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LEADERS & LEARNERS

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

Inside this issue:

Message From The Executive Director	2
Working Together To Help Every Student Learn And Excel: Northern Lights' Success With Off-Campus Schools	3
Bonnyville Off-Campus School	6
The World You Don't Know: An Off-Campus Principal's Observations	8
Faces In The Crowd	9
Contact CASA	10
Our Mission and Our Beliefs	10

CASA Events

- Watch for details in the next newsletter on the 2010 CASA Annual Summer Conference in Quebec City. The theme for this year's conference is "Dealing with Children's Mental Health."

Message From The President: Meeting Needs Through Alternative Schools

In this issue of *Leaders & Learners*, we're exploring what are called alternative, outreach or off-campus schools and programs. Our executive director **Frank Kelly** tells us about the success Ontario is seeing with dual credit programs. From north-eastern Alberta, Northern Lights School Division superintendent **Roger Nippard** shares the successes owing to the programming offered at that division's six off-campus schools. One of his off-campus principals, **James Trodden**, gives us not only the facts from his experiences in the school but also some of the heartaches and hopes. A tough read but an important one. Don't miss it.



Carol Gray
CASA president

can also include work-study opportunities where appropriate to student programming.

All three off-site alternative programs are staffed with a multidisciplinary team that includes subject area teachers, behaviour technicians, resource teachers, school psychologists, the school principal as well as a school nurse and school social worker from the local Centre de Santé et Services Sociaux (Health and

Social Services Centre). The staff meets daily to discuss specific students and their needs; the team meets weekly to plan and monitor interventions designed to maximize student success.

I'd like to share the approach from my home board, the Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB), based in and around Montreal.

We operate three off-site alternative programs designed to meet the needs of students who have been unsuccessful at their regular home schools as a result of behavioural challenges. Smaller class settings allow staff to maintain close communication with each student and family on a daily basis. This allows for a more personalized program with greater chance for success. The three centres provide educational services from the Secondary 2 through 5 levels (grades 8-11) and

Through this team approach, staff, students and parents set goals in the Individual Education Plan and revisit this plan throughout the year as the student progresses and develops. The team approach addresses both the behavioural and academic challenges faced by students and aims to improve their academic, social and life skills.

Regular communication is maintained with home regarding attendance, behaviour and academic progress. In addition, social workers assigned to particular students are encouraged to maintain regular contact with

(Continued on page 2)

Message From The Executive Director: Dual Credit Programs Prove To Be Positive Incentives

A new development in Ontario education over the past four years has been provision of dual credits for secondary students who choose to attend Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. Dual credits have become an important part of the Student Success initiative aimed at student retention, achievement and improving linkages between the college and the secondary systems.

The Ontario government set its goal of achieving 85 per cent graduation from high school by 2010. And with this program and other initiatives, the target is in sight.

The program is aimed at students who are at risk of not continuing or completing secondary studies. It encourages students who are disengaged or underachieving and gives them new incentives. The aim is to support the student in secondary and to encourage others to return.

A student enrolled in a secondary school may count a maximum of four optional credits toward the diploma and toward

the Ontario college certificate or diploma. Dual credit instruction is to be provided by a secondary school teacher and/or a college professor or instructor and/or a certified journeyman where required.

Dual credit programs may take place in college and board locations as appropriate.

Enrollment in dual credits has grown each year and is projected at over 14,000 students for 2010.

Positive incentives for success are critical to education achievement.



Frank Kelly
CASA executive director

Message From The President, continued

(Continued from page 1)

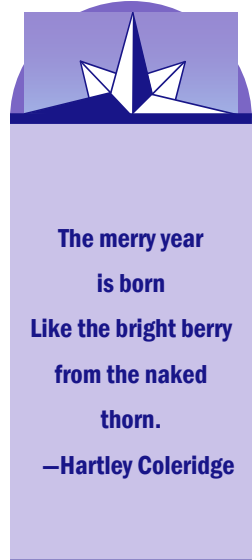
the school to monitor student progress and contribute to carrying out successful school-based plans. The importance of ongoing dialogue with community resources is recognized, and partnerships with local health care and social services is key to program success. As a result of this approach, teamwork, communication and collaboration are the cornerstones of student success in these programs.

