none, with Cape Breton's Cabot Trail, the Fortress of Louisburg, Peggy's Cove and miles of Atlantic Ocean beaches. It has some of the best golf courses in the world, with Cabot Links and Bell Bay. Come join us for a lobster and a ceilidh with our east coast down-home hospitality.

Faces in the Crowd: Profiles of Leaders

Bill Cooke

Bill is the Executive Director of the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS) of Saskatchewan. LEADS is governed by its own act and set of bylaws, and is the professional association to which all out-of-scope senior administrators in school divisions in Saskatchewan must belong.

Bill's background includes positions as a teacher, vice principal, principal, superintendent, deputy director and director/CEO in Saskatchewan's K-12 system.

As well, he has worked in post-secondary education in Saskatchewan as CEO of a regional college.

He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Oregon.

Some of the highlights of his career in the wider educational arena include, among others, involvement on two occasions with provincial education restructuring, chairing the provincial Directors of Education group from its inception until his retirement, and representing Saskatchewan for 10 years in the Educational Research and Development Corporation (a cross-Canada think tank of selected representation from education and business).

Bill also served as the President of the University of Saskatchewan Alumni Association.

He and his wife Toni have five daughters and, at last count, nine grandchildren living all over the place (including Saskatoon, Burlington, Atlanta and England).



Bill Cooke

Staying in personal touch with all of them is a bit daunting, he reports, but doable. When Bill and Toni aren't doing that, they try to enjoy the warm weather in Mesa, Arizona.

Christopher Fuzessy

Christopher is the Director of Schools, Region 2, for the Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB) in Dorval, Quebec. He also sits on CASSA's Board of Directors as one of two representatives

for the Association of Administrators of English Schools of Quebec (AAESQ).

His career in school system administration also included his role as the Assistant Director of Student Services for LBPSB from 2012 to 2015, and as the Coordinator of Student Services for LBPSB from 2009 to 2011.

Before working at the level of system leadership, Christopher held administrative positions at the school level. From 2007 to 2009, Christopher was a principal within the school board's Network of Alternative Schools. With that role, he was responsible for managing and administering six of the district's alternative schools at the high school level and one K to 11 alternative school.

As well, for each summer for four years (2006 to 2009), he was a principal overseeing the summer school programs at two high schools.

Faces in the Crowd: Profiles of Leaders, continued

From 2004 to 2007, he was a vice principal at one of those schools, Macdonald High School in Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec. Prior to his work with LBPSB, Christopher worked with the Kativik School Board in Quebec from 1992 to 1999.

Christopher received his Bachelor of Education (specializing in teaching English as a second language) in 1995 from Concordia University. He followed that in 1997 with his Master of Education (Educational Studies), also from Concordia. Christopher earned his PhD from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto in 2002, where he produced his thesis *An investigation of teacher role definitions in educating Inuit students in Nunavik*.

He has held a number of leadership roles in his career. His first decade of service in education administration included roles on the Board of Directors for the Greater Montreal Athletic Association, the Program Committee for the 2009 AAESQ Conference (as Chair), the Executive Committee for the Pearson Association of School Administrators (as Vice President and Treasurer), the LBPSB High School Professional Development Committee (as Chair), the Program Committee for the 2010 Canadian Student Leadership Conference (as Co-Chair), the Executive Committee for the AAESQ (as Vice President), the Program Committee for the 2012 Canadian Association of Principals conference (as Co-Chair), and the Service Quality Vigilance Committee (as Chair) and Board of



Christopher Fuzessy

Directors for Batshaw Youth and Family Centres.

He has delivered workshops and presentations at several conferences, including CASSA's national events in Montreal, St. John's and Whistler. Christopher also presented at the Département de la Protection de la Jeunesse de la Montérégie in 2012, the New Teachers Symposium at the University of Ottawa each year from 2012 to 2014, and at the New Teachers Workshop at

McGill University in 2009 and 2010.

His professional development activities have been wide-ranging, and have included events held by the Canadian Association of Principals, the Leadership Committee for English Education in Quebec, CASSA, AAESQ and other organizations based in Quebec, as well as the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

While a post-secondary student, Christopher earned a full entrance scholarship from the University of Ottawa and an Ontario Graduate Scholarship from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto in 1998. In 2011, Christopher received an Award of Merit from AAESQ. Four years later, he received AAESQ's Outstanding Achievement Award.

Christopher has lived and worked in the Montreal area throughout his career, along with his wife and three children who teach and study in the LBPSB schools.

CASSA Awards: Recognizing Outstanding Leadership

DO YOU WORK with an outstanding CASSA colleague? Do you know a Canadian school system leader who deserves to be recognized for their service? Consider putting their name forward for the Honourary Life Membership, the Distinguished Service Award or the annual Xerox EXL Award. The awards are presented each year at the CASSA conference in July.

The Honourary Life Membership recognizes excellence in education at the national level. It is normally meant to honour individuals who have contributed significantly to CASSA. Significant contributions at the provincial affiliate level will be considered only in light of their relevance to CASSA and its national mandate.

The Distinguished Service Award is intended to recognize any present or recent CASSA member who has demonstrated outstanding ability and leadership.

The CASSA executive will consider the suitability of candidates for these two awards based on responses to the items in the nomination forms.

The EXL Award recognizes the outstanding leadership of superintendents and directors of education from across Canada. CASSA members who have exhibited exemplary leadership ability and who have enhanced school administration are eligible to receive this award.

What kind of qualities should an EXL Award nominee have? They will have brought honour to themselves, their colleagues and their profession. They have given exemplary service to their provincial, territorial or national professional association. They have made significant contributions to the field of education through their service, writings or other activities. They serve as role models and teachers to others and have at least five years of membership in CASSA.

The recipient of the EXL Award is invited to attend the annual AASA conference in the United States as the Canadian Superintendent of the Year. The recipient is also profiled in CASSA's *Leaders & Learners* newsletter.

Nomination forms are available on the CASSA website. Nominations for the 2017 award should be sent to your regional affiliate or to CASSA's Executive Director Ken Bain. They will be accepted until May 16.

CASSA recognizes and is grateful for the longtime support of Xerox Canada in presenting the EXL Award every year since 2002.



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