



Following release of Re-Imagine Education report, participants call for followup action

REGINA—Rolling out the ambitious Education Re-Imagined initiative to the media, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Executive Director Randy Schmaltz alluded to the 12 Actions for Education, saving the best for last in terms of making sure the message was heard loud and clear.

Schmaltz, who was the chairperson of the Re-Imagine Education Reference Committee, said the 12th action "is the most important" in that it stresses the "actions of education outlined in this report must be acted upon."

It was clear the message was meant for Education Minister Gord Wyant and his Deputy Minister Rob Currie to mull over from their front row seats.

Wyant, for his part, indicated that while the Ministry has its own initiative for change that is scheduled for completion later this year, with the expressed goal of setting the course for education in the province for the next decade with implementation slated for the fall of 2020, Re-Imagine "certainly seems to have some alignments. Looking at the report, I find it very encouraging and I very much look forward to pursuing this further with our education partners."

In an interview afterwards, Wyant lauded the tone of the report, which he said was not accusatory in nature and while calling for significant change, it did not suggest the system is broken.

"I think we can all agree that there needs to be

change. We are going to work on that together by reaching out to our partners in wanting to have the best possible outcomes for the children in our classrooms. I see strong signs of commonality in this report, and it will take some time but I am very encouraged."

The aforementioned actions fall into four categories: the learning environment, decision making, legislation and policy, and funding.

Schmaltz underscored that throughout the 10-month process, the underlying goal of this multi-faceted approach was to have strong feedback from the 19 various partners. He stressed that the community at large has a significant role to play and must take ownership of the future of the province's education system.

Schmaltz shared that the response had been overwhelming, with over 6,000 people completing the survey alone, while consultations were held in 204 schools in 69 different communities.

"The breadth and depth of this engagement is unlike anything we have ever experienced before in the education sector in this province," he said.

According to Schmaltz, the interest in the initiative showed two things very clearly: that the people of Saskatchewan care deeply about education and they believe it is time to chart a new course.

He acknowledged that a confidence rating of 56.4 percent from those who responded "is a little hard to hear. But we can choose to feel hopeful, because we have before us a monumental opportunity."

Monica Kreuger, who was a member of the Reference Committee, represented the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. In her address she made it clear education change is long overdue, suggesting that "we need to do so much more. Our imperative has changed and our education system has not. People are the ones who drive system change and this has to be a movement."

Speaking afterwards, Kreuger referenced the importance of so many diverse organizations having been involved in the process.

"Because of that diversity, we challenged each other and everyone had their eyes opened. Right now there are so many things happening in education that we can barely keep up. We have to be very sensitive and the system has to be flexible, but we have to open this up and make some major changes. Right now there are just too many boxes. The conversations we had during the process, those have to be ongoing so that they become the norm," she said.

Schmaltz had indicated that one of the main themes that emerged from the data is the need to re-think the purpose of schools, noting that the school needs to play a larger role in the community.

Part of that envisioned change is to revisit the importance of addressing supports for children who learn in different ways, specifically recommending the need for the restoration of more educational assistants, speech-language pathologists, EAL teachers, counsellors and Elders.

"The system hasn't kept up to the pace of change when you look at the diversity and social pressures on students," he said, while bemoaning the



Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Executive Director Randy Schmaltz addressed media and those gathered for the release of the Re-Imagine Education report. Schmaltz served as the chairperson of the Re-Imagine Education Reference Committee.

fiscal restraints of recent years that invariably put pressure on schools in trying to meet these diverse needs of students.

Kreuger concurred, adding that "now more than ever, our education system needs to support new ways of learning and doing. Because as our system evolves, so will our community."

Another recommendation that might arguably be difficult to accomplish is the formation of a provincial education council with the expressed view that it be free of politics, thereby ensuring education policy is aligned with best practices.

Wyant actually agreed that keeping politics off to the side would doubtlessly be best for children in the classrooms, but there is ultimately the reality that funding will come down to political decisions.

Kreuger conceded that the changes recommended will for sure cost money, but she maintained that any expenditure has to be seen as an investment in our future.

"We need to work in partnership with the

government. I think it's going to take time and work. People are going to have to roll up their sleeves," she said, adding that she would anticipate some of the conversations that need to be had will not be easy.

As is always the case when an initiative such as this culminates, there is a hope that, as Kreuger said, "the report doesn't gather dust on a shelf."

"This can't ever be over. All the people who participated in this, they are going to want to see some tangible evidence that they have helped make a difference. I don't want to be saying in 50 years that our education system is outdated. People have to wake up and realize that if we speak up and come together, we have a powerful voice."

Schmaltz summed up by insisting "it isn't too late. The time to act is now. We can create a system that is reflective of the people of Saskatchewan, and one that will meet the needs of tomorrow." ■

Building on past success to prepare for the future

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is changing.

We have come a long way since 1933 and are working hard to support teachers and publicly funded public education in Saskatchewan. To reflect these changes, we have rebranded the Federation to align with the new service offerings and supports for our members.

While the current logo is recognizable given the many years it's been in use, it's often misunderstood. The Federation needs a new brand; one that is strong and distinct, clearly displaying who we are and what we stand for. A new brand that builds upon a solid foundation; one that celebrates successes.

The new logo is a prism. It connects the past and is symbolic of the new way we are doing business, evolving as we move into the future. It represents a strong, solid foundation, which is adaptable and contemporary. The prism and refracted light represent one Federation delivering a diverse array of supports and services to its membership. Strength is showcased as

the Federation works to advocate on behalf of Saskatchewan teachers. We stand up for teachers and their needs, especially during challenging times.

The new brand and logo is a departure from the longtime Arbos and our previous identity. The new logo is symbolic of a collective interest that we are all passionate about—knowledge and education. While our look is changing, so too is the way we serve you—our members. We are evolving to better meet the needs of our members, and our brand needs to represent this change.

The education landscape is changing in our province and the Federation is adapting to ensure teachers are supported. There is a brand new mobile app now available in the App Store and Google Play for members, which will enhance and simplify communication. We anticipate that the new app will support our members and their needs, saving time and effort and getting answers when needed.

Also, the Emma Stewart Resources Centre is expanding to allow for easy access

to available resources to best support members' careers. These changes and more will ensure efficient communication and effective support for many years to come.

We will honour the past, and recognize how we got to where we are today by naming the new member-focused resource building at 2311 Arlington Avenue the Arbos Centre for Learning. This name honours the longtime Arbos that has previously symbolized the Federation. We envision that this building, home to the Emma Stewart Resources Centre and STF Professional Development (formerly known as the Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit), will become a place for members to gather, learn and collaborate.

Investing in education is an investment in the future. ■



Talking about challenges of mental health resonates with Aden Bowman teachers

A year ago, a foundation was established for students to talk about mental health issues at Aden Bowman Collegiate in Saskatoon. This year it had morphed into an all-day event with no less than 26 wellness sessions in the morning and another 28 offered in the afternoon (many were off-site).

Even that statement gives you an appreciation for the amount of logistical work that had to be put in place. While the entire staff pitched in, resource teacher Joelle Kryszak and science teacher Rick Bowes were front and centre when it came to organizing the day.

Enlisting the help of a host of community organizations, Saskatoon City Police and the Grades 10 to 12 students themselves, the organizers fulfilled what they saw as integral to the day—students being able to choose what resonated with them the most.

