

SSBL Newsletter

Volume 17 • December 2016

President's Message



The Saskatchewan School Based Leaders professional growth network continues to serve school administrators in our province. Just recently, on November 26, Patrick Maze, president of the STF, attended an open forum meeting in Saskatoon to discuss issues concerning administrators in our province. As an executive, we felt that providing the opportunity to join in dialogue with Mr. Maze was timely and informational as we hear conflicting messages in the media, and need to deal with changing realities in our buildings; increasing demands and decreasing supports. Please **Save the Date** ... another meeting is organized with Patrick Maze on January 28 in Regina. Again, we welcome all administrators to join us as we dialogue as the SSBL strives to improve and create clarity in STF and school administrator's working relationship.

At CAP meetings I attended in Ottawa this past November, provincial delegates shared ongoing concerns with reduced funding and principal workload concerns; emphasizing the important role that CAP serves as a

national voice for administrators in Canada. The 2015-2016 Annual Report was shared highlighting CAPS commitment to research by establishing working partnerships and agreements with schools, professors, researchers, writers, presenters, universities, and post-secondary institutions. The current research study "The Aspirations and Work Life of the Canadian School Principal: A National Study", is a follow-up to the 2014 research study of The Future of the Principalship in Canada". This latest study, which comprised of a survey compiled earlier in this calendar year, created comprehensive data around current practices and aspirations of school leaders, specifically in three key areas: Equity and Inclusive School communities, Technology and the Digital Saturation of the Mileau for Learning and Living, and Aspirations and Efficacy. A special thank you to all the administrators who took the opportunity to participate in this survey, giving a Saskatchewan voice to the research. Further information regarding the analysis of this data will be shared at a breakout session this May, at the CAPS conference held in Saskatoon.

The SSBL is very excited about the upcoming CAP's conference being held in Saskatoon in May 2017. Please check out the website ... www.capconference2017@cdnprincipals.org; also check out the accompanying flyer in this newsletter. The last time the CAP conference was hosted in Saskatchewan in was in Regina (2010). We hope to have a strong contingent of administrators representing our province at the conference; online registration is now live!

Carol Sarich
Principal, St. Luke School
SSBL President
Western Vice-President CAP

In This Issue

Implementing evidence-based mental health programming in schools: The role of the school administrator

Open Forum Meeting:
Leadership in Time of Uncertainty

Next SSBL Meeting

School Boards in Saskatchewan
Taking on Reconciliation

SSBL Executive

*Effective leadership in every school –
a driving force in education*



SASKATCHEWAN
SCHOOL BASED
LEADERS

Implementing evidence-based mental health programming in schools: The role of the school administrator

By Katie Brooks, Claire Crooks, and Suzanne Zwarych

Katie Brooks holds a Master of Education in Curriculum Studies from Western University, with a focus on adolescent dating violence. After engaging in many violence prevention outreach and education initiatives in her youth, Katie spent 9 years with the CAMH Centre for Addition and Mental Health as a Research Associate. In her role, she assisted with the dissemination of the Fourth R Curriculum across Canada and project managed various research studies in the field of healthy relationships and violence prevention.

Claire Crooks is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education, and Director of the Centre for School Mental Health at Western University. She is one of the lead developers and researchers of the Fourth R, the relationship-based program aimed at preventing violence and promoting mental health among adolescents. The Fourth R has been implemented throughout Canada and is identified as a best practice program by numerous registries. She is particularly interested in strengths-based approaches that meet the unique needs of Aboriginal youth. Claire is the lead author of *Engaging Aboriginal Youth: A toolkit for service providers* (2010, Trafford).

Suzanne Zwarych holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration and she is the National Trainer for the Fourth R and implements the Public Health Agency of Canada grant that supports online training and Fourth R resources for teachers in both Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia. The Public Health Agency of Canada has funded Fourth R resources to grade 7, 8, and 9 teachers since 2008.

Implementing evidence-based mental health programming in schools has not often been part of a school-based administrator's professional development, yet, their influence and support for teachers is necessary for the success of the program. The effective implementation of any violence prevention school programming depends upon the support and involvement of school administrators (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978). As violence prevention programs can be seen as an add-on to regular school programming, determining factors which will influence the success and sustainability of such programs is paramount. Influenced by the support of administration is not only the success or failure of the program, but the degree to which the program is seen as a part of an over-arching culture at the school, reinforced through language and behaviours practiced by students and school staff alike. Administrator support has been found to be a significant factor in the maintenance of implementation momentum if teachers receive support from other teachers and their administrators as well as ongoing reminders of related priorities (Langley, Nadeem, Kataoka, Stein & Jaycox, 2010).

