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Upcoming Events

- The 2012 CASA Conference will take place in beautiful Whistler, British Columbia. The conference runs from July 5 through to July 8.

Message From The President: Creativity And Innovation In Leadership

Happy New Year to all CASA members on behalf of the CASA executive!

As we continue our journey as CASA members, leading and supporting all students in Canadian schools, this season of winter provides many opportunities to provide continued educational leadership in our school districts.

Specifically, our leadership in the areas of creativity and innovation is evident with all the educational initiatives that are currently being implemented in classrooms across Canada. These initiatives are stimulating and exciting for students, and ultimately enhance teaching and learning in our Canadian schools.

When we delve into creativity, it is an interesting activity to try to assess exactly what is creativity, and how does it occur in our daily educational activities.

In a review of the research about creativity, Dr. **Dean Keith Simonton** observed that to be considered a creative genius, an individual must seek complex issues and novelty in a wide range of areas, while at the same time remaining an independent and autonomous person who is typically a non-conformist in most of life's endeavours.



Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells
CASA president

This profile corresponds to individuals such as **Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci** and **William Shakespeare**, and perhaps to students and teachers who are in our Canadian schools today.

The question for us as school leaders is how do we respond to the students and teachers in our schools who are creative and innovative in their thinking and learning.

It is critical to develop creativity in our Canadian schools and to continue to provide the leadership to support teachers and students in their creative endeavours. Therefore we recognize that creativity and innovation are essential ingredients in today's world. For our students to be successful citizens, they should develop the confidence that they know how to learn, are able to adapt positively and quickly to change, and are flexible and creative in their thinking.

As school leaders, it is important for us to encourage teachers and students to seek more than one answer to solving a problem. It is essential for teachers to encourage students to review all possibilities, teaching students to suspend judgment and allowing for slow thinking to take the time to create and innovate in their educational activities.

(Continued on page 2)

Message From The Executive Director: Creativity Needed In Learning And In Administration

In a recent article in our national magazine, I commented that “It is up to our leaders to insist that there is a regular, positive and accepted place for creativity and innovation in education.” Since then, I have looked for innovation studies that have proven useful and will lead to better achievement into the future.

In Ontario, the Ministry of Education has authorized a series of projects under the heading of Teaching and Learning in a Digital World. The objective is to measure the effectiveness of some 47 initiatives and then narrow these to a select few that will be the focus of technology direction over the next few years in the schools of the province. The projects fall into 11 groupings featuring studies of blended learning, mobile technology in the classroom, professional learning models, parent and student engagement, and ethical and responsible use. Many will measure the values of using social media.

Alberta has put in place Destination Innovation 2012 to study educational innovation and imaginative practices for learning. An August conference will bring together best practices.

Quebec has planned project grants for teachers and administrators to create systemic change within schools and districts that will improve student achievement.

In other provinces, there is an ongoing focus on innovation and creative delivery of effective learning. Many leading this focus are looking at the value of all forms of technology while committing to the premise today that digital learning is a significant aspect of how to engage students at every age level.

CASA members are involved in all of these projects. They are often the initiators.

Developing better ways of engaging students and delivering positive program is the system leader’s job. We need to celebrate our successes in every province. I invite members to submit innovations that have brought success so that we can share them across Canada.

In closing, I’d like to wish CASA members and our education colleagues all the best for 2012.



Frank Kelly
CASA executive director

Message From The President: Creativity And Innovation In Leadership, continued

(Continued from page 1)

Michelangelo, DaVinci and Shakespeare did not create and innovate in one day or one year, but over time they imagined, created, developed and produced work that has survived centuries for all of us to appreciate and enjoy, inspiring our own creativity.

**It is critical to provide the leadership
to support teachers and students
in their creative endeavours.**

Therefore, as CASA members and leaders in the Canadian education system, let us continue to think creatively, work creatively with others, and implement teaching and learning innovations in our classrooms.

As **Faraq Mousa** reminds us, “The focus should be to encourage and develop creativity in all children without the ultimate goal being to make all children inventors, but rather to develop a future generation of critical thinkers.”

I hope this new year finds you energized and excited about the challenges that lie ahead for all administrators working in public education.

