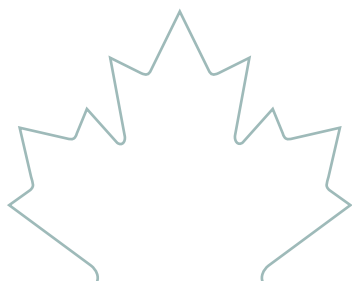


Greetings from the President



T

he work of system leaders is both challenging and rewarding. The challenges may be different from province to province, but the intrinsic reward is the same: the success of students. As an organization that represents a national voice in education, our board members share some

of the changes, opportunities, and challenges that system leaders face from coast to coast to coast.

Some of the opportunities in British Columbia include more money to support food programs at schools for students experiencing food scarcity at home. The Ministry of Education and Child Care has invested millions of dollars to support these programs. The province is also supporting the opening of many childcare facilities located on school sites. This initiative will improve access to childcare in the province and support the continuity of learning for our early learners.

Board members report the many school district efforts underway to support the journey towards Truth and Reconciliation for Indigenous Peoples. The Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) continues its support of this journey as it engages with the First Nations Education Administrators Association.

Some provincial/territorial education budgets that do not meet the needs of the educators and students in the system present challenges. As system leaders continue to advocate for appropriate funding, CASSA also supports the call for increased funding as a participant of the National Advisory Council on Publicly Funded Public Education, and in conversations with the Executive Director for the Council of Ministers of Education.

One change leaders are watching involves more centralized complaint resolution processes for parents. How this will impact system leaders' work is an important question to ask. Most concerns are best addressed locally by the parties involved. Will these processes support or impede the ability of system leaders to find resolutions and support families and learners? It bears watching.

New approaches to system accountability are being introduced in several provinces. Accountability for delivering a quality education has never been an issue for system leaders across Canada. Canada's education systems continually rate amongst the best in the world. Leaders will need



Kevin Kaardal
CASSA/ACGCS President

to continue dialogue with their ministries to ensure the process of accountability serves student learning, informs practice in the classroom, and results in additional support where required.

New legislation and governance processes in a couple of provinces will have significant impacts on how system leaders do their work. CASSA provides an opportunity to share best practices across the country so that system leaders can have more informed conversations with their Ministry colleagues and point to positive real-world examples of governance that works. The challenge is that not all new models of governance are introduced to improve public education's delivery, but to solve other important government mandates. As system leaders, we pivot and ensure the best possible outcomes in our respective jurisdictions.

The final challenge we hear, consistently, is the turnover of staff in the system. Attracting people to the sector with the complexity of expectations is a challenge. Districts/divisions are experiencing staffing shortages across Canada. Many rural and remote districts are hiring teachers who do not possess teaching certification. Education Assistants are being replaced by "Responsible Adults." CASSA is supporting understanding the recruiting challenges of French Immersion Teachers by participating in the "Putting Data to Work" project.

The turnover of senior system leaders is dramatic as many experienced system leaders are retiring. Other leaders are exiting for different career options. The result is that many system leaders are new to this specific work. This is an opportunity for CASSA to provide support networks and professional learning that these new talented leaders feel they need. This year's National Conference is a start. Getting to network with your colleagues around a common purpose – setting conditions so that learners can thrive is very rewarding. I hope to see you on July 5 to 7, in Victoria, British Columbia, for our conference.



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

Greetings from the Executive Director

“Our commitments will lead to fulfilling our vision: Equity and excellence in education for each learner.”



Ken Bain

CASSA/ACGCS Executive Director

I am proud to provide you with an update on the work that was completed by the Communication and Engagement Committee following the January Strategic Planning Meetings. The following content has been approved by the full board and is being made into an infographic.

The board has adopted the following values:

- Diversity,
- Equity,
- Excellence,
- Inclusion,
- Responsiveness, and
- Well-being.

In addition to the values, the Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) has established core commitments that support and demonstrate the values.

