



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

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*\*All websites and email addresses are active.  
Click them to connect immediately with  
various resources.*

# Greetings from the President

I have been plowing my way through the 522-page book entitled *To Hell and Back* by Ian Kershaw, a work that explains how ethnic-racist nationalism, territorial revisionism, acute class conflict and a protracted crisis of capitalism helped propel countries into the two world wars. I currently find myself in the decade of 1920, just after the First World War ended.

My home province of Manitoba held its provincial election at the start of September, and I reflected on the importance of democracy.

I assume I am like you in that we encourage individuals to take advantage of their democratic right to vote at every opportunity. However, it never fails to shock me how many citizens do not exercise that right. I am of the belief that not voting sends a message to the government indicating democracy is not that important.

Again, I think of Kershaw's book and his extensive detail describing the political and economic climate of those countries that went to war. What caught my attention most was the rhetoric and beliefs around ethnic-racist nationalism and the crisis of capitalism. Kershaw



**Reg Klassen**  
CASSA/ACGCS President

explains how people who were seen as different were blamed for a country's difficulties. At one point in the book Kershaw states that soldiers were often consumed by hatred and viewed civilians as collectively to blame and therefore treated them no different than soldiers.

Much of the current language of our world leaders has overtones of a similar philosophy. When it is suggested that individuals should go back from where they came, or we create policy that infringes on rights of religious freedom, or remove people from the democratic conversation to determine what is important (elimination of trustees), we move closer to the attitudes that existed in those countries that began the first and second world wars.

Each citizen has the right and responsibility to live and participate in a democracy so we can all live a *mino-pimatisiwin* (meaning good life in Cree). This means as educators we must ensure our students understand their important roles in maintaining a healthy democracy.

Finally, in the upcoming federal election, vote and encourage others to do so as well.

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voting sends a message to the  
government indicating democracy  
is not that important.

# Greetings from the Executive Director



**Ken Bain**

CASSA/ACGCS Executive Director

**A**s we embark on another year, I want to express my appreciation to those members of the CASSA Board of Directors who have retired and/or whose terms have ended: Theresa Kennedy (OCSOA – Ontario), Donna Davidson (MASS – Manitoba), Penny Prysnuik (retired, Yukon), Colleen Kappel (retired, OPSOA – Ontario) and Michael Chechile (retired, ADGESBQ – Quebec).

A warm welcome to our newest members: Mike Helm (ADGESBQ – Quebec), Ab Falconi (OCSOA – Ontario), Pauline Clarke (MASS – Manitoba) and Allan McManaman (OPSOA – Ontario).

I am sometimes asked about CASSA member benefits. Certainly, the discounted conference registration fee is the most often utilized member benefit. Another one relates to our partnership with GoodLife Fitness.

GoodLife Fitness is bringing its nationally acclaimed Health & Wellness Leadership Summit to **Calgary, Alberta, on Tuesday, October 22, 2019**, at BMO Centre at

Stampede Park and to **Toronto, Ontario, on Tuesday, November 26, 2019**, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, South Building.

This year's Summit will spotlight many important topics, including:

- Authentic Leadership – tools for building a psychologically safe and healthy workplace that supports inclusiveness, engagement and collaboration;
- Adapting to the Future of Digital Health – finding a balance between hi-touch and hi-tech approaches to health and wellness;
- Risk Management – using behavioural science to improve employees' health and support organizational objectives; and
- Resiliency – keys to transforming workplace culture and empowering people to new heights.

The CASSA-ACGCS strategic plan is inclusive of student and staff well-being as means to support optimal workplace performance and quality of life experience. We are pleased to work with the organizers to extend a registration discount for CASSA-

ACGCS members and guests to **save up to 40 per cent off the regular conference fee.**

Another member benefit relates to our relationship with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and its ongoing copyright advocacy for boards. There are limits to what can be copied and communicated in the classroom. Failure to comply with copyright law can result in a teacher, school or school board being sued for copyright infringement. The fair dealing provision in Canada's copyright law permits teachers to copy and communicate short excerpts from copyright-protected works provided the dealing is "fair."

The website [www.FairDealingDecisionTool.ca](http://www.FairDealingDecisionTool.ca) helps teachers decide, with a few clicks, whether the fair-dealing provision in the *Copyright Act* permits copying of short excerpts for students without needing to obtain copyright permission.