“It was great to see what the students came up with in terms of variety, and so we didn’t wind up with just a narrow focus. It was clear right from the start in talking to the students that they wanted choice in terms of the sessions we were able to offer,” Kryszak said.

Among the host of presenters were the multiple keynotes delivered by Connie Jakab, director of the National Hope Talks foundation. Her presentation included some of her own struggles with bullying growing up and later, the suicidal thoughts exhibited by her son at age eight.

She implored the students in the theatre to find the courage and the sense of bravery required in order “to do whatever it takes to make you who you are and what you stand for. You need to have a plan and it’s about the decisions you make,” she said, while also adding the importance of perhaps getting parents back in students’ lives more.

“Every single one of you has the ability to overcome the challenges you might face, whether it’s anxiety or depression, and you all have the ability to be resilient,” she reassured them.

Sitting in a vacated classroom with Bowes, Kryszak spoke of their shared passion and that of their colleagues at the school in wanting to create a school culture where it’s OK to talk about mental health issues and that they are here to support each other.



Joelle Kryszak and Rick Bowes share a lighter moment while looking over the jam-packed agenda for the wellness and mental health day held at Aden Bowman Collegiate.

“This is an example of trying to provide an extra tool for the students’ tool kits and helping them in any way we can,” she said.

From Bowes’ standpoint, the whole process has been empowering, adding that “we have to remind ourselves that mental health issues are not a sign of weakness and it should not be synonymous with that. I’ve learned so much in being involved in this whole process. It just confirms how important it is for us as teachers to listen and to realize we have to change to make room for this new generation so that in turn, they can pass on what they learn. It’s not like when we went to school,” he acknowledged.

“As a staff we know how important this is. If we can reach one or 10 out of the 900-plus students, you see real value and it keeps driving us forward.”

Kryszak said that to see this day come to fruition has been huge for every single member of the staff, “and we can’t forget about it after this day. We have to be mindful of this all the time and it has to be our reality,” she said, brandishing the T-shirt the two were wearing for the day.

Both spoke resoundingly of the degree of support they have received from principal Paul Humbert and the administrative team as well as Saskatoon Public Schools and certainly not least, from the school community council, whom Bowes said came up with the funding to bring in

Jakab. He said throughout the process, which started back in the spring, there has been unconditional support.

“In fact, we’ve had people just totally behind this and asking how they could help, and so that has been very gratifying. People see the need for us to address some of these issues that our students face.”

“You realize working in a school with all these students that it’s more than just about academics. We feel so fortunate to have been given the time and opportunity to do this and it’s important to maybe help make a difference for a kid,” Kryszak added.

“I was shocked at the level the kids would open up with us and in how they wanted to help others. Historically, [Aden] Bowman has been somewhat of a melting pot. It’s been very close-knit and there have been some really cool moments along the way. It’s been great to see how this involvement has made students probably trust us more,” Bowes noted.

“My eyes have really been opened and I’ve got to know some of the students that much better. The energy the students have put into the process has been my medicine and given me great strength,” he said, noting how one of the surprises has been the degree to which male students in particular have opened up.

“It’s been a great learning opportunity for all of us. I know a lot of students feel important today, so it feels really good,” Bowes added. ■

RESOURCE CONNECTIONS



By Joan Elliott, Librarian/Manager,
Emma Stewart Resources Centre

Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching

Given that schools in Saskatchewan are welcoming increasing numbers of culturally diverse, newcomer students, it is ever more important that we examine our own cultural assumptions and adopt culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy.

The September 2019 issue of *Education Canada* focused on the theme of culturally relevant teaching. Articles such as *Cultivating Community: Building Relationships Through Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*, by Laryssa Gorecki, *Developing Intercultural Competence: A Shift in Thinking*, by Johanne Mednick Myles, *Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy: How One School Moved Forward*, by Stephen Hurley, and *(Trans-multi) Culturally Responsive Education: A Critical Framework for Responding to Student Diversity*, by Latika Raisinghani, each provide pertinent approaches for learning to communicate in affirmative and inclusive ways with students who are linguistically and culturally diverse.

Supporting Emergent Multilingual Learners in Science, Grades 7-12, by Molly Weinburgh, Cecilia Silva and Kathy Horak Smith, describes an inquiry-based model for fostering authentic language learning and communication in science classrooms. Scaffolding, visual representations and journal entries are used to build the language skills of students.

With a Little Help From My Friends: Conversation-Based Instruction for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Classrooms, by Paula J. Mellom, Rebecca K. Hixon, and Jodi P. Weber, discusses ways of creating a safe classroom environment and of capitalizing on teachers’ and students’ home language, background knowledge and experience. Numerous suggestions for providing differentiated support and conversation-based lessons are also included.

Margarita Espino Calderón and Shawn Slakk, in *Success With Multicultural Newcomers & English Learners: Proven Practices for School Leadership Teams*, outline how to assess students’ academic, social and emotional needs, plan for professional development and school-wide programs, and teach vocabulary, reading comprehension and writing. *Supporting English Learners in the Classroom: Best Practices for Distinguishing Language Acquisition From Learning Disabilities*, by Eric M. Hass and Julie Esparza Brown, describes ways of determining if a second language learner is progressing well or may have a learning disability, outlines multi-tiered support systems, as well as effective instruction for learners with academic challenges.

Strategies for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning, by Sharrokk Hollie, provides insightful suggestions for considering one’s mindset related to deficit thinking and knowing one’s race-ethno cultural identity, creating responsive classroom environments, as well as responsive instruction for literacy and language. *Culturally Responsive Literacy Instruction*, edited by Bob Algozzine, Dorothy J. O’Shea and Festus E. Obiakor, connects the backgrounds and interests of students to curriculum and discusses effective practices for implementing and evaluating literacy instruction.

Hands-On English Language Learning For Early Years (Grades 1-3): An Inquiry Approach and Hands-On English Language Learning For Middle Years (Grades 4-6): An Inquiry Approach, both developed by Jennifer Lawson and her team, are practical guides that briefly outline the stages of language acquisition, present information on cultural knowledge and classroom-based assessment and feature scores of engaging activities with curricular connections.

Laura Mahalingappa, Terri L. Rodriguez and Nihat Polat in their book *Supporting Muslim Students: A Guide to Understanding the Diverse Issues of Today’s Classrooms*, advocate for all students through a social justice lens. Chapters on food and clothing, peer relationships and interactions, civic participation and school-community relationships explain the challenges faced by many Muslim students and illustrate ways that schools can be more inclusive for Muslim students and their families.

The Talk About kits published by Scholastic Canada feature well-illustrated and engaging literature for early years and elementary English language learners. Titles for the early years are *Everyday Things and Everyday Living*, while the titles for the elementary grades are *Science in My World* and *Things Around Me*.

Culturally responsive teaching can change mindsets and skill sets and may also transform how you approach teaching and learning in general.

To borrow the items highlighted here, please email src@stf.sk.ca or call 1-800-667-7762. ■

Free ASD resources available for teachers

Autism spectrum disorder is a huge topic and each child is unique in their strengths, challenges and preferences. To provide someone with background knowledge and applicable tools requires a resource that is often long and complex.

Although these are great to provide a holistic understanding of ASD, during the busy school year it can be hard to find the time and energy to complete a full online training course.

Paste Education was created as a free alternative to the traditional training course. Instead of walking through all of the topics associated with autism, their modules are designed to allow teachers to pick and choose the topics most relevant to the students they are working with. Each module is animated, designed to be less than 40 minutes in length and provides some easy strategies that may be directly implemented in the classroom.

