

# Leaders & Learners



**CASSA-ACGCS**  
Promoting Quality Education for Our Students

**VOLUME 9 ISSUE 63**  
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**CELEBRATING**  
**10 YEARS OF**  
**LEADERS &**  
**LEARNERS!**

## Message from the President: Bienvenue à Montreal!

I WOULD LIKE to welcome everyone who has come to Montreal to take part in the CASSA conference.

Our conference venue this year is spectacular. As a native Montrealer, I can say that this is a city that never disappoints.

Our conference is taking place in the heart of the action, and there are many sights, restaurants and shops to explore. Summer is a great time to visit the city and there are many festivals and activities taking place.

If this is your first time to Montreal, it will not be your last, I can guarantee you! The food is fabulous, the sights are amazing and the entire city has a “joie de vivre” vibe that makes visiting here exciting.

If you have been here before, I hope you are able to explore more of what our metropolis has to offer!

In addition to the world-renowned Montreal International Jazz Festival, you have access to numerous live music and theatre venues, museums and visually stunning sights like the beautiful



Cindy Finn  
President

Notre Dame Basilica, Montreal Botanical Gardens and Mont Royal.

This year's conference is special to me not only because I am hosting as CASSA's President but because I am hosting in my hometown. What a treat not only to take part in this enriching annual event with colleagues from across the country but to be able to see you all enjoy the best of Montreal at the same time.

While at Le Westin, I hope you'll take the opportunity to engage with our amazing sponsors. You'll find a list of this year's key sponsors on page 10. Take a moment to hear how they can work with your schools to benefit students and staff. Their support and participation is a big part of the success of these conferences.

To close, I'd like to mention the return of our Faces in the Crowd feature. It appears on page 3 of this issue. If you'd like to nominate a CASSA member for this leadership profile series, please get in touch. Our contact information can be found on page 9.

## 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: A Warm Welcome to Our Conference Delegates In Montreal**

ON BEHALF OF the CASSA Board of Directors, I want to welcome all conference delegates to beautiful and historic Montreal for CASSA 2015.

The next few days promise to provide you with opportunities to learn, share, network and enjoy all that CASSA and Montreal have to offer!

We have an exciting list of keynote speakers and a wonderful array of workshops that explore the main conference theme: STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math).

This year we also have a number of excellent general interest workshops on a variety of topics relevant to the needs of Canadian educators.

Montreal is an amazing city. Our host hotel venue, Le Westin, is situated a short walk to many of the amazing attractions Montreal offers, including the Montreal Jazz Festival and Old Montreal! We hope you'll take advantage of this ideal location.

Thanks to our wonderful sponsors! Because of their generous support again this year, we will be able to provide delegates with a most memorable conference experience.

Special thanks to EF Educational Tours once again for its outstanding Grand Door Prize: two airline tickets to any



Ken Bain  
Executive Director

destination in Canada and the continental United States (please note that some blackout dates apply).

Additional special thanks to Blackboard for its amazing CASSA conference app. Go to your app store, search for "CASSA" and download the app for free.

To all our conference delegates, speakers, sponsors, accompanying family members and guests, thank you for joining us this year. We look forward to providing all of you with a rewarding professional experience.

For those of you unable to be in Montreal, we hope we'll see you in Winnipeg next year. Have a great summer!

## Faces in the Crowd: Profiles of Leaders

Norman Yanitski is Superintendent/CEO for Black Gold School Division, just south of Edmonton. He completed all three of his degrees at the University of Alberta, earning a Doctor of Education: Educational Policy Studies in 1997, a Master of Education: Educational Administration in 1988 and a Bachelor of Education with Distinction in 1981. Dr. Yanitski is a leader in strategic planning, connecting people and building effective teams.



**Norman Yanitski**

Norman has been acknowledged by *Alberta Venture* magazine as one of the top 50 not-for-profit CEOs in Alberta. He received the Inspiring Success Award of Distinction from the division's board of trustees. Norman is known for his ability to bring theoretical research and the practical work of individuals and committees together to reach solutions. He has recently been elected to the University of Alberta Senate. Norman has also served as an adjunct assistant professor, deputy superintendent, Education manager and director of continuing education/partnerships. He has experience as a principal, teacher and faculty consultant.

