

Leaders & Learners



CASSA-ACGCS
Promoting Quality Education for Our Students

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AND MORE!

Welcome to the newly redesigned CASSA newsletter!

Message from the President: The Value of Partnerships

ONE SPRING WHEN I had been working in education for about 15 years, in many different roles, I met with one of my assistant superintendents. I was asked if I enjoyed my current school assignment and if I would consider applying for one of three large high school principal positions.

"Thanks, but I don't think I'm ready for that," I replied.

"Roger, you're no spring chicken. You're nearing the middle of your career and if you're not ready now, when do you think you will be ready?"

That meeting changed the course of my career. For the first time, I thought about what I would like to do before I reached the end of my career. Like PJ Funnybunny, I decided I did not want to be a principal. I wanted to be a partnership facilitator.

A year later, I took a partnership facilitator position in central office. My time there is one of my career highlights. When I was appointed superintendent of Northern Lights School Division in 2007, we created a partnership facilitator position. Having someone designated to work



Roger Nippard
President

with the larger community and deliver programming to better serve children and families has changed the face of the division.

Over the past few years, CASSA has forged some tremendous relationships with partners who have become part of the CASSA family. Olive Garden used

to have the slogan "When you're here, you're family." I believe that is an apt phrase to describe our national organization.

I often reflect back on that day in the assistant superintendent's office. Without that conversation, I don't think I would have gone on to serve in other positions at the system level and certainly never envisioned eventually having the honour to serve as president of CASSA.

This will be my last newsletter message, as my term ends at the end of June. In reflecting back over the past few years, I recall many individuals who have spent countless hours volunteering their time and energy to make CASSA the strong organization it is today. Truly through their efforts, "the campground has been left in better condition than they found it." Thank you for this opportunity.

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: The Continuing Growth and Evolution of CASSA

I AM PLEASED to be able to report that CASSA continues to grow and evolve as an organization! The CASSA Board of Directors unanimously approved the membership of the New Brunswick School Superintendents' Association, and we welcome our school system leadership colleagues from New Brunswick to CASSA.

CASSA has a new logo, appearing on the front page, and a new mission statement and purpose, appearing above this column.

In response to the recommendations of the communications audit, CASSA continues to reach out to our members with a redesigned website, a presence on Twitter (@CASSA-ACGCS) and a mobile app for either Android or Apple mobile phones.

We also have a brand new design for our *Leaders & Learners* newsletter, as you may have noticed.

CASSA has reached out to a number of educational partners and continues to seek out ways to have our voice heard across the country.

This year's CASSA conference in Calgary promises to be the biggest in our history, with over 260 attendees (to date). CASSA wishes to express its appreciation to Alberta Education and its Minister **Jeff Johnson** for the strong support that has been shown to CASSA as we host delegates from across the country to discuss student engagement.

CASSA's success is the result of the strength of our partnerships and relationships with CASSA sponsors. President **Roger Nippard** will be reflecting on the importance of partnerships in his column. It is safe to say that CASSA would not be in



Ken Bain
Executive Director

the strong financial situation it is without the support from sponsors and partners. Lastly, CASSA is strong because of the dedication of the members of our board of directors who donate their time to ensure there is a national forum and an opportunity for school system leaders from across Canada to listen and learn from one another. My thanks to them for their support.

We have five nominees for the 2014 Xerox EXL Award, recognizing Canada's superintendent of the year. The recipient of this prestigious national award will be announced at the opening ceremonies at this year's conference in Calgary.

It's not too late to register for the conference, and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in beautiful Alberta this July.

2014 Conference in Calgary: Engaging Students, Making a Difference

THIS YEAR'S CASSA conference in Calgary promises to be the biggest we've ever had. That's thanks in part to members registering in record numbers. The support from sponsoring partners, such as Imagine Learning and Maximus, and Alberta Education have helped make the conference a must-attend event for Canadian school system leaders.

You'll find details of our family-friendly tours starting on page 6.