**Creativity and innovation
are essential ingredients
in today’s world.**



Calling All Potential Whistler 2012 Conference Presenters: Request For Expressions Of Interest

By Ed Wittchen
CASA professional development/communications director

The Canadian Association of School Administrators has endeavoured to become the “voice of education” by having a presence in every part of Canada and by leading the way in setting the national education agenda with government. Our annual conference continues the winning format of hosting members and their families over the last several years in such inviting places as St. John’s, Whitehorse, Halifax, Calgary, Quebec City and Niagara Falls. The theme of our conference in Whistler this summer is Creativity and Innovation. It is intended to build on the tremendous success of last year’s conference.

CASA has established a set of national priorities for education, and encouraging and supporting creativity and innovation is a key one. This conference is designed for senior education leaders, school administrators, teachers, provincial education departmental staff and school trustees.

CASA is now requesting expressions of interest from Canada’s leading and innovative education practitioners who wish to present one of a series of exciting breakout sessions at the 2012 CASA Annual Summer Conference. The conference takes place at the Hilton Whistler Resort and Spa in Whistler from July 5 to 7. We know that there are many exciting, creative and innovative activities taking place in classrooms and schools across the nation related to this exciting topic. Please consider sharing your experiences and results with your colleagues.

CASA believes that the best professional development comes from hearing about the successes of our colleagues. Therefore, our breakout sessions feature conference delegates who have experienced successes and are willing to share with others across Canada. To be accepted as a presenter, you must be a paid and registered delegate to the conference and be willing to donate your time and expertise. You should not expect reimbursement for your presentation.

If you are interested in being considered for this agenda, please submit a title of your proposed presentation, a brief two- to three-sentence biography, and a short one- to two-paragraph description of the session. Each breakout session will be 70 minutes.

Please submit your expressions of interest to **Marion Holmes**, our conference facilitator, at PD PROs. Get in touch by email at holmes3@telusplanet.net, by phone at 1 (403)



The beautiful village of Whistler, British Columbia.

386-3860 or by fax at 1 (403) 386-3861. The deadline to submit an application is February 10.

Be sure you don’t miss out on the always popular pre-conference activities. Delegates and their family members are invited to sign up for activities such as Zipline excursions, ATV or Hummer tours to the top of nearby mountains, horseback riding excursions, and golfing on either an **Arnold Palmer-** or **Jack Nicklaus-**designed course. The feature event of the week will be a trip up the unique Peak2Peak gondola lift, which includes a mountain-top barbecue. The Hilton Whistler Resort and Spa, our conference host hotel, is steps away from the village’s pedestrian walk. This route winds through the streets of Whistler and features many shops and restaurants.

We have negotiated a special rate with Pacific Coaches for the two-and-a-half hour shuttle ride from Vancouver International Airport to the hotel (including return shuttle after the conference). Delegates can also choose to rent a vehicle in Vancouver and drive the Sea to Sky Highway built especially for the Vancouver 2010 Olympics.

Watch for a more detailed preview of pre-conference and conference activities in a future issue of *Leaders & Learners*. Details of the conference, as well as registration forms, will also be posted on the CASA website later this spring.



Cold Lake High School And Osum Oil Sands Partnership Promotes Student Interest In Science And Innovation

Article submitted by Osum Oil Sands Corp.
Photos by Christina Kean, teacher, Cold Lake High School

Students rarely realize their own potential. They don't always understand just yet that they hold the keys to solving the world's greatest challenges. We know that one of the most important skills they'll need to solve these challenges is innovation. And the science teachers at Cold Lake High School agree.

Three years ago, Osum Oil Sands approached the Northern Lights School Division's newest high school to form a partnership with the science department.

"These teachers were already taking their classes way beyond what is normally expected," says **Justin Robinson**, communications manager at Osum. "When we began talking, there was an energy in the room as we all brainstormed ideas to create transformative learning experiences for their students. It was clear even then that this was going to be a very different, very collaborative type of relationship."

The partnership started out with a donation to the school's science lab.

"This first step was about providing the best possible tools for students," continues Robinson. "So we just asked the teachers to make a list of all the things they'd invest in if they had the means to create the science lab of their dreams."

