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Leaders & Learners

THE VOICE OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS / L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES ADMINISTRATEURS ET DES ADMINISTRATRICES SCOLAIRES
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Next issue is out in late May.

Message From The Editor: Reflecting On The Past 50 Issues

At the end of 2004, CASA launched a new national newsletter. *Leaders & Learners* was developed, in the words of past president **Ruth Mattingley**, “to tell you about professional development opportunities, the achievements of our members and their school districts, and national education issues and trends.”

I hope that is what we have done in these past 50 issues. More importantly, I hope we have helped to strengthen relationships between affiliates, between school divisions and between system-level education leaders across the country. With this year's series on conference sponsorship partners, we also aim to strengthen the relationships we have with our corporate supporters.

I hope we have inspired you with reporting on the CASA conference keynote addresses and presentations by leaders such as **Roger Garriock, Dr. Paula Barrett, Ashleigh McIvor, David Bouchard, Budge Wilson, Frank Turner, Dr. Edwina Wetzel, Dr. Michael Fullan** and the late **Dr. Fraser Mustard**.

It has been a pleasure and an honour to work with CASA to produce these newsletters. One of the highlights for me is producing the annual double issue following the conference each summer. As CASA professional devel-



What a wild ride it's been: The 2007 conference in Whitehorse included rafting. More archival newsletter photos can be found on page 3.

opment/communications director **Ed Wittchen** notes, “looking back through the archives tells a fascinating story of our journey together.” That journey includes a lot of fun along with the learning and leadership, if the photos are anything to go by.

Leaders & Learners has also dedicated a significant number of pages to covering the awards and achievements of its members, fulfilling a promise made by Ed in that first issue “to celebrate the success stories in which many of you are involved and sharing those successes.”

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter over the years. I look forward to the next 50 issues.

Tara Lee Wittchen,
Leaders & Learners editor

Message From The President: Building On Our Solid Foundation

I had the opportunity to participate in the February CASA strategic planning retreat, which followed a similar event held the previous year where participants looked primarily at the mission, goals and beliefs of the organization. With READY and AIM out of the way this year, we decided to FIRE so our focus was more pragmatic.

Our session was facilitated by former president **John Darroch**. We followed up on two major actions that had emerged from the previous report, namely governance and membership, which are discussed at length in this edition. As I reflect on the process and our discussions, I recall how helpful it was to have a previous CASA president as the facilitator. While John hasn't been actively involved in the association for some time, and needed to be neutral, his understanding of the history of the organization was certainly beneficial. As many of our executive are new to the table, we gained a real appreciation for the journey this organization has been on for quite some time, especially this past decade.

One of CASA's current assets is its strong fiscal position. During the past 10 years or so, the association has reversed its financial situation, climbing out from under a mountain of debt. It is now, with assets in excess of \$200,000, well positioned fiscally to move forward the strategic plan.

The strong fiscal recovery is due in large part to the revenues generated through the affiliate memberships and also through the provision of professional development opportunities that we have enjoyed over the years. I would be remiss if I didn't express appreciation to a number of individuals who volunteered their services and dedicated incredible amounts of time and energy into getting the organization back into the black. It was evident for me at the retreat that other members are now stepping forward to continue to build on the solid foundation these individuals have provided.

With respect to governance, the question we posed was whether or not the current governance structure was effective and efficient enough to meet current as well as future challenges. We concluded essentially that, for a variety of reasons, we aren't necessarily following the governance model in our constitution. We challenged ourselves to examine whether or not the original model was the best model in our current environment.

“We challenged ourselves to examine whether the original model was the best model in our current environment.”

The strategic report overview will give you a proposed new model that will provide representation for the affiliates, greater opportunities for member involvement, greater accountability and transparency, and also an executive structure that would enable capacity building and leadership succession.

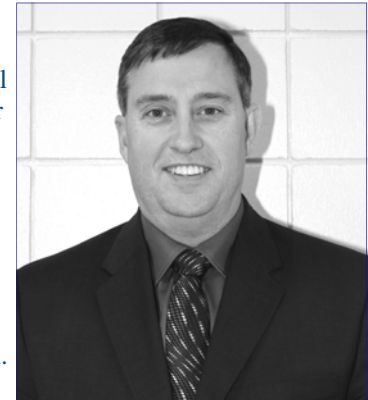
Our model is only a proposal at this point, so any suggestions or input members might have would be appreciated.

