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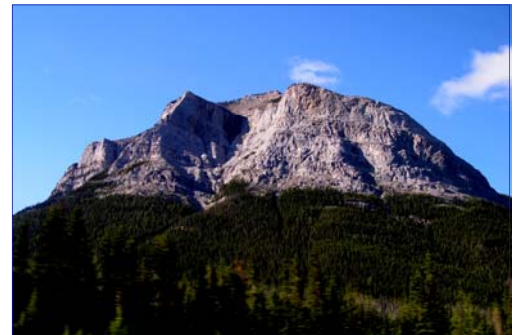
# LEADERS & LEARNERS

THE VOICE OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS / L'ASSOCIATION  
CANADIENNE DES ADMINISTRATEURS ET DES  
ADMINISTRATRICES SCOLAIRES

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## The 2009 CASA Annual Conference: Hats Off To Our Friendly Albertan Hosts



From dinosaurs to dancers, from mountain peaks to racing chucks, Alberta had it all.

*Photos by Jon Hutt and Tara Lee Wittchen*



**T**hat famous western hospitality (barring a few scary dinosaur claws and jaws) was made evident throughout the entire 2009 CASA Annual Conference in Calgary this July 7 to 12. Whether exploring the beautiful Rocky Mountains with a friendly bus driver guide, chatting with talented First Nations dancers after a spirited performance, or sampling a taste of that famous Alberta beef at a barbecue, conference participants and their families were made to feel welcome in Alberta.



## Pre-conference Activities In Drumheller: Sunshine, Hoodoos And Dinosaurs



Above: A sandstone hoodoo.

Right: Taylor, Bob and Lisa Mills pose beside the hoodoos in the heart of the Badlands.

*Photo by Ed Wittchen*



Left: Only in Drumheller would you find people so calm about a giant tyrannosaurus rex right behind them in the parking lot!

Right: Gary Kerton poses with his new triceratops buddy.

*Photo by Jon Hutt*



Left: A hot summer day in the hoodoos.

Below: The Red Deer River valley in the Drumheller Badlands.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen except where indicated*



A good traveler has  
no fixed plans and is  
not intent on  
arriving.  
—Lao Tzu



## Pre-conference Activities: Drumheller's Atlas Coal Mine



Above, left: Valerie Pichette (centre) and Emily and Salena Joshua (right) ride the rails of the Atlas Coal Mine train.

*Photo by Ed Wittchen*



Above, right: Ed Wittchen climbs up the last wooden mine tippie in Canada.

Right: Helmet lights shine on the tippie walls.



Left: Horseshoes used by the little mine ponies.




Below, left: An exterior view of the wooden tippie as the tour group carefully makes its way back down the side of the hill.



Below, right: Colourful but spiky desert flora.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen except where indicated*



Not all of those who  
wander are lost.  
—JRR Tolkien



## Pre-conference Activities In Drumheller: A Tiny Church, A Swinging Bridge, A Museum And More



*Left: Emily Joshua* takes up an entire row of pews inside Drumheller's World's Smallest Church. The diminutive building boasts a seating capacity of 10,000 people...6 at a time!

*Right, above: Bob Mills* and his son **Taylor** mingle among the terrifyingly realistic dinosaurs at the Royal Tyrell Museum in Drumheller.

*Right, below: Jurassic Park* is frightening in the dark, all the dinosaurs are running wild!




*Left: The Joshua family (Peter, Penny, Salena and Emily), Marion Holmes, and Jon Hutt (and baby Aurora)* pose at one end of the 117-metre-long Star Mine Suspension Bridge, which hangs over the Red Deer River in the Drumheller Valley.

*Below, left: Ann Blake and Gary Kerton* pose as coal miners at the Atlas Coal Mine.



*Below, right: Time for lunch!*

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



To awaken quite alone in a strange town is one of the pleasantest sensations in the world.

—Freya Stark



## Pre-conference Activities: Banff And Sulphur Mountain



Above: Taking the gondola up Sulphur Mountain.