Pre-conference activities start on Thursday, July 3, and include the 9am CASSA AGM (all delegates welcome), a series of meetings between the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) and Alberta Education at 12:30pm (CASS members and Alberta Education staff eligible to attend), and Leading People to Success, a free coaching workshop based on The Change Place programs at 1pm.

Conference activities start at 5:30pm, with a no-host bar. At 6pm, CASSA president **Roger Nippard** hosts a welcome and recognition of guests and sponsors; CASS president **Karl Germann**, AASA president-elect **David Pennington** and others will also speak.

At 6:25pm, the Alberta Minister of Education, the Honourable **Jeff Johnson**, will speak on "Inspiring Education." He was elected to his first term as a Member of the



Calgary, host city to the 2014 CASSA conference.

Legislative Assembly for the riding of Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater in March 2008. He was appointed Minister of Education in May 2012. He is also the 2012-14 Council of Ministers of Education chair.

The evening will also include the 2014 CASSA Awards, sponsored by Xerox. The awards presentation will start at 7:15pm. They include the CASSA Honorary Life Membership Award and the Xerox EXL Awards. **Randy Brydges**, director of Xerox-Western Canada Operations, **Kristen Keating**, strategic account manager with Xerox, and **Linda Lucas**, president of ELLE & Associates, will present these awards.

(Award coverage will appear in *Leaders & Learners'* annual double issue, published after the conference.)

At 8pm, **Dr. Doug Willms** will present the opening keynote address called "Student Engagement, Learning and Mental Health in Canadian Schools." *Tell Them From Me* is a dynamic web-based evaluation that lets students take part

in their school's evaluation in a non-threatening way. In this presentation, Dr. Willms will summarize the Canadian findings with an emphasis on the equality of outcomes among social class groups and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, and discuss the extent to which these subpopulations have access to the classroom and school factors that affect schooling outcomes. The

findings have implications for policy and practice at the classroom, school, district and provincial levels.

Dr. Willms is the president of KSI Research International Inc. and The Learning Bar Inc., professor and director of the Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy at the University of New Brunswick, and holds the Canada Research Chair in Literacy and Human Development. He is a Member of the US National Academy of Education, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and a Fellow of the International Academy of Education.

At 9pm, everyone is invited to the CASSA reception sponsored by CASS and Alberta Education. This event includes a no-host cash bar, a variety of hot and cold hors d'oeuvres, veggies and tasty Alberta roast beef on a bun.

You're in for a real treat when **Billy Melville**, country music's best-kept secret, takes the stage at 9:15pm. Billy is the grandson of

2014 Conference in Calgary: Engaging Students, Making a Difference, continued

chuckwagon racing legend **Orville Strandquist** and an award-winning media personality who happens to know his way around a country song or two.

Billy is also arguably the most trusted source of information on chuckwagon racing today. He is the colour commentator for the World Professional Chuckwagon Association's radio broadcasts. You'll enjoy his traditional western music repertoire and storytelling skills.

Sessions start on Friday, July 4, at 8:45am, and include *Successful Transitions: Possibilities for Prevention, Intervention and Inclusion*; *iPads for All St. James-Assiniboia's (Winnipeg) Middle Year Students: Assessing the Success*; *School Leadership in a Transformed Education System*; *Community Learning Centres: It Takes a Village...*; *Proposing a New Path Forward for Alberta's Education System: The Task Force for Teaching Excellence Report to the Minister*; *Empowering Students to Make a Difference: One School's Journey to Build an Inclusive Community through Anti-Bullying Awareness*; *Making High School Flexibility Work in Other Grades*; and *Youth Outreach and Transitions: Engaging and Re-engaging Students Across the System*.

Displays open for the day at 9:30am, and a partners-sponsored coffee break is offered at 10am.

