

SASKATCHEWAN TEACHERS' FEDERATION

# BULLETIN

SUMMER 2026 | VOLUME 92, NO.4

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## Setting the Table

Teachers set their priorities for the next round of provincial bargaining.

PAGE 10

## 2026 Arbos Awards

Honouring two lifetimes of advocacy, leadership and support for public education.

Reviving Her

# ANCESTORS' VOICE

At age 88, Louisa Fraser is teaching the language residential schools tried to erase.

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**Editor-in-Chief**  
 Courtney Forseth

**Managing Editor**  
 Lynn Redl

**Art Direction & Design**  
 Erin Cumming  
 Rebecca Harbin

**Photography**  
 Jordan Trask  
 (Unless otherwise noted)

**Production Manager**  
 Trevor Boytink

**Copy Editors**  
 Kaeley Morgan  
 Marla Mullie

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SASKATCHEWAN  
**TEACHERS'**  
 FEDERATION

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**18** | Teachers Set Priorities for Upcoming Provincial Bargaining



# President's Update



**This year may not have carried the intensity of active provincial collective bargaining, but it has still been a demanding one. The pressures in classrooms haven't paused. Class sizes continue to grow, classroom complexity continues to increase, and the supports needed to meet those realities have not kept pace.**

Budget 2026 brought that gap into sharper focus. While the provincial budget includes an operational increase, it does not keep up with inflation or enrolment growth. When adjusted for both, it results in an effective \$33 decrease in per-student funding. That shortfall isn't abstract. It shows up in classrooms every day – in the range of needs teachers are managing, in supports that aren't available and in the additional work that teachers absorb to ensure students are cared for.

That's why advocacy matters right now. Through Tell Them Tuesday, we're asking teachers, parents and community members to contact their MLAs following Budget 2026. This campaign ensures decision-makers hear directly from those who see the impact of funding decisions first-hand and keeps the conversation grounded in classroom realities.

In April, at our Annual Meeting of Council, councillors took a concrete step by approving the asking package for the next round of provincial collective bargaining. That package reflects months of consultation and is grounded in what teachers have been telling us. It focuses on key priorities: addressing classroom violence and complexity, strengthening supports for students, and securing fair and competitive salaries that recognize the professionalism and workload of teachers.

As we prepare to return to the bargaining table, we are doing so deliberately and with clear expectations. We are entering this process in good faith, informed by classroom realities and supported by a strong, member-driven mandate.

Relationships matter in this work. Respectful engagement allows for honest conversations, even when they are difficult. But good relationships do not come at the expense of teacher workload, compensation or working conditions. Respect must be demonstrated through action. We can be collaborative and firm at the same time, and we can bargain in good faith while still drawing clear lines.

The last round of bargaining showed what is possible when teachers stand together. Collective action led to real gains, including additional staffing, increased supports and the recognition of class complexity in the provincial collective agreement. Those gains did not fix everything, but they changed the landscape for bargaining. The introduction of a new clause on class complexity provides a foundation to build on in future rounds.

As we look ahead, collective responsibility matters. Solidarity doesn't live only at the bargaining table. It lives in staff rooms, communities and everyday conversations. When teachers speak clearly and confidently about their experiences, public trust grows and our collective voice is strengthened.

Whatever comes next, we will face it together – prepared, united and clear about what we are advocating for. Thank you for everything you do for students and for public education. We know what's at stake, and we're ready. ▲

Samantha Becotte  
Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation President



## National School Leaders Gather in Regina for CAP 2026

BY: **MITCHELL HAPP**, STF COMMUNICATIONS

This spring, Regina welcomed educational leaders from across the country for the Canadian Association of Principals Conference 2026. Centred on the theme Growing Leaders, Growing Communities, the event provided a collaborative platform for principals, vice-principals and aspiring leaders to network and share insights to help strengthen and support school leadership across Canada.

The conference featured a high-profile lineup of keynote speakers, including Saskatchewan's own Katie White, recipient of the 2026 Arbos for Outstanding Contributions to Education and the Teaching Profession. Participants also explored Regina's educational offerings through site visits and sessions showcasing innovative educational initiatives across the city and province. Highlights included hands-on Indigenous cultural workshops, visits to the māmawēyatitān centre and a look at the innovative STEAM Academy at F.W. Johnson Collegiate.

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation was proud to serve as a sponsor for this national gathering of educational decision-makers. ▲

## Saskatchewan Student Recipient of Prestigious Loran Award

BY: **MITCHELL HAPP & SANJIDA RAHMAN**, STF COMMUNICATIONS



Emily Gustus, a student at Tisdale Middle and Secondary School, has been selected as a 2026 Loran Scholar. She is one of only 36 recipients chosen from more than 5,400 applicants across Canada.

The award recognizes promising young people “with character,” those who push boundaries and challenge the status quo, display a commitment to service that improves the lives of others and demonstrate strong leadership potential.

Emily serves as a volunteer with her local fire department, participating in emergency calls and leading the community in fire safety. She participates in student council, cross-country running and the community band. She holds both glider and private pilot's licences, sharing her passion by bringing aviation experiences to youth across Saskatchewan.

“Emily stands out not only for her academic excellence, but also for her leadership, integrity and ability to bring people together. She leads with authenticity and consistently makes a positive impact on those around her,” says Kim Gisi, Emily's teacher at Tisdale Middle and Secondary School.

Loran Scholars benefit from a four-year leadership-enrichment program, diverse experiential learning opportunities, undergraduate financial support and a vast network of mentors. Offered in partnership with 25 Canadian universities, the scholarship is valued at more than \$100,000.

Emily's leadership showcases the profound potential of Saskatchewan's youth to drive meaningful change. ▲



# STF Continues Advocacy Push Following Budget 2026

BY: LYNN REDL, STF COMMUNICATIONS

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation launched a provincewide advocacy campaign in late March urging supporters of public education to contact their MLAs following the release of Saskatchewan Budget 2026.

After two years of progress toward restoring per-student funding, Budget 2026 will result in a \$33 decrease in per-student funding. While the budget includes an operational increase of 2.57 per cent, it does not keep pace with inflation or enrolment growth, effectively reversing recent gains.

Through the campaign, teachers, parents and community members are encouraged to contact their MLAs in support of sustained investment to address classroom complexity and student supports.

STF President Samantha Becotte says recent progress shows what is possible when government, teachers and communities work together, but warned that Budget 2026 puts that momentum at risk.

"Education works and is fundamental to a strong Saskatchewan," she says. "This campaign is about continuing to move forward together."

Supporters can take part through Tell Them Tuesday, using a template email, personalizing messages or sharing campaign materials. More information is available at [www.tellthemtuesday.com](http://www.tellthemtuesday.com). ▲

**tell them tuesday.com** 



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# A Generation Under Strain:

## What Schools Are Carrying

BY: **JANA LEN**, STF BULLETIN CONTRIBUTOR

Teachers are seeing a shift in student mental health across Saskatchewan, and what they bring to school every day. The number of students coming to school with struggles that impact their learning and growth in the classroom is continuously growing. Teachers describe classrooms where student needs are increasing in complexity, but the supports required to meet those needs have not kept pace. Schools are being asked to respond to challenges that extend far beyond their training and background.

ISTOCK



**T**here has been a distinct shift in the types of challenges students are bringing to school with them each day. “We’re noticing that many students are coming to school with more complex needs, and they often require more support to build skills like focus, problem-solving and coping with setbacks,” says Diana Jemieff Hayes, principal at Waldheim School. “What we’re seeing reflects the increasing complexity of the world they’re growing up in.”

Stephen Kowalchuk, vice-principal at Waldheim School, shares similar findings. “Helping students develop resilience is an important part of the work we do,” he says. “Learning how to bend but not break is difficult in a world that seems a lot more challenging to navigate for young people and adults alike.”

Many students are arriving at school with deeper anxiety, more dysregulation and fewer coping skills. Robin Heshka, principal from William Grayson School in Moose Jaw, says, “many students are finding it more difficult to tolerate uncertainty and frustration. We’re seeing more self harm, more substance use and more trauma, and teachers are the ones trying to hold all of it together for them.”