For people seeking a deeper understanding of ASD, these traditional resources will likely be better. However, for those looking for foundational knowledge and simple skills, please check out these modules at www.learn.pasteeducation.org.

Everything is free and connects you with bite-sized information from behavioural therapists, occupational therapists, developmental psychologists and special education experts. ■

Repta reminds teachers establishing wellness culture is important

During his presentation at the Councillor Conference regarding wellness for teachers, Wade Repta offered plenty of options for those in attendance to contemplate, but at the same time he also shared some hard truths.

"On a day-to-day basis it's not necessarily realistic to have balance between work and life. Reducing the workload for teachers is not always realistic," he offered.

"That's why it's important to be realistic when you are looking to improve your physical well-being in particular. You need to set goals that are attainable. If you think in terms of black and white, that can be hard. It's more about looking at the bigger picture. It might look different in how to create a culture of wellness and remember, we don't have all the answers."

Repta, an occupational therapist and vice-president of the Vancouver-based humanworks consulting group inc., has been working with teachers for the past two decades and so he is able to offer an extensive, valuable outside voice. Much of what he has experienced can be found in *The Well Teacher*, which he wrote with the help of his wife Andrée.

Although low-key in his style, he frequently referenced the findings in the publication, including the reality that is all too familiar to teachers—that they are being asked to do more with less.

Repta reckons there is pretty much an even split

between physical health and mental health issues that are pervasive within the profession. He agreed in an interview afterwards that it all too often refers back to the notion of "sucking it up" because teachers, by their very nature, are so focused on the needs of their students.

"... there is a sense of reluctance, but in fact you might find [your colleagues] do understand. We don't know what the other person is thinking and that they might be crying on their way to work in the morning. It's part of the autonomy that teachers have. It's important to understand that it's OK to be unwell and sometimes you have to do things for yourself first."

Wade Repta

He alluded to the fact that in today's social media world there are a multitude of ways in which educators can share, talk or listen to colleagues



Wade Repta's presentation on wellness drew a full house and reminded teachers of the importance of asking for help if necessary, while adding that there is no shame in doing so.

and their respective concerns when it comes to creating a person's "wellness culture."

Too often though, teachers find it difficult to start those aforementioned conversations.

"The teaching part; that's the easy part," he said in the interview, while referencing that "it's all the other stuff—a diverse student population, meeting parents' expectations and those of management. The teaching part is often where folks find refuge," he added.

During his presentation, Repta asked the rhetorical, poignant question of whether it is OK for teachers to be unwell. Answering his own question, he emphasized that "yes, it's OK to say you're not sure if you're OK. That has to

be the starting point in a lot of cases. Remember, you are not the wellness police. You just might be the person who needs the support the most and for someone to listen."

According to Repta, one of the key stepping stones is to forego the feeling of shame some teachers might experience if they feel like they are unable to cope to the extent which they expect of themselves.

"It's ironic how there is this thinking that your colleagues might not want to listen. So there is a sense of reluctance, but in fact you might find they do understand. We don't know what the other person is thinking and that they might be crying on their way to work in the morning. It's

part of the autonomy that teachers have. It's important to understand that it's OK to be unwell and sometimes you have to do things for yourself first."

Repta noted that he has witnessed a shift in this behaviour in recent years. "I think there is a collective understanding that teachers must change in terms of the recognition that it's all right to ask for help. It's part of establishing trust and that people are on your side."

His message clearly resonated with many in the room since the rather modest pile of his books were quickly spoken for following the session. To learn more about *The Well Teacher*, visit www.humanworkspress.com. ■

Kidder praises Re-Imagine initiative while reminding teachers of their important role

It wasn't difficult to spot the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation hierarchy following keynote presenter Annie Kidder's speech at the Councillor Conference opening session.

By all accounts, they were the ones with the smile on their face. Without any prompting, Kidder, the widely respected executive director of the Ontario-based People for Education non-profit association, praised the merits of the Re-Imagine Education initiative undertaken by the STF and a host of outside organizations in contemplating the future of public education in Saskatchewan.

Unlike many keynote presenters at conferences here, Kidder had clearly done her homework before coming to Saskatchewan. She also worked tirelessly as not only the keynote, but also at a host of workshop-related activities during her two days in Saskatoon.

In Kidder's words, what is happening here is both "extraordinary and rare," in reference to the Re-Imagine initiative in particular.

She lauded the fact that these sorts of initiatives are being taken on by a teacher organization like the STF; a situation which she bemoaned is not happening in her own province where hardly a day goes by without the latest round of deep



Annie Kidder addresses Councillor Conference in which she praised the work being done in Saskatchewan education and by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation in particular. She also reminded teachers of how critical their role is.

funding cutbacks and loss of funding for teachers.

"Class size is a nice and easy thing to talk about, but what gets lost in the conversation is how it's all about the funding cutbacks. That will lessen flexibility, and we all suffer when this happens."

Citing her own organization, of which Kidder is a founder and has been involved with for two-plus decades, she noted how they are about advocacy for public education and are attempting to amplify the public conversation about public education.

Somewhat of a media darling in her own backyard, Kidder is frequently the spokesperson whom the

electronic and newspaper journalists seek out to comment on the latest turn in this seemingly never-ending soap opera since Doug Ford became Premier in Ontario, and whose financial agenda seems squarely aimed at the respective teachers' unions and the profession.

Kidder said she is bemused by what she referred to as "polarized conversations, which are very problematic. Public education is an incredibly important part of a civilized society and public education is connected to everything. It is the hub at the centre of some of the issues we are struggling with like truth and reconciliation,

knowledge economy and wanting to have an engaged citizenry.

"When you look at the funding cutbacks, we need to realize that money put into education is an investment and will result in cost savings in health care, social assistance and crime years down the road. The problem is it takes a long time to see the return for governments and we need to continue to build a public dialogue about what is happening."

Of course, none of this is groundbreaking news to teacher associations or members of the profession in general. According to Kidder though, it is imperative to have the hard evidence on your side when building your case to the general public.

Kidder noted the rather unique situation in Canada where she indicated 95 percent of the populace attend public schools.

Touching on the work People for Education is involved in, Kidder said it often involves working across sectors in an effort to better inform people outside of rooms like this what an enterprise education is.

"Sometimes it's important to take a step back and reflect," she indicated, sharing the organization's pledge to follow up on what she called "the new basics" rather than merely reverting to the back-to-the-basics mantra.

"For our students today, it's about thinking creatively and critically, and learning to learn and communicating effectively. It's about developing a sense of self and developing constructive relationships. Our students in elementary school won't even know what the jobs will be in the future of this rapidly changing world. That's why we need to prepare them with these traits. We need the next generation to deal with a lot of complex problems that we have left them with," she noted.

This is why she reminded teachers how critical their role is on a daily basis.

"You are actually making a difference in millions of kids' lives and there is no more important job in the world than yours. It's easy sometimes for teachers to take their own work for granted.

"You are the experts when it comes to education and your voice needs to be honoured. It is important to link what you're trying to do so that our kids can thrive in the world in the future. That's how critical education is, and we have the same challenges and issues across the country. That's part of our [People for Education] mission to help be that voice. We need to stand together to continue to build that important public dialogue," she stressed. ■



Among those attending the Atlantic Rim Collaboratory summit in Wales were (from left) Darren McKee, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, Randy Schmaltz, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, Deloris Netmaker, Executive Director of Education with the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, Andy Hargreaves and Pasi Sahlberg, Gord Wyant, Minister of Education, Julie Leggott, Chief of Staff for Minister Wyant and Rob Currie, Deputy Education Minister.

