



LEADERS & LEARNERS

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Inside this issue:

Message From The Executive Director 2

EXL Awards 2

A Scoff, A Scuff... Summer Leadership Academy in NFLD 3

Focus on Alberta: Aboriginal and Cultural Initiatives 4

CASA PEOPLE: Faces In The Crowd 6

Contact CASA 7

Our Mission and Our Beliefs 7

Upcoming CASA Events

- Join us at this year's Summer Leadership Academy. It takes place at the Delta St. John's in St. John's, Newfoundland, from July 14 to 16, 2005.
- We are holding the CASA Annual Conference at the Delta Quebec City in October 2005.

Details on CASA events will be posted at www.casa-acas.ca.

Message From The President: Meeting The Needs Of All Our Students

It is a pleasure to share with you the fourth issue of *Leaders & Learners*. Every couple of months, we attempt to share matters of common interest and national trends in education. Cross-country discussions have shown that senior educational leaders have a deep commitment to not only improve student achievement, but to close the gap between low- and high-performing students.

Not all student groups are realizing the same level of success in our schools. We have a responsibility to all of our student groups to make sure that public education provides equal outcomes for all.

Educational leaders have implemented a range of programs and strategies that are paying off for many students, resulting in higher achievement. There is still much work for us to do. There are gaps in achievement and high



Ruth Mattingley
CASA president

dropout rates for many groups of students across Canada.

As stated in CASA's belief statements, cultural diversity is a unique strength that enriches our nation. It is our duty to build on that strength, and to make sure that all student groups receive appropriate instruction and programs that recognize their unique needs and maximize their potential.

We cannot be satisfied with just looking at overall achievement scores. We

need to dig down deeper to find the groups of students who are struggling and who have unique needs that are not being met.

Last summer at our Summer Leadership Academy in Calgary, a number of distinguished guests shared invaluable perspectives on the challenges facing our Aboriginal students. It was evident that such conversations are critical in developing better understanding and establishing future priorities and plans for improvement.

In these pages, we will continue that dialogue to better understand the realities and steps being taken to meet student needs. This month: examples of projects that are making a difference in the lives of Alberta students today. Together we can strengthen our knowledge, learn from shared experiences and make a positive difference in the lives of all of our students.

Message From The Executive Director: Essential Qualities For Today's Educational Leaders



Frank Kelly
CASA executive director

Managing and providing leadership for school districts is a complex task. It's a role

that requires a variety of skills and beliefs. The size of the district may change one's focus in the role, but the requirements remain consistent.

Today's educational leaders must:

- be aware of societal needs and trends
- understand current curriculum and instructional policies and practices
- understand and respect the world of young people—their interests, desires and troubles
- know the value of speaking and writing clearly
- refine technology skills on a regular basis
- understand the political process and the world of district trustees
- relate to constant change and develop a working process to manage it
- identify with staff at all levels, and know their expectations and their frustrations in improving learning
- be patient as change is carried out
- be passionate about learning and positive about the job
- demonstrate a contagious enthusiasm that will inspire others
- believe in the community as a great place to learn

This is a daunting package of skills and beliefs to aspire towards, but it is one displayed by a great number of CASA leaders.

Do you know a CASA member who exemplifies this kind of leadership? Drop us a line so we can share their story in an upcoming issue.

EXL Awards: Recognizing Excellence In Leadership

Do you work with an outstanding CASA member? Do you know a leader in our field who deserves to be recognized?



The EXL Award recognizes the outstanding leadership of superintendents across Canada. It is sponsored jointly by Xerox Canada and CASA. Provincial awards and one national award are presented annually at our fall conference.

CASA members who have shown exemplary leadership ability and who have enhanced school administration are eligible for this award, which includes an honorary life membership in CASA.

You can put forward nominations for this year's EXL Awards until June 30, 2005. The nomination forms can be

found at www.casa-acas.ca/pages/awards.html. Completed forms should be sent to the CASA office by email or fax care of Gillian Van Zant, at gillian@opsoa.org or (905) 845-2044.

What kind of qualities should an EXL Award nominee have?

