

President's Bulletin

May 2020

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This is our second CSBA President's Bulletin of 2020, and much has changed for Canada and the World! With the Covid-19 pandemic situation schools are closed and many people are working from home while all of Canada practices social distancing. It has been extremely challenging for everyone during this time as education systems adapted to provide for emergency remote learning in a variety of formats, and school educators and leaders developed ways to connect with students as well as families in need. Trustees too have learned new ways to continue to provide governance leadership with boards now meeting remotely.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of our education partners in implementing the best plans possible for our students. On behalf of the Canadian School Boards Association Board of Directors, we applaud the leadership being shown everyday by those in the public education system as we work through Covid-19 as a nation.

Trustees across the country may not be meeting face-to-face to discuss school board matters, but they continue to hear from concerned constituents and are responding to those concerns, helping to distribute information as it becomes available and ensure accountability measures and decision-making in boards. While the details vary from province to province, one thing is consistent – the dedication of trustees to students and the education system they serve.

The CSBA also continues to function with remote offices and online meetings. The association is monitoring the situation across the country and is available to support provincial associations and members as needed. While annual gatherings have been postponed or cancelled, the executive committee has continued to meet regularly. The Board of Directors has also moved to online meeting to move the work of our association forward, and our website and social media have been a regular point of access for information on provincial COVID resources and news. It is an important time to maintain communication and connection virtually as we all work together during these uncertain times.

We are focused on providing leadership and support while paying attention to ongoing requirements. I appreciated the Board of Directors meeting 'virtually' for the first time on May 3, as we also explored new ways of conducting business to continue support to school boards and Trustees across the country. It was a valuable time for sharing and some essential decision-making related to adjusted events.

Through the Covid-19 pandemic there has been a lot of discussion around mental health for all Canadians. I had the privilege of speaking with Senator Stan Kutcher, a child psychologist and Nova Scotia Senator, on the importance of staying healthy and understanding the difference between a mental health crisis and normal stress emotions during a pandemic. He also shared important considerations for re-entry to school. The conversation was recorded and is available on our website, Facebook Page and Twitter. It was very informative and I encourage all of you to view the video.

I look forward to our continued work on behalf of trustees across the country, and the students we all serve.

Yours in education,

Laurie French



Covid-19 Website Updates

Visit www.cdnsba.org to see regular updates from colleagues across Canada on their Covid-19 response initiatives.

CASSA and CSBA Collaboration

The Board of Directors and Executive Directors of the CSBA and the Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) has meet virtually each week and, of late, bi-weekly to share information and resources. This collaboration between trustees and superintendents is vital as we all strive to maintain quality education for all students and share resources.

The CSBA would like to thank the President of CASSA, Reg Klassen and CASSA Executive Director Ken Bains for their ongoing leadership and collaboration.

Ottawa Advocacy Event Update

The Advocacy Event planned for May was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Board of Directors had planned to meet in Ottawa and host meetings with Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators to discuss shared education priorities. Last year the Board of Directors met with multiple individuals to discuss public education on a national scope. There will be an advocacy event in the coming year, as soon as face-to-face meetings are safe.

With meeting restrictions in place across the country, school board members and trustees across the country are encouraged to reach out to their local Members of Parliament to share with them some insight into the world of a trustee and issues of shared importance, such as mental health, democracy, and Indigenous education. Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators are still responding to letters and emails.

National Trustees Gathering on Indigenous Education & CSBA Congress 2020 Update

The Alberta School Boards Association and CSBA made the very difficult decision to cancel the July 2020 National Trustees Gathering on Indigenous Education & CSBA Congress due to Covid-19 concerns. This decision comes due to the recommendation of the Alberta's Chief Medical Officer related to restrictions on mass gatherings.

The CSBA Board of Directors would like to thank ASBA and their planning committee for all the hard work that went into preparations for this event.

The National Trustees Gathering on Indigenous Education and Congress 2021 will take place July 8 to 11 in Montreal. Hosted by the Quebec English School Boards Association, this will be an exciting and informative event. Details regarding the exact location will be available soon as will program planning information.

2020 Annual General Meeting

The CSBA Annual General Meeting and election is scheduled for September 28 & 29, 2020. Planning is underway for the meeting. Depending on Covid-19 protocols and travel restrictions closer to the meeting date, the decision may be made to hold the meeting online.