Schmaltz, Wyant share observations from ARC summit

Saskatchewan was sitting at the table with some rather select company while attending the recent Atlantic Rim Collaboratory summit held in Wales.

The ARC's vision is to establish a global group of educational systems prioritizing democracy and human rights for all students with high-quality, professionally run systems. While still in its relative infancy, the members include primarily countries from northern Europe as well as Uruguay, with Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia as the provincial participants from Canada.

Those attending from here included Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Executive Director Randy Schmaltz, Education Minister Gord Wyant and Deputy Minister Rob Currie, as well as Saskatchewan School Boards Association Executive Director Darren McKee and Executive Director of Education with the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Deloris Netmaker.

According to Wyant, he was impressed with how the Saskatchewan delegation were "genuine contributors" to the conversations, which included exchanges with ARC founder Andy Hargreaves and some internationally recognized education thinkers like Pasi Sahlberg.

Schmaltz noted how it was invaluable to gain insight into what other nations are thinking when it comes to delving into "what good education reform looks like, and to contemplate how we can look at reforming our education system. It was very helpful to have those conversations and for the folks around the table to maybe challenge each other's thinking."

"It was pretty powerful to hear some of the different perspectives when you put it into the context of where we need to go in the future," Wyant said. "It's always helpful to not have too narrow of a focus. One of the most important things I came away with was the need to create coherence across the whole system."

"We [Saskatchewan] are not unique in seeking to have that cohesion. It might be difficult to define, but it starts by all the partners sitting at the table and having the connections we need in trying to develop a clearer vision."

It was not by coincidence that Wales was the chosen venue since many in the global education reform movement have lauded Welsh Minister for Education Kirsty

Williams for her courage and insight in reforming the country's school system, including sweeping changes to the curriculum.

Schmaltz came away impressed with the "reform journey" which Williams has helped spearhead. He suggested that one of the keys to success was that the system has emphasized the importance of principals and teachers leading the way in implementing change, which he suggested has been sorely lacking in Saskatchewan in recent times.

For his part, Wyant observed that the reason this has been accomplished to the degree it has in Wales was due to the fact that the Ministry, school leaders and teachers all took responsibility for its implementation.

"There was a real sense of trust and that's the first thing that has to happen in Saskatchewan if we're going to have system-wide change. My hope is we can do that because I've always said that meaningful change can't come from the top down. You could see in Wales how there was real buy in from the teachers and administrators because they took ownership of the process. So, it's much more likely that you are going to have participation from everyone. Change can't be imposed," Wyant noted.

An area where Schmaltz and Wyant concurred was the fact that there has been a growing tendency of administrators and teachers spending so much time collecting data because of the accountability measure, that their devotion to teaching is diminished.

"It came out pretty clearly that it can't be just about accountability measures. We can't overlook best practices, and there was lots we could take away from the conference and that was one of the themes for sure," Schmaltz offered.

Youth Council expected to add student voice to education sector

Deputy Premier and Education Minister Gord Wyant recently announced the members of the 2019-20 provincial Youth Council, a group of 12 high school students committed to improving their communities and empowering other young people in the province.

As members of the 2019-20 provincial Youth Council, students will have the opportunity to address meaningful issues directly with the Minister of Education and other government members, while also providing

Wyant acknowledged he has heard the same refrain from teachers and administrators throughout the province. Not for the first time he also heard the message delivered from Sahlberg, who is a staunch critic of an overreliance on data.

"School boards certainly require a certain amount of data, but if it doesn't lean toward meaningful change, then you have to say it's not working," Wyant said.

"There were certainly some examples of Wales having been very progressive. I think some of what they did can be emulated in Saskatchewan. Sometimes change isn't the easiest thing, and there's no question we have a lot of work to do, but you could see from their example that there were tangible signs of success. There is something to be said for the notion that sometimes what is hardest can also have the best results."

In summing up the overall experience, Wyant said it was valuable, "but I have to say nothing changed my mind in terms of where we need to go."

Schmaltz underscored the fact that "90 percent of the Re-Imagine Education initiative aligns very tightly to what we heard and what we are looking to accomplish in terms of what makes a good education system."

"It is going to require considerable political will and commitment. I think this conference reaffirmed what the elements of success look like. This has to be about empowering teachers and administrators. Restructuring has to be above improving learning and not about saving dollars. We would like to see self-assessment as opposed to good PISA scores, and we heard that time and again in what I believe were sincere and genuine conversations about what's best for kids," he stressed. ■

guidance on how to better engage students.

"Students have a critical voice in education and an important role to play in improving the future of our province, and I am looking forward to hearing their valuable feedback," Wyant said. "Thank you to the school divisions and education organizations who took the time to submit nominations and support our students in making their voice heard."

From the 51 nominations received by the Ministry

EDITORIAL



Imagining education without politics seems unlikely to happen

There we have it people—the culmination of the Re-Imagine Education initiative. Well, at least sort of. For as much as they might have tied a bow to the 10-month process in a swanky Regina hotel, the litmus test will be what happens now that the widespread consultations have been formally presented to Education Minister Gord Wyant and his colleagues.

Reading through the presentation, it's readily apparent how much of a general consensus there was when you consider there were 19 various partners involved which covered a pretty wide spectrum. And it would be fair to say not everyone has the exact same interests as their focus, yet there was no doubting that the folks who poured their heart and soul into this came away convinced that, above all else, our schools need to present a safe, inviting learning environment for all students.

That was the shared view of parents, students and teachers and really, who can argue with their basic premise. It was noted that the current education system is not broken, but there needs to be a reset with shared accountability.

In an effort to streamline the whole thing, there were 12 recommendations emanating from four main themes: learning environment, decision making, legislation and policy, and education funding.

So let's cut to the chase here and acknowledge just how important the latter is. This will always be about the funding and so it jumps off the page that among the 12 recommendations (wish list if you will) is the establishment of a provincial council on education which would be free of politics.

That echoes the comments made by Dean Jerome Cranston, Faculty of Education, University of Regina, at the first meeting of Re-Imagine Education, when he underscored the need to put politics aside. He was passionate about the importance of speaking for all children and as a subtext to that, the need for people to let go of some of the control they might currently have.

There was also the notion of how any chance for revitalizing the sector needs to come from the bottom up rather than from the top down. This is noble for sure. In fact, it's a phrase I have heard often from Minister Wyant himself.

Then we have the espoused theory that any sort of curriculum change needs to be relevant for students. That surely gives one pause because I'm going to go out on a limb here and suggest that should always have been the goal.

Another nugget was the agreed upon notion that the community has a critical role to play in the future of education in this province. There's a novel concept that slides right alongside the importance of having local voice.

So summing up here, there are some very laudable aspirations and hopes, but just to play the devil's advocate for a moment, this report could just as easily have been dubbed "Re-Re-Imagine Education" or even "School Plus 2.0."

The key part when we look back on this exercise in a decade or so would be whether the government would be willing to kick in the resources, both financially and in terms of boots on the ground. Because alas, the reality is if there's going to be any meaningful, sustained change then government very much has to be involved and so to suggest that we keep politics out of this is naively optimistic. ■

SASKATCHEWAN BULLETIN

The Saskatchewan Bulletin is published 10 times during the school year by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Contributions to the Bulletin are welcome and will be used when possible.

