



CASSA-ACGCS
Promoting Quality Education for Our Students

Greetings from the President

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

The Frontier School Division Games has existed for over 45 years, emphasizing traditional activities such as trap setting, archery and snowshoeing. Team sports such as volleyball, basketball, floor hockey and soccer are popular events, with badminton, table tennis and cross-country skiing rounding out the individual sports. More than 1,200 students in Grades 5 to 8 participated in six regional meets, with almost 400 athletes from just over 30 schools moving on to compete in the Divisional Frontier Games.

During the Games, I had the privilege of watching Boys Archery. I unknowingly sat beside the two contestants who were competing for first place. Each took his turn at shooting his six arrows then waited while other contestants shot until it was their turn again. While they sat, they quietly talked with each other, comparing notes of how they had shot and how they could have improved their scores. It was obvious they knew that whoever of the two came out on top had the chance of being crowned Boys Archery Champion.

They were from different worlds, and yet in this sharing of archery secrets (and comparing notes), that did not matter. One boy was non-Indigenous and the other was Indigenous. One of the boys was under the



Reg Klassen
CASSA/ACGCS President

protection of Child and Family Services, and the other was not. At that moment none of this mattered. This was about archery, and shooting as close to the bullseyes as possible.

At one point, the eventual Champion put his head in his hands as he watched the other boy hit two bullseyes with his first two arrows of his last set. The other arrows were not quite as well placed, and the boy with his head in his hands eventually won by a mere five points, 193 to 188.

What I will remember from these Games is the encouragement each athlete gave to the other, each in his own quiet way. These two athletes had gone head to head before as they were from the same region. In the final, they sought each other out, perhaps to seek out the best competition, but also to be quietly encouraged to do better by the other. I must say I was bit transformed as I watched this majestic battle unfold.

Reg Klassen
CASSA President

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Greetings from the Executive Director



Ken Bain
CASSA/ACGCS Executive Director

These are extraordinary times, and I hope that everyone is staying safe and healthy.

The Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) and our colleagues at the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) have set up weekly national e-meetings to receive updates from across the country. Thanks to CSBA for approaching CASSA with this opportunity. Please email me if you have specific topics or questions about which you would like to hear from others across Canada.

Regarding the 2020 conference, CASSA is committed to ensuring the safety of our delegates, families, sponsors and partners. We are in constant contact with our event planners, and at this time we are continuing to plan for July.

Further updates will be provided as we get closer to July.

I am delighted to announce that our Yukon school system leaders will be represented on the CASSA board by Paul McFadyen. I welcome Paul and look forward to hearing his monthly updates about the education landscape in Yukon. I want to express my appreciation to two members from Saskatchewan who

are leaving the CASSA board: Gwen Keith and Lynn Little. Gwen and Lynn are strong advocates for leaders in Saskatchewan and support the need for a strong national voice that influences education and beyond for the betterment of our students.

I welcome two new members from Saskatchewan: Domenic Scuglia and Quintin Robertson.

CASSA's mission is to "influence the directions that impact education and student learning." Our beliefs include "a responsibility to participate in dialogue on educational matters of national significance" and "to communicate and collaborate with educational and community partners to ensure excellence and equity."

CASSA continues to support the work of the Canadian Alliance for Healthy School Communities, the McConnell Foundation and its knowledge mobilization initiative WellAhead, Recess Project Canada and various other student well-being initiatives.

I will continue to update members about CASSA's involvement across these amazing opportunities to be an association of influence.

Ken Bain
CASSA/ACGCS Executive Director

CASSA's mission is to "influence the directions that impact education and student learning."

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Taking Learning *out of the Classroom* and *into the World*

In the February 2020 issue of *Leaders & Learners*, we published the first part of a conversation with Wood Street Centre principal Darren Hays.

Wood Street Centre is a unique experiential education facility in downtown Whitehorse, Yukon, that offers students in Grades 9 to 12 the opportunity for high-level academic learning in the classroom and during lab experiments, field trips and outdoor projects. Programming is available in French and English.

The Government of Yukon Department of Education administers public education services in the territory, including

those offered at Wood Street Centre. Yukon superintendent duties are currently divided between four people: Paul McFadyen (Area 1), Penny Prysnuik (Area 2), and Kim Ramsay and Greg Storey (Area 3).