## CASSA Board of Directors

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**Executive Director**  
Ken Bain

# Anglophone North School District:

**A**nglophone North School District (ANSD) schools are in the spotlight, thanks to a new initiative rolled out last fall. Schools from across the New Brunswick district are getting the opportunity to tell their own stories through a series of short four-minute online videos.

*What's Cool About My School* was created in the fall of 2018 with two goals: to give the communities within the district a look into what its schools are like and what makes each one unique and to provide a hands-on learning opportunity for ANSD students to record, direct and edit a video series. The series debuted online on October 16, 2018, and continued throughout the school year. Seven episodes were planned, produced and posted last year, under the direction of the district's Communications Officer Meredith Caissie and Technology Lead Craig Duplessie.

For a school to take part, it must apply to be featured in an upcoming episode. That includes submitting a brief description of the school's culture and something that makes the school unique, or "cool." Ideally that factor is not tied down to a specific date or seasonal event. The application needs to include the name of a contact person at the school who can help Meredith and Craig coordinate the shoot, the name of a student who will act as co-host of the episode, and the names of two or three students who will make up the production team.

Finally, the application needs to list three or four potential interview subjects for the episode. They can include students, teachers, principals, parents, support staff or others in the school community.

Once a date has been scheduled for the shoot, the school's contact person will need to make sure there are spaces available for the production team to work and be available to help identify shooting locations and co-ordinate the interviews.

While the video series provides a wonderful way for the schools featured to share pride

## *What's Cool About My School*

*Meredith Caissie, Communications Officer of Anglophone North School District, and Grade 5 student Ethan hosted the first episode of What's Cool About My School.*



about their learning community with the rest of the district and the broader community, it also offers students the opportunity to experience project-based learning.

Each student co-host works behind the scenes and on camera with Meredith to explore the episode's topic and to interview school staff and students. Under her guidance, they learn valuable communication skills such as how to formulate their thoughts, how to ask questions and how to use storytelling techniques to share information and teach others.

Members of each school's production team work with Craig to capture and edit the story through video, learning technical skills along the way such as how to block shots, create storyboards and shoot B-roll (supplemental footage available to intercut with the main shots).

Each episode begins with the same cheery backpack graphics and bouncy tune ("Boop" by Portland, Oregon, artist Podington Bear), followed by a brief introduction of Meredith and her student co-host. Students and staff alike make appearances and take part in interviews about what's cool about their school, with the interviews taking place in different locations throughout the school property. Production credits, including the names of student co-hosts and crew members, roll at the end of each episode.

The *What's Cool About My School* initiative is an example of how Anglophone North School District looks for student learning opportunities wherever possible. It has received a good deal of support so far and has created a great sense of pride for the schools and students.

The first seven episodes of *What's Cool About My School* can be found at <http://asd-n.nbed.nb.ca/node/2965/videos>.

**Episode 1:** You know a school has to be pretty special when its namesake is Terry Fox. At Terry Fox Elementary in Bathurst, students and staff work to make a difference in their own special way. The school's Code of Conduct is based on the acronym HERO: **H**onesty and integrity count, **E**veryone is accountable, use **R**espectful actions and words, and be **O**n task. Each day, students and staff are challenged to be someone's hero and to use helping hands to make a difference in their classroom, in their school and in the world around them. Students who make a positive impact are featured on the daily TFES News. This episode was co-hosted by Ethan, a French immersion student in Grade 5.

**Episode 2:** Superior Middle School, based in Bathurst, began the 2018–19 school year with a goal: to increase student engagement by creating more chances for staff and students to personalize learning. The school worked toward this goal by shifting math instruction to an outcome mastery model, where every student moves at their own pace and teachers engage students in cross-curricular project-based learning. This episode was co-hosted by Liam, a Grade 8 student.

**Episode 3:** Miramichi Rural School may be a small school without an official immersion program, but it is still accomplishing a lot with its French language instruction programming. Students from kindergarten to Grade 3 are involved in the French Language Opportunities in Rural Areas (known as FLORA) program, which gives them 30

When working on an episode, students learn interview skills as well as video production skills.



minutes of interactive French language exposure each day. Students from grades four to eight take part in the Intensive French program, where teachers and leads offer more hands-on experiences in Post-Intensive French classrooms. Grade 7 student Nicholas co-hosted this episode.