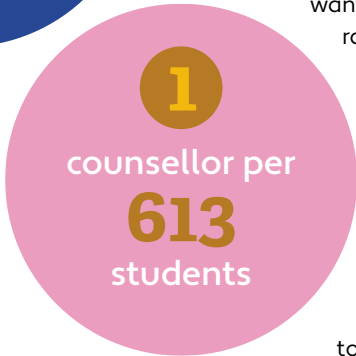
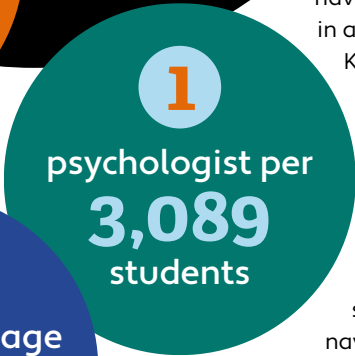
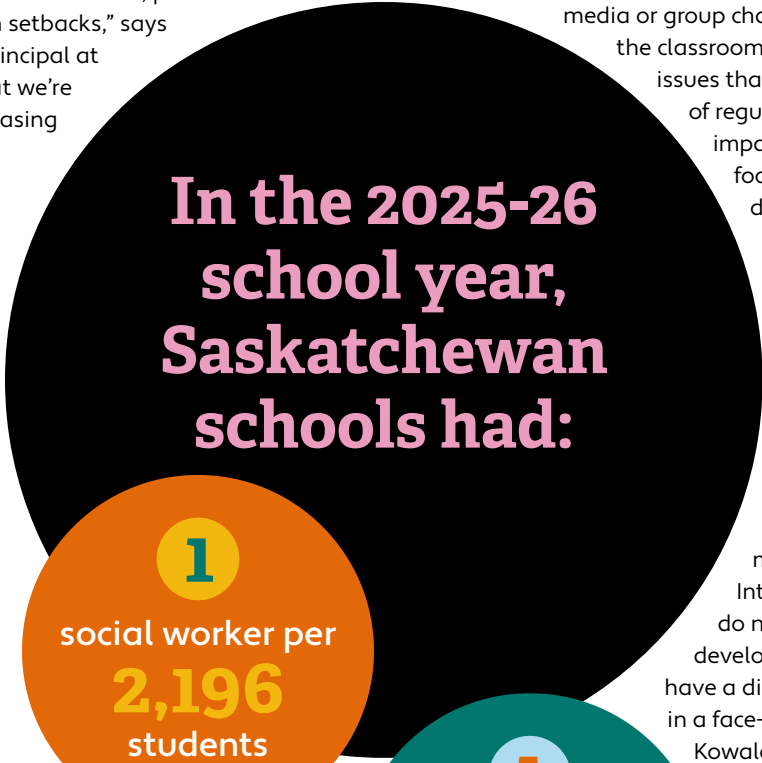
The reasons for these changes appear to be complex and layered. But at the centre of almost all conversations seems to be technology. Due to the increase in use of technology in every aspect of life, kids are reliant on high levels of dopamine. The devices are designed to be highly stimulating and hard to disengage from. Kids are exposed to quick immediate hits, with 10-second videos online, instant messaging and constant stimulation. It impacts

their focus and resiliency directly and affects every aspect of life.

Another concern with devices and technology is that there is no time without it. Teachers find that conflicts that happen outside of school hours, on social media or group chats, follow students into the classroom the next day. These issues that happened outside of regular school hours are impacting their ability to focus and learn during the day. Students are also being pulled back to their devices and interrupting workflow and focus. “Technology use must be very intentional and monitored tightly because of how distracting devices can be. Social media has without a doubt had a major impact on children. Interactions in digital spaces do not appear helpful in developing the skills required to have a discussion or disagreement in a face-to-face setting,” says Kowalchuk.

Technology is the centre of much of this change, but it is one piece of a very complicated puzzle. Teachers have also noticed that not only are the students struggling, but also families are navigating significant pressures, from mental health challenges to other concerns, such as housing or financial instability. Inevitably these stresses are showing up in the students at school, too. Heshka says, “Parents want to raise their children as they were raised, but it’s a different world now. Kids are navigating adult issues at younger and younger ages.”

STF President Samantha Becotte says the system is leaning too heavily on teachers to fill the void. “Teachers wear multiple hats and their focus gets drawn away from instruction and learning to addressing the crises that happen within classrooms,” she says. “Whether it’s counselling needs, nutritional needs or





behavioural needs, teachers are being stretched thin.” She notes that while the government’s mental health initiatives are welcome, they still rely on teachers to identify early signs of distress.

The numbers paint a stark picture. In the 2025-26 school year, Saskatchewan had one social worker for every 2,196 students, one psychologist for every 3,089 students, one speech language pathologist per 1,442 students, and one counsellor for every 613 students. The American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of 250 students to one counsellor. None of the Saskatchewan divisions meet that standard currently.

**The pressure on students and the classroom will continue to grow, but teachers will remain a steady connection point for them. While the system does require additional mental health supports, there are small, impactful practices that can help everyone feel supported.**

## Support for Students

- 1 Create predictable environments and routines.**
  - Keep routines consistent so students know what to expect.
  - Clearly explain changes to routines in advance, when possible.

Predictability helps to lower stress, reducing the cognitive load so that students can focus on learning.

- 2 Providing opportunities for choice and sharing of opinions.**
  - Allow choice in how students demonstrate their learning, where possible.
  - Provide opportunities for students to have a say in their physical environment, where possible.

Providing opportunities for sharing helps restore a sense of control and builds resilience.

## Support for Teachers

- 1 Take time to rest and reset.**

Care for your physical and mental well-being by eating regularly, setting consistent bedtimes and engaging in mindfulness, movement or exercise practices.
- 2 Building strong relationships benefits teachers as much as students.**

Feeling valued and connected at work helps reduce stress, enhances resilience and reinforces why teachers entered the profession in the first place.
- 3 Set clear and realistic boundaries and professional goals.**

Limit after-hours email responses, protect planning time during the school day, or choose one or two priority initiatives to focus on. Clear boundaries reduce cognitive overload and help prevent burnout.
- 4 Focus on what is within your control.**

Expending energy on factors outside of your control can increase frustration. Direct attention toward instructional choices and classroom environment will reduce stress and improve well-being.
- 5 Connect with colleagues.**

Share challenges, problem-solve together and celebrate successes, which creates connection and a reminder that you do not need to navigate this alone.

# Resources for Supporting the Mental Health Needs of Students

Teachers feel the consequences every day. “With nearly 300 students and access to a half-time counsellor, we see how impactful increased support could be,” Jemieff Hayes says. “A full-time position would allow us to be more proactive and build stronger preventative supports for students.”

In schools with higher complexity, the strain is even more critical. “Someone has to do this work,” says Heshka. “And when counsellors aren’t available, it falls on teachers. They’re trained to teach math, not to manage suicide risk or trauma responses. But they do it because someone has to for these students.”

Through all of this, teachers still need to deliver curriculum, assess learning and keep students engaged. “Ready to learn isn’t just a phrase,” Kowalchuk says. “There are needs that must be met before learning is even possible. Our ability to support those needs will ultimately improve the quality of learning in classrooms.” When students’ mental health isn’t optimal, it makes it more difficult to learn and grow. “Youth need to be well in order to learn,” Becotte agrees. “And right now, the supports simply aren’t there.”

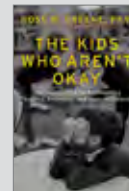
Mental health supports are not optional. They are essential. The STF’s 2025 member survey found 71 per cent of teachers say specialized professionals are not available when needed. That reality is felt in every corner of the province. A starting point for supporting student mental health would be for additional mental health supports: full-time, in-school, relationship-based mental health workers. “You can’t roll in with zero relationship and win these kids over,” Heshka says. “We need people in the building. Every day. Kids won’t open up to someone they see once a month.” Students need timely access to psychologists and specialized professionals. There is a need for mental health training to be embedded in teacher education programs and professional learning.

Even with the challenges, there is a sense of optimism from teachers. “We’re optimistic by nature,” Jemieff Hayes says. “When the right supports are in place, students thrive. Ensuring those supports are consistently available is key.” Teachers can see how capable and resilient students can be when the right supports are in place. Strengthening supports in schools doesn’t just impact at the school level; it also helps give these individuals what they need to thrive, contribute and be a part of their community.

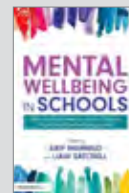
Saskatchewan teachers are doing everything they can, but the gap between students’ needs and what supports are provided is widening. The challenges students face today are real, complex and growing. Investing in mental health professionals along with in-school supports isn’t just about easing pressure in the classroom. It’s also about giving every student a fair chance to learn, cope and thrive. When we can strengthen the system around them, we strengthen their futures. ▲



**Improving School Mental Health: The Thriving School Community Solution**  
By Charle Peck and Cameron Caswell  
Hanover, PA. ConnectEDD Publishing, 2023



**The Kids Who Aren’t Okay: The Urgent Case for Reimagining Support, Belonging, and Hope in Schools**  
By Ross W. Greene  
New York, NY. Scribner, 2026



**Mental Wellbeing in Schools: What Teachers Need to Know to Support Pupils From Diverse Backgrounds**  
Edited by Arif Mahmud and Liam Satchell  
New York, NY. Routledge, 2022



**The No-Nonsense Guide to Mental Health in Schools: What Every Teacher Can Do to Make a Difference**  
By John R. Burns  
New York, NY. Routledge, 2024



**The School Mental Health Response Handbook: Practical Strategies for Educators and Support Staff**  
By Ali D’Amario and Tina Rae  
Philadelphia, PA. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2025



**The Schools We Need Now: A Guide to Designing a Mentally Healthy School**  
By Timothy Dohrer and Thomas Golebiewski  
Thousand Oaks, CA. Corwin, 2024



**Supporting Student Mental Health: Essentials for Teachers**  
By Michael Hass and Amy Ardell  
New York, NY. Routledge, 2022

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MEET THE

# 2026 Arbos Award *Recipients*

BY: JANA LEN, STF BULLETIN CONTRIBUTOR

The Arbos Award is the highest honour that the Saskatchewan teaching profession can bestow. Since 1951, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation has recognized individuals who have distinguished themselves through the scope, impact and significance of their educational contributions to public education and to the teaching profession. Each Arbos Award includes honorary lifetime membership in the Federation, along with the presentation of an Arbos statuette at the Federation's Annual Meeting of Council.