Successful students in these programs are able to obtain a high school leaving diploma, achieve necessary credits to qualify for specific trade-related training or finish their high school diploma through adult education. Some students who have achieved very well are recommended by their teachers for reintegration back into a regular high school.

Similarly, the LBPSB also operates four schools in partnership with local health and social services organizations in which smaller class settings, communication and collaboration are key to increased opportunities for student success. For example, Batshaw Youth and Family Services partners with the LBPSB in two school settings. Both of these schools provide educational services to youth at the secondary level. In addition, Portage partners with the LBPSB to provide educational services in a residential setting to youth at the secondary level who are challenged by substance abuse

issues. And the LBPSB partners with the Douglas Hospital to provide educational services from kindergarten to Secondary 5 to students in this hospital setting. Teachers in these settings work in close proximity and collaboration with the clinical staffs of their institutions to come to an educational plan that will best put students in a position for reintegration into a regular school setting upon completion of their respective programs.

What are some of the alternative programs in your divisions? How are they delivered? How long have students been able to access them, and what kind of results are there? What approaches from the past were less than successful and what seems to be bringing about positive changes for students, both in the short term and long? If you'd like to contribute information or articles on outreach programs in your division, or for that matter on any topic of interest to you, to this newsletter, please get in touch with our editor, **Tara Lee Wittchen**, by writing to tarawittchen@eastlink.ca.



Working Together To Help Every Student Learn And Excel: Northern Lights' Success With Off-Campus Schools

Northern Lights School Division No. 69 spans across a large geographical area in northeastern Alberta, from Wandering River to Cold Lake, and includes the major communities of Cold Lake, Bonnyville and Lac La Biche. Since the 1990s, the division has incorporated outreach, or off-campus, schools into its mandate to see all of its students succeed, regardless of their personal circumstances. At Northern Lights, that often includes high school completion.

NLSD superintendent **Roger Nippard** has worked for the division since 2001, starting as the Cold Lake and Bonnyville area assistant superintendent in 2001. In 2004, he was appointed to the position of assistant superintendent—human resources. He became superintendent of schools in 2007.

By Tara Lee Wittchen
editor
Leaders & Learners

In a school district like Northern Lights School Division—a rural division, in the middle of the booming Alberta oil patch, large Aboriginal population—you might assume that high school completion rates fall below provincial levels. You would, however, be wrong.

“We have a higher high school completion rate than the rest of the province,” says NLSD superintendent Roger Nippard, “and we have a higher transition to post-secondary rate than the rest of the province, too. Significantly higher, and I think our outreach schools have been the biggest factor in contributing to those statistics.”

An outreach school, also called an off-campus school, is defined as an alternative learning program for potential and early school leavers. It offers help for young adults to finish their junior and senior high school curriculum. At Northern Lights, there are four main components at the heart of each outreach school: an individualized academic program, a life skills program, personal living skills in health and wellness, and mentoring and counselling.

“Outreach programs give options and supports to students who otherwise may not stay in school,” Alberta’s Minister of Education Dave Hancock stated in a press release last summer. With their innovative programming and intervention strategies, outreach schools help students meet their high school completion goals.

Whether it’s the draw of easy employment or trouble with social issues, the opportunities offered by each of the six NLSD off-campus schools offer viable alternatives to students who otherwise struggle to stay in school. The provincial rate of high school completion in Alberta, according to the NLSD 2008-2009 *Annual Education Results Report*, is 70.7 per cent. Northern Lights’ rate is 71.3 per cent.

The Northern Lights vision and mission statements—

“Improving our world, one student at a time” and “Working together to help every student learn and excel”—seem especially poignant when applied to the successes of its outreach programming.

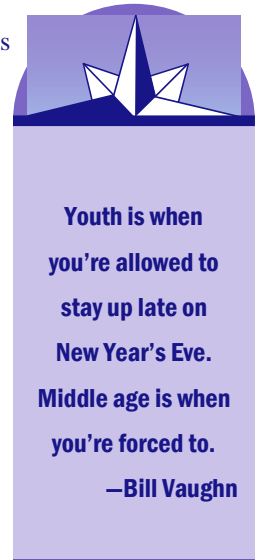
In the early years of off-campus schools in Alberta, about 20 years ago, the focus tended to be on at-risk students, Nippard says.