They will have brought honour to themselves, their colleagues and their profession. They have given exemplary service to their provincial or national professional association. They have made significant contributions to the field of education through their service, writings or other activities.

These are individuals who are recognized as role models and teachers to those around them.

**To teach is to learn
twice.**
—Joseph Joubert

The 2005 Summer Leadership Academy: A Scoff, A Scuff And Sessions In St. John's, Newfoundland

The 2005 CASA Summer Leadership Academy opens on Thursday, July 14, and continues through Saturday, July 16. This year, many sessions will touch on the experiences of our colleagues from Newfoundland, including those who have left The Rock.

Thursday: Our first session is "Restructuring: A Government Perspective," a half-hour overview of the recent restructuring of the Newfoundland and Labrador school system presented by that province's deputy minister of education. "Restructuring: Through the Looking Glass" will examine the challenges faced by the remaining directors of the boards (see *Leaders & Learners* Volume 1, Issue 3 for a primer).

The morning will continue with three roundtable discussions led by CASA past-president **John Darroch** on restructuring in other areas of the country. Next up, a panel of respected expatriate NLADE members will talk about why they chose to leave home when they did, and what it has been like to re-establish their careers and families in other parts of Canada, in "Away From The Rock." The afternoon wraps up with "Regional Economic Development and Schools," a talk led by **Phyllis Reardon** on the REDAS program, which connects schools to community and teachers to



economic developers.

While you're on your own for meals that day, everyone is invited to the Welcome To Newfoundland Reception after dinner, featuring a "Screech In Ceremony" and traditional Newfoundland entertainment from **The Kitchen Crowd**. Get ready to hear some jigs, reels, ballads, Newfoundland waltzes and maybe a yarn or two.

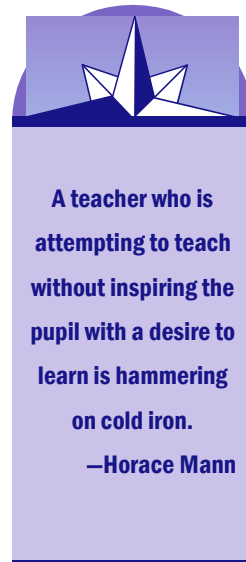
Friday: We'll start the day off talking about two issues of national concern: provincial testing programs, and curriculum development and support. We'll follow that up with "Finding Common Ground." This roundtable will develop suggestions for a paper describing the issues and pointing out where CASA affiliates could take a lead role. CASA may eventually send the paper to the

Council of Ministers of Education for Canada. Next, "Political Relationships for the CEOs Office," a panel of school board trustees and CEOs presenting their views of how successful CEOs can balance the delicate world of politics and relationships with the political masters. The morning will close with "Distance Education," a look at how our colleagues in Newfoundland and Labrador have been forced by circumstances to become leaders in developing distance education programs and methodologies.

Friday afternoon, you'll have the opportunity to join either a whale watching or a sea kayaking tour. Mid-July is peak season; kayakers should not be surprised to see whales surfacing around them. Later that evening, join us at Bridie Molloy's for A Scoff and Scuff, an optional ticketed event limited to just 100. You'll have a chance to sample from such delicacies as cod tongues and cheeks, traditional Newfoundland savory stuffing, Moose Bourguignon, partridge berry pudding or bakeapple sundae. Traditional Newfoundland dance step lessons will be offered after dinner. Then the fun really begins, with a rousing performance from Bridie Molloy's house band **The Navigators**. You can also opt to explore St. John's on your own.

Saturday: Our last morning features three sessions of "Snapshots of Success," with presentations by colleagues from across the country. Our final session speaker is still to be determined. At 1 pm, the closing remarks will wrap up the 2005 Summer Leadership Academy.

If you need information about registration, visit www.casa-acas.ca. See you on The Rock!



Focus On Alberta: Aboriginal And Cultural Initiatives

In this edition, we examine Aboriginal and cultural initiatives in education within the province of Alberta.