▼ Arbos Award winners pose with STF staff and Executive members.



# Heather Kuttai

## 2026 ARBOS FOR DISTINGUISHED SUPPORT OF EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Heather Kuttai is an author, disability advocate and human rights activist who has spent three decades advancing equity and accessibility in education. With a background in disability policy, leadership and post-secondary administration, and 50 years of lived experience as a wheelchair user, she has dedicated her career to removing barriers for students and strengthening public institutions.

Heather has a bachelor of arts and master of science from the University of Saskatchewan. She is the author of *Maternity Rolls: Pregnancy, Childbirth and Disability*, and has written several chapters for textbooks on disability and body diversity. In addition to these accomplishments, she is a three-time Paralympic medallist in the sport of target shooting.

Heather's commitment to supporting students and youth has shaped her leadership in classrooms, universities, community organizations and public institutions. She is known for her willingness to speak up when it matters most, and for her unwavering support of teachers and students during moments of challenge and change.

Heather's leadership extends across the community. She spearheaded the creation of both Disability Services for Students (now Access and Equity Services) and Student Central – a hub designed to make administrative and financial support easily accessible to students at the University of Saskatchewan. Heather also coached at the provincial and national levels, and contributed to organizations such as the Rick Hansen Foundation, Saskatoon Public Library, and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. Her work has been recognized with numerous honours, including the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal, the King's Coronation Medal, and induction into both the Saskatoon and Saskatchewan Sports Halls of Fame.

Heather is known for her advocacy for children, public defence of teachers and a lifelong commitment to building inclusive learning environments. Her courage and advocacy have strengthened the profession and left a lasting impact on public education in Saskatchewan.



## *A Conversation With Heather Kuttai*

### **What is the inspiration behind your work supporting education and the teaching profession?**

Whether it was acting as an ambassador for the Rick Hansen Foundation or just volunteering to talk to a class by request of a teacher friend, the inspiration behind supporting education has always been simply about the children. Aren't they why we do anything? They are our hope, and we owe them everything.

### **What has been the most rewarding part of your work?**

The most rewarding part of my work, and to be sure, there have been many rewards, were some of the reactions I received when I resigned from being a commissioner with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in protest of the provincial government's use of the notwithstanding clause to push through Bill 137 that mandates teachers to obtain parental consent before using a student's preferred name and pronoun at school. The same legislation forbids teachers from using third-party sexual health educators and experts in the classroom.

As the news spread and more people learned what I had done, there were many parents and teachers from all over the province that reached out to thank me, but the real reward was the reaction from children and young adults. One person told me they had been planning their suicide on the day they found out I had resigned. Other kids showed up on my doorstep and asked for a hug. I received a lot of thank-yous but the thanks really is mine. Standing up for our province's kids was the greatest honour of my life and likely the most important work I have done.

### **What was a defining moment of your career?**

My defining moment was when I ended my career as a human rights commissioner. I wrote a letter to the Premier, pushed Send, and 15 minutes later my phone blew up, as they say, and my life changed. I spent the next 30 days in the media, in meetings, and talking to teachers, and even now, two and a half years later, I am still talking about it, and people are still asking me about it.

### **What challenges did you face during your career?**

I have to say the steady stream of ableism has been and continues to be my biggest challenge. Sometimes it is overt, but a lot of the time, ableism is so deeply woven into every area of the environment we all live in that it continues to affect me regularly. It shows up as inaccessible spaces, rigid attitudes, misguided policies, exclusionary practices and low expectations. Ableism is a powerful force.

### **What is one lesson that has stuck with you throughout your career in supporting education?**

I have learned that children are not citizens lying in wait. As Canadians, we all “know” this, but we do not always behave as such. When I came to really see children as human beings who are born with a set of rights, my

worldview shifted to one that understood that parents do not have rights – their children do, though. And as parents and guardians and teachers, we all have responsibilities to do our very best by them, and sometimes that means we have to dig into our deeply held values and beliefs and question everything we thought we knew. It is a powerful lesson, but I am grateful I learned it.

### **Who are the people who helped shape your life and leadership approach?**

I am fortunate to have had many positive influences. My dad, George Kuttai, who had a bigger and better imagination than everyone else for who I might grow up to be; my coach, Finn Petersen, who had an unreasonable amount of confidence in me that eventually translated into my own; my first (and best) boss, Vera Pezer, who understood that true leadership is having enough confidence to give away power; Senator David Arnot for being a constant example of doing the right thing for my community and my country; and my husband, Darrell Seib, who is a master at communication, and has taught me that the quality of the answer you receive depends entirely on the quality of the question you ask. I would be remiss to not mention my children, Patrick and MJ, who are the greatest teachers of life lessons I could ever ask for.

# Katie White

## **2026 ARBOS FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION**

Katie White is an author, coach and educational consultant with more than 30 years of experience dedicated to strengthening teaching and learning. A former system leader, administrator, learning coach and K-12 teacher, she has a rare, integrated understanding of curriculum, assessment, instruction, environment and system planning.

Katie is connected to the lived realities of teachers. She listens carefully to their perspectives, recognizes the complexity of their daily work, and designs professional learning that is both evidence-based and manageable. Her guidance is practical, thoughtful and always focused on respect and admiration for the profession.

The positive influence Katie has had on education across the province is evident in her work with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, Ministry of Education, Saskatchewan League of Educational Administrators, Directors and

Superintendents, and Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit. Her work is consistently centred on improving the learning experiences of students while elevating the professional lives of teachers. She helps teachers develop their practice, while always honouring the complexity of classroom work.

Through her work, Katie has become a widely respected voice in assessment and instructional design. Her publications and professional learning sessions translate theory into practical strategies that help teachers create classrooms where students understand their learning and feel ownership over it.

Leaders across the province describe her guidance as relevant, inspiring and actionable. Her work supporting divisions, mentoring teachers and contributing to provincial initiatives has strengthened the profession, all while elevating teachers' voices and improving the learning experiences for students. Her commitment to student success and teacher empowerment has impacted public education and makes her an incredible leader in the profession.



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## *A Conversation With Katie White*

### **What inspired you to pursue a career in education?**

Upon graduating from high school, I had planned to pursue a career in law or broadcasting. But in the spring of Grade 12, I presented a speech in my senior English class and my teacher at the time, Harry Pitzel, asked me if I had considered being a teacher. While my dad was an educator, as well as two of my grandparents, it had not seriously occurred to me until that moment. But as soon as he asked, it made sense to me. I had been teaching community art classes and loved it, so I signed up and never looked back.

### **What did you love most about being a teacher?**

This is tough to pin down because I cannot imagine a more rewarding career and that statement must mean I love a great deal about it. I love the variety and renewal – never a dull moment and every year has its own potential. I love the creativity of planning new approaches and imagining new ways of sharing ideas. I love that it leans into my need to communicate out loud and make sense of things alongside others. I love that it is human and relational. I love that learners bring themselves to the teaching-learning relationship and this means every interaction is unique. I have never been bored a day in my career, and I have also never taken that for granted. Lastly, I deeply and profoundly love children and youth. I see them as intelligent, funny, imaginative and intriguing. I cannot imagine a life that does not centre children as the reason I do what I do every day.

### **What challenges did you face during the course of your career?**

Any complex experience has challenge within it, and I have to say that the challenges have invariably made me better, even though I did not always enjoy them. I have been challenged by feeling simultaneously overwhelmed and helpless sometimes. I always wish I could do more or do better. The consequences of our profession are front and centre and this means that the stakes feel high, which can be difficult. It is hard to leave the work, and balance has truly been elusive. In fact, lately, I am starting to accept that the urgency I often feel has made my life in education exponentially rewarding but also incredibly challenging. You need both, I think, to have a rich and rewarding career.

### **What career accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I realize I have accomplished much and this rests in my passion and desire to be personally challenged – my mom calls it “driver behaviour.” Nevertheless, the accomplishment that sits closest to my heart is the gift of helping others. Honestly. When a learner tells me that I have helped them or when I see others feeling empowered through the experiences I am facilitating, I am in my happiest place. I just want to be of service – straight up.

### **What advice would you give a new teacher?**

This profession is hard. Everyone will tell you that and it is true. It is hard because it matters. The way to be fulfilled is to know the importance of what you do, for children, youth and the literal future of the world. A teacher has to know it in their hearts and then lean into the joy of that role. Lean into the relationships you have with colleagues, the connection you feel with families and parents, and the absolute wonder of learning.

Care for yourself. I don't just mean bubble baths and pedicures (although those are nice), but care for yourself by doing the things that make your spirit whole. Go for walks, make art, make music, play sports, and invest in family and community. This is so that you feel strong and so that students see you feeling strong. Teachers need to show students that life is joyful, multi-faceted and rich.