While that is still a major part of the programming’s emphasis, the focus has widened significantly since then. Students may include those in grade 12 who need only a few more courses for graduation, working students, pregnant and parenting teens, students who have been or are involved with drugs or criminal activity, students who have been or are involved with sexual abuse, bullied students, students facing mental and physical health challenges or literacy challenges, students heavily involved in sports or fine arts, students who have failed or dropped out, adults wanting to finish their high school diploma or students whose religion prevents

(Continued on page 4)



Roger Nippard
superintendent
Northern Lights School District



Working Together To Help Every Student Learn And Excel: Northern Lights' Success With Off-Campus Schools, cont'd

(Continued from page 3)

them from finding their needs met in the traditional classroom setting.

"The mandate for each of our off-campus schools is similar in the sense that the primary audience are students who don't normally fit within the traditional school setting," Nippard explains. "Our schools also address some of the complexities and nuances in their own communities."

NLSD serves just under 6,000 students at 27 schools. The six outreach schools include Bonnyville Off-Campus School, Cold Lake Off-Campus School, Lac La Biche Off-Campus School, Crossroads Outreach School (on the Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement), Bridges School (for grades 7 to 9 in Cold Lake) and Journeys Outreach Academy (on the Kikino Métis Settlement). At present time, there are nearly 100 students at BOCS, between 40 and 50 at Cold Lake, around 30 each at Lac La Biche, Crossroads and Journeys, and close to 20 at Bridges.

"Those numbers have increased dramatically over the past few years," he says. "The programs have expanded and the numbers in all of them have been increasing. One of the results of that has been that our high school completion rate exceeds the provincial average because we've managed to focus on some of the students who typically would not have finished school."

Although any student in the public district's jurisdiction can access the outreach programs, the off-campus schools generally use an intake interview process for admission. Students who have difficulty fitting into a regular school system take priority. Care is also taken to be sure there is a mix of students, including the academically gifted or others who have experienced success in some way who may serve as good role models for their classmates.

"What many of these students need is self-esteem and some success, and success breeds success," Nippard says.

The benefits of the off-campus experience are many. One of the biggest is students finishing the high school program.

"That provides students with many options they wouldn't otherwise have," he says. Other benefits include a lower staff-to-student ratio and the chance to be in a setting with people who share similar challenges.

As students begin to complete courses, which are self-directed, and see themselves making progress, that in and of itself is a huge motivator to continue with the program.

"These students may be facing challenges that you or I would probably have long given up on, so they're very resilient and they tend to be very positive," Nip-

pard says. "They aren't there because they don't have the academic ability. It's often their personal circumstances that have taken priority. There may not be the stability in their personal lives that many students have."

Accountability plays a big role in the success of the students attending Northern Lights off-campus schools. Teachers will call right away if a student is missing. Classmates will also check in with one another if they know someone is going through a rough patch or isn't working up to their usual standards. The school communities are like big families, Nippard says.

"When you walk into these places, you'll be warmly received. You'll see lots of babies. You'll see students working on self-directed programs. You'll see students and teachers there taking such pride in their school. It really is amazing."

The pride students take in their school also extends to the greater community, especially as several of the schools place an emphasis on service learning. Students might go out and walk dogs at the local SPCA or get involved in helping

(Continued on page 5)

"These students may be facing challenges that you or I would probably have long given up on. They're very resilient and tend to be very positive."



May all your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions.

—Joey Adams

Working Together To Help Every Student Learn And Excel: Northern Lights' Success With Off-Campus Schools, cont'd

(Continued from page 4)

with the local recycling programs.

"They're very involved in investing back in the community. They take a tremendous amount of pride in their school and in giving a positive image of their school. They go out of their way to ensure that they don't perpetuate that negative reputation some may have of them."

Nippard recalls an example from the Cold Lake Off-Campus School. As part of its experiential education component, students took a year-end trip to a ranch. At the start of the visit, the individual running the ranch sat down with the students and told them his perception of what off-campus school students were like wasn't overly positive. Therefore, he explained, he was restricting access to only certain parts of the ranch during their stay.

"After he did his presentation and left, one of the girls in the group spoke up and said to the principal, 'They won't have any problem with us.' By the third day, that same individual came back and said, 'I've never seen a group of students like you folks. You've been absolutely incredible and very respectful. What I want to do for you on the last night you're here is give you the keys to the entire place.' You could see for these students, many of whom would probably not have been model citizens in the past, that type of encouragement meant the world to them."