First, **Morris Manyfingers** and **Gabrielle Christopherson** tell us about the many province-wide initiatives set out by Alberta Education, the provincial department of education. Morris is the director of the Aboriginal Services Branch at Alberta Education; Gabrielle is an information officer at ASB. Very special thanks to Gabrielle for her timely assistance in gathering vital information for this piece. In the interest of space and clarity, the acronym **FNMI** will stand for **First Nations, Métis and Inuit**.

We also put the spotlight on one school's unique efforts to integrate culture, including Aboriginal culture, into the curriculum and classroom. **Dianna Wabie**, Northern Lights School Division's aboriginal services consultant, and **Greig Christian**, a NLSD regional team leader, share some of the successes at Caslan School in northern Alberta.

Are there initiatives taking place in your school division or province that you'd like our readers to know about? Why not share them with us? You'll find our contact information on the last page of every issue.

What Aboriginal initiatives in education are taking place in your province?

ASB: There are a number of excellent initiatives taking place in Alberta these days. These include the FNMI School-Community Learning Environment Project, Aboriginal language courses (including Cree, Blackfoot, Plains Cree and Stoney/Nakoda), Aboriginal Studies 10/20/30 (developed in partnership with Elders, educators and Alberta Education staff), new Social Studies K-12 curriculum, infusion of Aboriginal content into the K-12 curriculum, Aboriginal content validation, industry training program (a collaboration between Alberta Advanced Education and various stakeholders working towards increased employment opportunities), numerous apprenticeship initiatives, post-secondary modules (intended for teacher training programs to increase pre-service teachers' awareness of FNMI histories, cultures and perspectives) and Aboriginal Teacher Education Programs.

How long have these kinds of initiatives been in place in your province?

ASB: Since the late 1980s, Alberta Education has provided funding for school jurisdiction-initiated Aboriginal education programs.

In 2002, the Government of Alberta released the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy Framework* after an extensive public consultation process involving over 5,000 participants. Since the development of the *Framework*, work has been guided by the five priority strategies recommended by the Native Education Policy Review Advisory Committee. These are:

- Strategy 1.5 Increase FNMI learner access to post-secondary and other adult education and training opportunities and support services.
- Strategy 2.1 Increase the attendance, retention and

graduation rates of FNMI students attending provincial schools.

- Strategy 2.2 Increase the number of FNMI teachers and school/institution personnel.
- Strategy 2.4 Facilitate the continuous development and delivery of FNMI courses and professional development opportunities for aspiring and existing administrators, teachers/instructors and school/institutional personnel.
- Strategy 4.2 Build working relationships that will contribute to quality learning opportunities for FNMI learners.

What do you feel are some of the key issues that need to be dealt with when it comes to designing and implementing these initiatives?

ASB: Ensuring that during all stages of planning and development, there is meaningful consultation and involvement of the Aboriginal communities from across Alberta, and working to ensure there is equity in the education of Aboriginal students whether they attend provincial or band-run schools.

Do you have success stories to share with our readers about particular initiatives in your province that are making a noticeable difference in improving awareness of Aboriginal culture and issues (for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and staff)?

ASB: *Aboriginal Perspectives: Abo-*

(Continued on page 5)



I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework.

—Lily Tomlin (as “Edith Ann”)

iginal Studies 10 by Kainai Board of Education, Métis Nation of Alberta, Northland School Division, Tribal Chiefs Institute of Treaty Six [Duval House Publishing, Edmonton]. This textbook and the texts for Aboriginal Studies 20 and 30 are unique in bringing together First Nations, Métis and Inuit community members from throughout Alberta to collaborate with Alberta Education and the publisher to write a book that accurately reflects the perspectives and the diversity of Aboriginal people in Alberta. On May 14, 2005, this textbook received the 2005 Educational Book Award from the Book Publishers Association of Alberta.

Amiskwaciy Academy is a partnership between Alberta Education and the Edmonton Public School Board. Using the Alberta Program of Studies as a base, the Academy enriches the curriculum by offering options courses that reflect Aboriginal traditions and values.

Rainbow Spirit Project is a joint venture between Edmonton Catholic Schools and Alberta Education. It is designed to identify and implement a series of “Best Practices” into six district schools to meet the needs of integrated Aboriginal students.