### **What is one lesson that has stuck with you through your career?**

Education should be evolving and we should be evolving within it. Investing too deeply in a particular thing (a lesson, a unit, an approach, a gradebook, a score, a timetable, total silence, or firm predictability) will only lead to status quo, and I really and truly believe status quo is not healthy or helpful for many people anymore. We need educators who are willing to stand up for the humans within the education system and reimagine teaching and learning, and schools and classrooms. ▲

# Violence in Public Schools:

*What Canadians Are Saying*

## New National Survey Shows Rising Concern – And Support for Action

BY: LYNN REDL, STF COMMUNICATIONS

**C**oncern about violence and aggression in public schools is continuing to rise across Canada. A new national survey conducted by Abacus Data in March 2026, commissioned by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, found that 88 per cent of Canadians are concerned that violence in public schools is increasing – up four points in just six months.

The findings suggest Canadians view school violence as a serious and growing issue, affecting both students and the teachers responsible for keeping schools safe.

## The New National Picture

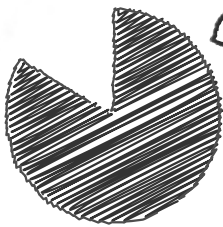
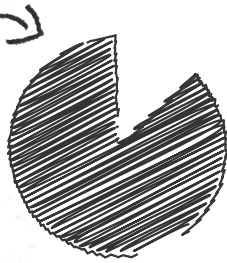


**88%**

of Canadians are concerned violence in public schools is increasing.

**86%**

support teachers' and school staff's right to intervene physically when safety is at risk.



**83%**

say teachers are essential to a strong public education system.

## What Canadians See Behind the Problem

When asked what is driving rising violence and aggression in public schools, Canadians pinpoint systemic pressures rather than isolated incidents. According to the Abacus Data survey, the most commonly identified factors are:



## Saskatchewan Snapshot

Closer to home, Saskatchewan teachers report similar and concerning trends. A University of Ottawa survey of Saskatchewan education workers conducted in 2023 found that in the previous school year:

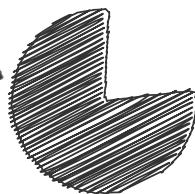


**85%**

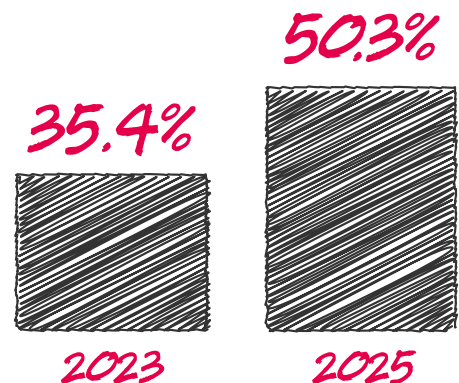
of teachers witnessed at least one student-initiated act of violence against a colleague.

**78%**

reported one or more instances of harassment from students.



The STF's recent member survey, conducted in fall 2025, confirms this trend. For the first time ever, more than half of Saskatchewan teachers reported experiencing violence in the classroom during the last five years:



## Support for a Range of Policy Responses

Although PreK-12 education falls primarily under provincial and territorial jurisdiction, more than three-quarters of Canadians believe the federal government should take action to address rising violence and aggression in schools.

### Survey Support on Public Policy Ideas

**72%** Set maximum teacher-to-student ratios.

**73%** Ensure minimum supports are met for students with intensive needs through a federally funded support program.

**76%** Obtain a major federal transfer to provinces and territories specifically for mental health.

**69%** Commit a minimum percentage of federal GDP (Gross Domestic Product) to provinces for PreK-12 education.

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**At the provincial level, STF will continue advocating for the resources and supports Saskatchewan teachers and students need to ensure safe and supportive classrooms.**

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## What Happens Next

Increasing violence is a symptom of chronic underfunding and a system that has not been given the tools to meet the complexity of students' emotional, behavioural and learning needs. Without adequate funding for resources to support students' needs, schools are left unable to provide the interventions, staffing and environments that students need. When those needs go unmet, students may become overwhelmed, dysregulated, or act out and communicate distress in the only ways available to them.

STF continues to work with CTF and teacher organizations across the country to push for meaningful action. At the provincial level, STF will continue advocating for the resources and supports Saskatchewan teachers and students need to ensure safe and supportive classrooms.

## The Bottom Line

Canadians are increasingly concerned about violence and aggression in public schools – and they expect governments to respond. The public understands that safer schools require meaningful investment, respect for teachers and concrete action.

“Teachers want what families want – safe, supportive classrooms where students can learn and teachers can do their work without fear,” says STF President Samantha Becotte. “This survey confirms what Saskatchewan teachers have been saying for years. Canadians understand the pressures in our schools. Now governments must back their words with real action.” ▲

# STF Website Update: A New Digital Experience Is on the Way

BY: JANA LEN, STF BULLETIN CONTRIBUTOR

**A new STF website is coming soon – and it’s designed to make members’ lives easier.**

Over the coming months, members will begin to see the first phase of the Federation’s renewed website rollout. The launch will happen in stages, with new features and improvements added over time rather than all at once. This phased approach will provide a smoother transition, allowing the STF to respond quickly to member feedback, and build a site that can continue to grow and improve long after launch.

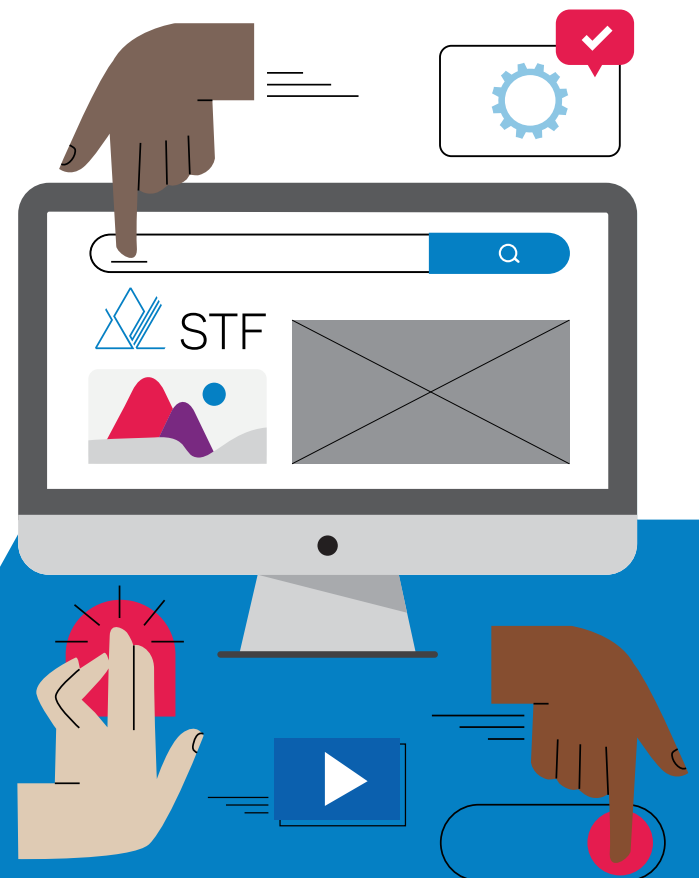
“This project is about more than a new look,” says Vice-President, Communications and Public Affairs Courtney Forseth. “It’s about creating a digital experience that truly supports members – one that makes it easier to access information, register for events and quickly connect with the Federation in ways that work for them.”

The STF’s new website marks an important shift to a digital-first approach in communication with members. Instead of a site that stays largely unchanged for years, Saskatchewan teachers can expect a platform that is updated regularly, adapts to evolving needs, and reflects how people actually search for and use information.

When the new site launches, members will notice improvements that make everyday tasks quicker and more intuitive. Content will be organized more clearly, with fewer PDFs, stronger search functionality and fewer clicks to find key information. One of the most anticipated upgrades – online event registration – will allow members to sign up for STF events easily, without the need to call in to complete registrations.

The website renewal project has been shaped directly by member input. Surveys, data analysis and hands-on validation tasks have helped identify priorities and guide decisions.

To stay informed, get sneak peeks and share your input, visit the website to sign up for the STF Website Renewal Community at [www.stf.sk.ca/website-renewal](http://www.stf.sk.ca/website-renewal). ▲



# Teachers Set Priorities for Upcoming Provincial Bargaining

BY: LYNN REDL, STF COMMUNICATIONS

**At the STF Annual Meeting of Council held in Saskatoon in April, elected councillors from across Saskatchewan voted to approve the *Proposals for Teachers' Consideration*. These proposals now become what's commonly referred to as the teachers' asking package.**

The proposals reflect what teachers say they need most right now: stability in the system, fair compensation, safe and supportive working and learning conditions, and a continued commitment to public education. Developed through extensive consultation with members, the asking package sets out clear priorities ahead of negotiations with the provincial government.

"This asking package is the result of teachers coming together and speaking with one strong, collective voice," says STF President Samantha Becotte. "It reflects what teachers across the province are experiencing in their classrooms and schools, and what they believe is needed to build a stable, sustainable education system."

## BUILT BY TEACHERS, THROUGH CONSULTATION

The asking package is grounded in one of the most comprehensive consultation processes in STF history. Beginning in August 2025, the Federation engaged teachers from across the province through surveys, discussions and town hall meetings.

More than 6,600 teachers participated in the pre-bargaining survey – the highest response rate the Federation has ever seen. These conversations continued throughout the year, including four open town hall meetings that allowed members to share their views directly.