Left: The first of many great photo opportunities.

*Photo by Jon Hutt*



Left, top: Some of the hardy alpine flora found at the top of Sulphur Mountain.

Left, middle: **Greg and Kimberley Anderson** get into a gondola to ride up to the spectacular summit ridge of Sulphur Mountain in Banff National Park.

Left, bottom: The famous Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel.

*Photo by Jon Hutt*



Left: The beautiful Bow River winding its way through Banff

*Photo by Jon Hutt*

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen  
except where indicated*



Today is your day,  
your mountain is  
waiting, so get on  
your way.

—Dr. Seuss



## Pre-conference Activities: Columbia Icefield In Jasper National Park



Above: **Jim and Piet Ferguson** exit the ice explorer vehicle.



Right: **Frank Kelly** takes in the rugged view from the comfort of the ice explorer.



Left: A topsy-turvy ride toward the glacier.



Right: The explorers travel on roads carved atop glacial debris as they approach the icefield.


*Photos by  
Tara Lee Wittchen  
except where indicated*



Left: AASA's **Mark Bielang** and CASA's **Carol Gray**.

Below: **Greg and Kimberley Anderson** (left) and **Ann Blake and Gary Kerton** pose in front of the glacier.

*Photos by Ed Wittchen*



A wise traveler never  
despises his own  
country.  
—Carlo Goldoni



Left to right: Xerox representative **Randy Brydges**; EXL Award nominees **Barbara Spadoni** (OCSOA), **Patricia Deans** (AAESQ), and **Jim Brandon** (CASS); EXL Award national winner **Johanne Messner** (OPSOA); and Xerox representative **Rick Brunt**.

## Recognizing Excellence: The 2009 Xerox EXL Awards

**O**n Thursday, July 9, conference delegates came together during the opening ceremonies at the Blackfoot Inn in Calgary to honour CASA colleagues nominated for the EXL Award.

Xerox representatives **Randy Brydges** and **Rick Brunt** presented the 2009 EXL Award to **Johanne Messner**. Johanne is the superintendent for the NE6 region of the Toronto District School Board and the OPSOA nominee.

Affiliate nominees for 2009 included **Jim Brandon** (CASS, Foothills School Division), **Patricia Deans** (AAESQ, Lester B. Pearson Public School Board) and **Barbara Spadoni** (OCSOA, Superior North Catholic District School Board).

The EXL award recognizes CASA members who show exemplary leadership ability and enhance school administration.



Above: A time to celebrate with friends and colleagues.


*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



Above, left: Xerox's **Randy Brydges** offers national winner **Johanne Messner** a congratulatory hug.



Above, right: Outgoing CASA president **Jim Grieve** looks on as Johanne thanks her colleagues.



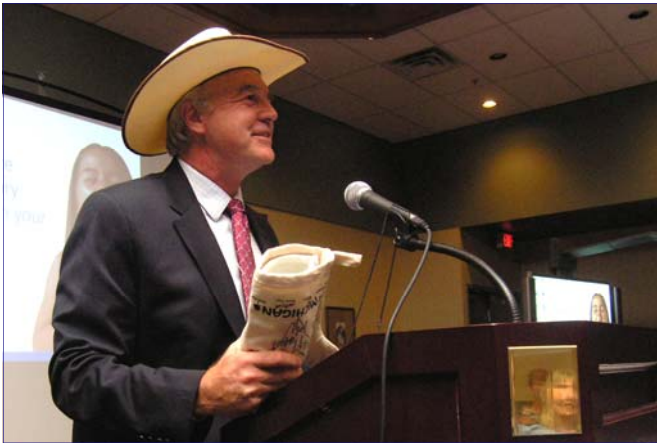
We advance on our journey only when we face our goal, when we are confident and believe we are going to win out.