- **Diversity: advocate** for leadership within education systems that represents different ethnicities, gender identities, nationalities, languages, cultures, and beliefs* (OECD definition)
- **Equity: advocate** for access to quality, relevant, and culturally sensitive education for all learners as a fundamental right
- **Excellence: promote** the success of each student
- **Inclusion: embrace** the attitudes and approaches that recognize learner differences and promotes equal opportunities for each student
- **Responsiveness: support** the role of senior school leaders through individual and collective professional learning and **strengthen** the capacity of school system leaders to build relationships toward Truth and Reconciliation and **communicate, network, and collaborate** with educational

partners on matters of national significance including excellence and equity in publicly funded education

- **Well-being: promote** the psychological, cognitive, social, and physical functioning and capabilities that students need to live a happy and fulfilling life* (OECD definition) and **support** initiatives and partnerships that promote the well-being of school system leaders

CASSA is committed to advocate, promote, embrace, support, strengthen, communicate, network, and collaborate. Our commitments will lead to fulfilling our vision: **Equity and excellence in education for each learner.**

Ken Bain

CASSA/ACGCS Executive Director

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CASSA Invites You to Join Us at the 2023 Leadership Conference



Online registration is now open for the 2023 CASSA Annual Leadership Conference. All CASSA members are invited

and encouraged to join us this year in Victoria, BC, from July 5 to 7, 2023. Victoria is on the unceded and traditional territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən People, now known as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations.

Come explore and reflect on this year's theme of "Leadership - Coast to Coast to Coast," with school leaders representing publicly funded school districts from across Canada. Our highly engaging keynote addresses, group discussions, and breakout sessions provide a multitude of opportunities for professional development and thoughtful exchanges on current topics and best practices. Our conference is also an excellent setting for delegates, guests, sponsors, and exhibitors to network.

Your registration fee includes two full breakfasts, two lunches, and one opening reception. There are two optional social activities to choose from as well.

All CASSA members are welcome to attend our **Annual General Meeting**. This will be held on July 5, from 10am to noon. The AGM will be followed by lunch and the conference **Welcome and Opening**.

We are pleased to welcome Chief Cadmus Delorme to deliver the **Opening Keynote Address** from 2:00pm to 3:30pm. From April 2016 to April 2023, Chief Delorme served as Chief of Cowessess First Nation, which is about 140 kilometres east of Regina in Treaty 4 territory. In 2021, Cowessess became the first First Nation community in Canada to sign an agreement with Ottawa that returns jurisdiction over children in care to the community. Heartbreakingly, the community also made headlines that same year when 751 unmarked graves were discovered at a cemetery near the former Marieval Indian Residential School. Chief Delorme will share stories, explain what we all inherited, and note the actions we must all take to make sure we get it right this time. He will explain how truth must come before reconciliation and how reconciliation comes with uncomfortable conversations. His presentation

promises to be delivered with humour, forward thinking, and open-mindedness.

An **Introduction of Critical Friends** will follow the opening keynote address. In this context, a critical friend is a trusted person who asks provocative questions, shares data to examine through another lens, and offers critique of a person's work as a friend. They take the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work. The role of a critical friend has been introduced in many school systems that see themselves as learning organizations and know that learning requires assessment feedback.

The critical friends for the 2023 CASSA Conference will be Dr. Michael Chechile of Concordia University in Montreal; Dr. Jacqueline Ottman, President of First Nations University of Canada in Regina; and Dr. Sharon Wahl, the Dean of Education at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

All conference participants, sponsors, and guests are welcome to join us at a **Reception** at 4pm.

We look forward to seeing you and your senior leadership team in lovely Victoria this July!

Thursday, July 6, begins with breakfast at 8am. This will be followed by a **Keynote and Table Conversations** delivered and led by Douglas Sanderson (*Amo Binashii*) and Andrew Stobo Sniderman from 9am to noon. They will discuss the factors behind the unequal outcomes experienced by Indigenous students and lessons learned from the 150-year history of schools in a town and a neighbouring First Nations reserve, drawing on their acclaimed book *Valley of the Birdtail: An Indian Reserve, a White Town, and the Road to Reconciliation*. Each conference registrant will receive a free copy of the book, a national best seller and the CBC Books 2022 Book of the Year.

