



June 2006

Volume 2, Issue 11

LEADERS & LEARNERS

THE VOICE OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS / L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES ADMINISTRATEURS ET DES ADMINISTRATRICES SCOLAIRES

Inside this issue:

Message From The Executive Director 2

The OPSOA Approach To Mentorship 2

An Interview With Warren Rosborough 4

In The Words Of A Mentorship Pioneer: Ruth Armson 5

Faces In The Crowd 6

Contact CASA 7

Our Mission and Our Beliefs 7

Upcoming CASA Events

- Summer Leadership Academy, July 2006, Toronto
- Annual Conference, October 2006, Winnipeg

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

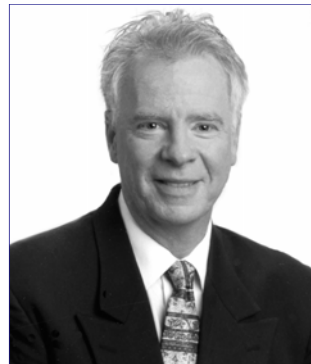
Message From The President: The Value Of Mentorship In Our Profession

It is rather surprising to note that it has only been in the last 20 years or so that mentorship has taken hold and flourished in our profession, in the field of education.

If mentorship can be defined as the passage of knowledge and tradition from an experienced individual to one of lesser understanding, the process has been taking place millennia prior to the development of formal education.

Our tribal ancestors around the world proved wonderful mentors. This traditional method of knowledge transfer continues today in indigenous societies.

We know of more and more instances in which First Nations in Canada have implemented such programs as the most effective manner to maintain their cultural heritage and identity.



Bob Mills
CASA president

The key to successful mentoring is the establishment of a unique relationship between the mentor and protégé, one in which both partners are searching for self improvement.

Without such a connection and goal, even the most experienced mentor is likely to fail.

Advantages to the participants are increased professional competency and professional renewal.

The mentor-mentee relationship also demands con-

siderable reflective practice, and benefits to both and, ultimately, to the profession.

Many programs now exist across the country at the teacher-to-teacher and administrator-to-administrator levels. Fewer operate on a formal basis between administrator and teacher.

Statistics indicate that fewer and fewer teachers in Canada are being attracted toward careers in educational administration, a serious concern.

Thus, I hope that this edition of *Leaders & Learners* will offer some impetus to the further development of local programs.

I hope these programs will continue to bring together successful practising administrators and teachers, senior administrators and principals in mentoring relationships that will enrich our profession.

Message From The Executive Director: Mentorship Models In Ontario

Senior administrators continue to retire at a significant rate per year across Canada. Eager replacements assume these jobs and are placed into difficult roles with limited training and sometimes no real chance to observe or experience the myriad of issues that make up the daily routine of the supervisory official.

New leaders will have taken preparatory courses before entering administrative ranks and school districts provide many training and professional development opportunities. But there are many issues not covered in classrooms and new administrators frequently need the wise counsel of someone who has done the job and experienced a variety of situations.

Some school districts are large and new members can access this experience; others are small and sometimes have few or no experienced members.

Sometimes it is not easy for a new member to ask a close colleague for advice and thus expose their lack of seasoning.

In these cases, it is important to have an outside source, a working confidante, a mentor.

For these reasons, many school districts have established mentoring programs to provide individual coaching to members new to the position or to veteran members who change portfolios.

In Ontario, for example, the Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association (OPSOA) provides a service of mentor-

ship in partnership with district school boards. The association has set up a provincial team employing recently retired supervisory officers.

The project began in 2005, and is coordinated by a former superintendent. Funding is shared between the provincial association and the boards that subscribe.

When new appointments are made in the spring, boards decide to register their member in the program. The OPSOA committee meets and assigns a mentor in consultation with the board.

Mentors meet with the new superintendents to set up a relationship. There is then an on-going connection throughout the year. Often the contacts are by telephone or email. The OPSOA feedback has been very positive and this support for new members has been viewed as a very significant asset in training.

Other models exist across the country. This one, which has become formalized, creates a very practical application of veteran experience and new enthusiasm.