Descriptions of each of the programs offered at Wood Street Centre also appeared in the February 2020 issue.

Here is the second part of our conversation with Darren Hays.

As principal, what are you most proud of when it comes to the students' achievements?

I am most proud that the students are able to be the person who they want to be. Some students reinvent themselves through self-discovery while others find passions and friendships that will last a lifetime. Seeing the passion and engagement from our students

demonstrates that education does change the world. Seeing youth taking on leadership roles and applying their knowledge and compassion to real-world challenges shows that our future is in the hands of incredible individuals.

Those who wonder how academic rigor is maintained when this just sounds like a lot of fun only need to look at the passion students throw into their studies. Students will work 10, 15, 20 hours on a weekend to create an impressive assignment because they are engaged and personally committed. The student has always been capable – they just needed an opportunity to demonstrate that they can excel.



The Wood Street Centre takes learning out of the classroom and into the world.



The Wood Street Centre maintains class sets of regularly used equipment that are provided at no cost to the students.

What are the qualities you consider essential for a teacher to succeed in these programs and settings, including the times they teach students away from traditional classroom spaces?

All staff must have a passion for their program. The teacher's passion develops synergy with the student's passion to develop an energy and enthusiasm that is challenging to replicate in a conventional school model.

Each staff member is a content expert with significant experience. Our experience is that the teacher must be creative, adaptable, a strong planner and a team member, but mostly they must be a problem solver who can respond to any challenge quickly.

What qualities are essential for students to succeed in these programs?

Students who have a personal interest in learning differently than provided in their regular classes will benefit greatly within our programs. They should be open to change, have a willingness to look at the world through a new lens and be a team member who will develop their skills in a variety of roles.

The experiential learning approach supports student growth on an individual and social level in ways that are challenging to replicate in a regular school. The most important step for students is choosing to apply for a program.

The Government of Yukon adapted the new British Columbia school curriculum to fit Yukon's context, and Yukon First Nations language, history, culture and ways of knowing, doing and being have been integrated into all subject areas and grade levels. How is this approach to curriculum reflected in the programs at Wood Street Centre?

In many ways, we are thankful that British Columbia and Yukon Education are catching up to our practices. Our learning has always been

visible; our assessment practices extend beyond students regurgitating information. Our content has always been interdisciplinary and appropriate for the student's development.

We differentiate our instruction by using the natural resources and our community partners and supports. An example is that we develop physical conditioning by creating challenging activities that challenge but do not overwhelm students. It is a great reward to make the last step in a climb but also a great reward to turn around and share a hand to help pull the next student over the top. It is the greatest when your classmate thanks you for helping them overcome a challenge they did not think they could achieve.

We always maximize our instructional time. While waiting for transportation after a long trip, students will discuss what they saw, smelled or observed during the activity. Students take on responsibility for planning meals, cooking, storytelling, playtime and pacing for rest and activity.

First Nations communities in Yukon tell their stories and show their practices in an authentic, local environment. The Yukon Environment First Nation Planning and Policy unit has staff who supports our programs. They provide chaperoning, local knowledge and contact with local First Nations governments, plus demonstrate cultural activities and practices in the classroom or on the land. Our school growth plan focuses on increasing awareness and understanding of First Nations ways of knowing and doing within our student community.

There is nothing more authentic than when a crowd cheers on an actor or sits silently when a joke falls flat. Either result or type of feedback is a learning opportunity that helps students develop.

We also have several programs that are provided in French for French immersion students, with student participation from other school French language programs. The French/English programs are essentially the same beyond the language element.

It is a wonderful opportunity for our students to spend a semester in a true language immersion setting, compared to conventional schools that may offer courses in English or French as students navigate their daily course loads.

How is the programming at Wood Street Centre made accessible to students who have limited financial means, live outside of the Whitehorse area or face other potential barriers?

Yukon Education has student and family supports available to assist all applicants. There

is a student residence for students in Grades 10 to 12 and living subsidies available to families to ensure there is housing available for those living outside Whitehorse. Program fees are subsidized to maintain a low barrier to program participation. MAD program costs can be covered by students actively selling performance tickets.