The 2023 **CASSA Awards** will be presented from noon to 1:30pm. Lunch will be served during the ceremony. Thursday's breakout sessions will take place in two sessions, from 1:30 to 2:30pm and from 2:45 to 3:45pm.

From 1:30 to 2:30pm, sessions include **Mirrors, Windows, and Equity: A Reflective Workshop on Courageously Shifting Practices** with Anna Villalta; **Beyond Donuts: Tools and Strategies for Connecting with Your School Community** with Douglas Stewart and Colleen Galley; **Year One of Trauma-Informed Mental Health Leadership Implementation at Waterloo Catholic District School Board** with Andrea Snyder and Judy Merkel; **Riding the Waves of Leader-Ship** with Mike Tobin and Kirk Smith; and **First Steps in the Spirit of Leadership** with Karen Shipka, Allan Beckingham, Mike Bowden, and Claire Guy.

From 2:45 to 3:45pm, sessions include **Trials and Tribulations of Teacher Recruitment** with Reg Klassen; **Educators' Perspectives on**

Their Relationships with Students, Colleagues, and Their Own Professional Development During the COVID-19 Pandemic with Maria Vasanelli; **Antiracism: One District's Journey** with Peter Smith, Matthew Martin, and Therese Trofimencoff; **The Answers Lie in the Community** with Daniel Stargratt; and **Get Out of Judgement and Into Curiosity** with Heather Gerber.

Following the breakout sessions, conference participants and family members are welcome to join two optional tours available. A two-hour guided **Pedal Bike Tour** is available for \$100. The tour will take participants to a variety of food stops and breweries, and let you take in the beautiful sights of Victoria. Note that all food and drink costs are the responsibility of participants. As well, a 45-minute **Craigdarroch Castle Tour** is available for \$30. This national historic site was built by coal baron Robert Dunsmuir during the reign of Queen Victoria. It has been meticulously restored to give visitors a chance to see what privileged life was like in the 1890s.

Friday, July 7, opens with a breakfast, a morning welcome, and a recap of the conference's first two days. Breakout sessions begin at 9:15am. Choices include **Systems and Cultures that Support Wellbeing** with Kathleen Lane; **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism: Faking It or Making It?; Innovation, Inclusion, and Student Success: Post-Graduation Community Transition** with Ward Streuby; and **A Transformative Approach: Building Brave, Equitable, and Accessible Spaces** with Jeannie Armstrong, Joan Carragher, Sean Heuchert, Steve O'Sullivan, Jonathan Dilanni, Sheila Piggott, Julie Selby, and Laura Dilanni.

After a brief morning break, the conference's Critical Friends Dr. Michael Chechile, Dr. Jacqueline Ottman, and Dr. Sharon Wahl will return at 10:35am to guide a **Response/Next Steps** session. It will cover conference themes, responses to the learnings that have taken place, and how to bring this knowledge forward in next steps.

The **Closing Session** will take place from 11:45am to 12:30pm. Conference participants and guests are then free to

enjoy the Victoria area or prepare for their departure.

All conference activities except the two optional group tours take place at the Victoria Conference Centre at 720 Douglas Street. There are two hotel options, both within walking distance. The DoubleTree Victoria at 777 Douglas Street offers room rates starting at \$279. The Marriott Victoria at 728 Humboldt Street offers room rates starting at \$299. Links to reserve rooms can be found on the CASSA conference website.

To support our host hotels and demonstrate effective practices in room block management, CASSA's board of directors is supporting the following policy:

- Attendees that have booked a hotel outside of the official conference block will be charged an additional \$200 administrative fee plus applicable taxes. Exceptions will be made for members who are local or who are sharing a room with another hotel guest.
- The deadline to book a room is June 4.
- Any hotel room cancellations require 72 hours' notice to avoid a penalty.