Our second major topic of discussion was how CASA can improve, engage and develop a more robust, balanced and representational national membership. Our discussions centred around the concept of “value for membership.” Suggestions for increasing value were explored as was funding staff positions to further add value. There was a great deal of discussion around defining the membership, reaching out to affiliates who are not currently members and expanding membership by offering the option of individual membership.

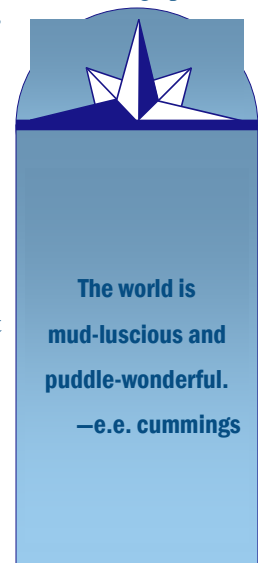
Our session ended with participants brainstorming specific areas of our constitution and bylaws that would facilitate the consensus reached regarding many of the themes and ideas that emerged.

My personal test of any event is whether or not I come out of it with more energy than I went in with. I believe as you read this edition of the newsletter you will get a good sense of the great conversations that we had and I trust you will come away with a heightened sense of where CASA is at the current moment, as well as where it is headed in the future.

Enjoy the read.



Roger Nippard
CASA president



Message From The Executive Director: What Have We Done To Make CASA Better?

As we all enjoy this issue of the *Leaders & Learners* newsletter, it is important to note that this is issue number 50! Quite a milestone for CASA. I want to reflect briefly about our past but focus mainly on our future.

CASA has had some very good times and some challenging times as an organization. Our most recent success can be attributed to the shared commitment of our board of directors from across Canada, along with the commitment of so many others to the importance of a national organization for system-level education leaders. My personal thanks to the commitment and dedication of a number of CASA leaders, both past and present, whose contributions to CASA have positioned us to look ahead with confidence.

What have we done to be better?

Two years ago, CASA undertook a communications audit and we are currently working toward implementation of many of the audit's recommendations. Since then, CASA has

- joined the Canadian Society of Association Executives to better connect with and learn from other not-for-profit organizations
- expanded our non-dues revenue through a hugely successful approach to sponsor/partner appreciation at the annual conference in Whistler (and our upcoming conference in St. John's)
- pursued other non-due revenue sources
- reached out to non-member affiliates with a view to re-engaging them as CASA members
- enhanced our profile by active involvement in American Association of School Administrators meetings

- reviewed our brand through a renewal of the website (still a work in progress)
- engaged in two strategic planning sessions designed to allow CASA to become more deliberate and intentional in its governance and operations (information about the most recent planning session is in this issue)



Ken Bain
CASA executive director

- reached out to all senior education leaders in the country through *Leaders & Learners* and have solicited magazine entries through a national call for abstracts
- ensured a solid financial foundation for our work, now and into the future

Speaking of the future, once again I ask each of you to consider attending this summer's conference. The topic is very future-oriented, and between the location, our keynote speaker and the many, many excellent workshops and presentations, it promises to be another outstanding experience for those in attendance.

Finally, I do see a bright future for CASA, as we move to create that pan-Canadian organization that responds to members' interests. We are financially healthy, we have a strong board and we have growing interest across Canada in our organization.

News From Quebec: Annual Spring Conference

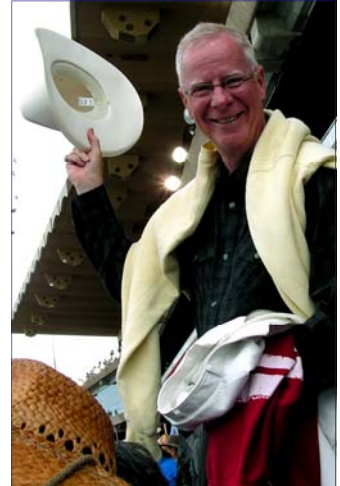
The Association of Administrators of English Schools of Quebec and the Quebec School Boards Association will be holding their annual spring conference from May 30 to June 1 in St. Sauveur.