—Orison Swett Marden



## The 2009 Opening Ceremonies: A Welcome To All Guest Speakers, Delegates And Sponsors

The 2009 CASA Annual Summer Conference opened on Thursday, July 9, 2009, at the Blackfoot Inn's Blackfoot Ballroom in Calgary, Alberta. After a warm welcome from outgoing CASA president **Jim Grieve**, Alberta's deputy minister of Education **Keray Henke** addressed the delegates. "What are the underlying factors that make a difference later in life?" he asked, touching on the theme for the week.



Above: AASA president **Mark Bielang** addresses CASA delegates during the conference opening ceremonies.

The deputy minister was followed by American Association of School Administrators' president **Mark Bielang**. He offered greetings from colleagues in the USA, as well as a bit of his own hospitality and humour. Sporting a white cowboy hat, he offered a gift of oven mitts to CASA's **Carol Gray**, **Bob Mills** and **Jim Gibbons**. He was also heard to quip, "I'm from southern Michigan...and my northern Michigan relatives sound a lot like Canadians, eh?"



Above, left: Alberta's deputy minister of Education **Keray Henke** welcomes delegates.



Above, right: Paradigm Shift was just one of many sponsors on hand throughout the conference.

*Photo by Ed Wittchen*



Above: Folks mingle during the Alberta reception sponsored by the College of Alberta School Superintendents.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen except where indicated*

Next to speak was Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) western vice president **Shawn Larsen** and College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) president **Greg Woronuk**.

Representatives of the conference's sponsors, including SMART Technology, Pearson Education, Paradigm Shift Achievement Plus Inc., Scientific Learning and Education Canada Network, also gave brief welcoming remarks to the gathered delegates.

Following an inspired keynote address by guest speaker **Dr. Michael Fullan** (see coverage beginning on the next page), all of the guests were invited to mix and mingle with each other at the Alberta Reception in the hotel's Heritage Ballroom.

Arriving at one point  
is the starting point  
to another.  
—John Dewey



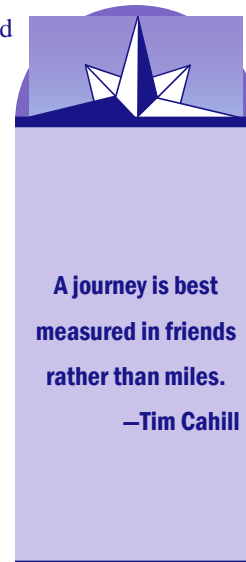
## Ten Things About Change & Lessons From A Premier: Excerpts From Dr. Michael Fullan's Keynote Address

Dr. Michael Fullan was the 2009 conference's first keynote speaker, addressing CASA delegates on the evening of Thursday, July 9. These first 10 points are ideas he shared during the first part of his talk.

1. Focus on a small number of ambitious goals and pursue them deeply and persistently. Stay the course.
2. Communication during implementation is more important than communication prior to implementation. You don't want to be "all hat and no cattle."
3. Excitement prior to implementation is more fragile than excitement during implementation. Good leaders energize other people. Lone innovators do not and they sometimes annoy.
4. In the early stages of implementation, costs outweigh the benefits. Protect the troops.
5. Relationships first, challenges second. Remember the "too fast, too slow" problem: If you go forward too strongly with new ideas, the culture rebels. If you move too slowly, the culture absorbs you.
6. Beware of plans. The size of a plan is inverse to the quality of its implementation.
7. Behaviours before beliefs. Capacity building = skill development = clarity = ownership.
8. Focus on strategies that enable learning about implementation during implementation. Learning is the work.
9. It is OK to be assertive.
10. Do the previous nine and accountability will almost take care of itself.

Dr. Fullan's presentation also included seven lessons that Ontario Premier **Dalton McGuinty** says he's learned about making progress in that province's schools since forming government six years ago. Today, optimism, confidence and respect are back in Ontario schools. Test scores and graduation rates are up. Class sizes are down. McGuinty advises leaders to modify these lessons to suit their own needs, but hopes that they are of value during times of change.