While it can be rewarding for off-campus staff to be a part of their students' journeys to success, it can also take its toll. Staff have to be willing to share more of themselves with students than an average teacher.

"You're in a fairly small setting, so you're going to get to know students on a one-on-one level," Nippard says. "They become part of your life and you need to be willing to share yours with them. Our off-campus staff connect very closely with the students they are serving, and in many cases become surrogate moms and dads. The people who are really good at it are people who are willing to put themselves out there, and are willing to be firm but fair. They tend to have high expectations and

hold students accountable. At the end of the day, the students really appreciate that."

When something goes wrong in a student's life outside of school, he explains, it's often the teacher or school staff person that they call to help them out.

"After three or four years in that setting, many need to move on. It may even be to a different off-campus setting, but they tend to move a bit more than staff in the traditional schools."

Another challenge is accepting that curriculum development, pedagogy and all of those professional tools that teachers learn aren't the most critical part of the off-campus program; it's focusing on the individual person. Sometimes staff just want to return to that regular classroom setting to reconnect with those methods and tools.

The biggest challenge to staff, however, is working with a mobile population with a variety of needs.

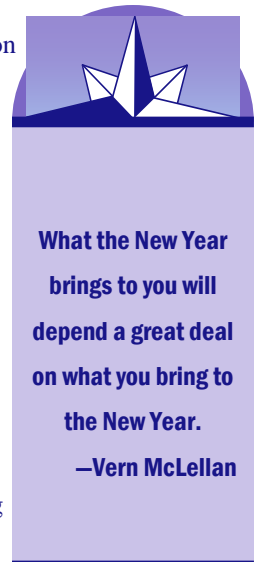
"You just have to put yourself out there in addressing some of those."

Despite these challenges, the work is tremendously rewarding, both on a professional and personal level. The students will tell you that they think very highly of the people working with them, Nippard says. Staff receive personal thanks from the students on a more frequent basis than those working in the traditional school setting.

"One of the most moving experiences of the year for me is attending the graduation at the Bonnyville Off-Campus School. It's interesting because every single student will get up and say, 'I never, ever thought I'd be here,' and their parents will say, 'I never thought my child would graduate,' almost to a person."

At that graduation, every single student gives a speech, and most of them tearfully. They thank the staff and the others who have made this day possible for them. Most of all, they are able to see what they are capable of doing for themselves. That makes it all the more rewarding for those who joined them along their journey.

"They take a tremendous amount of pride in their school and in giving a positive image of their school."



**What the New Year
brings to you will
depend a great deal
on what you bring to
the New Year.**

—Vern McLellan

In The Spotlight: Bonnyville Off-Campus School

James Trodden is the principal of the Bonnyville Off-Campus School, one of six off-campus schools in the Northern Lights School Division. The school has been open for the last decade. It started out with less than 10 students and now, in the 2009-2010 school year, serves 91 students. Students from grades 9 to 12 may attend BOCS.

James has been a teacher for 15 years and an administrator for 7. He has served as principal of BOCS for the last four years. In this issue of *Leaders & Learners*, James gives readers details about his school, his staff and his students. As well, through a personal essay, he also shares some of the stories behind the statistics. Many of these stories are devastating to read; a few offer glimmers of hope. It is through these glimmers of hope and through the strength of these young people that, as James says, we all can borrow the courage for one more day.

How have the enrollment numbers for Bonnyville Off-Campus School changed since it first opened?

The numbers have climbed from under 10 to close to 100. With the transient nature, graduating students first semester and students working from a distance, the school set up 117 programs last year.

The program has increased in size for a few reasons. Unfortunately one is the number of students in need; this relates to the number of students not happy with the regular school system or they are unsuccessful at the regular school system.

I think further issues are related to our changes in society. Many of our students thrive on the close relationships that an alternative environment provides. The school creates a sense of belonging that is absent from other parts of their lives. Connecting in a large high school is difficult; other possibilities for connections from sports teams, community groups or church are limited for many of our youth.

Need is the first reason for growth. Second is the increased success that our students are having. We consistently have graduated 17 to 20 students each year over the last few years. This year we should see the highest number of grads in our history, with over 20.