More sessions start at 10:45, and include *Inspiring Student Engagement and Learning at Michael Strembitsky School*; *Inspired Education, Inspiring Students*; *The Safe Schools Team of Grand Erie: "Meeting Students Where They Are"*;

Enhancing Student Learning Through a Team-focused Intervention Program for Schools and Students (TIPSS); *The Youth Achievement Program (YAP): A 10-year Successful Partnership with Government, Community and Industry in a Rural Community School*; *Compassion Has Muscle: Building Student Engagement and Relationships through Restorative Practice*; *Student Engagement within the Emerging Digital Learning Environment*; and *A New Approach to Distance Education for Rural and Isolated High Schools*.

Lunch is from 12 to 12:55pm.

Afternoon breakout sessions continue at 1pm, and include *Student Voice, Student Choice*; *Capacity Building and Changing Teacher Practice to Raise Student Engagement*; *Assessing with Meaning*; *Maximizing Partnerships for Innovation*; *Community Kitchen: Engaging Students and Our Community*; *Large-scale Online Budget Engagement: Successes and Lessons Learned*; *Moving to Action Using Instructional Rounds*; and *A Tale of Growth and Engagement*.

Another partners-sponsored coffee break is offered at 2:15pm.

The final breakout sessions for the day start at 3pm and end at 4:15. They include *The Path to Efficacy: Making a Difference for Students and Leaders*; *Moving Beyond Tolerance: Combatting Homophobia in Elementary Schools*; *Streamline Your Community Engagement by Embracing Mobile Communications*; *Giving Student Voice through Capacity Building*; *Inspiring Young Learners Beyond the Four Walls*; *Scaling Up and Sustaining Professional Technology Learning for Teachers*; and *Student*

Engagement: The Key to a High Performing Board.

A CASSA Partners Dinner, for CASSA executive and sponsoring partners only, starts at 6pm. Conference delegates are free to explore Calgary this evening.

Sessions get underway again on Saturday, July 5, at 8:45am. The first round includes *Technology to Ensure Student Engagement*; *Taking Care of Student Well-being First: Educator's Role*; *Integrating and Fostering Student Engagement Through a Strengths-based School Culture*; *School Climate, Student Behaviour and Classroom Engagement: Connecting the Dots*; *Excitement, Energy and Enthusiasm: Reimagine Lakeshore School Division*; *Developing Global Citizens Through Inquiry-based Learning*; and *Teaching Quality Standard Redesign*.

Displays open again at 9:30am, and a partners-sponsored coffee break is offered from 10 to 10:40.

Morning sessions continue at 10:45 with *Dancing in the Hallways: Enhancing Relationships With Your Kids*; *Engagement within the Full Day Kindergarten Classroom*; *Project-based Learning*; *Alberta Dual Credit in Action*; *Fun Fact: Math Opens Doors*; *Speak Out Alberta: Ministers Student Advisory Committee*; and *Paradigm Shift in High School: Teaching and Learning to Successfully Engage Students*.

Lunch is from 12 to 12:55pm.

The final breakout sessions start at 1pm and include *If You Give a Student a Voice...*; *Aspiring Toward Redundancy: A Systemic Approach to Promoting Student Independence*; *Leveraging*

2014 Conference in Calgary: Engaging Students, Making a Difference, continued

Technology to Meet the Pressing Needs of Your District; Pathway Planning as a Student Engagement Strategy; and Using a Blended Learning Environment to Serve Your English Language Learners, Struggling Readers and Exceptional Students.

At 2:20pm, **Dean Shareski** will give the closing keynote address. Dean is the community manager for Discovery Education Canada. He taught grades 1 to 8 for 14 years and spent 9 years as a digital learning consultant for Prairie South School Division in Moose Jaw. He also

teaches pre-service teachers at the University of Regina.

Dean's blog consistently ranks among the top educational blogs. He also contributes to *Tech Learning* and *The Huffington Post*. In 2010, he won the ISTE Award for Outstanding Leader of the Year.

At 3:10pm, there will be a video presentation called *The Star Thrower Story*. Learn more in the CASSA Member Benefits story below.