**Episode 4:** Grade 7 and 8 students at Nelson Rural School in Miramichi have been working with ArtsSmarts musician and songwriter Stephen Lewis from Fredericton. They have studied and created spoken word poetry and hip-hop songs to go along with the musical compositions they've created using keyboards and loop pedals. Gavin, a student in Grade 8, co-hosted this episode.

**Episode 5:** North and South Esk Elementary, based in Sunny Corner, recently installed Sensory Floor Paths, which offer students an opportunity to release energy and tension by travelling through a series of physical movements. Students can hop, skip, balance, jump and stretch all while improving their

ability to learn. They can even engage in literacy and numeracy while they're travelling these activity paths. This episode was co-hosted by Jaxon, a Grade 1 French immersion student.

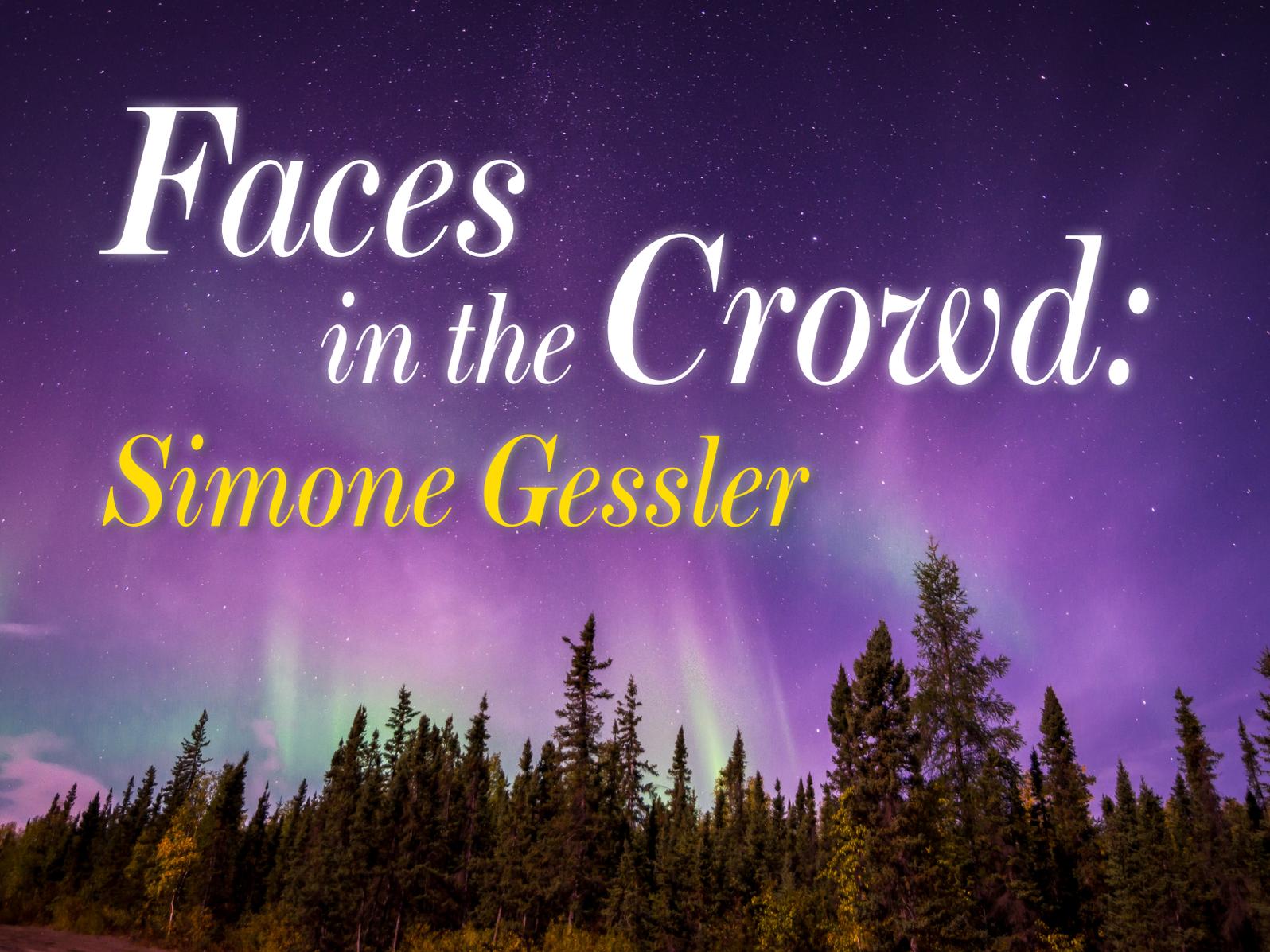
**Episode 6:** Tide Head School, a very small and unique school based in the village of Tide Head, had the opportunity to shine in the spotlight one last time before it closed its doors for good. Students reflected on what they love about their school while their principal discussed the upcoming transition for all. Logan, a Grade 4 student, co-hosted this episode.