Planning to fly to Victoria? CASSA is pleased to announce we have arranged conference discount rates with both Air Canada and WestJet.

Air Canada is offering discounts on flights to Victoria (YYJ) for travel between June 27 and July 15. Use the promotional code MVEDBR91 at www.aircanada.com. Discounts range from 5 per cent for standard fares to 10 per cent on flex fares and higher. For international travel, there is a 10 per cent discount on standard fares and higher.

WestJet is offering 5 per cent off Econo and 10 per cent off EconoFlex and Premium fares for travel within Canada and 2 percent off Econo, 5 per cent off EconoFlex, and 10 per cent off Premium base fares for guests travelling transborder. The discount applies to flights to Victoria, and for travel between June 27 and July 15. No discounts are available for Basic or Business class bookings. Use coupon code 2K2W7VL at www.westjet.com/conventions, or provide the promo code YBC13 to your travel agent.

We look forward to seeing you and your senior leadership team in lovely Victoria this July! ○

CASSA 2023 Keynote Speakers: Douglas Sanderson and Andrew Stobo Sniderman



Douglas Sanderson

Douglas Sanderson (*Amo Binashii*) is Swampy Cree, Beaver Clan, from the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. He is a Fulbright Scholar, and he holds the Prichard Wilson Chair in Law and Public Policy at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law. He was educated at Simon Fraser University (BA Honours), the University of Toronto (JD), and Columbia University (LL.M.), and he was the managing editor of the inaugural edition of the *Indigenous Law Journal* while at the University of Toronto. He served as a senior policy advisor to the government of Ontario, first in the Office of the Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and later to the Attorney General.

Professor Sanderson is a member of the Ontario Bar, the Osgoode Historical Society, and the Law Society of Upper Canada. His awards and distinctions include the Students Law Society Partnership Award from the University of Toronto and the Ludwik and Estelle Jus Memorial Human Rights Prize. His areas of research include Aboriginal and Indigenous legal theory, private law, and public and private legal theory. His work

uses the lens of material culture and property theory to examine the nature of historic injustice to Indigenous peoples and possible avenues for redress. His scholarship focuses on Aboriginal institutions, post-colonial reconciliation, and rebuilding community.



Andrew Stobo Sniderman

Andrew Stobo Sniderman is a writer, lawyer, and Rhodes Scholar from Montreal. He has written for the *New York Times*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star*, the *Montreal Gazette*, the *Ottawa Citizen*, and *Maclean's*. His profile of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Residential Schools won the award for best print feature of 2011 from the Canadian Association of Journalists.

As a lawyer, Andrew has argued before the Supreme Court of Canada and advocated for Indigenous clients. He has served as a human rights policy advisor to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs and a law clerk to Justice Edwin Cameron of the Constitutional Court of South Africa. He co-founded the organization that became the Genocide Intervention Network in Washington,

DC, and advocated for the end to the genocide in Darfur. He has focused his career on issues related to international human rights, refugee law, and Indigenous peoples' rights in Canada. He was educated at Harvard Law School, the University of Ottawa, the University of Toronto, Oxford, and Swarthmore College. He lives in New York with his wife Mariella, also a lawyer, and their son Amaru.

Valley of the Birdtail: An Indian Reserve, a White Town, and the Road to Reconciliation (HarperCollins Canada, 2022) tells the story of Waywayseecappo First Nation, the town of Rosburn, and the ways in which the neighbouring communities became separate and unequal, and then, starting in 2010, began the process of rebuilding connections. It traces the lives of two families from each of the communities over 150 years, incorporating Canadian history, politics, and law.

The book has its roots in an article Andrew wrote about how for years, schools in the two communities received significantly different amounts of funding. In Rosburn, the province provided \$10,000 per student; in Waywayseecappo, the federal government provided only \$7,300 per student. When Waywayseecappo was incorporated into the provincial education system in 2010, however, that funding discrepancy vanished as the First Nation saw its funds per student increase. This change was the result of several years of negotiation between federal and provincial governments, the First Nation, and Park West School Division.