Frank Kelly
CASA executive director

The OPSOA Approach To Mentorship

The following article was reprinted from an OPSOA paper on mentorship, with kind permission.

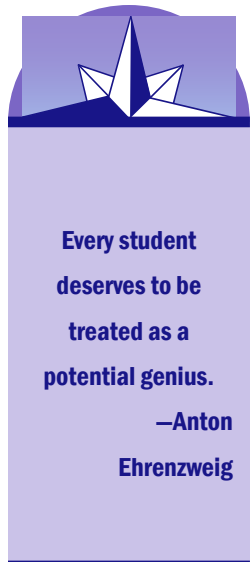
Background

In the spring of 2004, the OPSOA Board of Directors launched the mentorship program expanding its commitment to provide a wide range of professional development and individual mentorship for newly appointed supervisory officials. The one-year pilot program was an unqualified success and the OPSOA membership recently voted to continue the program into the future. Information gathered from the initial participants has led to program solidification and expansion.

Key Features of the Program

The program is grounded in partnership philosophy and begins upon request usually following appointment to a position or a new portfolio. Trained mentors work one-on-one with mentees for approximately one year to meet their specific needs. A series of face-to-face meetings are held, supplemented by phone and email communications. Confidentiality is a prime component of the mentoring relationship. Topics for the first and subsequent meetings include but are not limited to:

(Continued on page 3)



Every student
deserves to be
treated as a
potential genius.

—Anton
Ehrenzweig

The OPSOA Approach To Mentorship, continued

(Continued from page 2)

- Exchange of resumes
- Schedule of meetings
- Expectations/outcomes
- Mentee strengths/needs
- What are you proud of since our last meeting?
- Present working environment of the mentee
- Mentee job description
- What do you want to get out of this relationship?
- Overview of the program
- Types of communication
- Long- and short-range planning
- Administrative supports
- What's keeping you awake at night?
- Entry plan
- Current hot issues
- How are you staying balanced?

The face-to-face meetings are viewed as the cornerstone of the program. Comments from mentees regarding the importance of the meetings include:

Very helpful. Reassuring. Enormous insight and value. I looked forward to the meetings greatly.

This was the most meaningful part of the program for me.

It was a great opportunity to share and gain confidence in the role, seek advice and grow in the role.

Exceptionally valuable. At each meeting we set the plan for what we would discuss the next time.

It helped me articulate my thoughts, plans and actions. It helped me reflect on my practice and provided me with encouragement and support.

Who Can Participate?

Any member of OPSOA is eligible to participate.

Who Are the Mentors?

Mentors are OPSOA alumni members who have expressed an interest in becoming involved in the program. They are individuals with current knowledge of the educational scene who want to use this activity as a means to benefit their former profession and give back to the OPSOA organization. Mentors may or may not have worked in the same board as the mentees. Both models have worked successfully in the pilot program. Mentors usually have experience in the portfolio of the mentee. Participating boards do have input into

the mentor selection process.

Mentoring as a PD Activity

The mentoring program is a personal, continuous one-on-one learning opportunity for the mentees. The experience has extraordinary potential for a mentee who is committed to the process. Mentees who have been involved have said:

Mentorship is more than PD. It was a relationship with trust, expertise and more importantly the opportunity to follow-up and track events and decisions.

This is an extremely rich experience from the standpoint of it being one-on-one. I really don't know how one could 'top' this.

The mentorship program is much more focused, needs-based and practical.

This is a rare opportunity and...a fabulous experience.

Please continue to rate this kind of PD very highly. It is important to build a collaborative culture in the supervisory officer ranks.

Strengths of the Program

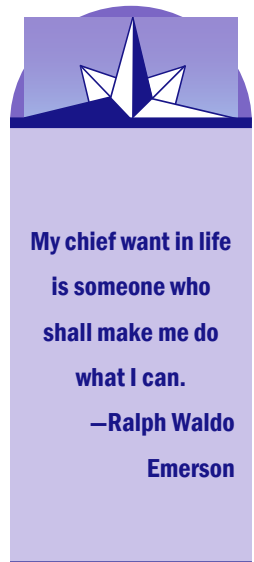
Personalized, focused, flexible, internal and external mentors available, self-directed, high mentor commitment, expanded mentee network, linked to OPSOA, helping others achieve success, participants volunteer to be involved, cost sharing, above and beyond supervisory support, one-on-one, confidential, advice on the politics of the role.