1. The drive to make progress can't be a fad. It has to be an enduring government priority backed by resources and an intelligent plan.
2. Education reform is not important to your government unless it's important to the head of your government—personally.
3. It doesn't matter how much money you invest or how much people want change. You won't get results unless teachers are onside.
4. Don't forget the hard part: Improve teaching.
5. Keep up the pressure all of the time.
6. Once you start making progress, you have permission to invest in more.
7. The best way to sustain your effort to improve your schools is to keep it personal. If it's only a matter of good public policy, that's not enough to keep you going over the long run.





## Leading In A Culture Of Change: An Interview With Dr. Michael Fullan

**Dr. Michael Fullan** is Canada's leading expert on education change. He is the special advisor to the premier and minister of Education in Ontario. Dr. Fullan participates as a researcher, consultant, trainer and policy advisor on a wide range of educational change projects with school systems, teachers' federations, research and development institutes, and government agencies in Canada and abroad. He has published widely on this topic, including the book *Leading in a Culture of Change*, which won the 2002 Book of the Year Award from the National Staff Development Council. His book *Breakthrough* won the 2006 Book of the Year Award from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Following his address to the conference delegates, Dr. Fullan gave a few minutes of his time to allow *Leaders & Learners* editor **Tara Lee Wittchen** to interview him for the newsletter. Here is their conversation.



**Dr. Michael Fullan** speaks to the CASA conference delegates on Thursday, July 9, during a keynote address sponsored by Alberta Education Early Learning Branch.

*In a culture that seems to demand gratification and results on an almost instantaneous basis, how can we best encourage educators to, as you put it, stay the course and keep the focus on relationships and behaviours and pursuing a few key goals well?*

The people who want quick results and try to get them actually don't get them anyway. It's not like we're giving up something for something else. You're not getting any results. The quicker they want them, the more things will change so that strategy has a very poor track record.

The more positive thing to say is we always say we're going to prove these results in very short order. Not overnight but within a couple of years. And a couple of years is not a long time in the big scheme of things and we've been able to do that.

You have to link your priorities with measurable results. And you have to state it in advance like we did with literacy. We said we're going to make these things go up, and watch us and be part of doing it. And then year one they went up, year two they went up and year three they were a little bit less, and then they went up.

In short, we're not talking about building relationships and hoping something will happen. We're talking about pinpointing the kinds of things that need to happen, which includes people working together and linking it to measurable results and proving it within short order that it's progressing.

*How can leaders in education like the ones here today, who are dealing with government, parents, the media and people from the broader community, remember to keep the focus during times of system change on the children and on the professionals in the classrooms and educational child care centres?*

You do it by making a personal commitment that you're the kind of leader that wants to make a difference, as opposed to somebody who just wants to move upward in the hierarchy or someone who talks a good game but doesn't deliver.

If you look just at trust, what builds trust in a leader is integrity plus confidence. I'm talking about integrity first and then you have to build your own confidence, and not be dissuaded, by being persistent. We saw

*(Continued on page 11)*

**When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.**

**—Victor Frankl**



## Leading In A Culture Of Change: An Interview With Dr. Michael Fullan, continued

*(Continued from page 10)*

it happen in England, we evaluated it and it worked for at least that first four-year term, and we saw it happen and were part of it for six years in Ontario.

It's getting more politicians—as well as more superintendents, incidentally—to do that.

The project we're doing here in Alberta with CASS, which is moving and improving districts, there are nine districts involved and each of the nine of these leaders are saying, "I want to improve my district by staying the course, by taking these ideas seriously and I want to be part of a network of learning with other districts where we learn from each other." That's a new phenomenon because those leaders recognize that these ideas were worth taking seriously, so now they've developed a strategy around it.

*Can you provide a few examples of how leaders can "protect the troops" during implementation of change?*

A good leader doesn't let his people hang out to dry, basically. A good leader recognizes that the buck stops here. Obama's like that. He said, "We screwed up on this one," and he didn't screw up, somebody on his team screwed up, but he said "We screwed up on this one, it's not going to happen again, we'll correct it, mistakes will be made and we'll admit them and we'll work on them right away." He, as president, is taking responsibility for anything his administration does, and taking responsibility but acting on problem solving and being transparent and building trust around it.