What obstacles or challenges must be faced to meet these goals? How do you plan on facing them?

ASB: Increasing the involvement of Aboriginal parents, Eld-

ers and community members in their children’s education, such as parents being at the school, on school councils, providing language and cultural resources in the classroom, working to improve curriculum and resources for Aboriginal students, and supporting their children’s learning at home. These will positively impact student achievement and the quality of education overall for Aboriginal students.

There is also a need to increase teachers’ awareness and understanding of Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives. Courses like the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program and the modules for use in Alberta universities will help to address this.

The increasing loss of Aboriginal languages occurring with each generation is an issue that can be addressed by some of the language and culture courses like Cree or Blackfoot. The U of A houses the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute, which also works to preserve indigenous languages.

Racism and bullying: these issues can be addressed by increasing awareness about them in schools, acknowledging racism exists in schools and examining the history of Aboriginal education and the residential school experience.

Thank you for sharing this with our readers!

Spotlight On Caslan School, Northern Lights SD #69

Caslan School teaches about 140 students, from kindergarten to grade 9. The students come from the nearby community of Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement, which is about 200 km northeast of Edmonton, Alberta. Caslan has two programs that work to integrate the arts and Métis culture into the curriculum: the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) and ArtsSmarts.

“ArtsSmarts is teachers working with artists to deliver curriculum,” explains **Dianna Wabie**. “Instead of teaching curriculum through the traditional methods of read about it, write about it and I will test you about it, it is teaching curriculum through the arts, and the arts encompass music, dance, drama, visual arts and fine arts.”

Students will still learn math, for example, but they might learn math concepts through visual arts or music. Teachers work one-on-one with artists to develop curriculum.

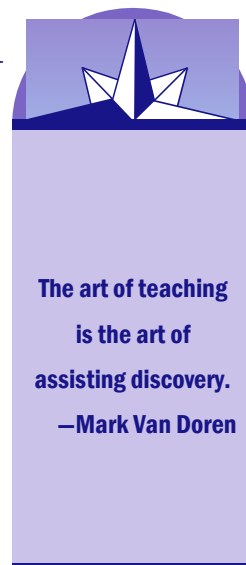
“The way we do this is through the AISI project,” she says, a professional development project. “It allows for blocks of time for teachers to work with artists and with the Arts-

Smarts coordinator to develop those pieces. Here’s some curriculum, here’s an artist, what can we do together to deliver that grade 3 Social Studies piece that would be much more interesting?”

AISI is improving students’ achievements through the professional development of teachers through the arts, she explains.

So how does Métis culture come into the picture? Dianna says that when a teacher at Caslan has a daily session with an artist and the ArtsSmarts coordinator, that’s when his or her students work with the school’s Métis cultural coordinator. The students have Métis dance three times a week (jigging and square dancing), and Métis music (fiddle and guitar) lessons twice a week. Both instructors

(Continued on page 7)



CASA PEOPLE: Faces In The Crowd



Peter Doyle
Alberta

After 30 years in Newfoundland and Labrador's education system, Peter and his wife Pauline headed to Alberta. Peter is now superintendent of the Christ The Redeemer Catholic School Division based in Okotoks, south of Calgary. The division serves communities across southern Alberta, and teaches more than 6,000 students in traditional schools, a virtual school and through home schooling.

Peter's career back east included principalships at Corpus Christi High School in Northern Bay on Newfoundland's east coast and the Sacred Heart Section of JR Smallwood Collegiate in Wabush, a mining town in western Labrador. In the mid-1980s Peter and Pauline, along with their children Emily, Dennis and Dianne, moved to Stephenville in western Newfoundland. Peter worked there as an assistant superintendent until their move to Okotoks in 2001.

