

# Leaders & Learners



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

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

**PAGE 2**  
**MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
A farewell and a few welcomes.

**PAGE 4**  
**EDUSIGHT**  
A profile on one of our new conference sponsors.

**PAGE 5**  
**ACCENT ENVIRONMENT**  
Putting the spotlight on another new conference sponsor.

**PAGE 7**  
**EXL NOMINEES**  
The 2016 EXL Award nominees.

**PAGE 10**  
**CONFERENCE SESSIONS**  
Updated information on this year's breakout sessions.

**GOING TO WINNIPEG?**  
**PLEASE CHECK THE BACK PAGE ANNOUNCEMENT.**

## Message from the President: Reflections from the Rearview Mirror

THE END OF the school year is always a whirlwind; there are concerts, sporting events, graduations and celebrations of all sorts. Every spring, the fast pace of June catches me by surprise, and I am sure I am not the only one who wonders, where did the year go?

This same sentiment is echoed as I reflect upon my time as CASSA President. My two-year term is coming to an end and the time has passed quickly.

I would like to share a few thoughts about what my involvement with CASSA has meant to me and look ahead to the future. It has been an honour to serve as the president of this national association dedicated to strengthening the role that school system leaders play in supporting quality education for all.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors for their support over the last two years.

Words of appreciation are owed to our Executive Director, **Ken Bain**, who has been steadfast in his work to



Cindy Finn  
President

move the association forward. Many of CASSA's accomplishments are a direct result of his belief in the guiding principles of the organization and his tireless efforts to build this organization's outreach and influence. Personally, I would like to thank him for his support and guidance

over the last couple of years. He was instrumental in helping me navigate the president's path.

Together, we have made important strides in meeting the goals we have set for CASSA.

First, we have made considerable progress in our efforts to be recognized as a national voice on education. We have grown our membership, such that we now have members from eight provinces and all three territories. For the last two years, the Board of Directors has met in Toronto for a winter strategic planning session that has allowed us to build our identity and solidify our

*Continued on page 3*

## 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 Fond Farewell and Warm Welcomes

I WANT TO begin by expressing my deep appreciation to CASSA President **Cindy Finn**, who will conclude her two-year term this summer.

Cindy has been an exceptional representative for the organization and was able to balance her duties as our president with her role as Director of Student Services at Lester B. Pearson School Board in Montreal, Quebec.

The role of CASSA president is a voluntary one and requires a time commitment that includes corresponding in a timely manner, writing for our professional publications and travelling to conferences, meetings and symposia across Canada and the United States.

At all times, Cindy's commitment to the need for a national association of school system leaders was front and centre in her conversations and presentations. It has been an honour to get to know Cindy and to work alongside her in my role with CASSA. I look forward to her continuing to serve CASSA as Past President.

I want to welcome **Anne O'Brien** as our new CASSA President. Anne is Director of Education for

Durham Catholic District School Board in Oshawa, Ontario. Anne too understands the importance of a national voice for education, and I know she will work tirelessly to make sure that CASSA remains as a strong and influential organization. I am looking forward to working with Anne and know she will represent CASSA well.



Ken Bain  
Executive Director

Welcome to our newest member of the board, **Darryl Bazylak**. Darryl joins LEADS Executive Director **Bill Cooke** as our Saskatchewan members of the board.

Lastly, I want to express my appreciation to the members of the CASSA Board of Directors, who also donate their time each month to the important work we do as leaders in education across the country.

Have a wonderful summer and I hope to see many of you in Winnipeg!

## Message from the President: Reflections from the Rearview Mirror, continued

*Continued from page 1*

goals. We have begun important conversations with the Council of Ministers of Education and the Canadian School Board Association, as we all have a shared interest in a strong Canadian education system.

Second, we have improved our relations with other national and international organizations who also have a stake in education. This year alone, CASSA board members actively participated in a number of conferences, including the International Leadership Symposium, the Canadian Education Association's conference on neuroscience, AASA's National Conference on Education and the International Conference on Behavioral Science.