Later that year, the first ever Osum Innovation Challenge was born. It was an opportunity for students at the school to

be exposed to world-class keynote speakers with inspiring messages and a challenge that would push their innovation skills to new heights. Osum and the school's team of science teachers worked together to organize a two-day design challenge that would have students creating a new winter sport with the support of two Silicon Valley innovation experts, local hockey teams, community leaders and two-time Olympic gold medalist **Catriona Le May Doan**.


At the 2011 event, students designed and built their own theme park experiences. Though the projects are fun and the end results are colourful and amusing to look at, it's not the towers of cardboard that are important for students. It's the innovation process they're learning to get there.

This past October, guest speaker **George Kourounis**, an adventurer and host of Discovery Channel's *Angry Planet*, challenged the students: "If you want something you've never had, do something you've never done." And that's how Osum feels about its partnership with Cold Lake High School.

Over the last three years, Osum has also funded capacity-building experiences for science teachers at the school, underwritten field trips (like "Riverwatch") for students and installed a solar photovoltaic demonstration project on the school's roof. Robinson says they're inspired to have been part of a distinctive and unique partnership that allows them to promote student interest in science and innovation by collaborating with teachers who are passionately devoted to their students, and they hope to continue with this partnership in the future.



Students from Cold Lake High School with their colourful and imaginative theme park creations.



I've always felt it
was not up to
anyone else to make
me give my best.
—Akeem Olajuwon

Academic, Personal And Musical Excellence: A Profile Of The Suzuki Charter School

The Suzuki Charter School (SCS) in Edmonton is a publicly funded charter school that integrates the Suzuki approach, explained in more detail in the article below, into its academic program. The school offers kindergarten through grade six programs as well as a preschool program to over 300 students. The SCS has three charter goals: to develop and support student excellence in music, academics and personal development.

Parents who enroll their children in the Suzuki Charter School represent a cross-section of the Edmonton community. They share a common belief in the importance of a strong academic program enriched by a carefully planned integrated program of music instruction. Indeed, it is the breadth and central focus on the Suzuki music program that makes the SCS unique, and that qualified the school for charter status, granted by the Alberta Minister of Learning in 1995. It is the first charter school of its kind in the world.

The article below was developed thanks to information provided by **Karen Spencer** and **Lee Lucente**, principal and superintendent of the Suzuki Charter School, based on a presentation **E. Jean Kellogg** made to the University of Alberta in December 2011. CASA members will likely recall Lee's long-term relationship with CASA over the years; Lee was, in fact, awarded an Honorary Life Membership to CASA in 2008.

The Suzuki Charter School (SCS) program is based on the teachings of Dr. **Shinichi Suzuki**, whose philosophy was to develop the whole child through music education. Dr. Suzuki's goal was to nurture a love of music and the development of a fine character, rather than just the mastering of a musical instrument. Dr. Suzuki called his teaching method the Mother-Tongue Approach because he was inspired by the way children so effortlessly learn to speak their native tongue. When a child learns to speak, the following factors are at work:

- listening
- motivation
- repetition
- step-by-step mastery
- memory
- vocabulary
- parental involvement
- love

In the Suzuki approach, each of these principles is used in the learning of an instrument. The Suzuki approach emphasizes three components that support children's development:

- mastery learning
- positive, nurturing environments
- strong family-school-community partnerships

Mastery Learning

Mastery learning refers to a process where students learn a technique or concept and demonstrate mastery of each technique before learning a new technique. For example, music repertoire is ordered so that each piece of music becomes a building block for future learning and each instrument, in-

cluding the voice, has its own repertoire. This provides familiarity and student motivation to progress. Emphasis is also placed on daily listening to Suzuki repertoire. Home listening is encouraged and music reading follows the acquisition of good aural, technical and musical skills, just as reading begins after a child can speak fluently. Integrating the music reading program with the Suzuki repertoire is vital to the child's musical development.

Several key concepts underpin mastery learning in the Suzuki approach:

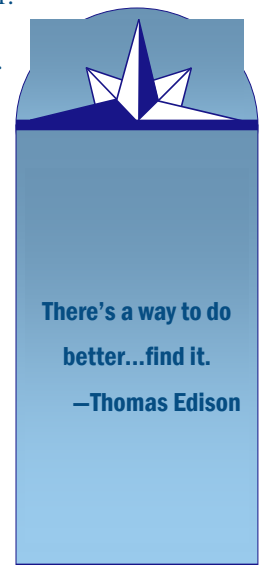
- Every child can learn.
- Ability develops early.
- Environment nurtures growth.
- Children learn from one another.
- Success breeds success.
- Parental involvement is critical.
- Encouragement is essential.