"This is the power of the collective at work," says Associate Executive Director, Labour Relations Pat Maze. "When thousands of teachers take the time to share their experiences and priorities, we're able to bring forward proposals that are thoughtful, realistic and firmly rooted in the daily reality of classrooms."

The result is an asking package that reflects a shared understanding of the challenges facing public education and a clear sense of what teachers believe must change for the system to thrive.

## A MOMENT TO RESET

The previous Provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement was settled through binding arbitration, following a period of significant strain and uncertainty.

With a new round of negotiations beginning, both parties now have an opportunity to return to the provincial table and rebuild a more constructive bargaining relationship.

"Good faith negotiations are essential to restoring trust and stability, and to ensuring students, families and communities aren't caught in the middle," says Becotte. "We can, and will, bargain in good faith while being firm on what teachers and students need."

Becotte reminds teachers that every round of bargaining is different and that preparation is key.

“We don’t know what to expect, but we know what is at stake. Our goal is always to reach a negotiated agreement that addresses teachers’ realities. That means showing up deliberate, informed and prepared for whatever comes our way.”

## THE PROPOSALS

The STF is committed to bargaining in good faith; therefore, proposals remain confidential until they are presented to the Government-Trustee Bargaining Committee. Once proposals have been presented at the table, they will be shared with members.

At the heart of the asking package is a focus on recruitment and retention. Saskatchewan schools are facing growing pressures, including rising class complexity, shortages of substitute, contract and permanent teachers, and increasing workload demands. At the same time, other provinces are actively recruiting teachers, making competitiveness a real concern.

“This asking package reflects the common realities and experiences of teachers across the province,” says Becotte. “Collective bargaining is about more than a contract – it’s about shaping the future of public education. And that future is stronger when teachers’ voices are heard.”

The package includes proposals related to compensation, including salaries, benefits and pensions; Truth and Reconciliation; and teaching and learning conditions.



## WHAT'S NEXT

The first meeting between the Teachers’ Bargaining Committee and Government-Trustee Bargaining Committee was held in Saskatoon on May 20. The two sides will continue negotiation meetings in the fall.

Saskatchewan teachers can stay informed about bargaining by reading member-only *Bargaining Updates*. Similar to the last round, these *Updates* will be used to provide teachers with timely information following each meeting of the TBC and GTBC, and to share any other important bargaining information.

Becotte says members have a critical role to play as we enter negotiations. “Our solidarity and collectivity are what give our voice power in negotiations. Successful bargaining requires a strong, informed and committed collective.”

### ALL MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO:

- **Stay informed.** Read and understand the *Bargaining Updates*.
- **Deal in facts.** If you’re uncertain about a proposal or a position, talk to your local association president, school staff liaison or the STF for more information.
- **Be ready.** Whatever this round brings, we must all be ready to take action and participate in our collective.
- **Share information.** Continue talking to friends, community leaders and business owners in your community about the real challenges facing students. ▲

# Putting Truth and Reconciliation Into Practice at the STF

BY: SARAH MACDONALD, STF COMMUNICATIONS

**At the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, Truth and Reconciliation means more than words – it means action. The STF has been working on its commitment to Truth and Reconciliation for many years and is currently engaged in a range of initiatives that demonstrate this commitment, involving both STF members and staff.**

## SASKATCHEWAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT CHARTER

The STF is one of more than 90 organizations around the province that has signed on to the Indigenous Engagement Charter. The Charter aims to help address racially inequitable educational outcomes and support economic parity for Indigenous people in Saskatchewan. As a signatory, the STF has committed to developing internal Indigenous engagement strategies, educating its workforce on Indigenous issues, hiring and retaining more Indigenous employees, implementing procurement practices and partnerships, and more.

Angela Caron, a Métis member of the senior administrative staff, has been released from some of her traditional senior administrative staff responsibilities to serve in a leadership role to support the STF's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. She says that being a signatory to the Indigenous Engagement Charter helped spur on some of the STF's Indigenous initiatives.

## DIRECTION 2030

Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation is one of the six values that guide the STF's most recent strategic plan, *Direction 2030*, launched in June 2025. While working on *Direction 2030*, the STF Executive was very intentional about embedding the principles of Truth and



Reconciliation in the values and strategic directions, from building partnerships with First Nations and Métis communities to ensuring teachers are committed to growth and development aligned with the principles of Truth and Reconciliation. In practice, this means such things as understanding and educating on residential schools and other impacts of settler colonialism, taking action to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students, and integrating Indigenous knowledge into teaching and learning. The Executive also emphasized the importance of anti-racism and anti-oppression throughout the plan.

## COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

To develop a plan with recommendations on how to better advance Truth and Reconciliation and align with *Direction 2030*, a Community of Practice was formed. Fifteen STF staff members from a variety of departments, led by two external facilitators, mapped the STF's current reconciliation activities and progress and made recommendations on areas such as a representative workforce, relationships and education. The Community of Practice also identified concrete actions to implement the plan.

The Community of Practice began all its work with ceremony. Caron said it was beautiful to see non-Indigenous staff engaging in the Indigenous practices, such as pipe ceremonies. There were also many opportunities for the Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff members to share their experiences and perspectives.



▲ Elaine Sutherland, director of treaty education with the OTC, facilitates the Treaty Learning Journey workshop for STF staff.

“It’s built some really good understanding and collaboration between a group of people that would not have come together in any other way,” Caron reflects.

## TREATY LEARNING JOURNEY

As part of its commitment to continuing education on Truth and Reconciliation, all STF staff participated in the Treaty Learning Journey workshop offered by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner. Over two days last fall, staff learned about treaty history, current Indigenous issues in Canada and heard from a residential school survivor.

## INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Indigenous Leadership Committee is one of the pillars of the STF’s leadership initiative. Caron leads this group, which includes Indigenous principals, vice-principals, a member of the faculty of Indigenous education, a learning facilitator, and a co-ordinator who works in equity and anti-racism. Together, they explore what Indigenous leadership looks like and what is needed for it to thrive. Committee members also contribute their expertise to STF initiatives such as implementing, reviewing and providing feedback on *Direction 2030* and provincial collective bargaining proposals. They are developing Indigenous leadership modules that, once completed, will be offered through STF Professional Learning.

“This is my very favourite work. They are just amazing people and leaders. Being an Indigenous leader in the Saskatchewan school sector is not easy because there is racism and so many barriers. But we don’t want it to be a negative connotation, so we’re looking at what is needed for Indigenous leadership to flourish in hopes of supporting school divisions to recruit, value, support and retain Indigenous leaders,” Caron explains.

## INDIGENIZING AND MODERNIZING COUNCIL WORKING COMMITTEE

Another step towards making the STF more inclusive is the Indigenizing and Modernizing Council Working Committee. Comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous members, it assesses how the STF’s governing body could be strengthened by incorporating Indigenous worldviews and governance practices into the system and considering how Council could become more welcoming of underrepresented groups. The Committee is making recommendations that will be provided to the STF Executive for consideration.

## BUILDING BRIDGES WITH INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS

STF President Samantha Becotte and Executive Director Angela Banda are being very purposeful about engaging with the education portfolio holders with Métis Nation Saskatchewan and the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations. The STF is exploring how they can work with those organizations in a relational and reciprocal way. “The commitment from our senior management and our Executive to nurture these relationships is strong,” Caron notes.

These are just some of the ongoing efforts at the STF to put Truth and Reconciliation into action. It’s work that gives Caron a lot of pride in the STF, especially when she sees staff and members engaged, motivated and championing this work.

“It’s the idea that we as an organization are not saying reconciliation is the work of Indigenous people. We’re saying that this is the work we need to do together, and people are so willing to learn, which is a hopeful thing for me,” says Caron. ▲



**W**hen Louisa Fraser, 88, teaches at awâsisak kâ-nîmîhtocik St. Francis School in Saskatoon, she is providing the students with something taken from her as a child: an opportunity to learn Cree freely and joyfully.

Cree was Fraser's first language. She spoke it with her family and community on Mistawasis Nêhiyawak, a First Nation about 70 kilometres west of Prince Albert. But when she was about eight years old, she was sent to Birtle Indian Residential School in Manitoba where speaking Cree was forbidden. After four years in residential school, she attended the Indian day school at Mistiwasis Nêhiyawak for a few years and then went to high school in Prince Albert. Colonial school made her feel great shame about being First Nations and suppressed her language.

But seven decades later, Fraser has learned Cree again and is determined to teach it to the next generation. "I always go back to my goal – to get my language back to be able to pass it on to other people," Fraser says.

Fraser had long dreamed of teaching Cree, but until last year, she didn't have an education degree. In her mid-80s, the great-grandmother returned to school to make that dream a reality.

Her journey to becoming a teacher was a long one. Along the way, Fraser held various jobs and earned multiple degrees and diplomas. She left Grade 12 a few credits short of graduating and worked for a time before marrying Samuel Fraser, a Métis man, and settling in a small town where they raised four children. She worked in hospital administration but soon realized that without post secondary education, her opportunities – and income – would be limited.

"As a child, I knew we were very poor on the reserve. After I came home from residential school and I was living on the reserve going to day school, we were in poverty most of the time. I knew I had to get an education so I could make my own living," Fraser says.

She completed her high school diploma through correspondence classes and was accepted into a nursing program in Saskatoon. Although her family moved to the city to support her studies, she struggled and left the program after two years.