As Andrew looked more deeply into how education imbalance is an inextricable part of post-Confederation Indigenous history, he saw the potential

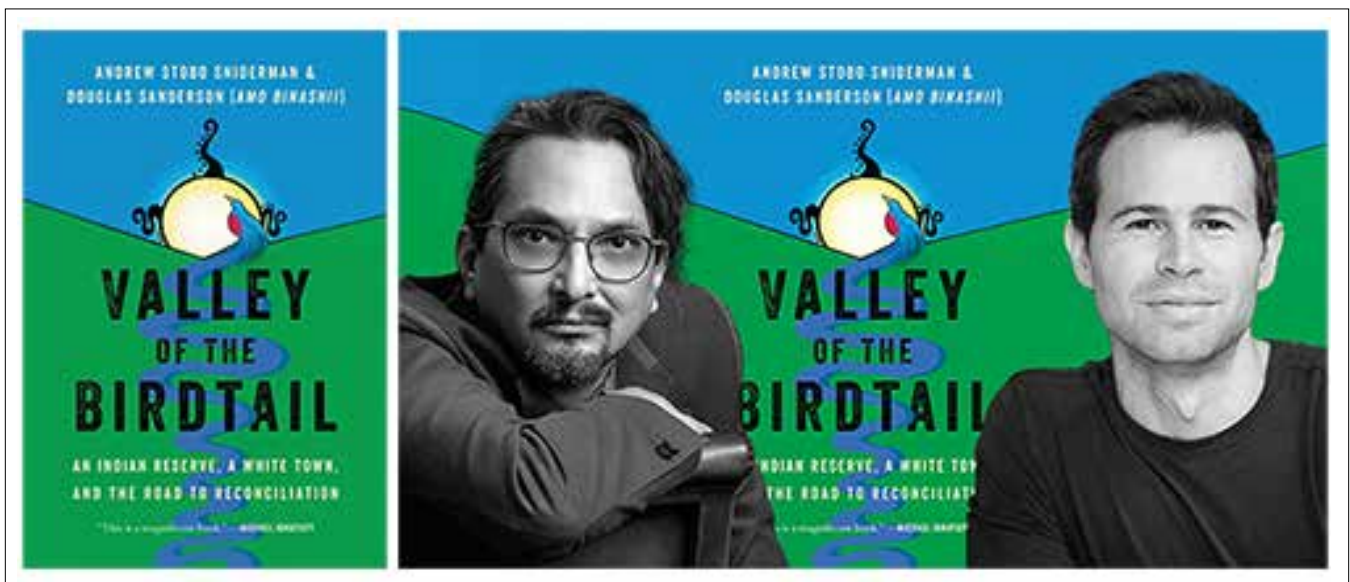
“Valley of the Birdtail: An Indian Reserve, a White Town, and the Road to Reconciliation (HarperCollins Canada, 2022) tells the story of Waywayseecappo First Nation, the town of Rosburn, and the ways in which the neighbouring communities became separate and unequal, and then, starting in 2010, began the process of rebuilding connections.”



for a book. He also realized that as a non-Indigenous Canadian, he needed another voice to help write it. He then approached Professor Sanderson—his former law professor at the University of Toronto and a member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation—about co-writing.

Valley of the Birdtail has been widely acclaimed since its publication. It is the winner of the 2023 John Wesley Dafoe Book Prize (one of the largest prizes for non-fiction writing in Canada), the Stubbendieck Great Plains Distinguished Book Prize, the Kobo Emerging Writer Prize, the Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing, and the OLA Evergreen Award.

Douglas Sanderson and Andrew Stobo Sniderman have addressed numerous events for senior leaders in education, judges, law firms, and law schools, including the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents and the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the Council of School Leaders (Manitoba), the Manitoba School Board Association, the Ontario Court of Appeal, the National Judicial Council – Court of King’s Bench in Manitoba, the McGill University Faculty of Law, the University of British Columbia Peter Allard School of Law, the University of Victoria Faculty of Law, the University of Winnipeg’s Robson Hall Faculty of Law, and various law firms. ○



Valley of the Birdtail: An Indian Reserve, a White Town, and the Road to Reconciliation by Andrew Stobo Sniderman and Douglas Sanderson.