**Episode 7:** Jacquet River School, based in Belledune, may be the only school in New Brunswick with its own BMX bike program. Thanks in part to community donations, the school has 26 BMX bikes, BMX accessories and a storage shed. Students from kindergarten to Grade 8 can use the bikes during recess and phys-ed class. Grade 8 student Grace co-hosted this episode. ○

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*Anglophone North School District serves just over 7,200 students at 30 schools. The district encompasses the northeast region of New Brunswick, stretching from Saint-Quentin to Bouctouche and includes the greater communities of Campbellton, Dalhousie, Bathurst, Miramichi and Rexton. The Office of the Superintendent is in Miramichi, and Mark Donovan is the Superintendent. There are two Education Centres: one in Miramichi and another shared between Bathurst and Dalhousie. The district also works closely with nine First Nation communities. To learn more about Anglophone North School District, visit the district's website at [www.asd-n.nbed.nb.ca](http://www.asd-n.nbed.nb.ca) and follow its Twitter account @asdnmb.*





# Faces in the Crowd:

## Simone Gessler

**S**imone Gessler is the Superintendent of Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS), the only faith-based district in the Northwest Territories. The district, created 67 years ago, currently supports over 1,300 students at three schools. Simone moved into this role in August 2019. Prior to her current posting, she was the district's Assistant Superintendent of Learning. She has been with YCS for 21 years, holding positions that have included primary, elementary and middle school teacher, assistant principal, principal and Associate Assistant Superintendent of Learning.

Simone earned a bachelor of education and bachelor of arts (honours) from the University of Saskatchewan. She later earned her master's degree in educational administration from St. Francis Xavier University. In 2014, she completed the executive program at the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto. She is currently working on her diploma in human resource management from McMaster University.

In 2012, Simone received the Ministerial Literacy Award from the Minister of Education for Northwest Territories. In 2014, she was named one of Canada's Outstanding Principals by The Learning Partnership. Last year, she became a Google Certified Innovator (Innovator Academy in Copenhagen, Denmark). Her innovator project, called linkEDleaders, is to connect education leaders in senior

administration, particularly those in small, rural or remote locations, to support conversation and collaboration. The project is set to launch this November.

Here, Simone shares with *Leaders & Learners* some of her reflections on her journey in education and senior leadership.

### **What inspired you to work in public education?**

I love to learn and grow, and the constant forward motion in education motivates and inspires me. I enjoy the challenge of looking at how new learning models can meet the needs of all students, and I continue to work in education because I believe we are moving forward and making a difference for our learners.

My journey into senior administration happened organically, really. I have had amazing mentors and supporters throughout my career. As leadership opportunities opened up, I was encouraged to consider new roles and enjoyed growing into each one.

I began as a .5 assistant principal at the K-8 level and then moved into a principalship for five years. It was as a principal that I really started to recognize the importance of empowering staff and providing opportunities for shared leadership, especially in the area of student engagement. As a school principal, I also dove into student-centred learning with inquiry-based models and technology integration. This led to my becoming Associate Assistant Superintendent of Learning for



*Simone says her three daughters keep her and her husband young and on the run.*

two years. During this time, I was responsible for supporting the district in deepening technology integration and implementing innovative approaches to learning.