All material is subject to editing. Requests for coverage by Bulletin staff should be received at least three weeks before the event.

Editor: Jens Nielsen

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40064493
Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses To:

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2317 Arlington Avenue
Saskatoon SK S7J 2H8
Tel: 306-373-1660/1-800-667-7762
Fax: 306-374-1122
Email: bulletin@stf.sk.ca

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Member of the Canadian Educational Press Association and the Educational Press Association of America.
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of Education, 12 students were selected following an extensive adjudication and interview process. Each Council member attends a different school division and brings their own unique perspective, skills and background. Biographies of all 12 selected council members can be found on the Youth Council page of the Ministry's website www.saskatchewan.ca.

"I am grateful for this opportunity and I look forward to representing

student voice, providing valuable insight on important issues and gaining a better understanding of education from a ministry perspective," 2019-20 Youth Council member Jordan Verbeek said. "I am excited to be a part of impacting future education for students in Saskatchewan."

The Youth Council's inaugural meeting was held on October 19, where members sat down with Wyant to discuss topics of importance to them and their peers. ■

Milestone teachers embrace different twist on delivering professional development

When Ferrah Graham and Kelly Gerein embarked on their journey as administrative leaders last year at Milestone School, they had a shared passion for revamping the standard practice of professional development for the 15 teachers at the K-12 school.

Graham, the principal of the school, indicated that both colleagues are very much proponents of deep learning. They envisioned forsaking teachers going to the occasional big-ticket, costly professional development event in favour of much more frequent, staff-led professional development initiatives at the school level.

Or, as the effusive Graham suggested, “we wanted to take our professional development funding and go with small bits that our teachers could use in their own classroom. We were fortunate to have a lot of amazing teachers on staff who bought into our vision,” she reflected. “We wanted the staff to think about professional development all the time.”

Predictably, with such a significant shift in focus, the existing staff could have been forgiven for balking at the notion. However, as Graham explained, it was critical that it was presented as optional.

“It was important that we presented this in such a way that it didn’t make it feel like it was an extra for our teachers, and that it was just a continuation of good practice,” Graham explained.

Then, to add a little extra incentive, they took their professional development funds to purchase a series of gift cards, which

Graham chuckled appealed especially to the competitive nature of some.

“We didn’t want to make it onerous. All we asked was that they provided some sort of evidence when their project was completed and so we were encouraging to share with colleagues. We made it very informal and it helped people to really think outside the box and to engage,” Graham said.

There was also a conscious effort to celebrate the innovation shown by having a school celebration where learning was the focal point.

“We didn’t know how much we had bitten off. But people could see how relevant and focused everyone was and how it improved our practice. Along the way, the idea was embraced by our education and administrative assistants and our custodians. People could see how it was improving the lives of our students and so people really jumped on board. We had so many great things happening that we couldn’t even have anticipated,” Graham enthused, noting that there have been more than 150 engagements since its inception.

And lest you should think the topics are just standard run-of-the-mill fare, there have been studies into such areas as looking at adverse childhood experiences and their effects, and trauma-informed teaching. This has been a bonus for Graham, who is a deep learning enthusiast—a passion which she has shared with her staff at every opportunity.

She also cited the way in which the teacher-librarian (team coach) has managed

to utilize various delivery modes from traditional books to TED Talks, for example, to expand students and colleagues’ perspectives.

The staff room has been virtually transformed during this journey, which Graham said means that now it’s the norm to hear people sharing their professional learning and practices.

“At the start we might have had to shoulder tap folks sometimes but now they are coming to us with ideas they want to share, and so everyone learns. It’s been a dream and it has helped make the school a lot of fun, and a very vibrant place.”

Increased collaboration has happened quite seamlessly in the process. Graham said because of the diverse interests of staff members, one of the byproducts has been that they have developed experts in a range of areas.

“I’ve also noticed it has changed how staff interact with students and everyone just dives right in. That has been a big part of this process and we’re seeing a lot of deep thinking and sharing.”

That sharing has in fact been extended to other schools within the Prairie Valley School Division,



This is an example of gift cards that staff at Milestone School have made available to staff who have embraced the school’s ambitious professional development initiative. Shown are (from left) principal Ferrah Graham, teacher Alex Meeres displaying his bounty and vice-principal Kelly Gerein.

including teachers from Milestone co-planning with colleagues from other schools.

“Definitely that’s been one of the really positive things that has resulted from all this. We have had examples where within the school we encourage teachers from the high school grades to trade classes with our elementary teachers. That has been exciting and it’s just another example of how this has snowballed,” Graham said.

While originally intended to be a one-year project before committing to its

continuation, Graham shared how staff had implored the model be continued when looking at preplanning for the current school year.

“There have just been so many side-effects or spinoffs, that we couldn’t have anticipated. So it’s gone way beyond what we might have hoped. It’s just amazing the growth we have seen,” she summed up.

Graham emphasized the group’s willingness to share their list of PD challenges by checking out #milestonepdchallenge on Twitter. ■

STF, FSIN call for investment in light of falling First Nations, Métis grad rates

Although it has been an oft-repeated goal of the Ministry of Education to increase First Nations and Métis graduation rates to 65 percent by 2020, the reality is that based on the most recent numbers, it is actually trending downwards.

Leaders of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations and the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation recently addressed the media in a united call for an immediate investment by the government in order to address this troubling trend.

“We have constantly encouraged for investment in the education sector in Saskatchewan, but it’s not happening and so we’re looking at this as a wake-up call. This should be a no-brainer,” FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron stated.

Cameron cited recent data from Saskatchewan Education showed the 2010 three-year graduation rate for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students dropped from 44.5 percent to 43.4 percent after having experienced modest gains previously. The five-year graduation rates showed a minimal increase from 59.4 percent to 61 percent.

According to STF President Patrick Maze, these numbers are unacceptable when compared to the overall graduation rates of approximately 80 percent.

“Government has committed to improving graduation rates for Indigenous students, but the plan isn’t working. It’s time to do more.

“When you consider the numbers have actually decreased, that’s not acceptable and it requires a considerable investment from both the provincial and



Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation President Patrick Maze answers question from the media to bemoan the ‘unacceptable’ state of First Nations and Métis students grad rates. He is flanked by FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron (left) and 2nd Vice-Chief David Pratt.

federal government. It’s not just an education issue, it’s a societal issue and we need to do better,” Maze indicated.

Cameron agreed, stating that he is looking for investment rather than incarceration for First Nations and Métis youth. “We want to work together and it will have a positive impact for everyone. We must fix these issues now.

“We don’t want to hear words. We want to see something in writing that is going to be for the benefit of everyone. We are going to hold government to task because our youth need to be able to see a bit of a light at the end of the tunnel, and education is that light,” he said.

FSIN 2nd Vice-Chief David Pratt, a former teacher himself, said First Nations students continue to face barriers and obstacles that prevent them from reaching their full potential in school.

“Government has to step up to the plate and ensure the proper support systems are in place to significantly increase First Nations graduation rates. We must work together on finding solutions for better educational outcomes and

also encourage our youth to continue their education into post-secondary and the trades.”

Pratt said despite past promises by both levels of government to address the issues, “what we are seeing on the ground is that there has been very little funding increase at the grassroots level. We need to stop looking at education as an expense, but rather as an investment in our children’s future.”

Cameron said it’s time to ponder options that might be outside the box. He emphasized the importance of the language and culture component, which he said will help students gain a sense of identity and build their self-esteem so that they want to succeed.