This professional development activity brings together educational leaders and school board commissioners from the English school boards across Quebec. Keynote speakers in-

clude **Erin Gruwell**, whose remarkable story was featured in the Academy Award-nominated film *The Freedom Fighters*; **Roger Garriock** from Destination ImagiNation; and **Wendy Mesley**, CBC news anchor and journalist. To learn more about the event, visit sc2013.aaesq.ca.




Looking Back Through Our Photo Archives: Celebrating 50 Issues Of Leadership, Learning And Fun



Have you been to one of the CASA conferences? If so, you know how much fun they are. If not, let this be the year you join in that fun.



Clockwise from top left: **Lee and Noreen Lucente** at the Alaska border (Whitehorse 2007); **Marcelle Auger and Sophie Bousquet** at Peggy's Cove (Halifax 2008); **Bob Mills** at the Stampede (Calgary 2009); **Roger Nippard** at a lobster boil (St. John's 2005); **Barry Wowk** on the *Maid of the Mist* (Niagara Falls 2011); Canoeists at sunset (Whitehorse 2007); **Johanne Messner and Sharon and Jim Grieve** at Peggy's Cove (Halifax 2008); ATVers making a splash in the woods (Whistler 2012).



Winter is on my
head, but eternal
spring is in
my heart.
—Victor Hugo

CASA Conference Sponsoring Partner Profiles: SMART Technologies Inc.

This will be our third consecutive issue featuring profiles on organizations who partner with CASA to be sponsors of our annual conference.

The first of this issue's profiles is on **SMART Technologies Inc.**, with whom CASA has a five-year relationship. **Jeannette Peoples**, an Education Solutions Specialist with SMART, responded to these questions via email. Jeannette and her colleagues at SMART have long been a presence at the annual conference, and she will be returning this year in St. John's. We are so pleased to welcome SMART once again.

To learn more about SMART Technologies, visit www.smarttech.com.

Please tell our readers about your company.

SMART Technologies Inc. is a leading provider of technology solutions that enable inspired collaboration in schools and workplaces around the world. It does so by turning group work into a highly interactive, engaging and productive experience.

SMART delivers integrated solutions of hardware, software and services designed for superior performance and ease of use. It is a world leader in interactive displays.

In 1991, SMART introduced the world's first interactive whiteboard. Today, SMART Board interactive whiteboards and other education technology from SMART are used in more than 2 million classrooms around the world, transforming learning for over 40 million students.

Please tell our readers a little bit about yourself.

I am an Education Solutions Specialist at SMART. I've worked with SMART products since 2007 and joined the company about three years ago.

Most of my time is spent working with Ontario school districts to ensure that they are getting timely and relevant updates and support from SMART while providing valuable insight to SMART from the education community.

I volunteer for the World Wildlife Fund, organizing shoreline cleanups to ensure that my two boys respect the natural habitat that wildlife relies on. I enjoy downtime with my husband and family, and daily walks with my chocolate lab Remington.

How long has your company been a CASA sponsor?

SMART has been a Platinum sponsor for the past four years. This will be our fifth annual conference.

Why is important for you to develop a sponsorship relationship with CASA?

This year's theme at the annual CASA conference is

SMART®

Inspired Collaboration™

"Pedagogy to Technology: Hardware Meets Headware." To me, that is exciting because we are seeing an elevated level of collaboration between technology and curriculum leaders.

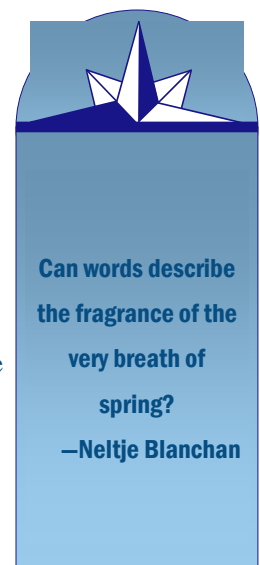
No longer are districts choosing the hottest and shiniest new technology, nor are they necessarily looking for the cheapest. Technology teams are joining forces with their curriculum leaders and are challenging vendors with questions like

- "How is this tool going to be used to impact learning?"
- "What research is behind this technology?"
- "What about support and professional development?"