We continue to support our vision of student-centred models including inquiry, design thinking and technology integration through collaborative teams and a project-based approach. As a district, we are transitioning from focusing on content to providing learning experiences for our students that foster risk-taking, curiosity and discovery in building student agency. Our shift in focus has impacted how we view assessment, which has resulted in rethinking and redesigning our assessment and reporting tools to communicate the growth of every learner through strength-based skill development.

“As a district, we are transitioning from focusing on content to providing learning experiences for our students that foster risk-taking, curiosity and discovery in building student agency.”

I have also had the distinct pleasure of spending time with other district and school-based leaders as a consultant in the area of eduleader as change agent and model of technology. These connections and the building of my professional learning network has had a significant impact on my learning as a leader.

It’s still a little surreal that I’ve now taken on the position of Superintendent. I have another steep learning curve ahead, but I love the work we are doing as a district and supporting our school-based leadership teams in their efforts to impact student learning.

**How would you describe your personal style of leadership?**

As a leader, I am always reflecting, learning and growing. My leadership style has certainly evolved over the last 15 years as I continue to learn what it means to be a “good” leader. I believe in a shared leadership model and encouraging others to take on leadership roles. I am an advocate for building leadership capacity from within. What I value most as a leader, what I feel is most crucial, is to be involved and to participate in the learning that is taking place with administrators, teachers and students. This builds relationships and trust, and models the importance of what we are doing, all of which create the strongest team.

As leaders, we also need to stay connected to the students by being involved with the students. I am currently the lead facilitator of the YCS TechSperts, our student technology leadership team. Being with the students reminds me why we are working so hard as leaders to transform education. Supporting the students as leaders in technology is my favourite project!

The big three then, from my perspective, are active involvement, relationship and trust, and empowering others to lead. I am passionate about connecting and collaborating with leaders both within my organization and beyond. Learning from and sharing ideas with others brings wisdom and foresight, and helps transform a vision into reality to create experiences that make a difference.

**Please tell our readers a little bit about your personal history.**

Originally a prairie girl from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, I came to Yellowknife in 1996 for adventure, teaching experience and to pay off my student loans! The plan was to come for two years but the North, its opportunities and the people have kept me here. I also met my husband in Yellowknife. He was born in the North but grew up in Saskatchewan as well. He is Manager of Sport and Recreation Development for the Government of Northwest Territories. We have three amazing daughters, ages 10, 12 and 14, who keep us young, on the run and laughing at ourselves. We love travelling, spending time with family and friends, watching Netflix on cold winter nights and celebrating all the holidays.

**Is there anything else you’d like to share with us?**

I guess really that I am just incredibly passionate about the future of education and where teaching and learning are leading us. The shift in focus from delivering content to recognizing social-emotional learning, mental health, growth mindset and next-generation learning models is what student-centred learning and assessment of individual growth and development are all about. It is an exciting time to be an educator! ○

# Faces in the Crowd:

## Camille Williams-Taylor

**C**amille Williams-Taylor is the Director of Education for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB). She was appointed to this position in January 2019. The OCDSB, created in 1998, is the largest school board in eastern Ontario and currently serves over 75,000 students at nearly 150 schools.

Camille began her career in education as a teacher in Winnipeg before moving to the Toronto area in 1991. After teaching for one year with the Peel District School Board, she taught in the former city of York, Ontario, for seven years before becoming a vice principal in North York. Next, she served as a principal for 10 years in schools in Scarborough.

She also was seconded to the Ontario Ministry of Education literacy and numeracy secretariat as a student achievement officer and as a course director for York University's Faculty of Education urban diversity program.

In 2011, she joined the Durham District School Board, based in Whitby, Ontario, as Superintendent, a position she held until the end of 2018.

An innovative leader and accomplished learner, Camille strives to make sure that excellence and equity co-exist throughout a school district. She was directly involved in equity and diversity initiatives at Durham District School Board, as well as measures to include different cultural perspectives in curriculum documents and to develop an action plan to tackle systemic racism faced by black students.

As a system leader, she works to create an environment that embraces creativity

and brings together many different voices to encourage positive relationships and support student learning and well-being. One of her main priorities is to build a vision for public education that makes sure all students have the best learning opportunities in a safe and caring environment. An ongoing goal is to influence and motivate colleagues, staff, community partners and students to galvanize their voices and realize their potential.