Positive, Nurturing Environments

The Suzuki approach emphasizes the benefits of supportive environments at home, at school and in the community to help students to develop

- confidence and self-esteem
- determination to try difficult things
- self-discipline and concentration
- a lasting enjoyment of music

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Academic, Personal And Musical Excellence: A Profile Of The Suzuki Charter School, continued

(Continued from page 5)

Parents are expected to

- spend time every day at home helping their child with music and academics
- play recordings of Suzuki repertoire at home in an environment of support, encouragement and understanding
- attend Suzuki workshops and music concerts with their child

Family-School-Community Partnerships

The importance of meaningful family, school and community partnerships is emphasized in the Suzuki approach. All partners are expected to contribute to student learning. For example, community partners provide music instruction and performance opportunities for students. Parents are expected to attend music lessons with their child and then guide the student through practice at home. Teachers undergo specialized training to become accredited Suzuki teachers and, once accredited, teachers are expected to remain members of their local Suzuki Association and regularly attend professional development sessions.

Music

Students at the Suzuki Charter School are required to take individual music lessons outside of the school, which are the foundation for individual skill development. Group classes within the school day provide students with experience playing with ensembles using a variety of musical genres such as classical, jazz or 20th-century music.

Choral and music theory are taught to students in kindergarten to grade six. Additional music opportunities at the school include

- glee club
- senior choir
- annual school musical
- school assemblies that showcase student musical talents
- performance opportunities with Suzuki and community partners in community venues
- student participation at Alberta Art Days

Academics

The SCS provides enriched programming in music, academics and personal development based on the Alberta curriculum. For example, French is taught daily from pre-kindergarten to grade six, and choral and music theory are taught to all students in kindergarten to grade six in small classes. Students write provincial achievement tests (PATs) in grades three and six, and the school's results in both

grades are generally above the provincial averages. For example, based on a comparative analysis of student PAT scores, the Fraser Institute recently ranked the Suzuki Charter School as first in Edmonton and second in Alberta. Students at the SCS also generally score above the provincial averages on Edmonton Public School's Highest Level of Achievement Tests.

To meet the learning needs of students, teachers

- use differentiated instruction
- access wraparound supports as needed
- work with provincial programs such as the Edmonton Student Health Initiative Program to meet student needs for speech, language and behavioural interventions
- facilitate daily communication about student progress using student agendas, homework assignments and communicative technology

Teachers also participate in Professional Learning Communities in the school to share promising practices and attend ongoing professional development, which includes

- the Alberta Association of Public Charter Schools conference
- the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement conference
- Alberta Education consultation meetings

Personal Development

To emphasize the importance of personal development, the Lion's Quest program is used at all grade levels, which

- sets high expectations for appropriate behaviour throughout the school
- teaches and reinforces core values such as trustworthiness, responsibility, kindness, honesty, integrity, courage and service
- promotes school-wide character education

Lion's Quest emphasizes that parents are an integral part of the program's implementation and that collaboration and partnerships between home, school and community are essential.

(Continued on page 7)



Academic, Personal And Musical Excellence: A Profile Of The Suzuki Charter School, continued

(Continued from page 6)

To promote the development of character, the SCS also provides leadership opportunities for students, including

- a student council with student representatives from every grade
- reading buddies where older students assist younger readers
- student involvement in planning school assemblies and carnivals
- grade responsible clean-up committees
- kindergarten welcome committee

The school emphasizes the importance of volunteer and service learning opportunities for students through

- a bucket-filling initiative where students perform good deeds
- funding drives for the Edmonton Food Bank and UNICEF
- contributions to a school mitten tree
- planning and hosting a volunteer appreciation tree
- participation in the Snow Angels program, where students shovel sidewalks and driveways for community members

The school also uses a behaviour-intervention protocol, which includes parents, the student and the teacher working collaboratively to address behaviour difficulties.