No matter what the student, parent or family history, everyone has the inherent need to be successful. Success brings more success. Every student and parent comes with the hope that a second chance, or, as we say, a first chance, at school that will work. As we become more successful more people see alternative education as an option.

What is the biggest misconception about outreach schools and the students who attend them? What, if

anything, was your biggest preconception or misconception about the off-campus/outreach experience before you began working at the Bonnyville Off-Campus School?

There are many misconceptions that abound in outreach education. They flow from the misconceptions that teaching the curriculum in different ways and methods means that it is a different high school curriculum. Whether you sit in a class or complete an assignment using project-based learning, the same objectives can be taught. Outreach education uses a variety of delivery models from individual assignments, to projects, to discussion groups, to team assignments, to classes and lectures. Different methods, same concepts.

Other misconceptions include the idea that all the bad kids go to outreach. Certainly we see students that have not been successful in regular schools, but the labels we put on them may connect more to our lack of flexibility in regular schools than the students being bad. Simple learning styles surveys of any population of students can put up to one third of students as kinesthetic learners. Simply put, these students learn best by doing, manipulating objects, moving. They are the top students in PE and shop class but sitting in an 86-minute science class, glued to their desk, is a form of personal hell for them. Change the environment, change the rules and that student can excel in science.

I once had a student who was labelled a behavioural problem; he hit walls and desks when he was angry. This student was removed from a school for this behaviour. When coming over to me he was bitter, angry and disillusioned with school. He still wanted to graduate to be successful. He had a rough few days. At one point he was very angry and I
(Continued on page 7)



**The object of
a new year is not
that we should have
a new year.
It is that we should
have a new soul.
—GK Chesterton**

Bonnyville Off-Campus School, continued

(Continued from page 6)

thought he might pop. Through gritted teeth he stated he could not do it, he could not sit there for the whole 50 minutes and work. I responded why was he doing it then? He replied that I told him he had to. I clarified and stated that he only had to work for 50 minutes. Where he sits, where he works, whether he stands or not was his choice. It was funny to see him over the next few months: He would work in one chair for 10 minutes, get up, bounce to a second chair for 10 minutes and move around all day like that. That is all it took for a bad kid to become an honours student. He graduated high school, grades 10 to 12, in two years. Never had a problem again and now works for an oil field company making more money than me. The number of stories I have of a bad student needing something simple to change their world is amazing.

Many bad students are struggling with lives and incidents that would crumble any of us. In a smaller setting, we are able to connect to students and work them in directions to change their lives.

Other misconceptions include that all the drug students go to outreach schools. I have students that do drugs. So does every high school in Alberta or Canada. Society is going to have to deal with the impact that pot, ecstasy and coke are having in their widespread use. With our close connections, we are able to address drug issues head on, get help for students and deal with the issues. Any schools that think they are not facing drug issues are completely ignorant to what is happening. Through smaller size and close connections we create a drug- and alcohol-safe environment and deal head on with this tough issue. In a larger school, this issue can be ignored.

What are the benefits for students attending the Bonnyville Off-Campus School versus a traditional classroom setting?

I think I am hinting at many of the benefits. They would include

- close personal environment
- acceptance of difference
- staff dedicated to students succeeding
- staff working with students
- different delivery styles to meet students' needs

- coffee pot on for everyone

The best benefit and reason for success is staff deeply connect to students' well-being and success. I work with the most amazing group of educators. This should not come as a surprise, but people matter. We use that philosophy in working with students and the staff are the best people.

What are the challenges they face?

Challenges for students include

- overcoming misconceptions
- raising themselves
- getting a fresh start
- overcoming history of a lack of success
- overcoming a low socioeconomic background
- dealing with trauma in their lives and personal histories
- getting judged

What benefits and challenges might the staff (teaching, support staff and administration) experience?

Staff challenges to overcome are many. Staff that work at outreach schools are often judged as less than mainstream teachers. Staff have to overcome personal judgments and do the best they can for students. Students often self-sabotage themselves and it can be very frustrating for staff to work so hard and see a student make poor choices in the end. One of the hardest parts is balancing the emotional toll the job can take on a person. Few people realize the amount of child abuse, rape, neglect and homelessness that exists within their own neighbourhood. This can take a toll on staff well-being. Frustration with lack of supports for teens can create anger.

What are the benefits and rewards to staff? They make a difference every day in children's lives. They change personal histories. The success stories are endless.