Camille is the fourth black director of education in Ontario, after Harold Brathwaite (Peel District School Board), Dr. Avis Glaze (Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board) and Chris Spence (Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board/Toronto District School Board). (All three were featured in "Faces in the Crowd" profiles in the February 2007 issue of *Leaders & Learners*.) She had the opportunity to work as part of Dr. Glaze's team when Dr. Glaze was Ontario's Chief Student Achievement Officer and Chief Executive of the literacy and numeracy secretariat. Camille was also the first black superintendent at Durham District School Board. She was a featured speaker at this year's Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators conference.

Camille was born in Jamaica, where she spent the first 11 years of her life. Her family then relocated to the Bahamas before moving to Winnipeg a year and a half later. She has undergraduate degrees from the University of Manitoba and McGill University, plus a master's degree in education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Camille is married and has three children. ○

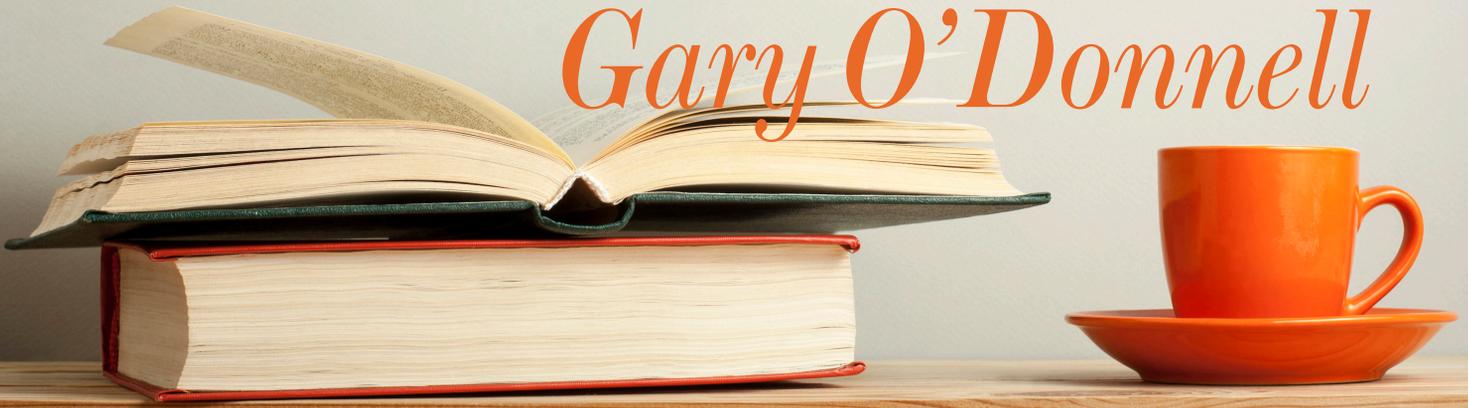


*Camille, the Director of Education for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, is the fourth black director of education in Ontario.*

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# Faces in the Crowd:

## Gary O'Donnell



**G**ary O'Donnell is the Director of Education for the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board, a post he began at the end of July 2019. Catholic education has been alive in the counties of Bruce and Grey for over 160 years. The present-day board, founded in 1967, serves approximately 4,500 students at 13 schools, including two secondary schools, in Grey and Bruce counties in Ontario. Its central office is located in the town of Hanover.

Prior to this appointment, Gary was the Superintendent of Education with the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board in mid-western Ontario. His portfolio duties there included special education, mental health, secondary programming, student success, 21st century global competencies and equity and inclusive education, among others. In his 27 years in Catholic education, Gary has also been a classroom teacher, vice principal, principal and system principal for special education with the London District Catholic School Board in southwestern Ontario.

Gary has been a board member for the Huron-Perth Centre for Children and Youth Mental Health, including serving as the chair of the Salary and Benefits Committee. The

HPC is an accredited community-based child and youth mental health centre, with offices in the communities of Stratford, Listowel and Clinton.