This is an exciting time for us at SMART, because we ask those questions of our solutions before we begin developing them, more so now than ever before.

What makes your company a good

(Continued on page 6)



CASA Conference Sponsoring Partner Profiles, continued: SMART Technologies Inc.

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match with an organization like CASA?

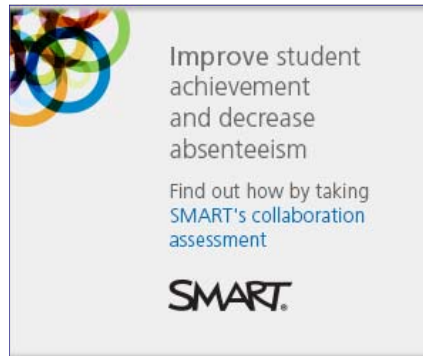
CASA gives us a way to connect with educational leaders from across Canada who can provide us with important insight into their challenges and goals. All in one place, at one time. It really packs a punch and is well worth the investment.

Were you able to attend the 2012 CASA conference in Whistler? What were your impressions of the event and of CASA members?

Members of SMART's education team have attended every year. I attended the annual conference in Niagara Falls two years ago and had a tremendous time connecting with many thought leaders in education who impact the direction of K-12 learning in Canada.

Any plans to attend the 2013 conference in St. John's?

My colleague from Quebec, Pierre Alexandre-Germaine, and I will be attending this year as a Gold-level sponsor. We are



Improve student achievement and decrease absenteeism

Find out how by taking SMART's collaboration assessment

SMART

so eager to connect with the attendees, as the conference provides ample opportunity to engage and converse with the delegates.

Would you like to add anything about your company and this partnership that may be of interest to our readers?

SMART is on the agenda to present in one of the breakout sessions. We will be sharing success stories, research and case studies where our technology has improved learning outcomes, increased student engagement, inspired collaboration, encouraged creative learning and fostered more cohesive communication.

SMART education solutions embrace wireless environments and the use of personal devices, which is a great message for us to tell. We're excited to share the story. See

you in St. John's!

Thank you, Jeannette, for taking part in this interview for Leaders & Learners.

Recognize An Outstanding Leader: Nominate A Colleague For One Of CASA's Awards

Do you know a leader in education administration who deserves national recognition? Consider putting their name forward as a nominee for one of three awards presented annually by CASA.

The **Distinguished Service Award** is intended to recognize any present or recent CASA member who has demonstrated outstanding ability and leadership.

An **Honorary Life Membership**, in recognition of excellence in education at the national level, is normally meant to honour individuals who have contributed significantly to CASA. Significant contributions at the provincial affiliate level will be considered only in light of their relevance to CASA and its national mandate.

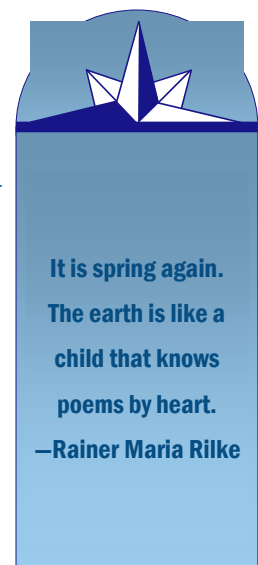
Nominations for these two awards are accepted between October 1 and June 30.

The **Xerox EXL Award** is presented to CASA members who have exhibited exemplary leadership ability and who

have enhanced school administration. This award includes an honorary life membership in CASA.

EXL Award nominees will have brought honour to themselves, their colleagues and their profession; given exemplary service to their provincial or national professional association; made significant contributions to the field of education through their service, writings or other activities; and who therefore serve as role models and teachers to others. Nominees must have been members of CASA for at least five years to qualify for the award. Nominations for are accepted between October 1 and May 14.

All awards are presented at the CASA annual conference.



