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Inside this issue:

Message From The Executive Director	2
Thoughts On The 2014 AASA Conference	2
The View From The AASA Executive Committee	3
Update On The 2014 CASSA Conference	4
CASSA's Annual Strategic Planning Session	5
CASSA Sponsor Xerox Comes Through Again: Catching A Toronto Maple Leafs Game In Style	6
The 2014 AASA Conference In Pictures	7
Contact CASSA	8
CASSA's Mission, Beliefs And Goals	8

Message From CASS: No Moss In Alberta

An old proverb states “a rolling stone gathers no moss.” The saying can have a positive or negative connotation.

Taken in the negative, the proverb refers to not establishing roots long enough in order to avoid responsibility.

I prefer to consider the positive interpretation of the expression, meaning to move forward by constantly seeking new innovative ideas. With that context in mind, I share that there is “no moss” in education in Alberta at this time.

Inspiring Education is the document that is providing the vision for the transformation of education in Alberta. *Inspiring Education* was the result of unprecedented consultation with all stakeholders in education following a mandate in 2008 from former Premier Ed Stelmach to then Education Minister Dave Hancock “to lead an initiative that would create a long-term vision for education in Alberta.”

Current Education Minister Jeff Johnson was a co-chair of the Steering Committee, which had three priorities paraphrased below:

- to heighten appreciation of the importance of education for all Albertans



Barry Litun
Executive Director for the
College of Alberta School
Superintendents (CASS)

- to develop a clear understanding of what it will mean to be an educated Albertan in 2030
- to create the basis for a policy framework to guide the direction, principles and goals for education in the province

I believe all system education leaders would be well served to acquaint themselves with the *Inspiring Education* document (<http://bit.ly/1fUfcn2>). The goal outlined in the strategy document is that **every** student in Alberta will have the opportunity to develop the

qualities and abilities described by the Three Es in Education: an Engaged Thinker who is an Ethical Citizen with an Entrepreneurial Spirit, while embracing the underlying core values of opportunity, fairness, citizenship, choice, diversity and excellence.

In the past year, a new Education Act has been passed in Alberta and new regulations are currently being developed. It is anticipated the new Act will be proclaimed and be in effect at the beginning of the 2015–16 school year.

This past month, Alberta Education announced that approximately half of all jurisdictions in the province will participate in

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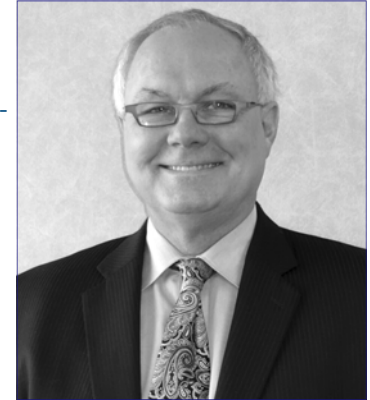
Message From The Executive Director: CASSA Very Well Received At Nashville Conference

I just returned from a wonderful experience at the AASA Conference in Nashville, Tennessee! CASSA is a very well thought of partner with superintendents in the United States. We have three CASSA executive members who play an important role in AASA: **Barry Wowk** (CASS) and **Nick Milanetti** (OCSOA) serve on the AASA Governing Board, and **Bob Mills** (ADGESBQ) has the distinction of being the first Canadian to sit on the AASA Executive Committee. We are delighted with their contributions to AASA and to CASSA. We benefit from their experiences with our colleagues to the south as they share insights from their meetings. Personally, I am very warmly welcomed as I meet with state executive directors from across the USA. I learn a great deal from their experiences and appreciate the international perspective on our roles.



Ken Bain with Kevin Skelcher of Thoughtstream.

Another highlight is the manner in which AASA embraces and celebrates the CASSA EXL Superintendent of the Year. This year's recipient, **Kim Jenkins** (CASS), was acknowledged in Nashville and received all of the same tributes and recognition as any other recipient from any of the states. CASSA was pleased to host a reception for Kim while we were in Nashville, and we appreciated the participation of some dedicated CASSA partners along with a number of CASSA members who made the trip to Nashville.



Ken Bain
CASSA executive director

From the opening ceremonies to the closing speaker—Canadian **Craig Kielburger**—the AASA conference provided a wonderful opportunity for networking and professional growth. Please mark your calendars now for next year's AASA conference. It will be in San Diego, California, from February 25 to 28 in 2015.

Lastly, I ask that each of you consider nominating someone for the CASSA EXL Award. It is an opportunity to celebrate the leadership of our members from across the country. Contact your provincial or territorial affiliate for more information.

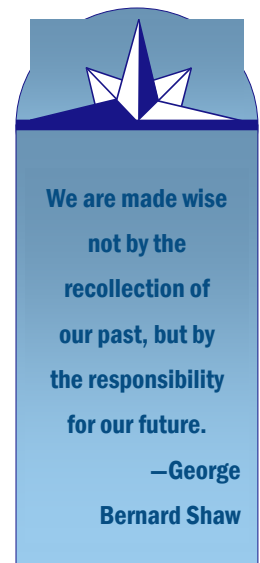
Thoughts On The 2014 AASA Conference

By Nick Milanetti

The US and Canadian educational scenes are very similar on many fronts. Issues such as declining enrollment, reduced funding, standardized testing, teacher retirements and professional growth are common to both countries. As well, it was interesting to note that there is reduced decision-making on the part of politicians in an election year.

The Americans continue to recognize that Canada has a wonderful education system and they have a great deal to learn and share with us. We do very well on international tests and serve very similar communities in many cases. They are also very interested with Catholic school boards in Ontario being publicly funded.

Nick Milanetti is the superintendent of Human Resources for the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board in Ontario. He attended the 2014 AASA conference in his capacity as a member of the AASA Governing Board.



Reflections On The 2014 AASA National Conference: The View From The AASA Executive Committee

By Bob Mills

For approximately nine years, the American Association of School Administrators has given CASSA two seats on their governing board. We have chosen to have one representing the western part of Canada, and a second member from the eastern part.

AASA has put Canada into their Region 4, which includes states such as Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri and Ohio. This structure gives both countries an opportunity to talk about issues that are current in both jurisdictions. Most importantly, it affords both Canada and the USA an opportunity to see that the way our countries are providing public education have much greater similarities than differences.

The main difference between the two countries is that Canada does not have a federal jurisdiction in education; it is solely a provincial matter. This major difference has kept Canada out of such strategies that have been initiated at the federal level in America, such as No Child Left Behind.

Any time two organizations from two different countries have an opportunity to share best practices, to question why a particular strategy is working or not working, it is beneficial to all. I feel honoured that our joint associations have this ability to have dialogues, and that Canadians have a chance to have an information base so much larger than is currently available in Canada.

In 2011, I was very honoured to have been selected to the AASA executive committee by my American peers in Region 4. I am the first Canadian to serve on their executive committee. As anyone who works with associations realizes, it is at the executive level that directions, changes and viewpoints have their inception. Ultimately it is the recommendations of the executive committee that are brought to the governing board for ratification.

Hereto, I feel Canada has been well placed to be able to express opinions on issues that may eventually make their way to the floor of the governing board. I hope that in the future this partnership continues to demonstrate close ties and bonds.

AASA recently held its annual convention in Nashville, bringing together educators from across the States and Canada to hear world-class speakers and learn about new innovations in education, both in pedagogy and technology. The size of the convention dwarfs Canada's annual convention considerably, but that's to be expected given the population difference between the US and Canada. Truly the elephant and mouse reality. We realize that this convention affords Canadian members the opportunity to see education on a world scale.

This year's convention lived up to all my expectations, and I am sure my American colleagues have had the same feelings. The only downside of this year's convention was the weather created many difficulties for individuals to arrive in Nashville.


Traditionally, we have also asked that the incoming president elect of AASA attend our annual conference. This year it will be held in Calgary and we expect the AASA president elect will attend. This will again help to cement our relationship with our American counterparts.

One last comment: It is always with the greatest of honour that we are permitted to have the CASSA Superintendent of the Year recognized along with the AASA Superintendent of the Year in a ceremony at the opening of the American national convention.

This year that meant CASSA's **Kim Jenkins** received the honour. We are all so proud of this special recognition.



Kim Jenkins receives his AASA Canadian Superintendent of the Year award from **Dan Domenech** and **Amy Sichel**.



Rank does not
confer privilege
or give power.
It imposes
responsibility.
—Peter Drucker

Update On The 2014 CASSA Conference: The Time To Book Your School District's Delegates Is Now

The CASSA 2014 conference will take place July 3 to 5 at the Coast Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre in Calgary. As usual, we are planning some sightseeing opportunities for delegates and spouses. Plans are currently being made for a one-day trip to the Columbia Ice Fields and the new and exciting Glacier Skywalk. A second trip to Drumheller and the world-famous Tyrell Museum, Badlands and the Acme Coal Mine is also being planned for July 2. Local trips to Heritage Park and the Glenbow Museum are being considered for July 3.

Alberta's Minister of Education, the Honourable **Jeff Johnson**, has agreed to partner with CASSA to enhance the success of the conference. He is supporting the attendance of a school principal from every public, Catholic, francophone and charter school authority in the province. He will also be on of our two keynote speakers on opening night, July 3. The other keynote will be delivered by **Dr. Doug Willms**. Dr. Willms will present "Student Engagement, Learning and Mental Health in Canadian Schools."

Over one million Canadian students have participated in *Tell Them From Me*, a dynamic web-based evaluation that lets students participate in their school's evaluation in a non-threatening way. The survey includes measures of student engagement, academic success and mental health, as well as the key classroom and school drivers of these schooling outcomes. Analyses of the Canadian *Tell Them From Me* data show that the relationships among these factors is a dynamic and interactive process that begins early—during the primary grades or even earlier—and continues through to adulthood.

In this presentation, Dr. Willms will summarize the Canadian findings with an emphasis on the equality of outcomes among social class groups and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, and discuss the extent to which these sub-populations have access to the classroom and school factors that affect schooling outcomes. The findings have implications for policy and practice at the classroom, school, district and provincial levels.

Doug Willms is a professor and the director of the Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy at the University of New Brunswick (UNB). He holds the Canada Research Chair in Literacy and Human Development. He is a member of the US National Academy of Education, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and president-elect and Fellow of the International Academy of Education.

Dr. Willms has published over 200 research articles and

monographs pertaining to youth literacy, children's health, the accountability of school systems and the assessment of national reforms. He is the editor of *Vulnerable Children: Findings from Canada's National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth* (University of Alberta Press, 2002) and the author of *Student Engagement at School: A Sense of Belonging and Participation* (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) and *Monitoring School Performance: A Guide for Educators* (Falmer Press, 1992).

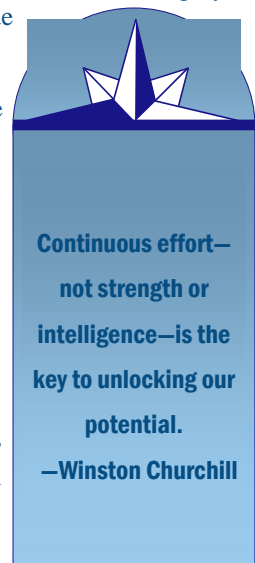
Dr. Willms and his colleagues designed the Early Years Evaluation (EYE), an instrument for the direct assessment of children's developmental skills at ages 3 to 6, and *Tell Them From Me*, an evaluation system for the continuous monitoring of student engagement and well-being. He and his colleagues at UNB are currently working with school leaders in 33 First Nations schools in the design and implementation of *Confident Learners*, a whole-school literacy program based on the science of literacy and instructional practice.

Proposals to present at the conference are being accepted now. Already well over half the available spots have been confirmed. If you are interested in presenting, please submit a proposal, including title, short description of the session and short biographies of any presenters to CASSA conference facilitator **Marion Holmes** at PD Pros by email at holmes3@telusplanet.net. Applications will be closed as soon as all available sessions are filled.

Make plans to stay and spend time in and around Calgary. The world-famous Calgary Stampede takes place from July 4 to 15—you definitely won't want to miss the Greatest Show On Earth. We will be offering spouses and children an opportunity to attend the Stampede on Friday, July 4.

Of course you are welcome to explore the Stampede and all that this great city and surround area has to offer on your own, either before or after the official conference events.

Look in upcoming issues of *Leaders & Learners* for more information on this year's conference, including speakers and special events.



CASSA's Annual Strategic Planning Session: A Successful And Productive Meeting In Toronto

Representatives from across Canada came together in Toronto on January 31 and February 1 for CASSA's annual strategic planning session. The focus this year was to review the purpose, mission, goals, strategies and measures of success to let us move forward as a unified national organization.

Carol Scaini facilitated the sessions under the direction of **Ken Bain**, CASSA's executive director. Participants worked in small groups and then came together as a large group to come to consensus on each of the topics. Delegates included

- **Eldred Barnes** (NLADE)
- **Bob Mills** (ADGESBQ)
- **Cindy Finn** (CASSA president-elect)
- **Steven Colpitts** (AAESQ)
- **Theresa Harris** (OCSOA executive director)
- **Anne O'Brien** (OCSOA president)
- **Nick Milanetti** (OCSOA and CASSA's eastern representative on the AASA board)
- **Kathy Soule** (OPSOA executive director)
- **Shawn Moynihan** (OPSOA CASSA representative)
- **Reg Klassen** (MASS president)
- **Barry Litun** (CASS executive director)
- **Barry Wowk** (CASS and CASSA's western representative on the AASA board)
- **Ed Wittchen** (CASSA PD director)
- **Metro Huculak** (NWTSSA executive director)
- **Curtis Brown** (NWTSSA president)
- **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells** (CASSA past president).

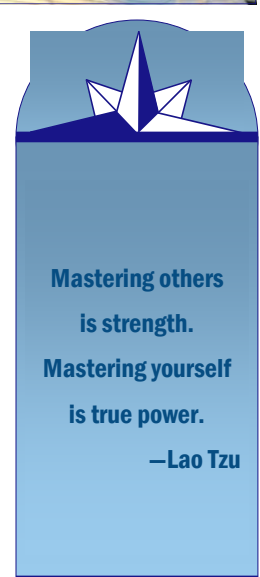
A full report of the strategic planning session outcomes will appear in the next newsletter.

Right: Session facilitator **Carol Scaini**.



Above: Working on CASSA's Mission and Vision.
Below: Finalizing the Goals.

Photos by Ed Wittchen



CASSA Sponsor Xerox Comes Through Again: Catching A Toronto Maple Leafs Game In Style

When CASSA held the 2014 Strategic Planning Session, our long-time partner Xerox Canada came through once again. PD Director **Ed Wittchen** asked **Randy Brydges** if Xerox would be able to get us a few tickets to the game between the Leafs and Florida Panthers while we were in Toronto. Randy came through big time with 12 tickets in the Xerox Suite.

For many of the group, it was not only their first Leafs game but also the first time in a private corporate suite. It is a unique experience as they provide a seemingly endless succession of food to go along with an open bar.


Of particular interest to the group was the fact that the Leafs suite was right next door. The group got to meet NHL Hall of Famer and former Leaf captain **Darryl Sittler**, who was in the suite that night.

Yellowknife superintendent **Metro Huculak** was the most enthusiastic. He not only got a puck autographed but asked Darryl if he would autograph a couple of jerseys for his son and for Ed, who had arranged for the tickets. Unfortunately there were no jerseys available near the suite but Darryl said he would bring them to the hotel the next day.

Imagine the surprise when he showed up just before the coffee break with the jerseys. Needless to say, it was an unforgettable experience.



Top: **Metro Huculak** and **Ed Wittchen** proudly wearing their Sittler jerseys.
Middle: **Ken Bain** taking the faceoff.
Below: **Metro Huculak** meeting the legendary Number 27, NHL Hall of Famer **Darryll Sittler**, in the Leafs' corporate suite.
Left, from left: **Metro Huculak**, **Curtis Brown** and **Mike O'Brien** enjoying themselves in the Xerox corporate suite at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto.



Where there is
no struggle,
there is
no strength.
—Oprah Winfrey

The 2014 AASA Conference In Pictures



Above: **Noelle Emerson** chats with **Barry Wowk**. Emerson is the deputy executive director of Policy and Advocacy for AASA. Wowk is the superintendent of the St. Albert Public School district and CASSA's AASA Western Representative.


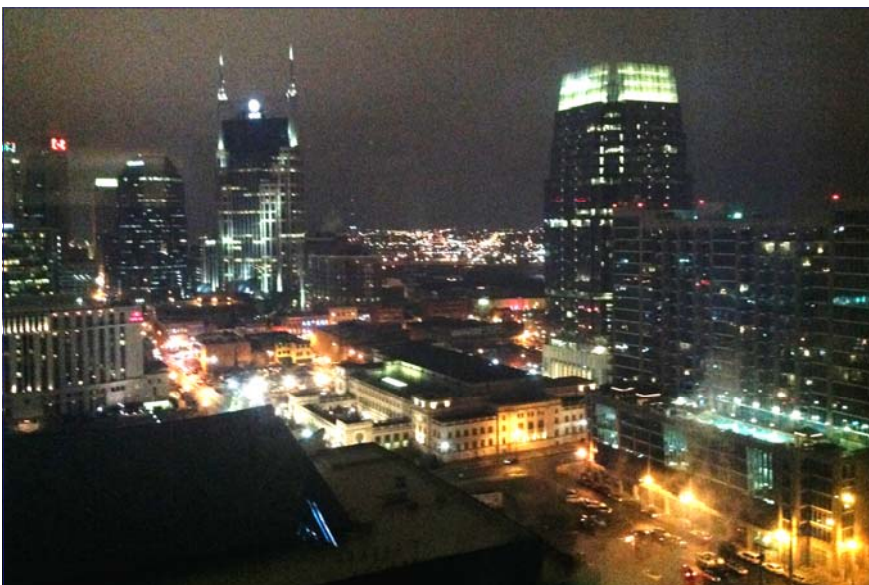


Above, right: **Ken Bain** (centre) with **Michael Lee** (left) from ERDI and **Kevin Skelcher** from Thoughtstream at the CASSA reception in Nashville.

Right: The 2013 EXL Award recipient **Kim Jenkins** (right) and his wife **Lynn** chat with **Craig Foley**, a member of CASS.



Below: A view of Nashville, Tennessee, as seen at night during the conference. Nashville was the 2014 host city for AASA's National Conference on Education. Next year's conference will take place in San Diego, California.



All photos on this page courtesy of Ken Bain

**To handle yourself,
use your head;
to handle others,
use your heart.**
—Eleanor Roosevelt

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Our Mission

CASSA 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.

Message From CASS, continued:

(Continued from page 1)

the Curriculum Prototyping Initiative (<http://bit.ly/1cuXcIJ>), one aspect of the Curriculum Redesign being undertaken.

“New programs of study, assessments, and learning and teaching resources are being developed that will focus on developing student competencies such as innovation, communication and collaboration. There will also be a strong focus on literacy and numeracy as the foundation to every subject, at every grade level.”

During this exciting time in education in the province, CASS members are working collaboratively with educational partners and Alberta Education to seek fresh and creative ideas for transforming the education system.

The theme of the CASS/Alberta Education Annual Conference being held in May is “Inspiring Education 2.0: From

Vision to Implementation.” This speaks to the challenge that system education leaders face to make sure the circumstances are in place to allow the goals of *Inspiring Education* to be realized.

Every student in Alberta will have the opportunity to develop the qualities and abilities described by the Three Es in Education: an Engaged Thinker who is an Ethical Citizen with an Entrepreneurial Spirit.

Most jurisdictions have already embarked on implementing aspects outlined in *Inspiring Education*. Clearly it will be necessary for education partners to work collaboratively, learning from and sharing with each other, for *Inspiring Education* to be implemented on a wide scale.

In conclusion, I look forward to seeing many educational colleagues from across Canada at the CASSA annual conference, scheduled for July 3 to 5 in Calgary. If you are able to join us, I know you will enjoy Alberta hospitality to its fullest.

Barry Litun is the executive director for the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS). He can be reached by email at barry.litun@cass.ab.ca. The CASS website is www.cass.ab.ca.