What Does It Cost?

Administrative fees are provided by OPSOA. Operational costs are shared between OPSOA and participating boards or OPSOA and participating individuals. Costs vary due to geographical distances and are estimated to be approximately \$1,250 per share (half of \$2,500 cost per mentor per year). Considering the nature of the experience and the costs of other types of professional development, the amount is extremely competitive.

How Do I Become Involved?

Speak to your director or designate who can arrange a mentor program for your board with OPSOA.



The OPSOA Approach To Mentorship: An Interview With Warren Rosborough

Warren Rosborough is a retired public school superintendent with over 30 years of administrative experience in the field of education. Dr. Rosborough's academic background is in the field of educational administration. He has held Board of Directors positions with OPSOA and the Peterborough, Victoria and Haliburton Children's Aid Society. Warren currently works as an educational consultant providing services to school districts, provincial organizations and the Ontario government.

In this interview with *Leaders & Learners*, Warren explains how the OPSOA mentorship model and manual came to be, and shares his thoughts on mentoring at the supervisory officer or superintendent level.

How did you come to be involved with the mentorship program and the manual that OPSOA now uses?

I was approached by Frank Kelly almost two years ago. OPSOA had expressed an interest in creating a mentorship program and he asked me to coordinate it for him.

I had several boards initially interested in participating in a pilot project for year one. As it turned out we ended up with two boards involved: a very large board—Toronto District School Board—and a smaller rural board in Ontario. I had six mentors working in the Toronto board and two mentors working in the smaller board.

Mentors met three or four times during that first year to put together some thoughts as to how we might structure the program initially. Then we met on a regular basis to review how things were going. At the end of that pilot year, I put together a fairly extensive survey that went out to all the mentees and all the mentors. I gathered the data from that particular survey and then with the assistance of one other mentor—I was actually a mentor year one as well as

coordinator—we created the manual that OPSOA now uses in the early summer of '05, ready to go for the beginning of the second year.

The OPSOA board of directors, with approval of the membership at their 2005 Annual Meeting, agreed that they would move ahead and proceed with the mentorship program. This year I have eight mentors working in Toronto District School Board and two mentors working in two other smaller boards, one in each board.

What was the response?

The feedback was extremely positive after year one, so this year I was just confirming with them what were their perceptions of what happened, what suggestions they might have for improving it. And I was able to ask them if they found the manual useful.

Initially when I put the program together, I did a fairly extensive literature search trying to find different types of mentoring programs. There's lots of information available and I put together a series of articles that the mentors used. But I couldn't find a program similar to this,

where an association, a group of professionals, had decided to give back to the profession they had recently left in retirement and mentor folks who were just entering the role.

To OPSOA's credit, they jointly support this particular program. The school board puts forward 50 per cent of the funds, OPSOA puts together 50 per cent of the funds. The mentors themselves receive very little remuneration; their expenses are paid and they get a very small honorarium for assisting these people for an entire year. We have one pairing who meet for breakfast or lunch every two weeks, plus email support and phone calls. The mentees say, "This is incredible, I've got a one-on-one coach here, it's been fabulous." I ask them, "Can you compare this to any other professional development opportunity that you've had in the past that's consistent?" and they say, "No, not at all. Far superior to anything I've ever been involved in."

What advice do you have for other regional organizations like OPSOA who may be considering a similar program?

They could save themselves an awful lot of time if they wanted to use portions of the model we've developed, though I'd have to check with Frank with how he would want to share some of the things we have. For example, the manual has in it exactly the things that we've found to be effective, like how do you get the relationship going, what sort of things do you talk about, all the issues around confidentiality, it's all there.