Norman and his wife Betty recently celebrated their 30th anniversary; both are U of A alumni. They enjoy exploring other cultures and have travelled to Germany, Holland, Italy, Belize, Mexico, China, Thailand and most recently New Orleans. The lake at Windermere, BC, is also a favourite vacation spot. Their daughters Melissa and Natasha are completing university degrees, a Master of Education in Counselling Psychology and a Bachelor of Education after-degree respectively.

Reg Klassen has spent 28 years serving students in a number of communities and educational situations. He is currently in his seventh year as Superintendent of Rolling River School Division in Minnedosa, Manitoba. In August 2015, he will begin his new position as Chief Superintendent of Frontier School Division in Winnipeg.



**Reg Klassen**

Reg holds bachelor degrees in Theology, Arts and Education. He has a master's degree in Educational Administration. Before he was appointed superintendent, he worked in both private and public education in a variety of capacities including guidance counsellor, resource teacher, classroom teacher, vice principal and principal.

He has served as the Chair of the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools and the Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools Education Committee, and as the President of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents. He is currently a CASSA board member.

Reg believes the main goal of education is “to prepare students to take their place in society as adult citizens in a democracy” and that it is the “duty of educators and leaders to help those around us, and particularly our students, gain knowledge and use it in such a way that humanity will have a better chance of living together in a global community, responsible to each other for the collective in our lives.”

Reg is married to Karyn, an educator working as a resource teacher and reading specialist. They have five children: two sons and three daughters.

## The Trip of a Lifetime, Part Two: CASSA and EF Educational Tours In Holland

*In Leaders & Learners Volume 9, Issue 62, we featured an excerpt from an EF Educational Tours blog. That blog documented the trip of a lifetime taken by Canadian veterans, students, cadets, educators and commanding officers to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Holland. In this issue, we share part two of that story, based on a personal tour diary written by Kevin Andrea. Kevin is the Superintendent at Northern Gateway Public Schools in Whitecourt, Alberta. He is last year's CASSA conference grand prize winner.*

AT THE 2014 CASSA Conference in Calgary, I was fortunate to have had my name drawn for the grand prize draw: a five-day excursion sponsored by EF Educational Tours to participate in events commemorating the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Holland during World War II.



At the time, some nine months before departure, I was simply excited about the opportunity to “get away” during the busyness of the school year. I now know that I should have been excited for so many other reasons.

It was really quite an experience. I travelled with a group of educational leaders from across the country. Our hosts were two EF vice presidents. The aim was to underscore the value of educational travel by students and to highlight the experiential learning that takes place.

Arriving in the storied city of Amsterdam with its bicycle paths, tulips- and tree-lined canals, and old-world architecture, we were treated to the sights, sounds and tastes of a city steeped in history. A visit to the Anne Frank House on the *Prinsengracht* reminded us of the tragic story of her secret life and her untimely death during the occupation of Holland. This theme was



Above: Colourful Dutch tulips in front of unique European architecture in Amsterdam.

Left: The Riekmolen Windmill in Amsterdam.



The tree-lined canals of Amsterdam.

developed further with a visit to the Jewish Holocaust Museum, one of over 50 museums of note found in the city of Amsterdam.

## The Trip of a Lifetime, Part Two: CASSA and EF Educational Tours In Holland

The sombre mood of remembrance created there carried over to the next day when we visited the Holten Canadian War Cemetery to commemorate the ultimate sacrifice made by 1,355 Canadian soldiers buried there during the last stages of the fighting to liberate the country in April and May 1945.

At a special ceremony attended by Prime Minister Harper and Princess Margriet of Holland, local Dutch elementary school students laid wreaths and flowers at the headstones of each of the Canadian war dead. It was a simple, heartfelt act that conveyed much about the gratitude of the Dutch people to the Canadian veterans, dignitaries and over 600 Canadian students in attendance.

Moments like these cannot be taught. They must be experienced.

From Holten we proceeded to the village of Groesbeek. Students participated in a silent procession from the town centre to the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, where over 2,300 Canadian war dead are interred.

The sight of hundreds of Canadian students quietly making their way in a solemn procession along the three-kilometre route was quite moving.