Gary was inspired to work in public education system administration by a desire to make a difference in the lives of students, families and staff. His vision for the district is for it to be a fully inclusive Catholic education community with high standards for teaching, learning, creativity and innovation. He is a true innovator who embraces learning technologies and a champion of inclusion who works to create conditions to build capacity and confidence in students and staff. His professional interests include 21st-century learning fluencies as they relate to fostering a deeper sense of inclusion in our Catholic schools. He believes that leadership is built on relationships that are nurtured over time, where there is mutual trust and respect. As a leader, he strives to be present, to build relationships and to walk with people on their educational journeys.

He is a graduate of the University of Windsor and earned his master's degree in educational administration from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

Gary enjoys marathon running, golf, soccer and reading. He has been happily married for



26 years to Janet Cillis, a secondary school Science Department Head who teaches physics and chemistry. They have three boys, two in university and the youngest in Grade 12. Gary can be followed on Twitter @GaryODonnellCFC.

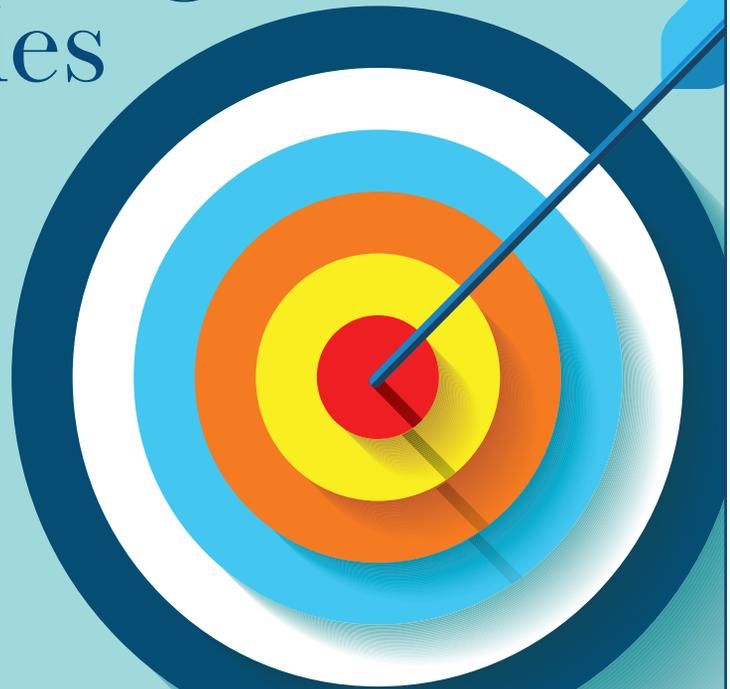
**His vision for the district is for it to be a fully inclusive Catholic education community with high standards for teaching, learning, creativity and innovation.**

# New Advertising Opportunities

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Now available! A new bundle allows you to advertise in this Newsletter, the *Leaders & Learners* magazine and CASSA's website at a great rate!

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Read past issues of this Newsletter and the *Leaders & Learners* magazine at <https://www.cassa-acgcs.ca>.



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Promoting Quality Education for Our Students

**Published for the Canadian Association of School System Administrators**

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**Published by Matrix Group Publishing Inc.**

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# Share Your Success Stories!



Write for the  
Summer 2020  
issue of  
*Leaders & Learners!*

**We are looking for features and success stories from each region of Canada: Eastern Canada, Quebec, Ontario, Western Canada and Northern Canada.**

## **THEME: EQUITY AND INCLUSION FOR STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

We are looking for articles about how schools, school districts and community partners are **supporting every student** through programs, community partnerships, professional development for principals/teachers, etc, that promote *Equity and Inclusion for Student Mental Health and Well-being*.

The Summer 2020 edition will be mailed to readers in Spring 2020 and will be available to attendees at our Conference, which will be held July 2-4, 2020, at St. Andrews By-the-Sea, New Brunswick, and is focused on this same theme.

If you have an article idea that fits into this theme, please send a short abstract (50 to 100 words) to Kaitlin Vitt, editor of the magazine, at [kvitt@matrixgroupinc.net](mailto:kvitt@matrixgroupinc.net), and copy [ken\\_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca](mailto:ken_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca).

**Proposals are due: November 4, 2019**

**Final articles are due: May 4, 2020**

**Photos are welcome (must be high resolution).**

**You will be notified if your abstract is selected.**



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