Reflecting on his time with the education portfolio while serving as Vice-Chief, Cameron said “I didn’t think it would take this long for something to happen. I thought we would start to see positive results. We can’t continue to not do anything. We need to take this seriously and perhaps have students to be more involved in terms of what works and what doesn’t work.” ■

Walk to Breakfast Celebrates 2019 Mosaic Challenge Winners

REGINA—Efforts of Saskatchewan schools to improve student nutrition and create healthier environments are celebrated with the Mosaic Extreme School Makeover Challenge’s Walk to Breakfast.

Since 2006, The Mosaic Company and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association have hosted the Challenge to encourage grassroots initiatives. Earlier this year, 10 schools each received \$10,000 as winners of the 2019 Challenge. Among the winners was Regina Public School Division’s Arcola Community School, host of the 2019 Walk to Breakfast event.

“We look forward to the Walk to Breakfast event each year and are excited to be at Arcola School and hear about their Makeover Challenge-winning project,” said Sarah Fedorchuk, vice-president, public affairs and government relations at The Mosaic Company. “This event is a great way to kick off a new school year and another set of projects focused on making nutrition a daily part of student lives. We wish the 10 winning schools the best of luck this fall!”

Arcola Community School’s winning project highlights include providing nutrition and life skills training,

developing cookbooks to share at home and hosting family engagement days.

“Helping students learn about lifelong nutrition and life skills is a lesson that helps them, their families and potentially, future generations,” said Katherine Gagne, chairperson, Regina Board of Education. “We are grateful to Mosaic and the SSBA in making this ambitious, good-health project possible.”

Other winning schools this year are part of the Good Spirit, Living Sky, Northern Lights, Northwest, Regina Catholic, Saskatoon Catholic, Saskatoon Public and South East Cornerstone school divisions.

“Healthy and nutritious food plays such an important part in the overall success and well-being of students,” Regina Pasqua MLA Muhammad Fiaz said on behalf of the Minister of Education, Gord Wyant. “I would like to commend Arcola Community School and all the other recipients for their innovative ideas and commitment to making nutrition an important part of students’ everyday lives.”

A record of more than 80 schools submitted projects to compete in the 2019 Challenge. ■

Hattie leaves educators with much to digest in analyzing their own approach

By the time John Hattie had finished his double-pronged keynote presentation to a full house at the Visible Learning Plus Foundation Day Institute in Saskatoon, he had doubtlessly left some of the educators in the room with much to contemplate—if not somewhat bewildered at times.

While Hattie suggested that every school deserves at least one lead (or highly accomplished) teacher on staff, he made no bones about the fact that there are too many schools who are “cruising”—somewhat mischievously suggesting that “if you have low expectations, you will succeed.”

Yet, he also suggested that despite a myriad of changes in education, teachers for the most part manage to get it right. In an interview afterwards, it was his assertion that in general, teachers are guilty of selling themselves short of the impact they have on students.

In Hattie’s world, impact is an often-repeated phrase. During his presentation, he offered that “I don’t care about how you teach; I care about the impact of your teaching to your students.”

That was just a snippet of what Hattie had to share this day. And, if he opined that teachers might be too modest, he personally is the anomaly of that particular character trait. Backed up by his international acclaim established over several decades and a ubiquitous resumé of books and reports, the native of New Zealand is not shy to share his views, even if his devotion to Visible Learning has drawn criticism in some circles.

“I will defend my research to anyone and if they are uncomfortable with it, that’s all right. I’m not here to win a popularity contest,” he said quite candidly in the interview.

As the cornerstone of his zealous belief in the Visible Learning model, Hattie

reiterated a phrase often associated with his work when he insisted that the real litmus test of this approach is “that every student should experience at least one year’s growth over the course of one school year.”

Utilizing a seemingly infinite set of slides and data to back up his extensive research work, Hattie is unapologetic about his belief in assessment, albeit not in the context many would deduce such as standardized testing, for example.

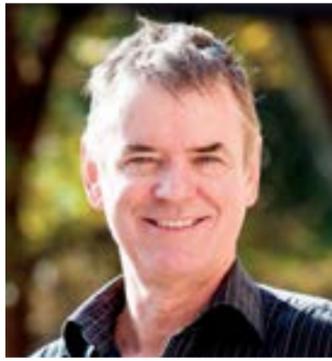
Always at the root of his views on the effectiveness of teachers and their respective schools is how the teaching is reaching the students. Utterly synonymous with assessment in Hattie’s view, is collective efficacy and collaboration, which he says is too often missing in schools.

Hattie is adamant that the narrative has to change, and an integral way to accomplish this is to get away from the notion of teachers having autonomy.

“Teachers too often sell themselves short. ... Look at the huge difference [they] can make in the lives of kids.”

John Hattie

In a perfect world Hattie would like to see teachers come out of the classroom more often to interact with colleagues and outside experts in order to have greater access to feedback of their own teaching methods. He concedes this would be very expensive and it would require buy-in from parents and the general public if such an extensive measure were to be introduced.



John Hattie

He also underscored the increased benefits teachers can experience if connected to international colleagues via the internet, which has been a passion of his through his partnership with Corwin, a SAGE Publishing Company.

“Teachers too often sell themselves short, and perhaps it’s because their expertise is not recognized in the way it should be in many places around the world. We have to strive for building a strong community of excellence among teachers. As a profession, we haven’t sold it well enough and I want to change that. Look at the huge difference teachers can make in the lives of kids.”

Although not unfamiliar with politics himself in his roles with New Zealand’s Ministry of Education and as the director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute, Hattie said that the overall tendency of government is to look for easy answers. They also want to see results today, which is not going to happen with a long-term proposition like the education of a child.

Hattie reminded educators of the importance of providing authentic student voice in a way “that we can help those students become their own teachers. We need to focus on the learner,” he said. Hattie was referring to the statistics he presented, which indicated on average kids get about three seconds per day to talk while 90 percent of a typical lesson might be the teachers talking.

“That’s not having an impact; we need to look at how do we get more dialogue, which leads to engagement. Don’t get in the way; be part of the solution. It’s critical to any kind of collaboration that you are collaborative and that you respect others’ viewpoints in those conversations,” Hattie said.

As he contemplated what he had hoped to accomplish on the latest stop in his global speaking schedule, Hattie reminded teachers that they are good change agents, “but one of the hardest parts is to get teachers to stop and smell the roses and stop denying their own expertise. If you need to, know when you should seek help.”

While well aware that he had left much for those in the room to digest, Hattie indicated that “I want at least three percent to come back for more and I want them to follow up on what we talked about. I want them to genuinely commit to making an impact for their students,” he said, adding that he plans to continue with his tireless schedule of sharing his strongly held views. ■

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP



Revisiting the basics

By Jane Macleod, Senior Manager, Research and Records

Instructional leadership is a ubiquitous term. There are no end to the number of books, journal articles, websites and blogs dedicated to this topic, each underscoring the critical importance of the instructional leader’s role and offering tips and hints for today’s busy school principals. Easier said than done I suspect.

Given the reality of the principal’s harried work life, making and finding time for instructional leadership is a challenge and begs the question: are there basic and/or essential elements of instructional leadership that are known to have a profound influence on the teaching and learning in schools today?

The short answer is, yes.

A recent article by Mike Schmoker, entitled *Focusing on the Essentials (Educational Leadership, September 2019)*, reminds us about the decisive and positive impact of curriculum knowledge, sound instruction and professional learning to student learning.

