

Friends of the CSBA Reception – Feb 24th 2008

The CSBA Friends Reception is an important event for Canada's education leaders to connect with the CSBA leadership.



r-l: CSBA Vice-President Rick Johnson, Ontario Education Minister Kathleen Wynne, CSBA President, Marcus Tabachnick



r-l: CSBA President Marcus Tabachnick, Manitoba Education Minister Peter Bjornson



r-l: CSBA President, Marcus Tabachnick, Curriculum Services Canada Executive Director, Kathryn McFarlane, Council of Ministers of Education Director General, Raymond Théberge

CSBA Meeting Highlights

Strategic Priorities

The CSBA Board of directors reviewed progress to date in their strategic priorities which focus on student achievement and the means by which high student achievement can be achieved. Specifically, the Board addressed the following:

- 1) **High School Completion Rates:** Reviewed early draft discussion papers. High school completion is directly linked to future income levels, employment rates, incarceration rates and is also linked to health outcomes.
- 2) **Closing the achievement gap of aboriginal students in the public system:** CSBA members discussed the outcomes of our participation in the Promising Practices Conference hosted by the Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education last November.

In addition, the Alberta School Boards Association discussed their goals for their upcoming *Closing the Gap* conference. Topics for the April event include “What are some of the most important gaps, How to involve First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents & communities, and How to use data to increase governance decision making capacity.” This will be a solutions-oriented session. (www.asba.ab.ca)

The British Columbia School Trustees Association (www.bcsta.org), Ontario Public School Boards' Association (www.opsba.org), and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (www.saskschoolboards.ca) also shared their efforts and successes. Saskatchewan reminded the Board that aboriginal education will be an important component of the July 2008 Congress.

You can find information on the work of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees at www.mast.mb.ca.

There are CSBA Members entering into discussions with First Nations Tribal Councils regarding joining provincial associations of school boards.

The other priorities addressed by the board included:

- 3) **Educational Success of Immigrant & Refugee Children**

Susan Cook, the OPSBA analyst who wrote the widely used CSBA Discussion Paper on this subject, updated the Board on her thoughts about major trends and offered her suggestions on advocacy strategies for the future.

She will be providing the CSBA with background materials.

CSBA Meeting Highlights

Strategic Priorities (continued)

There are areas of interest to the CSBA that are vitally important to how school boards effectively deliver high student achievement.

4) **Innovative Models of Education Delivery** – Canadian school boards are committed to delivering high quality education to every single student despite facing such factors they do not control such as a vast often difficult geography, rapidly changing economy which causes massive population shifts and a fundamental decline in the birthrate in Canada and worldwide which is causing what appears to be very long-term enrollment declines.

5) **Copyright** – The Board fully supports bringing Canada's copyright laws up-to-date. However, we would like to ensure schools and their students have fair access to materials in ways that balance the rights of artists with the educational needs of students. The CSBA will be publishing a series of bulletins for its members to ensure they have the most up-to-date materials and information.

6) **Trustee Professional Development** – The aim of this CSBA priority is to give trustees education leadership skills to enable them to ensure that student achievement is their highest priority, to give trustees and school board commissioners the tools and ability to engage their communities – again with the goal of high student achievement. The CSBA will begin organizing and collating information to enable CSBA members to locate each others' trustee development materials.



Minister Jackson Lafferty

President Tabachnick, Vice-President Johnson and National Director Patricia Parulekar, met with Jackson Lafferty, the Minister of Education for the Northwest Territories and his Deputy Minister, Dan Daniels, regarding building a learning and sharing relationship.

Minister Lafferty is also responsible for Justice, Employment, Culture and the Homeless.

r-l: Yukon Education Minister Patrick Rouble, CSBA President, Marcus Tabachnick (Feb 24th '08) – President Tabachnick also began a dialogue with Minister Rouble regarding how the CSBA could learn from and share with the Yukon system

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada Meeting Highlights

CMEC Initiatives

The Ministers agreed to initiatives to promote their priorities: Aboriginal education, literacy, and postsecondary education capacity.

Aboriginal Education

CMEC will host a summit in 2009 on improving Aboriginal achievement rates that will bring together Aboriginal education stakeholders to explore ways of improving the educational success of Canada's Aboriginal peoples, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Literacy

The Forum, entitled *Literacy – More Than Words*, will be held simultaneously in cities across Canada on April 14-15, 2008.

Postsecondary Education Capacity

Ministers will continue to urge the federal government to increase its financial contribution to postsecondary education through fiscal transfers.

They also agreed to develop a data and information strategy to further define the gaps between the skills Canadians will need in the future and the capacity of the postsecondary education system to deliver them.

CMEC also called on the federal government to continue to enhance student financial assistance.

www.cmec.ca/releases/press.en.stm?id=58 –