Have you had mentees before

(Continued on page 7)



**The greatest good
you can do for
another is not just
share your riches,
but reveal to them
their own.**

**—Benjamin
Disraeli**

In The Words Of A Mentorship Pioneer: Ruth Armson

Ruth Armson, originally from Manitoba, is a retired teacher in Whitehorse. In the words of **Chris Gonnet**, director of learning for the Yukon Department of Education, she is “probably one of the best teachers I have ever met in my career.” After retiring, Ruth started up a successful mentorship program for new teachers in the Yukon.

In addition to her continuing interest in education matters, Ruth is active in her community. She is an usher at the Yukon Arts Centre and sits on a committee for the Beringia Interpretive Centre. She enjoys golf, travel, anthropology, archeology, geology, geography and history. Read more about Ruth in this issue’s **Faces In The Crowd** feature.

Here, in her own words, Ruth explains the setup behind the teacher mentorship program.

When I retired, I founded the Yukon Retired Teachers’ Alumni and also did a lot of tutoring and mentoring of students.

The Yukon Teachers’ Association asked me to implement a Yukon Mentorship Program for Beginning Teachers. It is a joint venture with the Yukon Teachers’ Association and the Department of Education.

This teacher-to-teacher program is a formal partnership involving beginning teachers, mentor teachers, school administrators and the Steering Committee.

In this program, the mentor (experienced teacher) and the protégé (beginning teacher) form a team, and then they plan and learn together. It is not a teacher-tutor situation. They meet and work as equals—both honing their skills from the experience.

In this program, the principals are given a presentation on the content and philosophy of the program. Then applications are sent out to teachers and teams are formed.

In our first year we had 12 teams representing 13 schools throughout the Yukon and involving all grade levels.

There is an Orientation Session in August, when the teams meet, the philosophy of the program is discussed and plans are made by the teams for the first week of school.

There are three follow-up in-services during the year with workshops on areas of need, mentor sessions, protégé sessions, and time for teams to make short- and long-term plans. There is a final wind-up session and celebration in May.

The teams are asked to contact each other at least once a week. (In a small teaching community like the Yukon it is difficult to get both members of the team from the same school.)

They are asked to submit “Experiences from the Field”

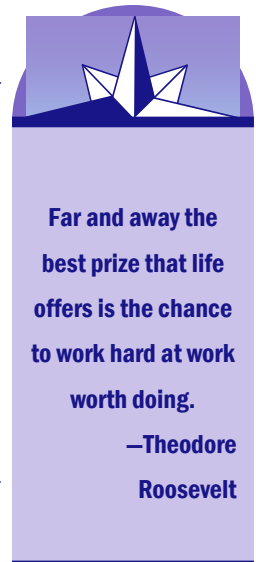
at the end of each month. Each team is also asked to keep a diary of reflections and a notebook of lessons, articles, etc. Between in-services, a newsletter is composed and mailed out.

Evaluation is solely on the program, never the teacher. There is also an end-of-year evaluation.

“The mentor and the protégé form a team...it is not a teacher-tutor situation. They meet and work as equals.”

I was available at all times for contact if any teacher in the program felt the need to contact me. I also wrote up a report for the Steering Committee on all aspects of the program: Implementation, In-services, Continuation, Program Evaluation and Program Sustainability.

The teachers in this first program felt that it was really worthwhile. The program is particularly good for those beginning teachers who find themselves in small, rather isolated communities.



CASA PEOPLE: Faces In The Crowd



Ruth Armson
Yukon

Ruth is the founder of the Yukon Retired Teachers' Alumni, and the force behind the Yukon Mentorship Program for Beginning Teachers.

She was raised on a small farm in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, and attended the University of Manitoba. She stepped into her first classroom on her 18th birthday with a one-year diploma in hand. One of her dreams was to teach in Canada's north. In 1967, she came to the Yukon to teach and has lived there ever since.

Ruth taught junior high Social Studies, English, Creative Drama and, on occasion, Art, Journalism and Science. She is the recipient of two Hilroy Fellowships, a National Grassroots Award, a Yukon Innovation in Teaching Award, the Commissioner's Award for Community Service and the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal.