It is spring again.
The earth is like a
child that knows
poems by heart.
—Rainer Maria Rilke

CASA Conference Sponsoring Partner Profiles: Pearson Education Canada

The second of this issue's sponsoring partner profiles is on **Pearson Education Canada**, which includes Pearson School Division and Pearson Learning Services.

Donna MacCallum, a professional learning support manager with Pearson Canada, provided responses to the profile questions.

Visit www.pearsoncanadaschool.com to learn more about Pearson Canada.

PEARSON

ALWAYS LEARNING

Please tell us about your company.

The Pearson School Division publishes and represents market-leading teaching and learning solutions for K–12. This includes digital platforms for managing the electronic learning environment, digital systems for maintaining student records and learning resources for classrooms, and distributed-learning support, as well as professional learning products and services for educators at all levels.

What sets us apart is our commitment to the development and distribution of innovative resources that address the real needs of Canadian teachers and students in a rapidly changing global community.

The School Division continues to invest in and support Canadian educators through an already substantial indigenous publishing program, and by developing products for national, regional and niche demands like those of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit community.

Pearson Learning Services is an education services business that builds on Pearson Canada's core capabilities:

- assessment for learning
- professional development
- curriculum support, platforms and systems integration
- school improvement

Pearson Canada School Division and Pearson Assessment

**“We believe in learning—
all kinds of learning
for all kinds of people,
delivered in a personal style.
Because wherever learning
flourishes, so do people.”**

~Pearson corporate statement~

are delighted to be attending the CASA conference again this year and look forward to reconnecting with colleagues.

How long has your company been a CASA sponsor?

Three years.

Why is it important to you to develop a sponsorship relationship with CASA? What makes your company a good match with this organization?

Committed to supporting educators as they embrace 21st-century competencies and help create the classroom conditions for teaching and learning that enable all students to flourish and be successful. The CASA membership represents educators who have the courage to make a difference by transforming education in their respective districts into innovative, student-centric learning systems.

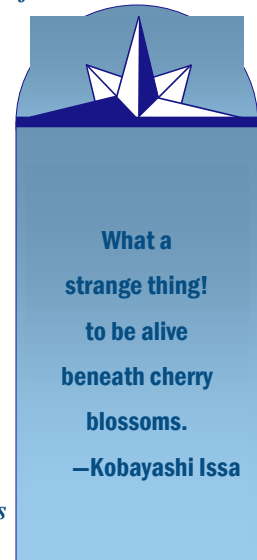
Were you able to attend the 2012 conference in Whistler? What were your impressions?

Yes, spent more time attending sessions, a networking opportunity; educators tend not to visit the booths.

Any plans to attend the 2013 conference in St. John's? What are you most looking forward to?

Excellent speaker roster, and again provides a wonderful networking opportunity to learn what school boards are doing across the country that is truly innovative and inspirational.

Thank you, Donna, for sharing this with our readers.



A Review Of The 2013 CASA Issue Planning Session: Part Two Of The Executive Summary Report

Editor's note: We continue our coverage of the issue planning session attended by National Executive Committee and Provincial Affiliate Council members in Toronto. The day and a half gathering took place on February 1 and 2. The first part of this report can be read in Volume 7, Issue 49.

By John Darroch

To simplify reporting and to better represent the thoughts and ideas of the working group, the outcomes of the issue planning session have been organized around the two central ideas of governance and membership. We will first look at governance.

Governance

Is the current governance structure of CASA effective and efficient enough to meet current as well as future organizational needs and challenges?

Our governance objectives are

- to analyze the CASA Constitution and identify specific areas in need of revision
- to prioritize the resultant identified areas needing revision
- to resolve and summarize the potential impact such changes may create for the organization
- to create and develop appropriate strategies to improve the effective overall governance of CASA

Participants identified the following governance areas as priorities for review and revision:

- governance structure
- clarification of the council of affiliates
- broader organizational transparency

Participants stressed the need for change of the overall governance structure of CASA. They identified a need for clarity regarding the name, composition and role of the various governance components, with an overarching goal of inclusiveness for all members as a central foundation upon which all changes should be considered.