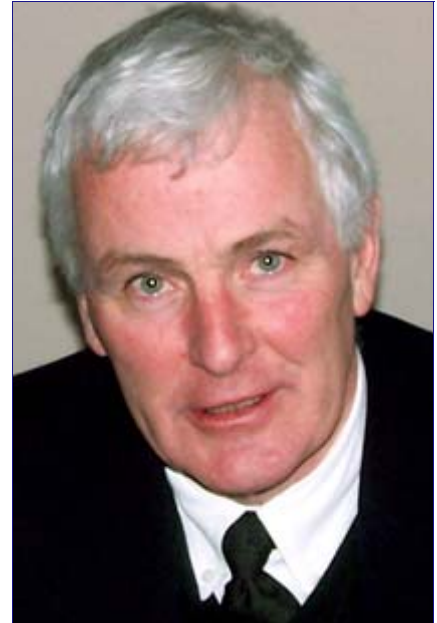


Paula Child
Ontario

Paula has worked for the Lambton Kent District School Board, which has offices in Sarnia and Chatham, for the past 27 years. She has worked as a secondary classroom teacher, secondary resource teacher and guidance consultant. She is currently the manager of staff development. One of Paula's areas of responsibilities for the past 10 years has been leadership development.

Paula has found outstanding opportunities for leadership professional development at the CASA summer institutes. Meeting with educators from across the country to discuss issues, develop networks and identify resources has been extremely beneficial for her. She's looking forward to this year's sessions.

Paula's hobbies include quilting and working with her two shelties in obedience competitions.



Jack Beaton
Nova Scotia

Jack grew up in Mabou, Cape Breton, and attended St. Francis Xavier University. He started teaching in Canso in 1975, and studied Educational Administration at Dalhousie University during the 1980s. Jack's career in school administration started in 1982 and included principal positions at five different schools. He has worked at the regional school board level since 1996. Jack is now the director of programs and student services for the Strait Regional School Board, which serves approximately 9,000 students in 27 schools in a large, mainly rural geographic area.

Jack has been involved in many provincial committees and initiatives, including the Nova Scotia school accreditation pilot project. He is married to Jenny and has two grown children, Sarah and Glenn. Jack is also a recreational runner.

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Our Mission:

CASA will advance quality public education and excellence in system level leadership through advocacy and national collaboration.



Our Beliefs:

CASA believes that:

- Cultural diversity is a unique strength that enriches our nation.
- Communication and collaboration with parents and other partners is integral to successful student learning.
- Quality public education provides the best opportunity for a nation to enhance the lives of all its citizens.
- Effective system, provincial and national level leadership enables and supports excellence in teaching and learning.
- A comprehensive education, equitable and accessible to all, is the key to meeting the diverse needs and securing a successful future for our youth.

Specific strategies to advance the mission:

- Establish position papers on specific topics as they relate to the beliefs and interests of the association.
- Recruit new people.
- Establish a national representation.
- Establish a three-tier public relations and publications strategy.
- Establish a funding team to create an operating budget.

Métis Culture: A Big Part Of The Caslan Curriculum

(Continued from page 5)

are Métis themselves, and they incorporate lessons about the culture, the values and belief system, and what it means to be a Métis person in this society today.

“For Aboriginal students, whether they’re First Nation or Métis, these opportunities are absolutely vital to students’ success,” Dianna says. “The traditional form of education that is offered through public or separate schools is not really conducive to the way that education is

looked at from an Aboriginal perspective.”

When Aboriginal culture is introduced to the “regular” lessons, it gives students a sense of belonging.

The ArtsSmarts and AISI projects work together to allow cultural infusion, so that students can see the connections to their culture in each subject area.

While the programs have only been in place for a few years, division staff are already seeing positive results. Attendance is up

eight percent over the last year, says **Greg Christian**, Northern Lights School Division regional team leader for Cold Lake, and bus drivers report kids waiting excitedly for the bus to take them to school in the morning, instead of drivers having to wait for kids to show up.

Dianna says that enthusiasm and the lessons are spilling over into the students’ homes and community, too. Last year, for example, the entire school worked on a theatrical performance called *Memories and Milestones*. Students collected stories from their parents and Elders about Buffalo Lake. “That was turned into a major production where everybody participated. We had kids learning to research, learning the skills to write things down, to organize what they’ve heard, and then putting that to music and dance.”

“It was just phenomenal,” she says, and it was highly meaningful to the community to see its culture reflected back by its children.