The conference closing address will be delivered by **Cindy Finn**,

CASSA's incoming president (2014-16), at 3:20pm. Be sure to stick around after Cindy's address to see if you've won one of the great conference door prizes. You must be present to claim your prize if your name is drawn.

Of course there is still plenty for delegates and their spouses and families to do after the official conference activities wrap up. See page 6 and 7 for more information on post-conference tour options.

We hope to see you in Calgary.

CASSA Member Benefits: Star Thrower and The Change Place

CASSA IS PLEASED to partner with Star Thrower and offer discounted rates when members access the Star Thrower programs and resources.

What is the story behind Star Thrower?

Joel Barker's version of the **Loren Eiseley** classic effectively reminds us that we all have the ability to make a difference. As individuals, we can choose to take action and participate in the world around us. Together, we can shape the future.

This short program encourages participants to take action. The video learning tool includes a six-minute video, training guide, self-study guide, PowerPoint presentation and a transcript of the video program.

Member benefits include access to a password-protected portal for the video stream of the Star Thrower story and support materials, and one year unlimited access within a school.

It costs \$100 per school in a CASSA member province or territory or \$125 per school in a non-CASSA member region.

Schools in a CASSA member province or territory can also sign up for continued professional development through the portal, including three video learning tools (*Everyday Creativity*, *For the Love of It*, and *Celebrate! Change Your Lens, Change Your Life*) and the associated support materials (leader guide, workbook and PowerPoint). The cost to schools in a CASSA member region is \$495.

To learn more about the Star Thrower program and benefits, visit their website at www.starthrower.com or contact Eilene@starthrower.com.

CASSA has also partnered with The Change Place, which offers an education coaching program for Canadian school system leaders.

To learn more about the programs offered by The Change Place, visit them online at www.thechangeplace.com. You can also attend a free CASSA pre-conference workshop in Calgary. For details on the free CASSA workshop, contact **John Laverty** at cjohn.laverty@gmail.com.

We encourage our members to look into the programming these organizations offer.

2014 Conference Tours: Explore Alberta's Beautiful Western Heritage

Wednesday, July 2

Option #1

Visit the spectacular Columbia Ice Fields and breathtaking Banff on this all-day (7am to 7pm) excursion. Tour includes highway coach transportation with Universal Motorcoach, National Park entrance fees, Ice Fields Explorer Sno-Coach and the Banff Gondola Lift. Lunch is at 1pm at The Crossing. Participants are responsible for their own lunch and incidental costs.

Tour costs are \$180 for adults and \$160 for children 16 and under. A minimum of 20 participants is required.



Explore Banff by motorcoach.

Wednesday, July 2

Option #2

Go back in time on this adventure in the Drumheller area. This all-day (7am to 7pm) excursion features the Royal Tyrell Museum, the famous Badlands and the Atlas Coal Mine Tour. Tour includes highway coach transportation with Universal Motorcoach, Horseshoe Canyon, Rosedale Suspension Bridge and the Hoodoos in the Badlands, Atlas Coal Mine Tour and the Royal Tyrell Museum, the world's foremost dinosaur museum. Lunch is at 1pm in the town of Drumheller. Participants are responsible for their own lunch and incidental costs.

Tour costs are \$100 for adults and \$80 for children 16 and under. A minimum of 12 participants is required.



The CP Rail steam engine at Heritage Park.

Thursday, July 3

Option #3

Explore the history of the west on a fun and interactive tour of Heritage Park from 7am to 4pm. The tour includes Gasoline Alley Museum, the antique ferris wheel and carousel, the SS Moyie paddle wheeler and a trip around the park on the CP Rail steam engine and antique rail cars, as well as the historical village. Lunch is at 12pm at Heritage Park. Participants are responsible for their own lunch and incidental costs.

Tour costs are \$47 for adults, \$30 for children age 7 to 14, \$20 for children age 4 to 6, and free for 3 and under. A minimum of 12 participants is required.