Fraser went on to work in various office roles, including at the Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre's library, where she earned a library technician diploma. She later worked at a women's halfway house and pursued a bachelor of social work degree through the University of Regina. "I did well in the classes. It was fairly easy for me," Fraser recalls.



▲ Louisa Fraser receives her bachelor of education degree from the University of Saskatchewan.

In 1994, at 56 years old, she got her first degree. She later completed a BA in sociology at the University of Saskatchewan.

She accepted some temporary social work jobs in Saskatoon and eventually landed a full-time job at the Battleford Tribal Council in North Battleford. "They paid me well, so I was able to get a mortgage, to get a car, and I got my driver's license. I lived there during the week and came home on weekends," she says.

**Fraser decided it was finally time to reclaim her language. Though already in her 70s, she was undeterred. She studied Cree during the summers for three years and earned a certificate in Indigenous Language Level 2 from First Nations University of Canada.**

Fraser worked there for six years, during which time she took a distance master of social work degree through Dalhousie University. "That was hard. I worked at the same time, so I really had to stay focused. I went to Halifax for convocation in 2007. That was the best day!" she recalls.

Her master of social work allowed her to open a private mental health therapy practice, which she ran from 2007 until 2021. Even then, her appetite for learning never slowed. A lifelong sewer, she enrolled in the Academy of Fashion Design in Saskatoon in 2019, earning a diploma two years later.

Around the same time, Fraser decided it was finally time to reclaim her language. Though already in her 70s, she was undeterred. She studied Cree during the summers for three years and earned a certificate in Indigenous Language Level 2 from First Nations University of Canada.

"I know what everything means. I can write Cree, but I've got to use the language more," she says.

She wanted to share her knowledge of Cree, to think in Cree, and use it regularly, so she decided to become a Cree

teacher. She applied for a teaching certificate, but since she still didn't have an education degree, she worked as an education assistant instead.

Meanwhile, her granddaughter, Kelsey Fraser, was studying education through the University of Saskatchewan's Indian Teacher Education Program. Inspired by the program's focus on Indigenous cultures and languages, Fraser enrolled after Kelsey graduated, beginning classes in September 2023.

"I was really excited and happy for her because when I was in the ITEP program, my grandma would tell me, 'I've always wanted to get to be a teacher.' And I said, 'Well, why don't you just do it?'" recalls Kelsey, who teaches grades 3 and 4 at an Indigenous-focused elementary school in Calgary.

Initially, Fraser found the program a bit daunting. She was the only white-haired person among many fresh-faced students and some who were in their 30s and 40s.

▼ Fraser enjoys a copy of *Mwākwa Talks to the Loon: A Cree Story for Children* by Dale Auger.

## A FAMILY OF EDUCATORS

Great-grandmother Louisa Fraser is the most recent person in her family to get an education degree. Her daughter Kim Fraser-Saddleback, her niece Valery Harper and her grandniece Shawn Sanderson all have doctor of education degrees from the University of Saskatchewan. Kim teaches at First Nations University of Canada. Her granddaughter Kelsey Fraser is also an ITEP graduate, and she teaches at an Indigenous-focused school in Calgary.



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## Today, Fraser is living out her dream. She works as a substitute teacher with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, teaches Cree syllabics to current ITEP students and serves as an Elder in the program.

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Education classes were quite different from social work, and the new technology was challenging. Still, she found comfort in learning alongside other Indigenous students, some of whom also spoke Cree.

“I always went back to my goal to get my language back to be able to pass it on to other people. That’s what kept me there,” explains Fraser.

Many of her previous university credits applied to the B.Ed. so she finished the degree in two years. She did her practicums in Saskatoon at wāhkōhtowin School and awāsisak kâ-nīmīhtocik St. Francis School, which both have Cree programs. At University of Saskatchewan’s fall 2025 convocation, she was the oldest graduate – and received a standing ovation from her classmates.

Today, Fraser is living out her dream. She works as a substitute teacher with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, teaches Cree syllabics to current ITEP students and serves as an Elder in the program. She is also exploring online Cree teaching and parent-focused language programs.

Kelsey has watched her kokum teach and says it comes naturally.

“I wish to be a student in her class because I know that she’s soft-spoken and when she smiles you feel so safe with her. The kids are well behaved with her because it’s like having your kokum in your class and you listen when your kokum is around,” Kelsey says.

While many people her age are long settled into retirement, Fraser is embracing a new chapter. Alongside sewing, reading, Elder work and exercise classes, she now teaches several days a week.



▲ Louisa Fraser gains hands-on experience in the classroom during her student-teaching practicum.

“I just want to get more experience in the classroom. It’s always in the front of my mind that I want to pass the language down, so people use their language all the time, wherever they are, at school, at home or in a community,” she says.

Fraser, who has long been an inspiration to Kelsey and others in her family thanks to her work ethic and constant desire to learn new things, says that it doesn’t matter how old you are; you can always go after your dreams.

“Even if it’s hard, if you really want it, you can put the time into it, to work on it, to complete it. Maybe it is inspiring, but I just wanted my B.Ed. so I could teach Cree,” she concludes.

For Kelsey, her kokum’s work represents healing.

“She didn’t get to be in a classroom setting where you could learn your language and play with your friends and have a day filled with adults who care about you and honour you,” says Kelsey. “I know that it’s healing part of her and that’s a beautiful way of revitalizing both her language and her spirit.” ▲

# Get to Know Your Local Leaders

BY: SANJIDA RAHMAN, STF COMMUNICATIONS

**L**ocal associations play a critical role within the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Your local association presidents aren't just representatives – they're advocates, problem-solvers, and the bridge between your classroom and the broader provincial voice. Their decisions and leadership directly shape your professional experience, your working conditions and the future of education in Saskatchewan.

To spotlight the people behind the role, we're sharing their stories – what drives them, how they got here and why they chose to step up. Because when you know who's speaking on your behalf, you can better understand the power of your collective voice.

## Jarren Reaney

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN EDUCATION  
STUDENTS' SOCIETY

### What made you want to become a teacher?

Like many aspiring educators, my decision to become a teacher was deeply influenced by the impactful teachers I had growing up. Their ability to connect, inspire and shape students' lives left a lasting impression on me. At the same time, I was fortunate to gain meaningful experience working with young children through my mom's daycare, which operates out of our family home. Being part of that environment allowed me to see first-hand not only how important those early connections are, but also how rewarding it is to support and inspire the younger generation. These experiences naturally came together and guided me toward teaching as a career. Looking ahead, I am motivated by the opportunity to make a lasting, positive impact within my community, and I believe teaching provides a powerful and meaningful way to do so.

### What made you want to become president of your local association?

My local association is the student body within the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, which plays a key role in representing and supporting pre-service teachers. When the opportunity to become president arose, there were no other candidates running for the position. Rather than leaving that gap unfilled, I saw it as a sign to step forward and take on a new challenge. Although I had been involved in various student leadership groups over the years,



I had never held a presidential role, and I felt ready to grow into that level of responsibility. I was motivated by a desire to create positive change within my community and believed I had the skills and dedication to do so. I also thrive in busy, engaging environments, and this role offered exactly that. Looking back, I can confidently say it was the right decision. Serving as president has been an incredibly rewarding experience that has allowed me to grow both professionally and personally, build meaningful connections and fully embrace the opportunities that come with leadership.

### **What advice would you share with members who want to become more involved with the Federation?**

My advice to anyone considering becoming more involved with the Federation is simple: take the step and get involved. The Federation plays an essential role in supporting teachers by negotiating salaries, benefits and working conditions, while also providing representation in workplace matters and advocating for safe, respectful and equitable schools. Beyond that, it offers valuable professional development opportunities, shares current research and best practices, and works to strengthen public education through advocacy at both the governmental and community levels. Becoming involved is not only a way to support the profession, but also an opportunity for personal and professional growth. It allows you to have a voice in decisions that directly impact education, develop leadership skills and build meaningful connections with other educators. Most importantly, it gives you the chance to contribute to positive change in schools and help shape the future of education in Saskatchewan.



## **Colin Kristoff**

**REGINA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**

### **What made you want to become a teacher?**

Unlike many teachers I've met, I wasn't driven by an early, almost spiritual calling to teach. I've always admired those who knew from a young age that this was their path – but my journey was different.

Looking back, what shaped me most were the people I encountered growing up in the Regina Catholic Schools Division. And I say people intentionally. My memories aren't limited to teachers – they include administrators,



caretakers and the many adults who created a sense of belonging. Those relationships mattered, and they still do.

Among those experiences, the presence of strong, positive male role models in teaching had a lasting impact on me. I could see parts of myself reflected in them, and I naturally gravitated toward those connections. They helped me understand that teaching could look like me – that there was space in the profession for my personality, my interests and my way of connecting with others. That kind of representation matters, especially at a young age, and it shaped how I came to see both the profession and my place within it.

There are a few individuals I carry with me in a particular way. Mr. Brian Lach stepped into a difficult classroom mid-year and led with confidence, opening doors to outdoor learning experiences that felt rare at the time. My former principal, Mr. Rob Kovatch, embodied community – someone you could see not just at school, but also in the neighbourhood or at church, always present and welcoming.