Schmoker submits that this trilogy of competencies should be an essential part of every teacher’s repertoire and that principals are well advised to hone their instructional leadership skills in each of these three areas.

- 1. Curriculum knowledge.** There is an abundance of research attesting to the importance of a clear, coherent and relevant curriculum. However, without the teacher’s professional touch, the curriculum is merely a document. Guided by their training, experience and knowledge of the students, teachers work with their colleagues to adapt the curriculum so that it meets the diverse needs of their students.

Therefore, essential tasks for today’s instructional leader are to engage teachers in practical conversations about “what they are teaching and when,” and to ensure teachers have the necessary resources to support the curriculum outcomes.

- 2. Sound instruction.** Fullan and Quinn (2016) call this “precision in pedagogy.” Teachers demonstrate pedagogical precision when they ensure that instructional decisions (i.e., strategies, procedures, assessments etc.) are purposeful and evidence-based. Teachers’ expertise in instruction and assessment, along with their capacity to adapt or adjust depending on the context, are both critical and well-accepted elements of sound instruction.

Given the intensive nature of classrooms today, it is essential that instructional leaders ensure that teachers, individually and collaboratively, have time to review and reflect on student data and carefully plan their instructional approaches to maximize student engagement with their learning.

- 3. Professional learning.** Creating a culture that emphasizes and enriches curriculum understanding and instructional practice requires ongoing opportunities for professional learning. Dylan Wiliam (2016) tells us that effective professional learning allows teachers to learn something new (e.g., content, strategy, approach etc.) so that they can more effectively respond to students’ learning needs.

Given the diversity of talent and expertise in Saskatchewan schools today, embedding ongoing professional learning into a school’s culture requires that instructional leaders know how to help teachers identify areas for growth and development that will result in improved learning for their students.

In summary, the vital importance of curriculum knowledge, sound instruction and professional learning to student learning is certainly not a new or radical idea. A quick perusal of most educational leadership textbooks, websites or seminars will very likely include references and ideas on how principals can polish their instructional leadership skills.

Today’s school leaders, inundated with administrative tasks and professional responsibilities, can easily feel overwhelmed and attending to instructional leadership tasks can often fall to the bottom of the list. Finding and taking time to focus on these three basic elements can shine a light on what many call the most rewarding part of the principal’s role. ■

Halloweening for Hunger

Students at St. Joseph High School in Saskatoon have been presented with the inaugural Youth Leadership in Action award from the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre.

This marked the thirteenth year students at St. Joseph have been collecting non-perishable food items as part of Halloweening for Hunger. There has been more than 120,000 pounds of food collected, including 22,551 pounds in this most recent version of the event.

According to teacher Rachelle Kelln, “it started small with just a handful of students and has grown into a project that students look forward to every year. The number of students, the time and effort they put in and their desire to serve their community is quite impressive. It’s hard to believe this is the thirteenth year.”

A number of other schools throughout Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools have also joined in the initiative.

Kelln is pictured with Grade 12 student Nouha Karam. ■





Dancing the globe is part of the Artists in Schools program at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Elementary School in the Regina Catholic School Division. (Photo courtesy of RCSD.)

Building literacy through the arts

By Sabrina Cataldo

Regina Catholic Schools and local artists recently worked together to provide diverse dance and music programming to kindergarten students at St. Kateri Tekakwitha School.

The school has a large number of English as an additional language students. “Self-expression through dance and music transfers to their vocabulary development,” Regina Catholic School Arts Education Consultant Sophia Yannitsos observed. “Students learned literacy outcomes, but instead of doing it through books, they did this through kinesthetic awareness and music.”

The innovative pilot program was funded through a \$10,000 Artists in Schools grant from the Saskatchewan Arts Board. It engaged professional artists who specialize in theatre, music and First Nations dance to enable students and teachers to explore their creative capacity as they developed fundamental skills.

There are five modules to the program: a cultural awareness and sensitivity workshop for teachers, creative dance, First Nations hoop dance, Ghanaian dance and drumming, and international Orff Pedagogy

barred instruments such as the xylophone.

Students were completely engaged and built their self-confidence over the course of the project. One said “I was nervous about dancing with five hoops. I didn’t think I could do it. But, look, I can use all the hoops!” At the end of the project, board members, other schools and guests were invited to a student performance.

“When they performed and the crowd oohed and aahed and clapped at their dance, I got tears in my eyes. It was so powerful to see how they had connected with the audience and were able to share their learning,” teacher Michelle Dizy offered.

The Saskatchewan kindergarten curriculum focuses on developing a child’s opportunity to learn about themselves and the environment through spontaneous play. The music and dance program met all three of the goals for the K-12 arts education curriculum: cultural/historical through learning music and dance from around the world, critical/responsive through dialoguing with teachers and artists about learnings, and creative/productive through the final performance.

“We’re not teaching them to be actors or singers or dancers or hoop dancers, but we’re using art forms as a vehicle for physical expression, for building social relationships, for gaining knowledge and understandings,” said artist Chanz Perry.

“The learning that occurred during this project cannot be mandated by curriculum or planned in a long-range plan. This is learning that happens through the magic of music and dance. This is learning that touches the soul and changes a child. This is the difference that art makes.” She goes on to say, “When a child says, ‘dancing the Gahu dance makes me feel brave,’ when something like that happens, it’s magical,” Dizy stressed.

The Saskatchewan Arts Board’s Artists in Schools program offers schools a chance to enhance arts-related activities that are linked to educational outcomes through partnerships with professional artists. For more, visit www.saskartsboard.ca/ais.

Artists in Schools is supported by funding from the Saskatchewan Arts Board, SaskCulture Inc. through the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation, and the Government of Saskatchewan through the Ministry of Education. ■

Zambory shares personal story of addictions in reaching out to teachers

This was not Tracy Zambory speaking to teachers attending the Saskatoon Teachers’ Convention as the president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses about the explosion of opioids among the province’s youth.

Rather, this was Zambory conveying her own personal story as to how her then-teenage son Wesley one day quite unexpectedly shared with his parents that he was struggling with drug addiction.

The fact that she had not seen it only served to underscore her point to teachers that the opioid crisis in Saskatchewan is real and is very dangerous, while chronicling her own experience as a poignant example of the sort of turbulent journey that it can take a family on.

While advocating for the admittedly somewhat controversial utilization of safe injection sites, Zambory was very forthright in her advice to those citizens who have expressed their opposition to such facilities in their respective neighbourhoods. “I have news for you people, this is very real and it can happen in anyone’s neighbourhood. Addiction is not what people think it is and addiction does not discriminate. You never know who is struggling with addiction because people are too scared to reveal.”

Zambory’s address had a twofold message, also pointing out the benefits of a burgeoning relationship being contemplated between the province’s nurses and teachers.

“It’s a natural fit in that ours are two professions that have impacted so many families, and our shared goal is to positively shape the lives of people we encounter every day. That’s a joint commitment we have,” she said.

Noting the numbers of the respective professional organizations that would exceed 20,000, Zambory said “we need to come together in order to push for more resources.

“As nurses and teachers, we are in a unique situation where people trust us. So we have a very public platform to share our message in terms of providing guidance for our youth,” Zambory added. “We need greater investment in coping with mental health issues in society.”

As the culmination of her keynote presentation, Zambory summoned her courage to provide a glimpse into the roller coaster existence that her family experienced during her son’s up-and-down battle to overcome his range of addictions as he grew into adulthood and searched for a career path.