Friday, July 4 (for spouses, children and guests)

Option #4

Yahoo! Join more than 200,000 people as they watch the Calgary Stampede Parade. This is one of the best ways to kick off the Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth. You'll see amazing floats, bands, riders, celebrities and displays of culture. Leave the hotel at 7am and return by 1pm. Bring a snack if you like, as no official meal break is planned for this excursion. Dress for the weather; in Calgary, that could mean just about anything, even in summer.

Tour costs are \$15 for adults, \$10 for children age 7 to 16, and free for 6 and under. A minimum of 12 participants is required.

2014 Conference Tours: Explore Alberta's Beautiful Western Heritage, continued

Friday, July 4 or Saturday, July 5 Option #5

And they're off!! This is your chance to spend an evening watching one of the wildest western sports around, world-class professional chuckwagon racing at the Calgary Stampede Rangeland Derby Chuckwagon Races and Grandstand Show. You won't believe the power of these horses or the bravery and skill of the chuckwagon drivers and outriders! Leave the hotel at 5pm, have dinner at Stampede Park on your own and return at midnight after the fireworks.

Tour costs are \$90 for adults and \$70 for children 16 and under. Note that this is for Friday OR Saturday, not both.



The Calgary Stampede Rangeland Derby Chuckwagon Races, an exciting part of what's known as the Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth.

Sunday, July 6 Option #6

Ready for some more Stampede action? This all-day (10am to 12 midnight) post-conference excursion is the ultimate Calgary Stampede experience and includes the rodeo, midway rides and attractions, Rangeland Derby Chuckwagon Races and Grandstand Show, and fireworks. Get in the spirit and put on your cowboy hat and finest western wear. Lunch and dinner are on your own at Stampede Park.

Tour costs are \$125 for adults and \$105 for children 16 and under. A minimum of 20 participants is required.

Additional Conference Notes

Deadline to sign up for the tours is June 5. Forms, as well as tour and program details, can be found on the CASSA website.



Professional barrel racing at the Calgary Stampede.

For anyone unable to reserve a room at our host hotel, the Coast Plaza Calgary, note that we have arranged for a nearby overflow hotel. Contact **Marion Holmes** at PD Pros with any registration questions or concerns. Details, including reservation instructions and Marion's contact information, can also be found on the CASSA website.



Sponsoring Partners Profiles

MAXIMUS | Canada

MAXIMUS OFFERS A proven solution for managing and maintaining provincial compliance in all areas of instruction, assessment, special education, adaptations and Response to Instruction (Rtl)/Response to Learning.

The team of experienced educators and project managers at MAXIMUS is equipped to address the needs of school boards across Canada, with a complete set of management tools and consulting for all levels of the Canadian education system.

MAXIMUS Canada offers end-to-end educational solutions with



IMAGINE LEARNING, FOUNDED in 2004, is an online program that helps English language learners in English language and literacy, provides explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, introduces and reinforces academic language in Science, Math and Social Studies, provides strategic first language support and teaches basic interpersonal communication skills.

TIENET, a web-based educational software system. TIENET's multiple modules can be deployed separately or as a comprehensive system to manage special education and adaptations, Rtl/Response to Learning, general education and assessment.

TIENET has been used in school districts since 1985, and currently serves approximately 2.6 million students in more than 650 school districts and 6,000 schools across North America. Deployed in Canada in 2011, TIENET now supports more than 45,000 Canadian students with disabilities and instructional challenges.

Visit them at the conference and online at www.maximuscanada.ca.

Each student receives an individualized program monitored by a supervising teacher and monthly reports that outline progress and changes made to accommodate the needs of each student.

Imagine Learning is a highly interactive software and a useful diagnostic tool. It is also suitable for Early Childhood Education, students with special needs and struggling readers. A one-year license is just \$175 and offers unlimited access.

Be sure to check them out while in Calgary or visit Imagine Learning online at www.imaginelearning.com.

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

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Calgary Stampede, City of
Calgary and Banff images
courtesy of Tourism Calgary.

Steam train photo
courtesy of Heritage Park.