Third, professional development continues to be a cornerstone of CASSA's mission. Our annual summer conference attracts passionate educational leaders from every corner of the country, and our publications help keep us all connected. Our conference themes reflect cutting-edge issues in education, ranging from student engagement to STEAM initiatives to social justice. This summer, we will be meeting in Winnipeg from July 7 to 9, and our conference roster will feature dynamic speakers intended to inspire and provide a forum for continued growth. We hope you will join us for what promises to be a great conference and a much anticipated visit to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Finally, we seek to recognize outstanding contributions to education in Canada. We regularly feature items of this nature in our publication *Leaders & Learners*. We also recognize excellence in educational leadership each July when we honour a worthy school system administrator with the EXL award. We hope you will be on hand at the opening ceremonies of our conference on July 7 to celebrate our 2016 recipient.

While I am proud of what we have achieved over the last few years, there is much more still to accomplish.

Our Board of Directors is working hard to bring a national focus to important issues such as youth mental health. Recent examples of traumatic incidents such as the school shooting in La Loche and the fires in Fort McMurray have renewed conversations about attending to the welfare of students and staff. We know that we are living in times of uncertainty; education is often the hub through which the community mobilizes to cope with adverse events. CASSA is well positioned to facilitate continued efforts to help our school systems be responsive to the ever-changing needs of the communities they serve.

The future looks bright for CASSA. I offer my best wishes to **Anne O'Brien**, Director of Education at the Durham Catholic District School Board, who assumes her role as President of CASSA this summer. Anne's dedication to education and bubbly personality make her an ideal person to chart the next steps for the organization.

It is my heartfelt wish that you continue to be involved with CASSA and consider joining us at a future professional development event or taking on an active role within the organization. There is tremendous value in a national organization that helps us celebrate all that is good in Canadian education and invites us to grow as educational leaders.

As you reflect on your own professional activities this year, I hope the sentiments are ones of satisfaction and pride. As school system administrators, we work hard to improve student achievement and promote wellness for our students and staff so as to optimize learning environments.

I wish you all the best for a happy and healthy summer vacation, for it is well earned.

## Conference Sponsor Profile: Edusight

*Edusight is a new CASSA conference sponsor. Here, Edusight President **Garros Li** shares details about the company. Learn more at the company's website at [edusight.co](http://edusight.co).*

*It's important that our readers get to know our CASSA conference sponsors. Please tell us about your company.*

Edusight is a digital portfolio and gradebook tool that empowers teachers and students to easily document evidence of learning (both formative and summative) by capturing notes, photos, audio, video and grades with their mobile devices and on the web while engaging parents.

Launched in Toronto in 2014, we are funded by Y-Combinator/Imagine K12, the leading education accelerator based in Silicon Valley (fellow portfolio edtech companies include Remind and Class Dojo). We are also partnered with the New York City Department of Education's iZone in conjunction with the Gates Foundation.

*Please tell our readers a little bit about yourself.*

As one of three co-founders, I have been part of Edusight since day one. Our vision is to help teachers, students, parents and administrators personalize learning. It has been an amazing experience learning from every stakeholder in the education ecosystem.

In addition to working at Edusight, I am an avid scuba diver and socializer. I love meeting new people and learning about their stories!

*How long have you been a CASSA sponsor?*

This is Edusight's first year sponsoring CASSA, and we're excited about this partnership!

*Why is it important for you to develop a sponsorship relationship with CASSA?*



We are always eager to learn about how we can support

educators to impact learning outcomes. We are excited for the presentation opportunity offered by the sponsorship relationship with CASSA, as this will offer a great chance for meaningful dialogue with district leaders to learn more about how we can continue supporting them and the work they do.

*What makes your company a good match with an organization like CASSA?*

We understand the importance of listening to and learning from educators in order to build tools that will equip them to be as effective as possible in the classroom. Working with CASSA provides us with the opportunity to understand the needs of educators from an administrative and district level. The more we can learn by working with organizations like CASSA, the better and more effective tools we can build for educators to impact learning outcomes.

*What are you most looking forward to at the 2016 conference in Winnipeg?*

This is the first time we are attending a CASSA conference and the entire team is thrilled! We are most looking forward to connecting with administrators and districts from across Canada and gathering an in-depth understanding of exactly how assessment needs and challenges differ across regions. We're excited about the partnership and can't wait to meet everyone in Winnipeg this year.

## Conference Sponsor Profile: Accent Environments

*We are welcoming another new CASSA conference sponsor this year: Accent Environments. Learn more at the company's website at [accentenvironments.com](http://accentenvironments.com).*

*It's important that our readers get to know our CASSA conference sponsors. Please tell our readers about your company.*

We are creators of Inclusive Learning Environments to engage every learner, enabling them to reach their full potential and reduce demands on teachers.

