

Fall Board Meeting Highlights

The following issues were addressed during the CSBA Board meeting held in Ottawa, November 9th and 10th 2008.

- 1) **High School Completion Rates** – *Although Statistics Canada found that high school completion rates have significantly dropped – 9% nationally – they examine the rates until the age of 24. Provinces more or less measure till the age of 18.*

The Board shared a number of best practices in their provinces. For example,

The British Columbia Trustees Association (BCSTA) shared the successes of a recent provincial government initiative to give boards a list of non-graduates to enable them to more effectively focus on individual students.

Rick Johnson, CBSA President, discussed the success his Trillium Lakeland District School Board is having with their *Recover Earn and Learn (REAL)* program begun about 3 years ago which focuses on encouraging recently dropped out students to return. This person was able to bring back some 400 students in the first year alone.

Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) President Colleen Schenk discussed the positive effect of the Ontario government's *Learning to 18* regulations which require students to stay in school until the age of 18 or until they graduate.

The Board discussed how students are identified as dropping out when they move to another province – even though they complete their schooling in that province.

- 2) **Closing the gap of aboriginal student achievement in the public system** – The Board addressed the draft Action Plan prepared from a workshop facilitated by President Johnson at the *Closing the Gap for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students* conference hosted by the Alberta School Boards Association. A final CSBA Plan should be ready by the Winter Board meeting although much of it can and has already been acted on.

Members also discussed the need for data as well as the release of that data to allow for an open and frank discussion of what specifically needs to be done and when, to enable swift and effective action. *To achieve, we need to know where we stand.*

- 3) **New Models of Education Delivery** – *One of the most complex challenges facing school boards in Canadian history is delivering on our mandate of excellence for each an every student in the face of rapidly declining enrollment. Small school populations make delivering even the most basic of curriculum difficult and expensive.*



David Birnbaum and Debbie Horrocks, Quebec English School Boards Association, Executive Director and President, respectively; Ron Marks, and Ken Meech, Nova Scotia School Boards Association, President and Executive Director respectively



Ruth Ann Furgala, MAST Representative to the CSBA

**The Board At Work
November 9-10th, 2008**

- 3) **New Models** (*continued*) – The Board shared a number of successful practices in facing this challenge; using technology in particular. The BCSTA discussed how enormously successful, BC's on line *LearnNow BC* has been. Initially, only a couple of thousand were expected to sign up, to date, some 10,000 have connected to find out about BC's educational opportunities and services. www.learnnow.bc.ca.

The Nova Scotia School Boards Association (NSSBA) announced that the theme of Congress 2009 is the *Class of 2020* – the impact of technology not only in the classroom but also for education policy and governance.



Heather Welwood, Alberta School Boards Association President and Roy Challis, Saskatchewan School Boards Association President

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Highlights of the Fall Board Meeting *continued*

- 4) **The Task Force On Cyberbullying from the Quebec English School Boards Association:** *In June 2008 the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) released a Report Chaired by Claude Lajeunesse which produced a number of thoughtful, practical and very doable recommendations for addressing cyberbullying. What was so impressive to the CSBA board was the positive approach of the QESBA Task Force Committee – that in positively embracing internet use, methods for preventing abuses could better be addressed.*

The Task Force arrived at seven broad recommendations aimed at the school community with each offering a number of specific tactics to carry out the goals. CSBA Members praised QESBA's work and agreed to distribute it to their respective communities.

The Task Force recommendations are:

- i. Educate and involve community partners in responsible Internet use
 - ii. Initiate and support programs and materials to integrate Internet use in teaching and learning practices
 - iii. Enhance public awareness of key Internet issues
 - iv. Develop and adapt clear policies on Internet use
 - v. Undertake safety and security measures
 - vi. Train teachers and other school personnel in information literacy
 - vii. Encourage ministries to respond to the impact of new technologies
- www.qesba.qc.ca

Friends of the CSBA Reception

Advocacy is a core activity of the CSBA, indeed building relationships is vital to healthy community engagement of any organisation whose foundations are rooted in democracy.

The CSBA believes that we must build informal and personal relationships with the people representing organisations whose mandates directly address or indirectly touch on education. In addition to formal efforts, the CSBA hosts informal events where our stakeholders can meet school board leadership from across the country



Nada Borden, CSBA Vice-President and Yves Beaudin, Council of Ministers of Education. Friends Reception, November 2008. Ottawa



Rick Johnson, CSBA President and Peter Sheremeta Provincial Director, Terry Fox Foundation. Friends Reception, November 2008. Ottawa



Louise Pinet, Executive Director, L'Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario, Rick Johnson, CSBA President, Alain Pineau, Executive Director, Canadian Conference of the Arts