“Addiction is a disease to be clear about it. Ultimately, people are looking for a way to escape, whether it’s anxiety or depression or whatever mental health issues they are dealing with.

“It’s critical for our profession to equip kids with the tools to recognize the perils of opioids and meth; it’s never going to be the answer.” After several painful setbacks, Zambory noted that it took the support and strength of a woman whom her son had fallen in love with that helped him seek help via entering a methadone clinic.

“The biggest barriers we face when this affects someone in our own families is the shame. We need to bring it [addiction] out of the shadows and break the stigma because it’s a disease.”

Zambory said the whole experience served to confirm the importance of having a strong support system in place when confronted with a scenario like the one she saw all too personally.

“If we are going to have success in this area in the future, it’s going to take an interprofessional support team like we are creating here today. There is so much work to do and it will take a community like we have to make a difference if we’re ever going to win this battle,” she said to heartfelt applause. ■

Facilitators learn from each other in making connections with adult learners

As members of the provincial facilitator community gathered, they were wrestling with the unique challenges that exist when dealing with adult learners.

The consensus after the daylong event was that the opportunity to share strategies with colleagues was invaluable in expanding their repertoire and understanding.

“With adult learners, they come in for their own purposes and they are intentional learners. It is important to build the relationships and sense of engagement,” said Holly Franklin, vice-principal in Shaunavon. “As facilitators in that environment, it is important to create engaged learner experiences.”

Trish Karakochuk, who is an elementary teacher in Wynyard, suggested that the fact these adult learners are paying to be in the classroom can’t be overlooked. “They usually have other responsibilities while pursuing their education, and so it’s important to remember

their time is valuable. What we are teaching them has to be relevant specifically to what they are looking for.”

Karakochuk added that adult learners come with higher expectations and with a specific need that can be applicable in their journey.

“[Adult learners] come in for their own purposes and they are intentional learners. It is important to build the relationships and sense of engagement.”

Holly Franklin

“They [adult learners] tend to be more engaged and there needs to be a purpose to what they are learning. So as the teachers, you have to balance your knowledge with their expertise.”

Elsa Borsa, a personal alignment coach attending the session from Carrot

River, echoed the sentiments of her tablemates insofar as acknowledging that it is not uncommon for these adult learners to have had a negative educational experience previously.

“Many of the adult learners I have talked to are there with a view to create a change in their lives. So our goal is to try and create that change by being able to add what they are seeking.

“There is a responsibility when responding to adult learners that we take into account their various lived experiences. It’s important to create a belief in what we are there for. It can be incredibly rewarding, and it requires you to help them see the potential for real change.”

Borsa agreed that it can be inspiring to see how excited adult learners can be to learn if the level of engagement is sufficiently strong. “It can be very refreshing to see the progress,” she added.

Karakochuk stressed the need for facilitators to be adaptive to the fact

adult learners can be quite different from one another in numerous ways. She cited the importance of having that flexibility when coming up with the best-possible strategy.

Borsa concurred, noting that, for example, different cultural backgrounds also need to be taken into account.

“We tend to approach education from the aspect of what resonates with ourselves. But I have found this experience definitely broadens your own understanding, and so it’s a learning experience for the facilitators as well,” she noted.

Karakochuk said attending this workshop with like-minded colleagues was just the ticket since she emphasized how those in the room shared her own aspiration of being a lifelong learner. “If you were in this group, then for sure you could confirm that learning never stops after you graduate [from university].”

Franklin was effusive in her praise of how the day had been developed by STF Professional Development (formerly

known as SPDU), including facilitator Michelle Naidu.

“[STF Professional Development] really has this figured out and they did such an excellent job of helping you understand what fits. It was presented in such a way that we can definitely model what we learned here today and put it into practice. Having attended this workshop has for sure made me a better facilitator.”

Karakochuk was particularly grateful for the specific examples that revolved around the importance of engagement. She noted the benefits of those in the room having shared their learning in such a way that there were tangible signs of evidence in how to remove barriers for adult students.

As Borsa said, “This was such a great opportunity for helpful feedback,” which she suggested can sometimes be a struggle to achieve. “For sure the wheels are going to be turning on the way home,” she quipped, accompanied by the nodding heads of her colleagues in agreement. ■

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- Provincial Facilitator Community

For more information on these openings or to apply, please visit the Get Involved section of the Federation website, www.stf.sk.ca.

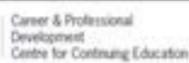



CERTIFICATE OF EXTENDED STUDIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



"The Inclusive Education Certificate program was highly recommended by my school division and colleagues. I gained added background knowledge and experience to bring added value to my team members, other teachers, and most importantly, my students." - Jenn

Register for Spring, Summer and Fall 2020 courses. Learn more at www.uregina.ca/cce.

Sneak Peek

We will soon be announcing an exciting partnership with **Wanuskewin Heritage Park** with the arrival of the bison, scheduled for late 2019.

This partnership will definitely help you plan next year's field trips! (Grades 4 and 5)

Watch for updates on our social media and upcoming School Staff Liaison mailings.









Follow us @SaskTeachersFed

SASKATCHEWAN SCIENCE TEACHERS' SOCIETY presents

SCIS MATICS 2020

ScisMatics is a provincial conference for science and math teachers. The theme this year is "emerging technologies" where you will get to experience the current trends in technology through innovative keynote speakers, displays, tours and presenters.

emerging technologies

Keynote Speakers
Dr. Ivar Mendez
Robyn Reist

Call for Presenters: <http://bit.ly/ScisMaticsPresenters>



Registration opening January 2020. Stay tuned for details! <http://www.stf.ca/>

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
APRIL 30-MAY 1, 2020






UPCOMING EVENTS

<p>November 29, 2019 – Lloydminster Building Mathematical Fluency and Automaticity With Games</p> <p>November 29, 2019 Foundations of Distance Education</p> <p>December 3, 2019 – Lloydminster Instructional Coaching Skills and Strategies</p> <p>December 6, 2019 – Saskatoon January 13, 2020 – St. Walburg Let's Talk: Supporting Diverse Language Learners in the Early Years (NEW)</p> <p>January 15, 2020 – Saskatoon safeTALK: Suicide Awareness Training</p> <p>January 24, 2020 – Yorkton Fundamental Practices for High-Quality Early Learning</p>	<p>January 24, 2020 – Saskatoon Connecting Curriculum to Play-Based Projects in Kindergarten</p> <p>January 31, 2020 – Lloydminster Parent and Family Engagement: Inviting Families and Parents to Share in Our Learning</p> <p>February 7 and March 20, 2020 – Lloydminster Responding to Children's Interests</p> <p>February 7, 2020 – Saskatoon Supporting Writers in the Early Years</p> <p>February 10, 2020 – Saskatoon Cracking the Code: Building Skills for Literacy Success</p>
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For more information about these sessions or to register, visit www.stf.sk.ca.



8th Annual SASKATCHEWAN VISUAL ART PROJECT 2019 – 2020

A project that has been recognized by RCE Saskatchewan as an Innovative Project. May 2019

CELEBRATION OF ART, FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY

Students in Grades 9 to 12 are invited to share their ideas and feelings through art about peace, care of the Earth, diversity, reconciliation and spirituality.

Deadline for submissions is April 10, 2020.

For more information, visit www.multifaithsask.org.

Visual Art Project organizing committee sincerely thanks Saskatchewan Art Educators Association for their support and guidance