We do this through the design of the Accentuated Learning Environment, the inclusive learning environment that balances the needs of each student's personal learning styles, recognizes individual communication styles and supports flexible teaching styles for the educator.

*When did the company get its start?*

It all started back in 1994, when **Dave Henry** and **Dan Evans** (brothers-in-law) bought Accent Equipment from some close family friends.

Although Accent Equipment was reasonably well established, the new and current owners could see that steady, sustainable growth was required, which could only be achieved by commitment and focus. Their goal from the first day was to make the purchasing experience an easy one for all of their clients. We still strive for that daily.

The Accentuated Learning Environment was a vision started by **Russell Evans**. Via the gracious

feedback and positive encouragement from their teaching professional clients, Russell and his team at Accent finally developed the classroom environment that is changing learning experiences, one classroom at a time!

“Russell’s understanding of student learning paired with extensive product knowledge and appreciation for all educators make him a trusted partner in designing the best learning environments for all students.”

~Melanie Gamache, teacher,  
Dauphin Regional Secondary School

*What makes Accent Environments different?*

We aren't just a furniture supplier. We design learning environments with what is best for both students and teachers in mind. We strive to be experts in the components that make up a classroom environment. Our deep understanding on how these components directly affect both the functionality and productivity within the

classroom separates us from any other furniture supplier. We believe that education is at the heart of any and all communities.

*Will staff from Accent Environments be at our conference in Winnipeg this year?*

Russell Evans will be presenting at CASSA. He is a Learning Environment Specialist and is passionate individual whose expertise in the area of classroom design is impressive. He is an expert in all the components that make up a classroom environment.