We maintain a small inventory of extra clothing, sleeping bags, bicycles and so on, plus we maintain class sets of regularly used equipment, such as ski equipment and snowshoes, which are provided at no cost to the students. Yukon Education also has a supply of canoes, kayaks and transportation vehicles available to all schools that lowers program costs.

Students who do not own their equipment will have the required gear loaned or shared as needed. We wish to remove the barriers to participate, as a diverse student grouping creates a wonderful base to build community.

Finally, what is the typical credit load for each of the programs offered?

ACES 10 is four four-credit courses; CHAOS 9 is one four-credit course, CHAOS 10 is four four-credit courses, ES 11 is four to five two- and four-credit courses, FACES is four four-credit courses, MAD 10-12 is four to five two- and four-credit courses, OPES 9 is one four-credit course and PASE 9 is one four-credit course.

None of the programs work without great support behind the scenes, and we value the commitment others provide in meeting the organization challenges every school is faced with. We have transportation, contract, health and safety, policy and finance challenges every day, and we are thankful to our Wood Street Centre staff, Yukon government and community members who make sure a square peg works effectively in a round hole system.

While the teachers at Wood Street Centre are amazing, we thank all school communities and partners in our education system for their support ensuring an amazing school has the opportunity to be part of the larger education puzzle.

It is a challenge replicating what Wood Street Centre does in our other schools. However, even developing small elements of what works well for the Wood Street Centre school community will reap great rewards in traditional schools. The rewards of our Wood Street Centre approach are immense, and we thank all our school partners for their commitment to supporting their students as each of them explores our experiential learning model. ○

The 2020 CASSA conference will be set in the lovely seaside town of St. Andrews-by-the-Sea, New Brunswick.



2020 CASSA Conference

The 2020 CASSA Annual Conference features guest speakers from the top of their respective fields. Each year, the CASSA conference opens with an address presented by a high-calibre keynote speaker. The theme this year in St.

Andrew by-the-Sea is *Equity and Inclusion for Student Well-Being*, and conference participants will have the privilege of hearing from Kike Ojo-Thompson on July 2.

Kike joins a long list of notable contemporary thinkers and leaders who have spoken at previous CASSA conferences. That list includes Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaiash, Dr. Michael Fullan, Dr. Paula Barrett, Dr. Edwina Wetzel, Dr. Doug Gleddie, Natalie Panek, Michael Ungar, the Honourable James Bartleman and the late Dr. Fraser Mustard.

We hope to see you in St. Andrew's-by-the-Sea this July for this incredible leadership learning opportunity.

Introducing Kike Ojo-Thompson

Kike Ojo-Thompson is an award-winning expert in equity, inclusion and diversity. She specializes in developing, facilitating and carrying out innovative solutions for creating equity at an institutional level.

For over two decades, Kike has been leading engaging and effective workshops, lectures, mediations and trainings for a broad range of organizations eager to create equitable outcomes for their staff and clients. She is a dynamic speaker and educator with the ability to artfully balance tact and honesty in her work.

She is the founder and principal consultant of the Kojo Institute. Kike is also a member of the Ontario Human Rights Commission Community Advisory Group and was the former senior facilitator for Ontario's carding review team. She was also the former project lead for One Vision One Voice, a first-of-its-kind initiative created to address anti-black racism in the child welfare system. A former



Keynote speaker Kike Ojo-Thompson is an award-winning expert in equity, inclusion and diversity.

secondary school teacher, Kike has since supported a number of boards of education throughout Ontario.

You can stay up to date with Kike Ojo-Thompson's work by following the Kojo Institute (@KojoInstitute) on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

This annual event offers a unique professional learning opportunity for school system leaders from publicly funded school districts across Canada.

“Sea” You There!

The New Brunswick School Superintendents Association (NBSSA) and the Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) invite you and your senior leadership team to attend this year’s CASSA conference, scheduled to take place in St. Andrews-by-the-Sea, New Brunswick, from July 2 to 4.