In high school, Mr. John Majewski brought physics to life. He had a remarkable ability to make a challenging subject engaging, adapting his teaching to meet students where they were. His carefully structured labs and projects built both confidence and curiosity.

And then there was Mr. Ed Schroeder, whose presence spanned my years in the division. He represented, for me, the essence of teaching: a love of learning, a joy in sharing it and a genuine care for students. He made people feel seen and valued.

When you're surrounded by people like that, it's hard not to want to become a teacher.

### **What made you want to become president of your local association?**

Becoming president wasn't something I had planned. Like teaching, it came more through experience than intention. Much of that path was shaped by Chris Kampman, our most recent past president. He helped reimagine what association work could look like – more engaging, more representative and grounded in meaningful data rather than isolated perspectives. His approach emphasized listening to members at scale and ensuring decisions reflected the collective voice.

When he stepped away, there was an opportunity to continue that work – to build on it and expand it. It felt important to keep that momentum going and to involve more teachers in shaping the future of the profession.

At the same time, the shift from classroom to association leadership has been profound. After 25 years in education,

the classroom still feels like the place I understand most deeply. There are days when this role feels unfamiliar, even uncomfortable. But that tension is also part of the growth – learning how to serve the profession in a different way.

### What advice would you share with members who want to become more involved with the Federation?

Marshall McLuhan described the world as a “global village” – a place where connection, communication and shared experience shape how we understand one another. That idea feels particularly relevant to Federation work.

He also reminded readers, often in the prefaces to his own books, that knowledge is provisional. His ideas didn’t exist in a vacuum, nor were they meant to be absolute. He saw books – and by extension, participation in dialogue – as a bridge between individual cognition and collective understanding. Meaning is not fixed; it is shaped through interaction, reflection and exchange.

That’s the spirit I would encourage when getting involved.

The Federation is, in many ways, its own kind of global village. It brings together diverse perspectives, experiences and voices from across the profession. No one person carries the full picture, and no single viewpoint is sufficient on its own. The strength comes from the exchange – from listening, contributing and being open to having your thinking shaped along the way.

So, the advice is this: step into the conversation.

You don’t need to have certainty or a complete understanding before you begin; understanding develops through participation. Your voice matters not because it is definitive, but because it contributes to a shared and evolving understanding of our profession and its future.



## Lori Gray

**PRINCE ALBERT & AREA  
TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION,  
TEACHER AT CARLTON  
COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL**

### What made you want to become a teacher?

I realized I wanted to become a teacher while completing my honours degree in sociology. During a class visit to the Regional Psychiatric Centre, I was particularly drawn to the resource centre. Hearing about



the impact education had on clients – providing structure, confidence and future opportunities – stood out to me. In that moment, I recognized how meaningful it would be to support others through learning.

After that experience, I found myself consistently thinking about teaching and the kind of classroom environment I would want to create. I became motivated by the idea of helping students build skills, confidence and a sense of possibility in their own lives. That experience ultimately solidified my decision to pursue teaching as a career where I can support and encourage students to reach their full potential.

### What made you want to become president of your local association?

I have consistently sought out leadership opportunities throughout my career, from mentoring colleagues early on to taking on formal roles within the school and the association. My experience as a councillor and local implementation and negotiation committee chairperson with the Prince Albert and Area Teachers’ Association, including contributing to the successful negotiation of a new agreement, gave me a strong understanding of advocacy, collaboration and the importance of effective representation.

Through this work, I saw first-hand the impact a strong association can have in supporting teachers and amplifying their voices. I decided to pursue the presidency because I wanted to take a more active role in shaping that support – ensuring members feel heard, represented and confident in their association. Leading at this level allows me to build on my experience while continuing to advocate for the profession and strengthen our collective voice.

### What advice would you share with the people who want to become more involved with the Federation?

My advice would be to get involved, even in small ways to start. Becoming active in the Federation gives you a deeper understanding of the profession – how decisions are made, how teachers are supported and how collective voices can create meaningful change.

I would encourage people to begin by connecting with members of their local association, attending meetings or joining a committee. These opportunities not only build your knowledge, but they also allow you to contribute to addressing issues that directly impact teachers and students. Over time, you’ll develop both a strong professional network and a sense of shared purpose within the profession.

## Stuart Wilson

**GOOD SPIRIT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, TEACHER AT MELVILLE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL**



### What made you want to become a teacher?

Teaching has been in my family for a few generations. My family always emphasized the importance of learning, which was instilled in me. I guess you could say teaching is the family business. So, it was a natural fit to become a teacher even though I wasn't sure I wanted to become one. After earning a BA in English, it was a natural progression to go into education. I realized how valuable teachers are and couldn't imagine doing anything else.

### What made you want to become president of your local association?

I had been active with the local association for many years, mostly as an STF councillor, when the role of president came open. I thought my experience and years as a councillor could help my local association. I knew how important this role is and understood that my knowledge of the history of the association would be an asset to the position.

### What advice would you share with the people who want to become more involved with the Federation?

I would say sign up for a committee, either in your local association or the STF. There are many opportunities within your local association and the STF for you to get involved. You will meet new people, learn how the organizations work and have a deeper appreciation for what we do. ▲

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Audience: PreK-Grade 3 teachers

#### **Word Recognition and Phonological Awareness**

Audience: PreK-Grade 3 teachers

#### **Bridging Word Recognition and Comprehension Through Vocabulary and Morphology Instruction**

Audience: K-Grade 6 teachers



To register please visit our events page.

[www.stf.sk.ca/professional-resources/events-calendar](http://www.stf.sk.ca/professional-resources/events-calendar)



For a complete list of all available workshops, check out our events catalogue.

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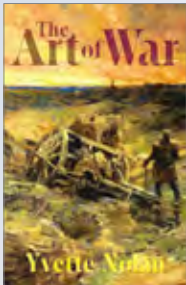
STF-001895 / MAY 26, 2026 9:33 A.M.

# Read Saskatchewan This Summer

BY: JOAN ELLIOTT, ESRC LIBRARIAN AND MANAGER

Saskatchewan has a vibrant community of talented authors and dedicated publishers. The titles highlighted here were selected primarily from the 2026 Saskatchewan Book Awards Shortlist and include a mix of fiction, nonfiction, poetry and drama.

To borrow resources, contact us at [esrc@stf.sk.ca](mailto:esrc@stf.sk.ca) or request materials directly from the [Online Catalogue](#). All postage is paid by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.



### ***The Art of War***

Set during the Second World War, this play by Yvette Nolan depicts the battlefield experiences of a Canadian artist who witnesses and paints the carnage of war. The artist's journey of self-discovery is also movingly portrayed.



### ***Son of Nobody***

This highly anticipated novel by internationally acclaimed author Yann Martel is an insightful retelling of the Trojan War from the perspectives of a modern-day-classics scholar and an ancient Greek foot soldier. Written in both prose and poetic form, the narrative reveals many lessons about what we can learn from the past about love, suffering and obsession.



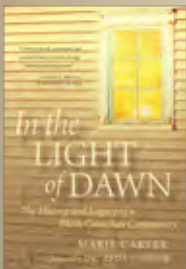
### ***How to Know a Crow: The Biography of a Brainy Bird***

Written by Candace Savage and illustrated by Rachel Hudson, this book is intended for readers aged 9 to 12. It takes the reader on a fascinating journey through the seasons of a crow's life and answers questions such as: What are their families like? Can they use tools? Do they communicate with one another?



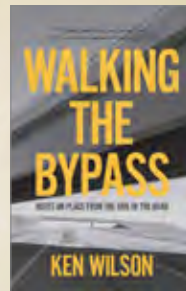
### ***Touching Grass***

Written by Kristy Jackson and illustrated by Rhael McGregor, this novel geared to middle grade and young adult readers is the amusing story of a youth who is in trouble at school and spends too much time playing online video games. His mother sends him to a Dene First Nation culture camp to reconnect with nature and his Dene roots.



### ***In the Light of Dawn: The History and Legacy of a Black Canadian Community***

Author Marie Carter chronicles the history and contributions of the Dawn Settlement located at a terminus of the famed Underground Railroad in rural Ontario. Revealing how this abolitionist settlement and its residents intersected with American figures such as Frederick Douglass and Rosa Parks, Carter recovers 200 years of lost Black history.



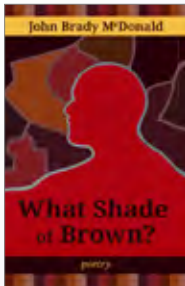
### ***Walking the Bypass: Notes on Place From the Side of the Road***

Extensively researched and deeply personal, this thoughtful volume by Ken Wilson, a University of Regina instructor, describes his experiences walking along the Regina Bypass, including the Global Transportation Hub and the contentious highway surrounding the city. He uses these experiences as a basis for understanding the changes to the land since the arrival of settlers and reflects on how we can learn from and develop relationships with the land around us.



### **Kohkum's Royal Bannock**

Written by Wilfred Burton, illustrated by Hawlii Pichette and translated into Michif by Irma Klyne and Larry Fayant, this humorous bilingual storybook is about a kohkum, her grandson and several aunts who make a huge batch of bannock to present to the Queen and her entourage on the Queen's royal visit. Opportunities to count in English and Michif are included in the text, along with a recipe for bannock.