ACCENTUATED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS 

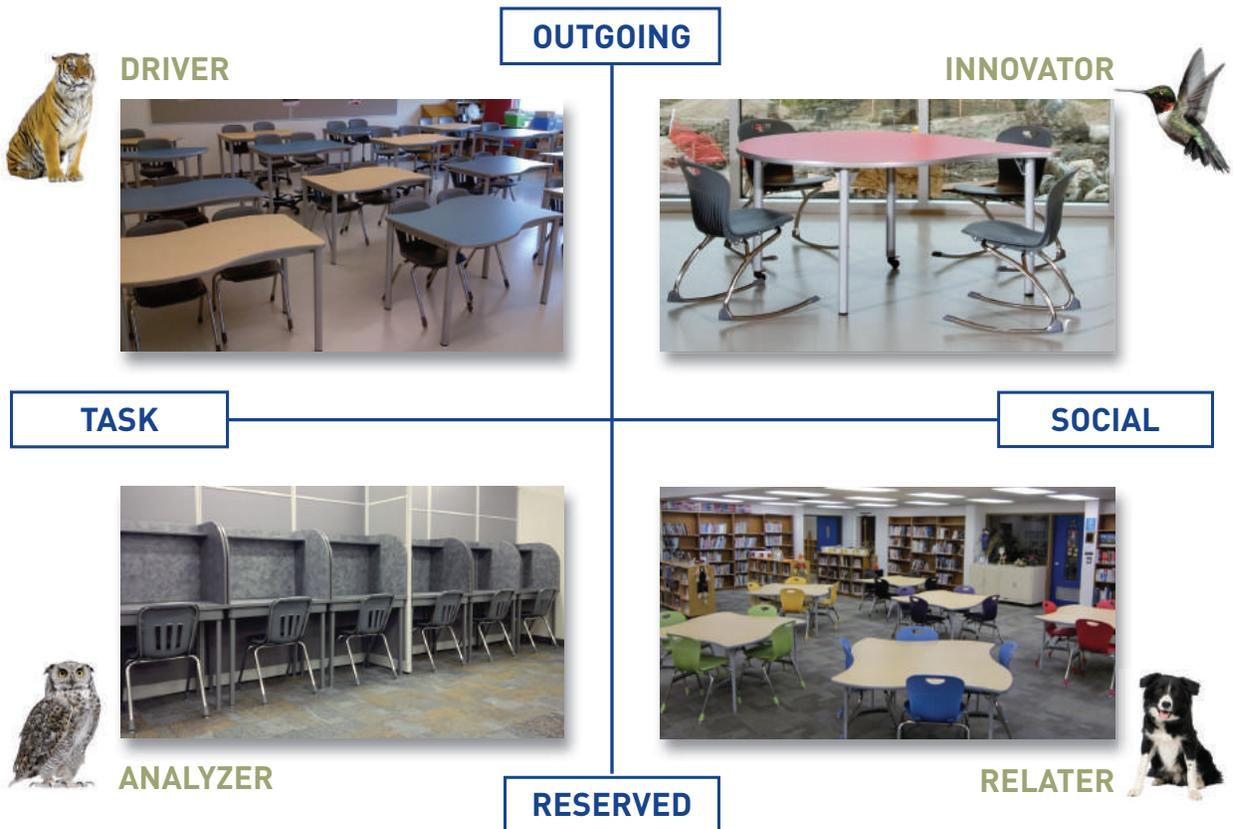
# JUST RIGHT ZONE

 FOR EVERY LEARNER

A **Just Right Zone** is our natural learning spot. It is the position or way that we learn the best. It will be different for every learner and it may also be different for each learner in different subjects as well.

For some it may be standing and moving around, for others it may be a collaborative group, or somewhere off on their own.

What educators have taught us is that when each student is in their own natural learning zone, they feel included, are more engaged and get the most of their learning experience in your learning environment.



Phone: 800 665 9378 Fax: 866 296 4569

## CASSA EXL Award: 2016 Nominees

*Each year, CASSA honours the EXL Award recipient at our summer conference. The ceremony for the 2016 award will take place on Thursday, July 7, in Winnipeg. The recipient is chosen from a selection of high-calibre nominees from across the country, representing a number of CASSA's regional affiliates. This national recipient will also go on to represent CASSA as the Canadian Superintendent of the Year at the annual American School Superintendents Association conference in February 2017.*

*The 2016 nominees include individuals from the Northwest Territories Superintendents Association (NWTSA), the Association of Directors General of English School Boards of Quebec (ADGESBQ), the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association (OCSOA) and the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS).*

*Here are profiles on each of the four deserving nominees. Congratulations and good luck to each of them. Leaders & Learners will feature award ceremony coverage in a later issue.*

### **Denise McDonald**

#### **NWTSA**

Denise is the Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer for the Beaufort Delta Divisional Educational Council (BDEC) and the nominee for the Northwest Territories Superintendents Association.

She has also served as BDEC's Assistant Superintendent, the Health and Wellness Manager for the Gwich'in Tribal Council, a teacher at Samuel Hearne Secondary School, the Aboriginal Languages and Culture Based Education Coordinator in Yellowknife, and an administrator and teacher at Joseph Burr Tyrell Elementary School in Fort Smith.

Denise is known for her keen desire and success in developing partnerships and effective working relations within and between organizations. She is often sought after and has held many significant leadership roles.

Some of the many groups in which she has been a member include the Government of the Northwest Territories Anti-Poverty Advisory Group, Aurora College Board of Governors, Aboriginal Sports Circle of the Western Arctic, Inuvik Emergency Shelter Committee, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples roundtable discussions on Education, Children's First

Fundraising Committee, Inuvik Family Counselling Committee and the NWT Teacher Education Evaluation Committee.

In Denise's current role, her work in uniting the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and Gwich'in Tribal Council's support to develop local curriculums that reflect that culture, context and history of the population BDEC serves has been an integral piece to improving student achievement.

**Curtis Brown**, Superintendent of the South Slave Divisional Education Council, says, "Denise is not only respected for her Aboriginal heritage and breadth of educational leadership knowledge, her eloquence and passion for the health and well-being of northern children and their families is always front and centre. Her coherent and lucid contributions to our deliberations always reminds us what's most important."

### **Gail Somerville**

#### **ADGESBQ**

Gail is a senior administrator with the Riverside School Board on the south shore of Montreal and the nominee for the Association of Directors General of

## **CASSA EXL Award: 2016 Nominees, continued**

English School Boards of Quebec. Her career in Quebec administration spans 37 years. Her professional experiences have been varied; she taught at the elementary and high school levels before moving to educational administration.

Throughout Gail's career, she has been a champion for students who struggle academically and socially. She taught special education to students with special needs and was also a teacher of incarcerated youth. She worked as a school administrator in alternative schools that serviced at-risk students and was an elementary school principal in a low socioeconomic area.