This annual event offers a unique professional learning opportunity for school system leaders from publicly funded school districts across Canada. The 2020 conference will focus on the theme *Equity and Inclusion for Student Well-Being*. Conference participants will have a number of chances for personalized learning and peer-to-peer sharing on this and related topics through keynote addresses, panel discussions and breakout sessions. Delegates, guests, sponsors and exhibitors will also be able to access networking opportunities throughout the three-day event.

Hotel and Travel Information

The 2020 CASSA conference will be set at the Algonquin Resort in the lovely seaside town of St. Andrews, a national historic district with elegant seaside homes dating back to the 18th century. The resort, in the southwest corner of New Brunswick,

is easily accessible by all major roads and is about 90 minutes from the Saint John airport and two hours from the Fredericton airport. It’s also just 30 minutes from the United States border.

The Algonquin Resort features an indoor pool with a three-storey waterslide, a full-service day spa, complimentary bicycles, a state-of-the-art fitness centre, high-speed Wi-Fi, beach access to Katy’s Cove, all-day room service, an on-site restaurant and bar and a complimentary community shuttle to nearby hot spots. Some of the local attractions in the area include Kingsbrae Garden, Ross Memorial Museum, Sunbury Shores Arts and Nature Centre, Fundy Discovery Aquarium and Huntsman Marine Science Centre, Ganong Chocolate Museum and Wild Salmon Nature Centre.

You can access rooms at CASSA’s preferred rates from June 28 to July 8. Room rates range from \$207 to \$257 per night and are subject to a destination marketing fee of two per cent plus applicable taxes. The last day to book these rates is June 3. Please book online directly with the Algonquin Resort (www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1568384275533&key=GRP&app=resvlink), or call 1-877-231-1731 to specify you are eligible for the Canadian Association of School System

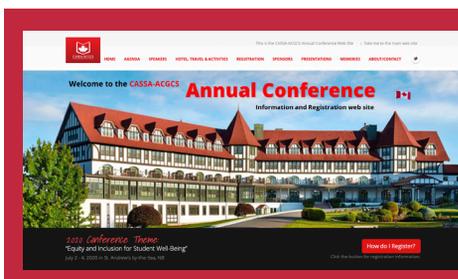
Administrators preferred room rates. If you wish to stay more than three days before or after the conference dates, you must contact the hotel directly for booking.

If you’re travelling by air, Air Canada is the official Canadian airline for this year’s conference. It is offering a discount on eligible fares to attendees travelling on flights to the Saint John airport. Visit www.air-canada.com and enter the promotion code HV2JPQ31 to book a discounted flight. Keep in mind the following travel conditions apply:

- The discount will be applied to the fare at the time that the ticket is purchased;
- The discount and the fare are subject to all applicable taxes and surcharges, and no discount will apply to Tango fares;
- The travel period begins Wednesday, June 24, and ends on Saturday, July 11, 2020; and
- The booking must be made to Saint John, New Brunswick (YSJ).

For those wishing to rent a vehicle, please note there is limited availability at the Saint John airport. Be sure to reserve early. Options include Hertz (1-800-654-2240), Budget (1-506-633-3467) or Alamo, Enterprise and National (1-506-696-3340). Hertz offers a discounted rate for conference attendees. A link to the rates and booking details can be found on the CASSA conference website under the Hotel, Travel & Activities tab (www.conference.cassa-acgcs.ca/CASSA-hotel_travel.html). The Algonquin Resort provides an outdoor on-site parking lot. Self-parking is free, and valet parking is available for \$25 per day (unlimited in and out privileges).

Keep watching upcoming issues of this newsletter and the CASSA conference website for additional details. Previous conferences are well known for their opportunities for fun, family-friendly outings in addition to the formal portion of the conference, so consider bringing your family along as well. We hope to see you “by the sea” this July! ○



Call for Presentations

CASSA is now accepting presentation proposals for the 2020 annual CASSA Conference in St. Andrews, N.B. Presentations will relate to equitable and inclusive schools and systems that support marginalized/racialized students and their well-being. For more information please download the 2020 Call for Presentations document that is available at www.conference.cassa-acgcs.ca.

Save the date!