Accessing the SCS Program

The SCS is open to all families who are interested in following the Suzuki approach of learning to play a musical instrument with their children on registering with the school.

The admission process starts with an in-house registration to see how many students are returning and whether they have siblings ready to enter kindergarten. This allows the school to identify all available openings. After the in-house registration of children of registered families and staff members is complete, registration is opened to a lottery draw.

Parents who have contacted the school and asked to be part of the lottery receive an invitation to an open house, which takes place in February each year. The open house is intended to help parents and students to make an informed decision about the school's program.

History of the SCS

In the early 1990s, the Alberta government, concerned about the state of education, commissioned a report, which found

the absence of competition as the primary reason for "the failure of public schools to provide the level of excellence in education necessary for success in an increasingly competitive society."

In 1994, charter legislation was introduced as an amendment to the *School Act*, which allowed the Minister to establish a charter school if the school had significant support, potentially improved student learning and did not duplicate programs offered by another school board in the district. The charter school concept assumes that, given the option, parents will choose to enroll their children in successful and innovative schools and withdraw them from less responsive and less successful schools, thus introducing competition into the public education system. Alberta is the only province in Canada with charter schools.

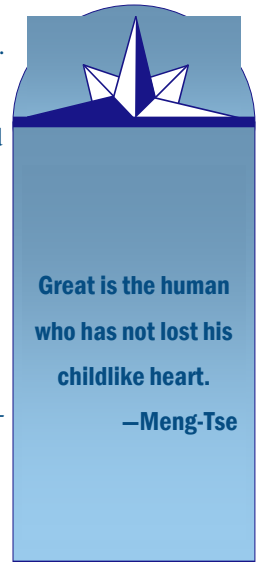
A charter school is a special type of public school organized by groups of parents or educators. Charter schools have a great deal of flexibility in governance and administration but they remain accountable to government for student achievement and fulfillment of their specific charter mandate. Through annual reviews and the charter renewal process, the Minister makes sure that schools are operating according to their charter and achieving all outcomes required by provincial legislation, regulation and policies.

Charter schools must demonstrate that their program is substantively different than programs already available and provide enhanced student learning in measured ways. Charter schools are expected to employ innovative educational practices without duplicating existing public school programming.

The central focus on the Suzuki approach makes the SCS unique and qualified the school for its charter, which was granted by the Minister of Learning in 1995.

To learn more about SCS, visit www.suzukischool.ca.

*"Every child has the sprout of possibility to grow. Nurture that sprout with overflowing love and make the flower of hope bloom."
~ Dr. Shinichi Suzuki*



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Our Mission

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



Our Beliefs

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

Our Goals

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

The Benefits Of A Blended Learning Environment

By Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells
CASA president

A blended learning environment encourages curiosity, promotes independence, and creates new opportunities to challenge all students to expand their academic skills and apply their personal learning styles to maximize potential and academic success.

The intermediate students at Holy Name Catholic Elementary School, with guidance from principal **Antonio Cardamone** and teachers **Cathryn Hay** and **Luana Martinelli**, are experiencing great success with the blended learning pilot. This initiative, created by the Ontario Ministry of Education and partnered by Niagara Catholic District School Board, was created to adapt students' learning styles in the classroom while using 21st-century technology. It blends in-class teacher instruction with online learning, using web-based learning tools, creating an authentic connection between teaching and technology.

Blended learning has provided Holy Name's intermediate teachers and students with a vital tool to successfully incorporate technology into learning and to enhance program delivery. The combination of effective teaching strategies,

blended learning tools and the engaged student body ultimately creates a dynamic learning environment. The blended learning classroom provides innovative ways for students to communicate and collaborate through using learning management system tools, such as the discussion board and blogs, which help increase student learning.

When completing an activity with an online component, the students are fully and actively engaged. Many of the online assignments are interactive and include graphics, text, audio and virtual hands-on activities, which appeal to a variety of learning styles.

A blended classroom offers varied opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking skills by allowing them to communicate, question and challenge each other's ideas more often and more effectively. Students who were previously disengaged are now more focused and are contributing thoughtful and reflective responses to assignments and discussion postings.

The blended learning initiative has empowered both the teachers and the students at Holy Name to take control of their own teaching and learning experience. This has led to higher levels of engagement and achievement for everyone.