It was agreed that the Executive Council should be defined as being composed of the following officers of CASA:

- president
- president-elect
- past president
- professional development director
- CASA representatives to the American Association of School Administrators (two)
- executive director (advisory non-voting capacity)

Other ideas included the need for more clarity on such things as expanded terms of reference for the Executive Council, role descriptions for the various executive positions and adoption of two-year terms for specific positions such as the president, president-elect and past president.

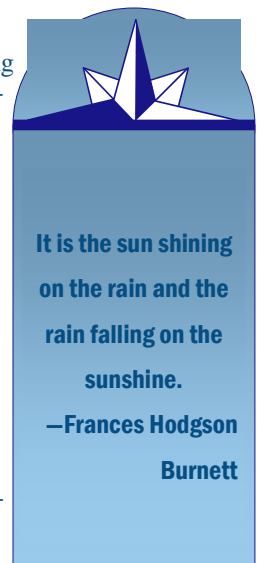
Clarification of the Council of Affiliates

The composition, role and purpose of the existing Council of Affiliates were the subject of considerable discussion and debate. The name itself seemed to mean different things to different members, adding to the existing and historic lack of clarity and confusion.

Participants embraced the need to expand and balance the makeup of this governance body, recommending that it consist of the following representatives:

- Executive Council members (eight) already identified
- two designated representatives chosen by each provincial/regional member affiliate (strongly recommended that these be the president and executive director)
- a maximum of two members-at-

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A Review Of The 2013 CASA Issue Planning Session: Part Two Of The Executive Summary Report, continued

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large elected on the basis of the need to

- support as diverse a geographic national perspective as possible
- provide a unique or timely skill set strategic to the organization
- ensure growth of organizational capacity and/or to support succession planning for the organization

Organizational Transparency

All participants were committed to ideas, strategies and processes that would enhance and expand the transparency of the organization, both real as well as perceived, as viewed by its members, potential members, educational partners and the public in general.

Specific strategies were identified by the working group.

- Identify, schedule and advertise a specific time and location for conducting a formal annual general meeting as part of the CASA annual summer conference.
- Prior to the AGM, make sure the annual slate of electoral candidates is circulated to all members for consideration and information.
- Provide an opportunity for interested members-at-large to be nominated from the floor at the AGM.
- Include a presentation of an annual financial report and budgetary update as part of the AGM.
- Celebrate and reinforce the ongoing fiscal solvency and health of CASA.
- When completed, make the strategic plan available on the CASA website with links to appropriate budget information and strategic directions.

Governance Implications

Moving forward, the workshop participants identified a number of areas as priorities for change relative to the overall governance of CASA as an organization.

1. Clearly differentiate the Executive Committee from the Affiliate Council in terms of both name and role within the constitution.
2. Consider renaming the existing Affiliate Council with a

more generic and universally understood descriptor that better correlates with the purpose and role of the council.

3. Review and realign governance legislative documents relative to current practice and recommended changes.
4. Edit governance documents for clarity and consistency.
5. Provide enhanced opportunities to educate the general membership about the governance and operation of CASA through the creation and publication of appropriate role descriptions.
6. Edit, revise and update the existing CASA Strategic Plan to reflect the above priorities and expand the detail of the plan to include identified issues/goals, strategies and timelines.
7. As circumstances and resources permit, revisit the Mission, Belief and Goals sections of the CASA Strategic Plan to ensure alignment with above changes as well as vision, structure and purpose.

Membership

How can our organization improve, engage and develop a more robust, inclusive and representational national membership?

Our membership objectives are

- to identify and create strategic opportunities for increasing participation by individuals within CASA
- to identify existing barriers that restrict participation in CASA by identified CASA affiliates
- to identify unique barriers that restrict participation in CASA by regional CASA affiliates
- to create supportive strategic action plans to remedy identified problems

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A Review Of The 2013 CASA Issue Planning Session: Part Two Of The Executive Summary Report, continued

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- to review/revise the CASA fee structure to ensure alignment with above actions

Following activities and discussions, participants identified the following as priorities for change relative to promoting membership within the organization:

- Explore the potential value and financial viability of creating a part-time executive director position for CASA to provide an ongoing point of contact/organizational presence and identity, coordination or membership and communications initiatives, and overall general administration duties.
- Identify ways of increasing the organizational visibility while supporting and increasing potential options to maximize individual membership opportunities.
- Seek ways to expand and differentiate member benefits.