Thank you, James.



**For last year's words
belong to last year's
language and next
year's words await
another voice.**

—TS Eliot

The World You Don't Know: An Off-Campus Principal's Observations

By James Trodden
Bonnyville Off-Campus School principal
Northern Lights School Division

With a cup of Tim Hortons' coffee, double-double, and a cream cheese bagel in my hand, it is hard to believe that the world I walk through is a thin veil over a deeper darker reality. I will have breakfast this morning, I will feel rested after a safe night's sleep and my world will be my creation, safe and comfortable.

The illusion that this is everyone's reality has long since been chased away by the images and stories of a world I didn't know.

The statistics, news articles and numbers never had an impact on me. A recent study showed Canada has the second-highest number of servers hosting pornographic content featuring children. One in 10 children still lives in poverty in Canada—one in four in First Nations communities, according to a new report by Campaign 2000. In 2005, there were 145,842 marriages and 71,269 divorces. In 2003, under one-third (31 per cent) of 19-year-old youth from families in the bottom 25 per cent of the income distribution had attended university. In contrast, one-half (50 per cent) of young people of the same age from families at the top of the income distribution had attended university. In 2006-2007, there were 34,065 youths convicted of a criminal offence. In Canada, 3 in 10 students will not graduate high school.

All of these numbers point to a different world than that of Tim Hortons' coffee and bagels.

As a principal of a small alternative high school in rural Alberta, these numbers create my world, yet it is the stories that pull back the veil and reveal a different world. This is the world that exists in parallel of the one we choose to see. It is not a world over there, or separate from the one that I live happily in, but it lives in the shadows of our schools, homes and society. It is a world of the realities of child living inside the statistics and numbers.

On a Monday morning, a 15-year-old girl shakes and cries in the classroom of her teacher. I know she has been living rough. It is into October, the temperature is dropping and she lives in a tent in someone's backyard. I get the teacher's class covered and wait to see what help

the young lady needs. Time passes slowly, then in a rush. The young girl has been gang-raped by a sports' team, passed around for the entire night. A trip to the clinic gets a morning-after pill to cause an abortion. This happened Friday night, the girl has showered repeatedly, it is too late for a rape kit. She does not know the names of the people. She was drinking, she is unclear, the players say she wanted it, no charges are pressed and she goes back to living in her tent.

A 12-year-old boy is referred to my office. He often gets in trouble and I have had to deal with him a lot. The boy sits next to my desk. As I begin to ask him what he did wrong, he shyly explains that he is not in trouble today. He tells me it is his birthday and he asked his teacher if he could come tell me. I start rifling through my desk looking for a birthday card or something to give him to get on with the rush of my day. He says something that pulls my attention back to him. He hesitates and asks me if I can get him something for his birthday. Not sure what I can get him; I was a little broke that month. He asks if he can sleep at the school for his birthday. Time passes slowly, then in a rush. He lives with his aunt, he does not want to go home to do those "ugly pig things," and he tells me more. No 12-year-old boy should have to ask to not go home and get raped as his birthday gift. Repeated calls and threats to child welfare finally get a worker to come to the school. They send him back to the home. I never see him come to school again; apparently he was shipped off to another relative. The other kids in the home continue to live there.

The stories are endless, and so frequent that at times they begin to seem normal. At others times they cut through the armour and leave a fountain of tears on my face.

A 17-year-old boy is living in the trunk of an abandoned vehicle, another is in the cab of his truck; it is the middle of winter. On Monday morning, a young man is waiting for me at the school. He offers to make coffee in the kitchen for me. He knows I always have peanut butter, jam and bread for toast. He has not eaten since the Friday before.

There have been so many cases of parents beating kids that we use this as a motivator for finishing high school to get out on their own.

I see kids that have been fed drugs and
(Continued on page 10)



**In the New Year,
may your right hand
always be stretched
out in friendship,
never in want.**

—Irish toast

CASA PEOPLE: Faces In The Crowd



Piet Langstraat
Alberta

Piet began teaching for Red Deer Public Schools in 1984. He is currently deputy superintendent for the district. He also spent four years with Chinook's Edge School Division as assistant superintendent from 2002 to 2006.

As well, for the past 10 years, he has served as an instructor for the University of Alberta Middle Years Program. He has had the opportunity to provide service as a zone director to the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) executive from 2007 to 2009.