### **What Shade of Brown?**

This powerful collection of poetry and prose by author, artist and activist John Brady McDonald describes the life experiences of an Indigenous man who feels he does not truly belong in either Indigenous or settler societies. The author's direct and heartfelt style in chronicling his journey makes an immediate and lasting impression upon the reader.



## Join the McDowell Foundation's Board of Directors!

The McDowell Foundation is looking for a classroom teacher to join our Board of Directors starting in September 2026.

For more details, visit:  
[mcdowellfoundation.ca/get-involved](http://mcdowellfoundation.ca/get-involved)

STF-001207 / 20260526

## SSL-EBRATION

MAKING CONNECTIONS

### School staff liaisons, this one is for you!

Join us to celebrate and learn about the important work you do. Attend this event to improve your understanding of SSL responsibilities, learn the skills you need to thrive in the year ahead, network with other SSLs and connect with Federation staff.

Each school is asked to send one SSL.

Visit the [SSL page](#) on the Federation website for more information and to register.



STF-001508B / 20260526

### **SASKATOON**

**Saturday, October 17, 2026**

To be attended by the following local associations: ALEF, DELTA, Horizon, Lloydminster, Prairie Spirit, Saskatoon, Sun West and Tri-West

### **PRINCE ALBERT**

**Saturday, November 7, 2026**

To be attended by the following local associations: ALEF, Creighton, DELTA, Ile a la Crosse, North East, Northern Area, Northwest and Prince Albert & Area

### **REGINA**

**Saturday, November 7, 2026**

To be attended by the following local associations: ALEF, Chinook, Christ the Teacher, DELTA, Good Spirit, Holy Family, Holy Trinity, Prairie South, Prairie Valley, Regina Catholic, Regina Public and South East Cornerstone

# Empowering Educators to Strengthen Early Literacy

BY: JANA LEN, STF BULLETIN CONTRIBUTOR

Thanks to funding from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers can participate in professional learning to strengthen the earliest and most critical years of literacy development for Saskatchewan students. **Empowering Educators: Evidence-Based Foundations for Literacy** is a three-day workshop created and delivered by Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Professional Learning. The workshop is created for teachers, by teachers. The funding for the project is part of a provincewide effort to improve reading outcomes and ensure every young student is given the skills they need for long-term success.



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## When teachers understand the science behind how children learn to read, they can more effectively support every student in the classroom.

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As research shows, literacy is a critical milestone for students and is much more than just decoding words. The ability to read and comprehend what is being read is closely linked to later achievement, graduation rates and general well-being throughout adulthood. From an equity perspective, early literacy helps disrupt predictable patterns for students who have been historically underserved. This includes students from marginalized communities, those learning English as an additional language and those with reading challenges. High-quality, evidence-based early literacy instruction ensures that access to effective teaching is not dependent on background or circumstance. It is creating more equitable outcomes and positioning all students to fully participate in their education and future opportunities.

In its pilot phase, the workshop offers insights into what supports teachers need, and how this support can change the future for young students. When teachers understand the science behind how children learn to read, they can more effectively support every student in the classroom. Participants learn how the brain processes language and how interconnected systems, such as attention, memory and cognitive flexibility, shape a child's ability to read and write.

By grounding instruction in evidence-based practice and emphasizing all components of reading along with responsive planning and assessment, the program builds consistent practices that can be sustained over time. By using data to detect student needs early and adjusting instruction accordingly, teachers can address reading difficulties early and prevent them from becoming long-term barriers for students. This practice lays a strong foundation for ongoing success in reading, learning and overall educational achievement.

As the delivery of the workshops continues, the feedback shows how the training is already influencing classroom practice. Teachers share that after the session, they have a better understanding of the foundational language

systems that support literacy, and how the systems develop over time. Many have shared that learning about the brain's reading networks has helped them better understand why some students struggle and how specific instruction can make an impact on their reading journeys. This extensive learning is giving teachers an understanding of how students move from sounding out words to reading with fluency and confidence.

Another significant area of impact has been through the assessment teaching. Teachers have learned how to use screeners, diagnostics, benchmarks and curriculum-based measures to help better understand each student's reading ability and style. This understanding helps teachers make more informed decisions and respond more effectively to student needs.

For STF Professional Learning facilitators, one of the most enjoyable aspects of delivering the program has been the opportunity to work with such passionate and committed Saskatchewan teachers. Some participants are new to the profession and just learning the science of reading while others have been applying these practices in Saskatchewan classrooms for years. These varying experiences have allowed facilitators and teachers to learn and share with one another and create a strong early literacy community focused on student achievement. STFPL facilitators recognized early on that the teacher participants were not only ready and eager to learn but were also extremely excited about the conversations, strategies and resources being shared.

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## As the delivery of the workshops continues, the feedback shows how the training is already influencing classroom practice.

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The Ministry of Education and STFPL have committed to continuing the Empowering Educators: Evidence-Based Foundations for Literacy program into the 2026-27 school year. This supports the common goal of continuing to try to reach as many kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers as possible. As the program continues, the focus will remain on strengthening teacher capacity, building consistency across the province, and ensuring that young students will have the literacy skills and foundation needed to succeed. ▲

# Enhancements Coming to Teachers' Long-Term Disability Plan

BY: SARAH MACDONALD, STF COMMUNICATIONS

## ENHANCEMENTS TO LONG-TERM DISABILITY ADMINISTRATION

Updates to the Teachers' Long-Term Disability Plan are being introduced to support a more streamlined and member-focused experience. These enhancements are intended to provide more timely reviews and improved support for members throughout the long-term disability process.

### HERE'S WHAT'S CHANGING

#### More Timely Claims Review

Currently, LTD applications are reviewed by the Claims Committee, which meets monthly from September to June. Under the updated model, applications will be reviewed more frequently and year-round by a professional case manager.

#### Enhanced Wrap-Around Support

The STF's LTD case managers bring experience in mental health, nursing, health-care systems, physiotherapy, rehabilitation and related fields. All members receiving long-term disability benefits, including those already on a claim, will have access to support from a dedicated case manager.

This approach is intended to offer co-ordinated guidance, help members navigate health-care resources, and support them in understanding rehabilitation and return-to-work options. The goal is to provide clearer pathways and a more connected, member-centred experience.

#### Support for Recovery and Return-to-Work Planning

With assistance from their dedicated case manager, members on LTD will receive support in accessing medical care and

rehabilitation resources. As a member's health improves, the case manager will work with them to explore suitable return-to-work plan options. This enhanced approach is designed to provide consistent, co-ordinated support throughout a member's recovery journey.

#### Benefits for STF Membership as a Whole

The updated case management model is expected to support a more efficient and responsive process for teachers across the province. As implementation progresses, it may contribute to improved co-ordination, streamlined administration and broader system-level benefits for the education community.

#### Teacher Voice and Governance

As the Claims Committee concludes its work, the Teachers' Long-Term Disability Plan will continue to assess how teachers' voices can be meaningfully incorporated within the updated administrative structure. Ensuring that the perspectives and needs of the education sector remain central to LTD governance will continue to be a priority.

If you have any questions about the upcoming changes to the Teachers' LTD Plan, you can contact the STF at 306-373-1660 or toll-free at 1-800-667-7762.





## A SASKATCHEWAN WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS AND HISTORIES MATTER

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RECHERCHER

**Nouvelle Interface**

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Executive, which is elected by Council from its ranks, manages and regulates the activities of the Federation. The members must ensure the organization is acting in accordance with its legislated mandate and fiduciary commitments. Among their responsibilities is the establishment and appointment of members to the benefit plan boards and various committees.

# Meet Your Executive

At the Annual Meeting of Council held April 22 to 25, 2026, the following individuals were elected to the Executive of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

NAME	POSITION	LOCAL ASSOCIATION	TERM
Chris Kampman	Member-at-Large	Regina Catholic Schools Teachers' Association	2026-28
Amy Orth	Member-at-Large	Prairie Spirit Teachers' Association	2026-28
Crystal Schindel	Member-at-Large	Horizon Teachers' Association	2026-28
Karielle Willner	Member-at-Large	Sun West Teachers' Association	2026-28

The following individuals were elected in 2025 to serve a two-year term from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2027.

NAME	POSITION	LOCAL ASSOCIATION	TERM
Samantha Becotte	President	Lloydminster Teachers' Association	2025-27
Nathan Bromm	Vice-President	South East Cornerstone Teachers' Association	2025-27
Daniel Dion	Member-at-Large	Association locale des enseignantes et enseignants francoskois	2025-27
Amy Korver	Member-at-Large	Prairie Spirit Teachers' Association	2025-27
Whitney Paul-Joseph	Member-at-Large	South East Cornerstone Teachers'	2025-27
Peggy Welter	Member-at-Large	Prairie Valley Teachers' Association	2025-27

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Read about Council final decisions and results in the 2026 Annual Meeting of Council [Report to Members](#). In addition, the Reports to Council, STF Executive election results and the final plenary resolution and election results can be viewed online at [www.stf.sk.ca/about-stf/our-team/council/annual-meeting-of-council-2026](http://www.stf.sk.ca/about-stf/our-team/council/annual-meeting-of-council-2026), when you log in through MySTF.



COUNCIL