Participants agreed that for CASA to continue to move forward, a more coordinated and consistent effort would be needed to guide, oversee, and coordinate various initiatives and strategies identified and adopted by the governing body. This need could best be met by recognizing the need for an appropriately funded and formally defined part-time executive director position. Although not formally addressed, it would seem the existing partnership with OPSOA for secretarial/office support was mutually beneficial and should continue and be formalized as required.

Workshop participants generated and discussed a variety of ways and means of increasing the organizational visibility of CASA while at the same time increasing opportunities for individual member involvement. The following strategies were identified as ideas that merited further exploration and consideration:

- Develop reciprocal agreements with all provincial and/or regional affiliates that would link the CASA website with those of affiliates.
- Determine the feasibility of creating a “members only” segment on the CASA website to enable sharing of topical and timely information for members such as
 - administration compensation/contract/benefit survey results

- sample policies and “best practices” on timely topics of national interest
- development of a key leadership contacts list between affiliates

- Explore the process of rebranding the organization and creating a tagline to provide more national clarity and enhanced identity and visibility in terms of what segment of the educational community is represented by CASA.
- Consider initiatives CASA could coordinate that would create a national niche or fill a national void while simultaneously promoting affiliate involvement such as
 - providing specific professional development activities focused on affiliate presidents and/or executive directors
 - brokering and advertising opportunities for national membership participation in online projects or video conferencing opportunities hosted by an affiliate

Membership Benefits

Participants agreed that the best way of increasing overall CASA membership was to promote opportunities for individuals to see and experience direct benefits from their membership. Suggested strategies included

- possible creation of a visible reminder of their CASA membership through provision of a membership card based on the “membership has its privileges” concept
- providing members from any affiliate access to appropriate areas of other affiliate “member areas” for professional development, policy development, best practice, leadership development, etc.
- promoting group affiliate discounts for attendance at the CASA annual summer conference and/or differentiate member versus non-member conference rates

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Our Mission

CASA exists to promote and enhance effective administration and leadership in the provision of quality in education in Canada.



Our Beliefs

- School system administration is a noble profession.
- Effective leadership and administration of school systems are essential.
- Individually and collectively, school system administrators provide leadership for quality in education.
- Communication and cooperation with other stakeholder groups in education are vital.
- Individually and collectively, school system administrators can assist one another.

Our Goals

- To provide a national voice on education matters.
- To promote and provide opportunity for professional development of the membership.
- To promote communication and liaison with national and international organizations having an interest in education.
- To provide a variety of services to the membership.
- To recognize outstanding contributions to education in Canada.

A Review Of The 2013 CASA Issue Planning Session: Part Two Of The Executive Summary Report, continued

(Continued from page 10)

- differentiating the purpose, function and identity of the *Leaders & Learners* newsletter and magazine
- adopting a “why would you NOT want to be a member of CASA” philosophy regarding CASA membership

Membership Implications

As the organization moves forward, participants identified the following priorities regarding membership initiatives and strategies:

1. If CASA is to be seen as a national organization committed to change and inclusion, it must not only “talk the walk” but more important “walk the talk” by continuing to invite and afford all affiliates and members meaningful and real opportunities for participation as equals in CASA’s journey of self-development, improvement and accountability.
2. Keep the membership and affiliates apprised of ongoing initiatives for change by sharing key decisions and actions and development of appropriate communication strategies that provide opportunities for feedback on the development and formulation of interim documents and plans.
3. Unlike many of the governance initiatives, membership initiatives involve real and sustained costs in terms of communication coordination; IT programming, information sharing and access, and information maintenance; and general project management. They must therefore be considered in terms of long-term sustainability.
4. To better ensure clarity and consistency of purpose and coordination of various ongoing initiatives under development, as a volunteer organization it is pertinent that CASA review the feasibility of the creation of a salaried part-time executive director position.
5. As CASA continues to evolve as an organization, every effort must be made to maintain open, clear, concise and timely communication with both members and potential members through existing as well as new mediums and formats.