**EQUITY
AND
INCLUSION**

FOR STUDENT WELL-BEING
ST. ANDREWS BY THE SEA, NB • JULY 2-4

**JOIN CASSA AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE FROM
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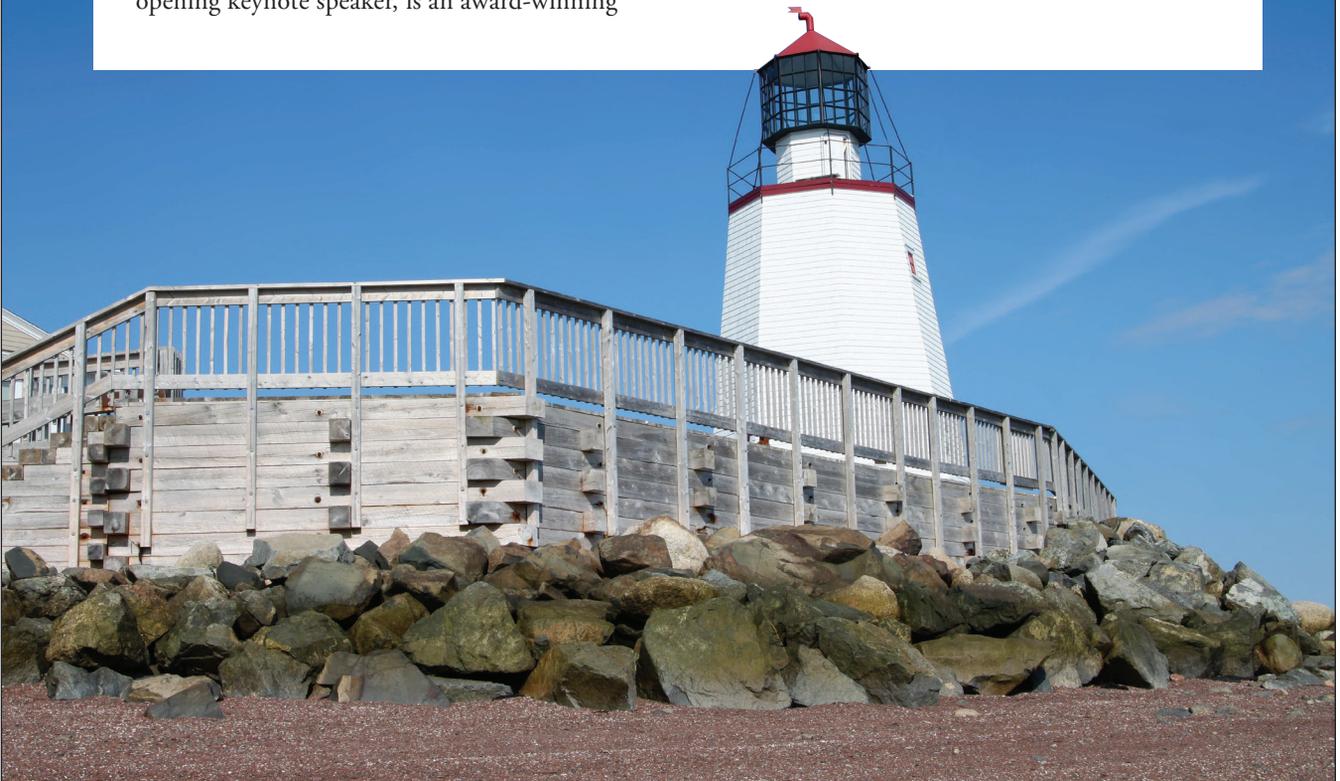
THEME: EQUITY AND INCLUSION FOR STUDENT WELL-BEING

The CASSA Annual Conference draws school system leaders from across Canada to learn and share information on current topics in education. Delegates will have opportunities to hear from engaging speakers and breakout session leaders during the day, plus have the chance to explore St. Andrews by-the-Sea.

Kike Ojo-Thompson, the founder and principal consultant of Kojo Institute and the conference's opening keynote speaker, is an award-winning

expert in equity, inclusion and diversity. Sure to inspire, Kike specializes in developing, facilitating and implementing innovative solutions for creating equity at an institutional level.

More details, including speakers, will be posted to the conference website. Visit www.conference.cassa-acgcs.ca to learn more about the conference, to register to attend and to apply to be a presenter.



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