Delegates take notes during Dr. Fullan's address.

**"It's really as fundamental as learning theory: If you're going to learn something, you have to be willing to make mistakes."**

The people who do it have to have confidence, otherwise you fall apart. But if you're the kind of leader who only worries about your own image, it actually does your image more harm. Because people know that kind of leader and they respect him or her less and you don't gain anything, whereas you saw Tim and Sally in my presentation, they

had a lot of confidence. They had the confidence to say two things. One, I might not know the answer to this. Two, if something goes wrong I'm going to take the blame for it initially and I'm going to create that

atmosphere so that people won't be afraid to take risks. Then they start to solve problems and get better and confidence goes up and there are fewer mistakes made.

*What do you think about the stories we're seeing in the news today of so many examples of political leaders who are letting their people take the blame for mistakes?*

It's bad leadership, basically. What gets leaders is not making mistakes but how they handle the mistakes that they make. That's really what gets them. It's about being open and accessible and not defensive, absorbing the blame on behalf of your organization but also getting better at what you're doing so that your accomplishments counterbalance any mistakes. You have to know the answer to something, you can't keep saying, "I'll go find out."

It's really as fundamental as learning theory: If you're going to learn something, you have to be willing to make mistakes. If you create an atmosphere where people feel uptight about everything they do, they won't try anything. If you blame other people instead of understanding and protecting them, then you create an organization that's afraid to act and won't solve problems and won't get better.

*Thank you, Dr. Fullan, for sharing your ideas with us at the conference and in our newsletter.*



**Man cannot  
discover new oceans  
unless he has the  
courage to lose  
sight of the shore.**

—Andre Gide

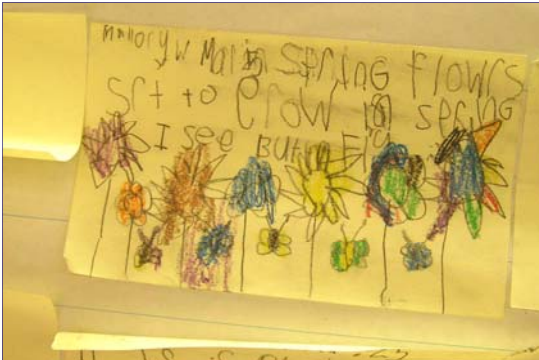


## Conference Sessions, Part One



Above: **Adrienne Sprecker** reads aloud.

Left: **Dr. Clyde Hertzman** discusses some of the points of his keynote address with a delegate.



Left, top: Children's artwork on display in a breakout session.


Left, middle: **Janice Fulawka**, director of student support services for Northern Lights School Division, presents "On My Way: Beginning the Learning Journey" with **Adrienne Sprecker** (pictured above), an assistant principal with the division.

Left, bottom: Time for questions from session participants.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



Left: **Erica Raymond**, a special assignment teacher for special education with the Northeastern Catholic District School Board.



Learn from  
yesterday, live for  
today, hope for  
tomorrow.  
—Albert Einstein



## Western Hospitality On Display: Fancy Dancers, Fancy Roping Skills And A Barbecue Too



Left: An impressive display of Aboriginal fancy dancing added a magical touch to the Friday night festivities. Especially moving was the invitation for all to join in a friendship circle dance.

Right, above: Former CASA president **Jim Gibbons**, who happens to be a real cowboy in his spare time, offered a lesson in roping skills.

Right, below: Yeehaw! It's time to rope us some delegates.

*Photos by Jon Hutt*



Left: An old-fashioned western round-up, complete with a few little cowpokes.

*Photo by Ed Wittchen*



Below, left: A tasty western barbecue feast was laid out for conference delegates and their families to enjoy on Friday night.

*Photo by Jon Hutt*



Below, right: Let's line dance!

*Photo by Ed Wittchen*



Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.