CASSA 2023 Keynote Speaker: Chief Cadmus Delorme



“The result is that Cowessess First Nation now has complete decision-making power over its children and youth no matter where they live, coast to coast to coast.”



Chief Cadmus Delorme, a Cree and Saulteaux, is from the Cowessess First Nation in Treaty 4 territory. In April 2016, at the age of 34, he began his first term as Chief of Cowessess First Nation. He was re-elected in 2019 and continued to serve his community in this role until April 2023, when he confirmed he will not seek a third term.

Under his leadership, Cowessess First Nation focused on economic self-sustainability, renewable energy, agriculture, and efficiency in land use initiatives to create current and future business opportunities for the community. It also prioritized work on political sovereignty and child welfare reform.

Cowessess is the first First Nation community in Canada to sign an agreement with Ottawa that returns jurisdiction over children in care to the community. In March 2020, the community passed its own child welfare legislation, called the Miyo Pimatisowan Act, which means “striving for a better life” in Cree. Reformed federal legislation on Indigenous child welfare was passed in 2019 and came into effect in 2021 through Bill C-92. The result is that Cowessess First Nation now has

complete decision-making power over its children and youth no matter where they live, coast to coast to coast. Its jurisdiction will be recognized and financially supported by the federal and provincial governments. The federal bill was written in response to the first five calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In speaking to CBC about the years-long process leading to this legislation, Chief Delorme noted that Cowessess chaired every meeting and led every discussion. He also emphasized the importance of First Nations exercising their rights to decolonize legislation, and described Indigenous people as rights holders, versus shareholders or stakeholders, who can create their own laws in a co-relation representing the true spirit of Treaty.

In 2021, Chief Delorme experienced a heartbreakingly difficult moment as a community leader when Cowessess First Nation made international headlines with the discovery of 751 unmarked graves at a cemetery near the former

Marieval Indian Residential School. The school was operated by the Catholic Church and open from 1899 to 1997. Children from First Nations in south-east Saskatchewan and southwestern Manitoba were sent there.

He has a bachelor’s degree in business administration and a certificate in Hospitality, Tourism, and Gaming Entertainment Management, both from the First Nations University of Canada, and a master’s degree in public administration from the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. He has also completed an Institute of Corporate Directors designation.

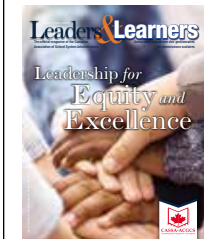
Chief Delorme received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012 and the Platinum Jubilee Medal in 2022. In 2015, he was named one of Saskatchewan’s Future 40, which celebrates the province’s new generation of leaders, builders, and change-makers under the age of 40. He lives with his wife Kimberly, brother-in-law, and two sons on Cowessess First Nation. ○

Mark Your Calendars for CASSA's Annual Conference in 2023!



July 5-7, 2023
Victoria, British Columbia

The CASSA Annual Conference looks forward to seeing you in beautiful Victoria, British Columbia, in 2023! Re-connect school system leaders from across Canada to learn and share information on current topics in education. **Save the date!**



WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO WRITE FOR US!

The CASSA Board is looking for authors interested in writing for the upcoming Winter 2023-2024 issue of *Leaders & Learners* magazine. If you have an article idea that fits into a theme about leadership, please send an abstract to Jenna Collignon, editor of the magazine, at jcollignon@matrixgroupinc.net, and copy ken_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca. We are looking for features and success stories from each region of Canada: Eastern Canada, Quebec, Ontario, Western Canada, and Northern Canada.

net, and copy ken_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca. We are looking for features and success stories from each region of Canada: Eastern Canada, Quebec, Ontario, Western Canada, and Northern Canada.

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