From 2007 to 2016, she was the Director of Complementary Educational Services at the Riverside School Board. In this role, she oversaw special education services and learning support programs for the school board.

The common thread that weaves all of these experiences together is Gail's belief that youth who are at risk deserve support and her passion to make a difference as an educator.

In the latter phases of her career, Gail developed a keen interest in applied educational research. She has been instrumental in developing and researching a sleep hygiene program for elementary students. This program, Sleep for Success, has been successfully implemented in schools within the Riverside School Board.

Throughout her career, Gail has been an active member on various provincial committees. For many years, she was the Vice-Chair on the provincial committee of Administrators of Complementary Educational Services (ACES). She also served on the Steering Committee of the Leadership Committee for

English Education in Quebec (LCEEQ), a provincial pedagogical think tank. Over the years, she has also served on various committees in service to the Ministry of Education.

### **John Stadnyk**

#### **OCSOA**

John is the Director of Education for the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board and the nominee for the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association.

In his role as Director at HSCDSB, John has overseen the implementation of technology in all schools, the equitable allocation of resources to ensure student achievement and the installation of Reading Recovery in all elementary schools. His work in that regard led to his receiving the 2014 Outstanding Leadership Award from the Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery.

John has also been a mentor for new directors of education, a representative on the English Catholic Council of Ontario Directors of Education provincial bargaining with OSSTF support workers and the Council of Directors of Education representative on Knowledge Ontario.

He has also served on the Ministry's Committee for province-wide equitable allocation of special education funding.

Along with these extra voluntary duties, John is a member of the Board of Directors for St. Vincent Place in Sault Ste. Marie and serves on the Patient Care Advisory Committee for the Sault Area Hospital. He is a past member of the Board of Directors for the Algoma Regional Community Hospice.

## CASSA EXL Award: 2016 Nominees, continued

Upon receiving the nomination and OCSOA award, John stated, “I am truly grateful to the OCSOA Board of Directors for this great honour. It is certainly a privilege to be recognized by my peers and professional association. I am very proud to be a member of such a prestigious organization.”

He acknowledged and thanked his nominator, **Maria Esposito**, with whom he has worked and learned from for 15 years.

He also thanked everyone who shared letters of support and indicated he wished to share the award with all of them.

John dedicated the award to his late wife **Janis**, who was a pillar of support throughout his entire journey in education, and to his children **Nick** and **Mary**.

### Joan Carr

#### CASS

Joan is the Superintendent of the Edmonton Catholic School Board and the College of Alberta School Superintendents nominee.

She is a past chair of the Catholic Social Services Sign of Hope campaign and has served on the Board of Directors for CASS, Junior Achievement and Racism Free Edmonton.

In Joan’s EXL nomination, she was praised for giving students a broad spectrum of programming so they can reach their fullest potential.

Her commitment to setting up services for children and families, First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, and students new to Canada, and establishing partnerships with community organizations, governments and business were noted as well.

“Joan Carr is an inspirational professional who is well known for her leadership, innovation and creativity,” said **Marilyn Bergstra**, Board Chair of Edmonton Catholic Schools.

“Joan has proven to be an exceptional leader in finding solutions to challenges while achieving high-quality learning outcomes. All this is done through a lens of faith, with compassion and care for students, families and staff.”

*With very special thanks to Xerox Canada, the long-time sponsor of the annual EXL Award.*



**Hearts & Minds**  
Creating a Culture of Caring  
**Conference**  
July 7 - 9, 2016  
Winnipeg, Manitoba



## **CASSA Conference 2016: Breakout Sessions Information**

*The theme for the 2016 CASSA Conference in Winnipeg is Hearts & Minds: Creating a Culture of Caring. In addition to the keynote speaker sessions on this topic (see Leaders & Learners Volume 10, Issue 68 or the CASSA conference website for more details), there's an abundance of similarly themed breakout sessions from which to choose.*

*Exact times and locations for all of the sessions will be updated on the CASSA conference website and also published in your conference guide, available at registration. Here is a list of some of the breakout sessions you can attend this July.*