Many of the Dutch locals lined the streets to mark the event. As the students walked past, one elderly gentleman stood alone and motionless on a street corner, a Canadian flag held between outstretched arms, tears streaming down his face. What memories were playing upon his mind we can only imagine. He certainly made an impression on the many Canadian



Dutch elementary school students laid flowers at the graves of the fallen Canadian soldiers.



Over 4,000 people, including Prime Minister Harper and Dutch Princess Margriet, attended the wreath-laying ceremony in the Canadian War Cemetery at Holten.

youth who passed by. Moments like these cannot be taught. They must be experienced.

At the cemetery, the community held a beautiful ceremony on a warm spring evening. When it was finished, students who had researched individual Canadian soldiers before coming to Holland sought out the grave marker of their assigned hero. Sometimes smiling, sometimes crying, they found their soldiers and

## The Trip of a Lifetime, Part Two: CASSA and EF Educational Tours In Holland



Over 600 Canadian students and cadets took part in a Silent Walk from the centre of Groesbeek to the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery about five kilometres away.



Canadian students searched for the grave markers of Canadian soldiers at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery.

laid small tokens of remembrance that they had carried with them from Canada. It completed the solemn day.

The next day was significantly different as the groups travelled to Wageningen to participate in a full day of celebrations marking the liberation of Holland. The day began with a huge parade in which veterans from Allied countries paraded through the streets of town to cheering crowds.

Special among these veterans were those with the designation of “liberators,” meaning that they would have fought in World War II. Given that they would have been fighting 70 years ago, many were in their late 80s and 90s, and they were often driven in WWII-vintage vehicles. The cheers that went up when these heroes came along was a mixture of awe and adulation that created an atmosphere seldom experienced by our students.

After the last of the parading vets walked past, our Canadian students were permitted to join the parade as it wound its final kilometre through the town. So many of the Dutch locals, old and young, waved Canadian flags and held signs with phrases like “We will never forget!” and “Thank you, Canada!”

The outpouring of gratitude for the contributions of our Canadian soldiers in returning freedom to this country over 70 years ago enveloped us all. It was truly an amazing feeling of pride that we all shared as we walked the final leg of the parade route.

The remainder of the day was spent in celebration, with music, historical re-enactments and displays. EF Educational Tours sponsored snacks, activities and motivational guest speakers specifically tailored for students in their large event tent on the grounds.

At the end of this official day of celebration across the Netherlands, student tour groups prepared to move on to the next leg of their European excursion to destinations like Italy, France, Germany, Austria and Norway. For our group, it was back to Amsterdam for one final day of taking in the sights before departing for home.

Having never visited Holland, this excursion gave me a deeper understanding of the special relationship between this country and ours that endures to this day.

## The Trip of a Lifetime, Part Two: CASSA and EF Educational Tours In Holland



Canadian and Dutch veterans marched side by side in the streets of Wageningen. They were joined by veterans of other Allied countries.



People crowded the streets for the Liberation Day Parade where Canadian WWII veterans who liberated Holland were greeted by cheers.

It was particularly special in that we were witness to the gratitude of the Dutch people who truly do remember the Canadian “liberators” from a time long since past.

The Dutch people’s admiration for these soldiers and the heartfelt appreciation that our veterans have for the Dutch was remarkable. It certainly left a lasting impression on me.

That so many of our students from school jurisdictions from across the country had the opportunity to experience this firsthand was a powerful educational experience.

I am fortunate to work for a school jurisdiction that recognizes and supports the value of international travel, primarily over the spring break period. The 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe tour demonstrated that there is great value to schedule international travel around significant events to give our students a chance to be part of a unique experience. The upcoming 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge is another such event, and we will be working to support students

There is great value to  
schedule international travel  
around significant events.

interested in being a part of that significant Canadian milestone in France. I really enjoyed meeting colleagues

from other parts of Alberta and other Canadian provinces as part of this travel experience. I’d like to give special thanks to **David Mann** and **Marc Trudel** from EF, who not only

sponsored the CASSA grand prize but also served as perfect hosts during our tour. The EF organization is to be commended for providing well-planned tour activities that exposed hundreds of Canadian students to a first-rate educational opportunity while providing lasting memories and whetting an appetite for international travel.