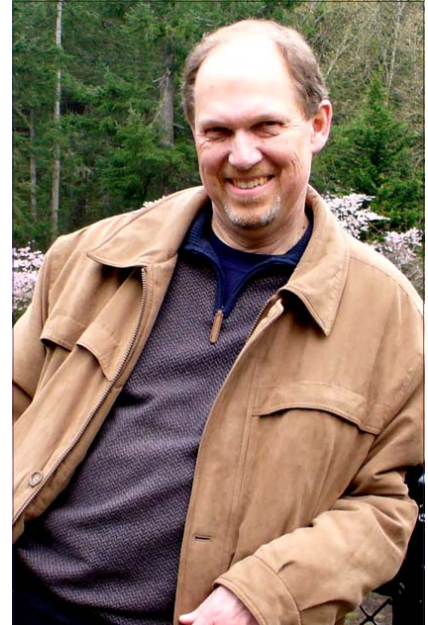


Strini Reddy
Manitoba

Strini was born in South Africa, and has taught in the capacity of teacher, consultant, principal, superintendent and university lecturer in six countries. He is the recipient of numerous honours and awards for his leadership and achievements in education, social justice, peace and anti-racism, including the Order of Manitoba.

Throughout his career, Strini led a number of educational organizations. Although he officially retired in 1998 (at the time, he was the executive director of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents), he remains active in promoting the well being of children and young people in Canada and beyond. He is a popular public speaker, and presents a theme of optimism for the world and advocacy for children.

Strini and his wife have three children and six grandchildren.



Don Falk
Alberta

Don is the superintendent for Red Deer Public School District, with 10 years of central office administration and 11 years of school administration with the district. Prior to that he was a teacher and school administrator for 12 years in BC.

He earned a BA at Simon Fraser and his MA at Gonzaga University in Spokane. While at Gonzaga, Don experienced the thrill of singing "O Canada" and throwing out the first ball at an AAA baseball game.

Don and his wife Judy (also a teacher) are parents of four, with one grandchild and one on the way. Don enjoys exploring Red Deer's park and trail network, reading, movies, trips to Victoria and attending board meetings ("just checking to make sure you are actually reading this!"). Don is especially proud of losing more than 50 pounds recently.

CONTACT CASA:

1123 Glenashton Drive
Oakville, ON
L6H 5M1
Canada

T: (905) 845-2345

F: (905) 845-2044

frank_kelly@opsoa.org

gillian@opsoa.org

www.casa-acas.ca

Editor: Tara Lee Wittchen

©2006 CASA

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.

An Interview With Warren Rosborough, continued

(Continued from page 4)

your involvement with this program?

Not specifically in a supervisory officer position, it was more mentorship when I was a supervisory officer of principals within my own family of schools. That was the background that the other mentors bring to the table, they've been doing this for a number of years, mentoring other individuals within their organizations but it tended not to be at a peer level.

Interestingly enough, Toronto is the school board that has had the most interest in the program and they have an internal mentorship program. Their new appointees have an individual internally that they are paired up with and yet the administration there, the person responsible for bringing these people along, jumped right in the first year and said "OK, we're going to get external mentors, people from the OPSOA program, for half of our new appointees." So they had 12 new ones and they got six folks from the OPSOA mentorship program. The second year around they had 10 new SOs and they got OPSOA mentors for them all, because the people who didn't have them were saying "Gee,

why not? We really want them." Their culture is one that is very accepting of the concept of mentorship because it has been in their culture for a while. We still are having difficulties getting inroads into other boards that are appointing new supervisory officers. It tends to be looked upon in some areas like, "If I need a mentor, maybe that's saying that I don't have the skills to be able to do the job."

Even though we have a program that's operated two years and we consider it successful, we still have a way to go.

Is there anything else you'd like to add about the benefits of mentorship in the field of education?

I think it's being viewed as the way to go. It's current, it's shown to be successful. I know Ontario is trying to do a teacher induction program, which is very much associated with mentorship. If teachers are going to be mentored, why not administrators being mentored? I think we need to get on board with this. The Ontario government, for example, and governments across the country are supporting mentorship programs for teachers. Why aren't they supporting mentorship programs for administrators?