—Mahatma Gandhi



## Conference Sessions, Part Two



Whether after a keynote address (left) or waiting for the next activity (above), there are always opportunities for delegates to share ideas.

*Left photo by Tara Lee Wittchen*



*Left, top:* Delegates listening and taking notes during a breakout session on Friday.

*Left, middle:* **Krimsen Sumners**, supervisor of student services for St. Albert Protestant Schools.

*Left, bottom:* **Joanne Davis**, manager of the Toronto District School Board Parenting and Family Literacy Centres.

*Photo by Tara Lee Wittchen*



*Left:* **Frank Dunham**, superintendent of Mission Public Schools in BC.

*Photos by Ed Wittchen except where indicated*



## Dr. Fraser Mustard: Passionate About ECE

Dr. Fraser Mustard's many accomplishments include being named a Companion to the Order of Canada, a recipient of the Order of Ontario, an inductee of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, the winner of the 1993 Sir John William Dawson Medal and the recipient of 15 honorary degrees. He is one of the leading minds in this country when it comes to research on the socioeconomic determinants of human development and health. Dr. Mustard places particular emphasis on the importance to society of early childhood development.

Dr. Mustard delivered an informative, passionate keynote address about early childhood education initiatives on Saturday morning. His talk was sponsored by the Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre. Watch for coverage of the ideas expressed in this well-received address in an upcoming issue of *Leaders & Learners* this fall.



Dr. Fraser Mustard not only shared his thoughts during his keynote address but also in many informal conversations with delegates throughout the conference, including at breakout sessions.

## Early Childhood Education Initiatives Across Canada

The entire conference came to a close late Sunday morning with an informative cross-country discussion of early childhood education initiatives.


On hand to present views from their regional and professional perspectives were (pictured from left to right) **Jim Grieve**, outgoing CASA president and director of education for Peel District School Board in Ontario; **Brenda Willis**, assistant superintendent for Edmonton Catholic Schools in Alberta; **Carol Gray**, incoming CASA president and director of secondary schools for Lester B. Pearson School Board in Quebec; **Greg Woronuk**, CASS president and superintendent of Peace River School Division in Alberta; and **Shawn Larson**, western vice president of the Canadian Association of Principals and

principal of Hillmond Central School in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan.



A cross-country panel discusses Early Childhood Education Initiatives: What It Looks Like (The All-Canadian Scene) on Sunday morning.

Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen



The only journey is  
the one within.  
—Rainer Maria Rilke



## Calling All Cowboys And Cowgirls: Grab Your Hats and Boots, It's Calgary Stampede Time!



Above: **Mark and Pam Bielang.**

*Photo by Ed Wittchen*

Right: **Bob Mills** raises his white hat in a friendly Calgary Stampede salute.



Left: Spectacular fireworks light up the night sky following the grandstand show.

Right: Chuckwagon driver **Doug Irvine** races his team around barrel number four during the "Half Mile of Hell."



Left: **Jon Hutt and Ed Wittchen** visit the beautiful tipis of the Treaty 7 First Nations.

Below: Stampede is a time for families!

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen except where indicated*



Adventure must start with running away from home.  
—William Bolitho

## Feedback: Some Of Your Thoughts On The 2009 CASA Conference

“I enjoyed everything at the conference. I really liked the trip to the Columbia Icefields and the chuckwagon races.”

~ **Ken Bain**, associate director of education  
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board  
Hamilton, Ontario

“The conference was, on a scale of 1 to 10, about a 12. I think to me, not that the sessions were not good, they were awesome, but the networking was as valuable to me as the conference. We took a bus trip to the Icefields and the conversations we had on that bus trip out and back, I learned more from my colleagues than I’ve learned in five years...just methods of doing things and the issues in everyone’s districts. It was extremely valuable.”

~ **Bob Gillis**, multimedia coordinator/consultant  
School District 16  
Miramichi, New Brunswick

“Actually, the Stampede, absolutely. I loved it, especially the chuckwagons.”