- **Walk a Mile in Our Moccasins** with Rebecca Chartrand
- **School District Recommendations from the Every Teacher Project and the National Inventory on LGBTQ-inclusive Education** with Catherine Taylor, Terry Price and Christopher Campbell
  - **Creating a Quality Environment for Students and Staff in OCDSB** with Michele Giroux, Monica Ceschia and Cynthia Donkers
  - **Creating a Culture of Caring: The JCHS Positive Mental Health Toolkit** with Katherine Eberl Kelly
  - **Igniting Student Voice and Engagement in a School District** with Jamie Nunn
  - **Nurturing Inclusive Catholic School Communities** with Tracy Barill and Tish Sheppard
  - **Genocide Studies: Activating the Ethical Dimension** with Krista Brodersen, Deborah Brown and Carolyn Craven
    - **Exploring the Holocaust Through an Interactive Digital Platform** with Elin Beaumont
    - **With This Ring** with Jessica Dowsett, Karen Edgar, Melanie Ferdinand and Gail Lalonde
    - **Implementing PBIS with a Student First Approach: Good Spirit School Division's Journey** with Tracy Huckell (workshop presented by Pearson)
      - **Developing Safe and Caring Online Environments** with Nadya Tymochenko and Gillian Tuck Kutarna (workshop presented by Miller Thomson LLP)
      - **The Power of Partnerships** with Rex Ferguson-Baird and Dean Shareski (workshop presented by Discovery Education Canada)
  - **Creating a Culture of Caring Through Culturally Relevant Play-based Approaches to Teaching and Learning** with Burcu Yaman Ntelioglou, Deborah R. Burnside and Marilyn Marquis-Forster
  - **Creating a Culture of Caring Around Reconciliation as a Non-Indigenous Teacher** with Nathan Tidridge
  - **How Anti-stigma Initiatives Align with a Board's Mental Health and Addiction Strategy** with Anne O'Brien, Janine Bowyer and Diane Mullane
    - **Respecting Difference: A Whole School Approach to Creating Safe, Caring and Welcoming Environments Through Social Justice and Social Responsibility** with Stephen Charbonneau and Dr. Patrick Carney
    - **Using Group Insight to Build Trust and Inform District Decisions** with Kevin Skelcher

## CASSA Conference 2016: Breakout Sessions

- **S.P.I.C.E. Up Your Kindergarten Program, Nourishing the Whole Child in Swan Valley School Division Early Learning Classrooms** with Marilyn Marquis-Forster and Debra Burnside
- **From Student Achievement to Student Achievement and Well-Being: One District's Evolution from Focusing on Literacy to Student Achievement and Well-Being** with J. Philip Parappally and Heather Sears
- **MS2: Model of Student Support Established in Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools to Address Academic, Emotional and Social Needs** with Dr. Paul Mason, Kathleen Finnigan, Patricia MacRae-Pasula and Carmen Baumgarten
- **Frontier School Division: Equity of Opportunity Through Unique Programming** with Reg Klassen
- **Leading Mentally Healthy Schools: From Theory to Practice** with Gail Lalonde, Glen Woodburn and Alexander Fortier
- **Every Student Included and Engaged** with Russell Evans and Greg Hasiuk
- **Assessment Guidelines to Support Student Success** with Dr. Bryan Szumlas
- **The Role of Technology in Creating a Culture of Caring** with Amy Dewis (workshop presented by SMART Technologies)
- **Removing Barriers and Reducing the Achievement Gap with Competency-based Learning** with Garros Li and Ashley Barby (workshop presented by Edusight)
- **The Land as Teacher and Cultural Connection** with Ron Cook
- **Social Justice: The Call to Serve One Another** with Brian Beal
- **Enhancing Cultural Perspectives in a Rural Alberta School** with Wes Wescott and Ian Baxter
- **We are Witnesses: The Holocaust in History and Living Memory** with Michael Nasello and Domenic Scuglia
- **Feed All Four in TLDSB** with Heather Truscott, Tischa Heatherington and Ray Este
- **Smart But Scattered: How Executive Functioning Skills and/or FASD May Be Impacting Your Students** with Terry Craig and Jennifer Williamson

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DO YOU HAVE A DIGITAL CAMERA, A SMARTPHONE OR AN IPAD? ARE YOU GOING TO THE 2016 CONFERENCE?

### WE WANT YOUR CONFERENCE PHOTOS!

PLEASE CONSIDER SHARING YOUR DIGITAL PHOTOS WITH CASSA EXECUTIVE OR THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR.