

## Greetings from the President



**Kevin Kaardal**  
CASSA/ACGCS President

## The Result of Your Leadership

**A**s my term as President ends, I want to express my gratitude to the Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) Executive Director Ken Bain. His leadership has led to an improvement of CASSA's reach and impact across Canada. We truly are a national organization of school system leaders from coast to coast to coast. The 10 years while Ken has been at the helm of the organization experienced steady growth financially and with its reach and reputation. CASSA members are now sought out for advice on mental health initiatives, nature-based education, system wellbeing, national issues on publicly funded public education, the global education network's position paper submitted to the United Nations, advice to the Canadian Ministers of Education Council and for the development of strong networks of public education's system leaders.

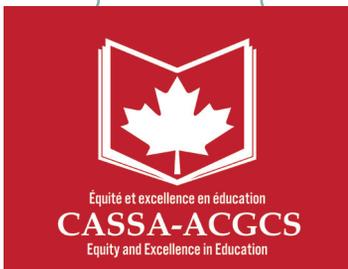
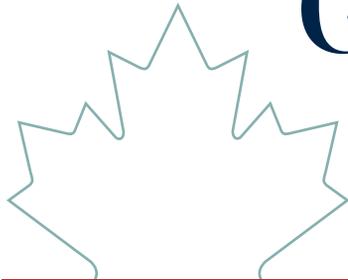
I am also grateful to the CASSA Executive (President Elect: Mike Helm, Past President: Curtis Brown, AASA Reps: Cindy Finn and Kevin Garinger) and the Board who have been supportive of developing and enacting the strategic plan and the work outlined by its supporting committees. The three committees include: Governance and Operations, Professional Learning and Communications and Engagement. The work they are doing will improve the effectiveness of CASSA as an organization.

As most of you wrap up the school year, take time to reflect on the positive impacts your leadership has had for the children and youth we serve. System leaders set the conditions where educators and their learners can thrive holistically. System leaders deal with

polarization of society, labour strife, financial restrictions, critical incidents, and climate emergencies and do so in a highly organized way with professionalism and compassion. You welcome new Canadians and refugees and see the opportunity to enrich our learning communities with intercultural sharing and celebration of the diversity that makes up our communities. You explore new developments like generative Artificial Intelligence software and its potential impacts on learning for all. I am excited about the opportunities it provides as a tool to differentiate and personalize learning. There is more thought and work to be done on many of these issues, but past practice and results prove collectively we are up to the task.

"In communal transformation, leadership is about intention, convening, valuing relatedness, and presenting choices. It is not a personality characteristic or a matter of style, and therefore it requires nothing more than what all of us already have." (Block, Peter. *Community: The Structure of Belonging* {p. 135}. Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Kindle Edition.)

Public education in Canada does improve our students' life chances and build capacity so that they can follow their dreams and flourish as positive global citizens. Your work has played a role in making those dreams more than just wishes. As system leaders we get the privilege to work with dedicated teams of professionals who share a common purpose and who seek to truly understand the nature of learning and foster the conditions where it can bloom in inclusive learning environments. Canadian public education systems are considered some of the best in the world. This achievement is not an accident. It is the result of your intention as leaders and the choices you present to your learning communities. It is the result of your leadership.



### Inside this Issue

Greetings from the President,  
Page 1

Greetings from the Executive  
Director,  
Page 2

Join Us at the 2024 Leadership  
Conference,  
Page 3

Keynote Speaker: Senator David  
M. Arnot,  
Page 5

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Louis Volante,  
Page 6

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Jacqueline  
Ottmann,  
Page 6

EXL Award Nominations,  
Page 7

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

# Greetings from the Executive Director

## A Farewell to CASSA



**Ken Bain**

CASSA/ACGCS Executive Director

I hope that your school year was successful and that, although it is a hectic time of year, things are winding down. My career as the Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) Executive Director is also winding down. After more than a decade in the role, I have decided to retire and turn the role over to a new leader.

I am proud of the growth in membership the association has experienced over the years. CASSA now includes members from every province, the Northwest Territories, and the Francophone system leaders outside Quebec.

I am proud of the professional learning opportunities we have provided to our members over the years. We have addressed a variety of themes each of which has contributed to healthy school communities. Everything from STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, ARTS, and Math) to leading with hearts and minds to stressing the importance of physical activity to supporting

mental health and well-being to name a few. Our timely focus on Truth and Reconciliation through our conference speakers and workshops is a highlight for me. The conference has shifted its focus over the past few years with the professional learning needs of the school system leader at the centre of our work.

The role has allowed me to meet and work with many incredibly dedicated individuals and groups who share CASSA's goals of strengthening school communities. I am resisting the urge to name those partners in education as I might unintentionally omit listing someone or some group.

I have had the opportunity to travel the country as a member of the CASSA board and as its executive director. I have marvelled at the beauty of our country from Yukon to British Columbia to Newfoundland and Labrador.

I have worked alongside CASSA presidents whose commitment to the importance of a national association of school system leaders has been quite extraordinary as they all had very demanding roles as school system

leaders and continued to support the association. My thanks to Roger Nippard (Alberta), Cindy Finn (Quebec), Anne O'Brien (Ontario), Reg Klassen (Manitoba), Curtis Brown (Northwest Territories), and Kevin Kaardal (British Columbia).

My sincere thanks to the dozens of CASSA board members who have given of their time to support the association and its goals.

Lastly, I want to pay tribute to my predecessor and mentor, Frank Kelly, without whose unwavering commitment, there would be no CASSA. I learned a lot from Frank – especially the importance of personal and professional relationships.

I leave the association knowing that it is in a strong place and look forward to hearing about its future success. Best wishes to you all.

### CASSA Board of Directors

#### President

Kevin Kaardal

#### Past President

Curtis Brown

#### President Elect

Mike Helm

#### CASS (Alberta)

David Keohane and Clint Moroziuk

#### LEADS (Saskatchewan)

Ben Grebinski and Ward Strueby

#### MASS (Manitoba)

Barb Isaak and Christian Michalik

#### OSCOA (Ontario)

John Kostoff and John Klein

#### NWTSA (Northwest Territories)

Yvonne Careen and Souhail Soujah

#### ADGESBQ (Quebec)

Pela Nickoletopoulos

#### AAESQ (Quebec)

Anna Villalta

#### RNDGÉ

Valérie Morand

#### NBSSA (New Brunswick)

Derek O'Brien

#### NLASSA (Newfoundland and Labrador)

John Way and Kirk Smith

#### BCSSA (British Columbia)

Gino Bondi and Cheryl Lenardon

#### AASA Eastern Rep

Cindy Finn

#### AASA Western Rep

Kevin Garinger

#### PSAANS (Nova Scotia)

Tim Simony and Paul Landry

#### Directors at Large

Tracy Beaulieu (Prince Edward Island)

Joy Badder (Ontario)



# Join Us at the 2024 Leadership Conference!

**W**e invite you to join us in Montréal from July 3 to 5 for the 2024 Canadian

Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) Annual Leadership Conference. Explore this year's theme, Inspiring Systemic Change Through Courageous Leadership, through informative breakout sessions and inspiring keynote addresses. Connect, collaborate, and celebrate leadership approaches from across Canada. Hosted at Le Westin Montréal this year, our national conference offers multiple opportunities for delegates, guests, sponsors, and exhibitors to network and learn from one another.

Tiohtià:ke/Montréal is situated on the traditional and unceded territory of the Kanien'kehà:ka (Mohawk). It

is a place that has long served as a site of meeting and exchange among many First Nations including the Kanien'kehà:ka of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Huron/Wendat, Abenaki, and Anishinaabeg.

Online registration is now open. Registration rates are \$780 for CASSA members and \$995 for non-members. Refunds, less a \$150 cancellation fee, are available until June 7. No refunds are available after June 7.

We offer early bird rates each year. Watch the CASSA conference website each spring for rates and deadlines (this year's was May 17). It pays to register early. The first 150 delegates to sign up and pay for their 2024 conference registration received complimentary enrolment in the 4 Seasons of Indigenous Learning and Outdoor Learning Certification courses, courtesy of the Outdoor Learning Store.

CASSA members are welcome to take part in our 2024 **Annual General Meeting** on

Wednesday, July 3, from 10:00 to 11:00 am. Lunch and the conference will follow.

Dr. Jackie Ottmann will present our **Opening Keynote Address** from 2:00 to 3:30 pm. Dr. Ottmann (*mizowaykomiguk paypomwayotung* – thunder that can be felt over a large landscape). She is Anishinaabe (Saulteaux) from Fishing Lake First Nation in Treaty Four, Saskatchewan. Her leadership in education, from elementary and secondary school to post-secondary institutions, is guided by Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing. In 2021, Dr. Ottmann was named president of the First Nations University of Canada.

From 3:45 to 5:30 pm, all conference participants, sponsors, and guests are invited to attend a **Reception** hosted by Nelson with conference exhibitors. Thursday, July 4, begins with **Breakfast**. Exhibits also open at 8:00 am.

Louis Volante, Ph.D., will deliver our second **Keynote Address**, on "AI, Classroom



Air Canada is offering discounts of 5 per cent on standard fares and 10 per cent on flex fares and higher for travel in North America. A 10 per cent discount is available for international standard fares and higher. Discounts apply to travel to Montréal from June 26 to July 12. Use promotion code **Q78G6NY1** at [aircanada.com](http://aircanada.com).



WestJet is offering 5 per cent off Econo and 10 per cent off EconoFlex and premium fares for travel within Canada and 2 per cent off Econo, 5 per cent off EconoFlex, and 10 per cent off premium base fares for guests travelling transborder. No discount is available for basic or business class bookings. The discount applies to flights to Montréal between June 26 and July 13. Use coupon code **9Y8O2LK** at [www.westjet.com/conventions](http://www.westjet.com/conventions) or provide the promo code YBJ92 to your travel agent.



VIA Rail is offering a 10 per cent discount off the best available fare in Economy, Economy Plus, Business, Business Plus, and Sleeper Class from June 30 to July 8 from all stations throughout the VIA system to Montréal and return. The fare applies to a maximum of two passengers per booking. One complimentary stopover is allowed at no additional charge. For travel on all fare plans in business class, the first stopover is allowed at no additional charge, provided that this stopover takes place in Toronto, Montréal, or Ottawa. No discounts are available for Escape fares or Prestige Class. Use VIA convention discount code **14514** as a corporate code.

Assessment and Authentic Learning: Key Considerations for School System Leaders.” Dr. Volante is a professor of Education Governance at Brock University and a professorial fellow at United Nations University – Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT). In his address, he will examine the challenges for contemporary school system leaders presented by the proliferation of new technological tools, particularly large language models such as ChatGPT. There is a lack of consensus on what constitutes appropriate educational practices and policy responses in the face of this digital revolution. Drawing on theoretical, empirical, and practitioner perspectives, Dr. Volante offers key assessment considerations for school system leaders as they support

teachers, resource personnel, and school administrators. Best practice examples from around the world are offered to highlight both the opportunities and constraints associated with the integration of artificial “intelligence” within contemporary classrooms.

A short **Break with Exhibitors** is scheduled in the morning.

We will present the **2024 CASSA Awards** from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. **Lunch** will be served during the ceremony. We are delighted to announce that Nelson, Canada’s leading K–12 educational publisher, is our new sponsor of the EXL Award.

Thursday’s **Breakout Sessions** will take place from 1:00 to 2:15 pm. There will be a choice of up to five sessions. Watch for details as they are updated on the conference website.

A second **Break with Exhibitors** will follow.

From 2:45 to 4:15 pm, Senator David Arnot will deliver “From Courageous Conversations to Decisive Actions: A Responsibility Revolution for Difficult Times,”

our third **Keynote Address**. In 2014, when Senator Arnot was the Chief Commissioner for the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, he began inviting leading scholars, advocates, and local and international leaders to speak publicly and freely about contemporary and contentious challenges facing our society. The Courageous Conversations series identified the need for public education on the themes of racism, Indigenous identity and reconciliation, gender identity, mental health, and disability. Today, education systems across Canada are being stress tested by having to simultaneously provide leadership on these themes and to educate students about the concomitant social, political, and economic pressures working against equity, fairness, and facts. They are being asked to act as both the engine of democracy and its emergency department. In his address, Senator Arnot will describe why a responsibility

revolution is necessary in Canadian education and how senior school system leaders can achieve CASSA's vision through decisive action.

Conference participants are free to enjoy all that a summer evening in Montreal has to offer. Take in the spectacular fireworks displays exploding over the St. Lawrence River beside the Jacques-Cartier Bridge as part of L'International des Feux Loto-Québec. The Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, celebrating its 44th year, offers indoor and outdoor concerts, most of which are free, at and around the Quartier des spectacles. Explore the world's biggest open air Big Top as downtown hosts colourful, high-flying circus performers from around the world during Montréal Complètement Cirque.

Friday, July 5, will begin with **Breakfast Exhibits** will open again at 8:00 am. Following a brief Welcome, delegates can

choose from up to five **Breakout Sessions**. After a brief **Break with Exhibitors**, delegates can once again choose from up to five **Breakout Sessions**.

The conference closes with some final remarks and a look ahead to next year in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

CASSA is pleased to offer accommodation and travel discounts for conference guests.

Le Westin Montréal Attendee room rates start at \$264 per night for single or double occupancy in a standard room. A group rate is available until 5:00 pm on June 3, based on availability. Room rates do not include applicable service charges and taxes.

For those planning to fly to Montréal, CASSA has arranged discounts with both WestJet and Air Canada.

CASSA looks forward to gathering with you and your senior leadership team to explore innovative and exceptional leadership practices in beautiful Montréal this July! ○

## Keynote Speaker:

# Senator David M. Arnot



Before he was named to the Senate of Canada as an independent senator in 2021, David M. Arnot had a long and distinguished career in law in Saskatchewan.

After graduating from the University of Saskatchewan with a Juris Doctor in 1976, he became a Crown prosecutor, a senior Crown prosecutor, and then a judge for the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan. As a judge, he worked closely with Poundmaker First Nation on the use of sentencing circles and restorative justice measures to promote healing in legal proceedings and give a voice to victims, community members, and families while seeking constructive resolutions.

He was seconded from the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan three times: first as director general of the Aboriginal Justice Directorate for Justice Canada, then as treaty commissioner of Saskatchewan, and finally as chief commissioner of the Saskatchewan Human

Rights Commission, a position he held from 2009 to 2021.

Senator Arnot is the former chair of the Canadian Judges' Forum of the Canadian Bar Association. He has produced and directed judicial education video projects that have been used throughout Canada and around the world.

His many accolades include the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal, the Distinguished Service Award from the Canadian Bar Association's Saskatchewan Branch, the Miklos Kanitz Holocaust & Human Rights Award, and the University of Saskatchewan's Canada 150 Nation Builders Alumnus Award. CTV named him Saskatoon's Citizen of the Year in 2016. In 2018, the Transformation Institute for Leadership and Innovation named him one of Canada's top 150 Leaders and Innovators.

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan, under his leadership and in recognition of its

work raising awareness about treaties, received the biennial Award of Excellence for education programs in the public and government sector from the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. As a voice for reconciliation and with the guidance of Elders, he introduced the phrase "we are all treaty people." His work on Teaching Treaties in the Classroom has been cited as a model for all of Canada and was recognized by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Racism.

Senator Arnot currently serves on the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples, the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, and the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources. He also serves as the Legislative Liaison for the Independent Senators Group, one of four recognized parliamentary groups in the Senate.

## Keynote Speaker:

# Dr. Louis Volante

Louis Volante is a full professor in Education Governance and Policy Analysis at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. He teaches graduate courses focused on politics and policy in education; educational change; educational leadership; comparative education; and innovative assessment. He also teaches undergraduate courses on work and learning in organizations.

Dr. Volante is also a professorial fellow at the United Nations University – Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT)/Maastricht Graduate School of Governance in the Netherlands. He has held visiting professor appointments at UNU-MERIT, the University College London in England, and the University of Toronto, where he earned his Ph.D.

Research societies, including the American Educational Research Association, feature him as an expert on educational change.

Both academic and policy communities cite his interdisciplinary scholarship, focused on the global governance of education; politics, policy, and large-scale reform; political economy of education systems; international achievement surveys and policy diffusion; and impact evaluation of policies and programs.

Dr. Volante is currently the principal investigator researching the short- and long-term effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on social inequality and student learning outcomes. A Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Grant supports this five-year project to 2028.

He has, as a consultant, advised national and international organizations, including the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the European Commission. He has served as the president



of the Canadian Educational Researchers' Association and the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE).

Dr. Volante is a two-time recipient of the RWB Jackson Publication Award, presented each year by CSSE to recognize the most outstanding English language journal article. He has edited or co-edited a number of books, including *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform* (2012), *The Intersection of International Achievement Testing and Educational Policy* (2016), *The PISA Effect on Global Educational Governance* (2017), *Immigrant Student Achievement and Education Policy* (2018), and *Socioeconomic Inequality and Student Outcomes* (2019).

## Keynote Speaker:

# Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann

Educator, scholar, academic leader, and advocate Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann (*mizowaykomiguk paypomwayotung* – thunder that can be felt over a large landscape) is a role model for Indigenous leadership. She is Anishinaabe (Saulteaux) from Fishing Lake First Nation in Treaty Four, Saskatchewan (*Kisiskâciwan*).

In 2021, the First Nations University of Canada appointed Dr. Ottmann its president. This is the only First Nations-owned post-secondary institution in the country, with four campuses in Treaty Four and Treaty Six territories. The university's programs are based on a foundation of Indigenous knowledge. There Dr. Ottmann has been raising the university's profile and expanding its programming and reach.

Dr. Ottmann strives to create schools, organizations, and communities that foster a deeper sense of belonging and appre-

ciation for Indigenous peoples' histories, stories, philosophies, knowledges, intellect, traditions, and lived experiences. She is well-known as a change-maker whose purpose is to transform practices inclusive of Indigenous leadership, methodologies, and pedagogies. She approaches all of her work through Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing.

She began her journey in education as an elementary and secondary school teacher and principal. Her career in post-secondary education started at the University of Calgary, where in addition to her roles as a professor she was the coordinator of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit undergraduate teacher education program and the director of Indigenous Education Initiatives. While at the U of C, she co-chaired the Werkland School of Education's Indigenous Strategy and the university-wide Indigenous Strategy.



In 2017, the University of Saskatchewan named Dr. Ottmann its inaugural vice-provost for Indigenous engagement. It was a homecoming of sorts, as she had earned both her master's degree and PhD there. It was in her vice-provost role that she developed the university's first Indigenous Strategy, *ohpahotân*, which means let's fly up together.

Her many accomplishments include becoming the first Indigenous person named president of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, the largest organization of professors, students, researchers, and practitioners in education in Canada. She is also the founding editor of *Thrivance: Journal of Indigenous Ways of Being, Knowing, and Doing*.

# EXL Award Nominations

**F**or over 20 years, the Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) has recognized the extraordinary efforts of Canadian school system leaders through the annual presentation of the EXL Award. We are pleased to announce the support of Nelson Canada in presenting the 2024 EXL Award.

CASSA will announce the recipient of the EXL Award in Montreal/Tiohtià:ke at this year's conference on July 4, 2024. Congratulations to each of the nominees!



## Devin Roberts

- Northwest Territories Superintendents' Association.
- Superintendent of Education, Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council, Inuvik.
- CASSA member since 2018.



## Reg Klassen

- Manitoba Association of School Superintendents.
- Chief Superintendent, Frontier School Division, Winnipeg.
- CASSA member since 2012.



## Katharine Stevenson

- Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association.
- Superintendent of Education, Durham Catholic District School Board, Oshawa.
- CASSA member since 2022.



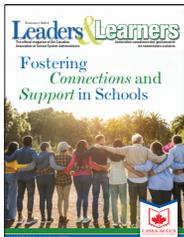
## Kandy Mackey

- Association of Directors General of English School Boards of Québec.
- Director General, Eastern Townships School Board, Magog.
- CASSA member since 2013.



## Dr. Wilco Tymensen

- College of Alberta School Superintendents.
- Superintendent, Horizon School Division, Taber.
- CASSA member since 2006.



## WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO WRITE FOR US!

The CASSA Board is looking for authors interested in writing for the upcoming Winter 2024-25 issue of *Leaders & Learners* magazine. If you have an article idea that you're itching to tell, please send an abstract to Jenna Collignon, editor of the magazine, at [jcollignon@matrixgroupinc.net](mailto:jcollignon@matrixgroupinc.net), and copy [ken\\_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca](mailto: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.

Please support this  
Newsletter's sponsors!

**murdock**<sup>®</sup>  
SINCE 1853



Équité et excellence en éducation  
**CASSA-ACGCS**  
Equity and Excellence in Education

## Published for the Canadian Association of School System Administrators

1123 Glenashton Drive  
Oakville, ON L6H 5M1  
Tel: 905-845-4254  
[ken\\_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca](mailto:ken_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca)  
[www.cassa-acgcs.ca](http://www.cassa-acgcs.ca)

## Articles written by Tara Wittchen

## Published by Matrix Group Publishing Inc.

309 Youville Street  
Winnipeg, MB R2H 2S9  
Tel: 866-999-1299  
[editor@matrixgroupinc.net](mailto:editor@matrixgroupinc.net)  
[www.matrixgroupinc.net](http://www.matrixgroupinc.net)