Piet, his wife Naomi and their two sons live in the countryside south of Red Deer. He enjoys camping, fishing, canoeing and tending his herd of Red Angus cattle. He is especially passionate about gardening and spends many pleasant hours in his greenhouse.



Barbara Spadoni
Ontario

Barbara earned her teaching degree from Lakehead University in 1973 and began teaching that fall. In 1979, she chose to stay home to raise two children while completing her BA. She continued to supply teach and served as a trustee for the Schreiber-Terrace Bay Separate School Board.

She returned to the board in 1987 to teach. By 1989, Barb had completed her B. Ed. and M. Ed. She eventually served as a teacher, principal, special education coordinator, superintendent of education and director of education for Superior North Catholic District School Board. After 36 years in education, Barb retired this past August. Her husband Pat is also retired.

For years, Barb was a curling enthusiast, a hockey supporter and a Justice of the Peace. She is an active member of Holy Angels Parish and the Catholic Women's League.



Ken Bain
Ontario

Ken is the associate director of education for the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. He began his teaching career in 1975. His first year in administration was 1985, when he served as vice principal of a middle school. He went on to serve as principal for five schools, as well as an area supervisor. From 1997 to 2008, he served as interim assistant superintendent of schools, superintendent of education and superintendent of education-operations for the board.

Ken earned his BA at McMaster, his B. Ed. at the University of Toronto and his Master of Science in Education at Niagara University. Ken has received the EXL Award as Superintendent of the Year for Ontario, the HWDSB Profiling Excellence Award and the Prime Minister's Award for the Integration of Exceptional Pupils.

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Our Mission:

CASA will advance quality public education and excellence in system level leadership through advocacy and national collaboration.



Our Beliefs:

CASA believes that:

- Cultural diversity is a unique strength that enriches our nation.
- Communication and collaboration with parents and other partners is integral to successful student learning.
- Quality public education provides the best opportunity for a nation to enhance the lives of all its citizens.
- Effective system, provincial and national level leadership enables and supports excellence in teaching and learning.
- A comprehensive education, equitable and accessible to all, is the key to meeting the diverse needs and securing a successful future for our youth.

Specific strategies to advance the mission:

- Establish position papers on specific topics as they relate to the beliefs and interests of the association.
- Recruit new people.
- Establish a national representation.
- Establish a three-tier public relations and publications strategy.
- Establish a funding team to create an operating budget.

The World You Don't Know, continued

(Continued from page 8)

alcohol by parents since the age of 10; I spend time trying to convince them that this is not normal.

I talk to a girl about where she will sleep that night. She has been living with her boyfriend who is controlling and beats her. She can't go home; her step-dad sexually assaults her. I think a couch of another student is available.

Another girl has been homeless since the age of nine. She ran away from home when her mom's boyfriends started getting very friendly with her. She has lived on couches and on floors for the past six years.

A beautiful girl sobs in my office. She has all the pressures of the past victimization and present conditions, and she is craving the crystal meth she quit three months earlier. It will all go away if she smokes the pipe. I ask her to hold on for one more day, I beg her, she promises and I hope.

The stories stack and count higher than the statistics. This is not the world I get to go home to, this reality is different.

I want to yell, I want to cry at the people passing by the window outside my office. Do they know? Do they care

that this shadow world exists? What can they do? November is coming to a close, what will I do? Payday just passed, I have to go get my few groceries to donate to the local food bank. I like how the local grocery store makes packages for \$10. Santa's Anonymous has put out collection boxes; you only have to hear a child tell you about repeated Christmas mornings without a gift to donate to this organization. The Hope Mission collects money for Christmas turkey dinners; just \$25 dollars buys 10 homeless people a meal on Christmas. When I eat Christmas dinner this year, I know I will be eating it with 10 other people not even at my table.

I will find hope again tomorrow; tomorrow I will see my students again. Through all the fog in their world they will achieve, overcome, and it is through their strength I will borrow the courage for one more day.

For now I am leaving to my world. Never again will I be able to ignore the shadow world, the world that most never know. The lineup at Tim Hortons is long tonight. Many of my students and parents work there. They tell me it is a great place to work; they get lots of hours and a 50 per cent discount on food. They will get to eat well tonight. Winter is here and the hot coffee will help with the chill.