As a school system leader, I gain great comfort in having our students’ overseas excursions planned by a company with the network, the experience and the proven track record of success that EF has. I’m looking forward to seeing who wins the grand prize draw in Montreal.

## 2015 CASSA Conference Sessions: From Robotics and Tablet Tech to LEGO and Visual Art

*The theme for the 2015 CASSA Conference in Montreal is STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math. In addition to the keynote speaker sessions on this topic (see Leaders & Learners Volume 9 Issue 62 or the CASSA conference website for more details), there's an abundance of similarly themed breakout sessions from which to choose. As well, there will be several general interest sessions available. Exact times and locations for all of the sessions will be published in your conference guide, available at registration. Here is a list of some of the breakout sessions you can attend on July 3 and 4 at Le Westin.*

• **Robotics In Space** with Sophie Lussier

• **Full STEAM Ahead** with Mathieu Canavan

• **Inquiry...The Missing Link** with Katherine Davey and Sophie Lussier

• **Mathematical Ethics: Values, Valences and Virtues** with Douglas Henrich

• **Blast Off: Improving Engagement in the Language Arts through Design and Technology** with Ryan Henderson and Nicholas Cloutier

• **Technology and Digital Citizenship** with Jeffrey Jordan and Simon Belanger

• **Engendering Innovation in a Large School District** with Paul McKenzie and Rick Pardo

• **STEAM** with Christopher Fuzessy, Colleen Galley and Kerry-Ann Payette

• **Maximizing Technology Investments Through Process Changes** with Julie

René de Cotret and Luigi Di Filippo

• **Not Just a Fairytale: How Secondary and Elementary Schools Built a STEAM Partnership** with Greg McLeod

• **If You Build It They Will Create** with Tami Brewster, Heather Strulovitch and Danna Dworkind

• **Science Literacy Under the Microscope** with Marie-Claude Bergeron, Sara Iatauro and Terry Saba

• **Math and Literacy: A Combined Approach** with Chad Leblanc

• **Nexus Tablets in Grade 5-6 to Facilitate ELA, Math & More** with Craig Bullett

• **Improved Achievement and Increased Teacher Capacity in Mathematics: One Superintendent's Journey** with Dr. Shawn Moynihan

• **The Application of Feedback in Secondary**

**School Classrooms: Teaching and Learning in Grade 9 Applied Level Mathematics** with Vince MacDonald

• **Rethinking the Science Classroom for our iGeneration** with Sara Iatauro

• **What's the A?** with Geri Lorway

• **Engaging Student Councils in Student Success** with Daniel Gillen

• **Integrating and Promoting Well Being in Science, Math and the Arts** with Patrick Carney

• **Kingston Community Conversations** with Dianne LaFortune and Theresa Dostaler

• **Technology and Learning (Both Student and Professional Learning)** with Christian Michalik and Clarke Hagan

• **LEGO Therapy** with Ruth Schwarcz and Cheryl McDonald

• **The Value of Business and Educational**



## 2015 CASSA Conference Sessions

**Partnerships to Bring STEAM to the Classroom** with Nancy Battet and Lily Sacco

- **Full STEAM Ahead for ASSESSMENT** with Bryan Szumlas and Bernie Varem

- **Teacher Growth Using Dylan William's Five Key Strategies** with Jim Burchell

- **What are the Systemic Structures that Create the Conditions to Promote Teacher and Student Engagement?** with Marlene Murray, Darcy Cormack and Darren Baker

- **Sustainability-Integrating Visual Arts with Technology Using GIS** with Barb Boerchers

- **Implementing STEM in Canada's Largest School Board** with Christopher Usih

- **Harnessing the Power of Research to Increase Student Achievement** with Donald J. Fraynd

- **Promoting ICE (Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship)** with Eric Hardie and Ron Ferguson

- **Improving Academic Performance by Managing and Using Student Data** with Carla Weller

- **The Great Canadian Educator** with Dean Shareski

- **Innovative Assessment and Digital Student Portfolios for Deeper Learning** with Anne Saftich

- **The 21st Century is Now** with Phil Dawes and Frank Hummell



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