~ **John Forbeck**, superintendent of education—operations  
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board  
Hamilton, Ontario

“There are a lot of highlights, including Fraser Mustard and the chuckwagon races. I enjoyed all of the speakers. I brought along my wife, and my grandson and daughter joined us too.”

~ **Barry Wowk**, superintendent  
St. Albert Protestant Schools  
St. Albert, Alberta

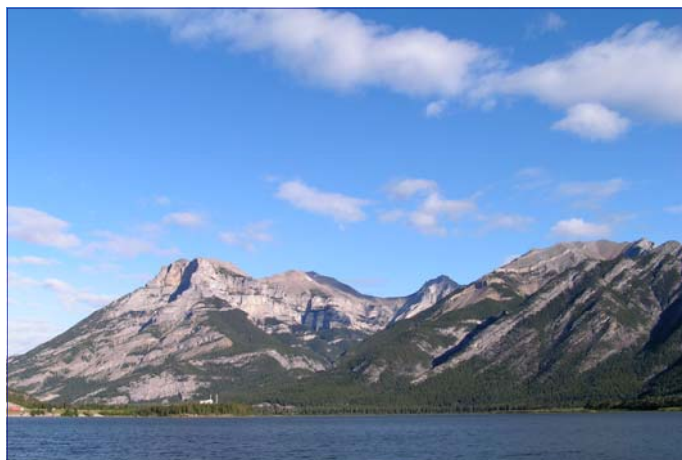
“The highlight for me was really getting an opportunity to connect with people from across the country and hear from people about some of the best practices that are out there. We really had a chance to share back and forth some of the great things that are happening in education today.

And oh, the fun stuff! The Stampede was probably first and foremost for us. My whole family is with me and we just had a fabulous time. We went twice and we loved the show tonight. We look forward to coming again some day.”

~ **Larry Hope**, director of education  
Keewatin-Patricia District School Board  
Dryden/Kenora, Ontario

“I must say, the most powerful presenter was Fraser Mustard. He affected everyone in the room with his passion and his love and his care, making a difference for children. I also enjoyed the Calgary Stampede. Yahoo!”

~ **Johanne Messner**, superintendent (NE6 region)  
Toronto District School Board  
Toronto, Ontario



A visit to the majestic Rocky Mountains was just one part of the amazing 2009 CASA Annual Conference.

*Photo by Jon Hutt*

“The highlight of the conference for me is hard to select, but I think I’d have to say that of all the sessions the one that will probably be of greatest use to me in our school district is the session put on by the jurisdictions from north-western Ontario with respect to the early intervention with Aboriginal children. That’s the one that stands out for me.

Of the fun stuff, well, the Stampede is great, and this wasn’t really ‘fun’ stuff but we went over to SMART Technologies and saw the world headquarters of SMART, and that was excellent as well.

It’s just been great to meet old friends from across the country as well as make new friends both from across our country as well as from the US.”

~ **Don Falk**, superintendent of schools  
Red Deer Public Schools  
Red Deer, Alberta

**You can discover  
more about a person  
in an hour of play  
than in a year of  
conversation.**

—Plato



## CASA PEOPLE: Famous Last Words (And Pictures)



*Left:* The Elders will teach the children.

*Right, top:* **Kath Rhyason** knows hugs are a part of good early child development.

*Photos by Ed Wittchen*

*Right, below:* **Mark Bielang** sips glacier water.

*Photo by Carol Gray*



Spouses and family members always welcome: **Penny, Salena, Emily** and **Peter Joshua** take in the grandstand show at the Stampede.



*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen except where indicated*



On the road again: Whether by motorcoach, minivan or even gondola, CASA pre-conference participants are always on the move.

### CONTACT CASA:

1123 Glenashton Drive  
Oakville, ON  
L6H 5M1  
Canada

T: (905) 845-2345  
F: (905) 845-2044  
frank\_kelly@opsoa.org

[www.casa-acas.ca](http://www.casa-acas.ca)

Editor: Tara Lee Wittchen  
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