The 21 lesson, Grade 8 Fourth R Healthy Relationships program was implemented in 64 classrooms in 57 schools across eight school divisions in Saskatchewan to validate the effectiveness of the lessons on students' knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes toward violence. In the first year of the project, the 2011-2012 school year, half of the schools received the program and the teachers in those schools who would be teaching the program also received a one-day training explaining the implementation process. The other half of the schools did not receive the program or the training until the 2012-2013 school year. This gave the

researchers the opportunity to compare results between students and schools who used the program against the results from the half of the schools who did not use the program in the 2011-2012 school year. At the end of the implementation year, school administrators and teachers in the schools who implemented the Fourth R Grade 8 violence prevention program were asked to complete an online survey. The survey was completed by 27 school administrators out of the 29 schools that implemented the program in the first year. Several themes emerged as reasons for support and potential future challenges that need to be addressed for sustainability to be achieved and momentum maintained. The purpose of this article is to discuss the results of the administrator and teacher surveys in the schools where the program was implemented. Future articles will present the student survey results and the impact of the Fourth R program on student knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

Themes arising from administrator surveys

As a result of the administrator surveys completed, several clear themes emerged as relevant and poignant to the role and capacity of administrator support in the implementation of the Fourth R Healthy Relationships curriculum. The attitudes and views of the administrators give a clear insight into the factors which inform their support and potential challenges to continued support for the Grade 8 Fourth R program.

Theme 1: Implementation positive for teachers and students

Administrators shared a very positive impression of the Fourth R Healthy Relationships curriculum and over

whelmingly expressed that the implementation of the Fourth R curriculum at their school was a positive experience for the teachers (97%). Furthermore, 68 percent of administrators reported they felt that the Fourth R aligned well with their division's priorities and objectives, making the curriculum a good fit for not only their school, but the school broader division as well. The following are quotes taken directly from administrator responses regarding benefit of the program for their students:

"...I have noticed a real shift in the students' attitudes towards themselves, one another, staff and property"

"I have found students are talking about the ideas presented in the Fourth R program amongst themselves, using the language in their own everyday conversations"

Studies have shown that from the teacher's perspective, the perceived need for the program and the perceived capability of the program in meeting these needs are predictors of implementation quality (Durlack & DuPre, 2008). Thus, administrator support, opinion of perceived benefit and alignment with division's current priorities are encouraging findings with respect to ongoing implementation and sustainability.

Theme 2: Informal and formal support for teachers

The willingness and degree of assistance, reminders and follow-up provided by administrators to their teachers in relation to the implementation of the Fourth R Healthy Relationships curriculum is undoubtedly a factor in the quality and sustainability of the implementation. The majority of the administrators surveyed (90%) reported that they met informally with the teacher at their school who was delivering the Fourth R. Beyond this, principals mentioned a variety of other ways they supported their staff including regular meetings, opportunity to share at a staff meeting and observation of the lessons:

"I observed a 'grafitti' lesson where students moved around the room in groups writing ideas down about 'gangs'. They wrote ideas down on sheets

placed around the room on various topics including gang involvement, consequences, and how young people may get swayed into joining gangs."

The time and investment spent by administrators with their teachers when implementing a new program is extremely beneficial. Not only do the teachers feel that what they are doing is relevant and positive, but the students get this sense as well, and the teacher is aware that they have someone to talk to if they are having any concerns or difficulties.

Theme 3: Awareness of implementation challenge

Due to the informal meetings and involvement of administrators with their teachers previously identified, as well as their years of experience in education, administrators generally have an acute awareness of issues that curriculum programs have which may interfere with full implementation and sustainability. Although 72 percent of administrators identified they felt there was nothing about the Fourth R that made it difficult for teachers to implement, some feedback was provided as to challenges discussed or perceived. The most common challenge that was identified by administrators was with respect to time:

"time allocation for each lesson was difficult to meet ... teachers report that they needed more time"

"often it was hard to find the time because of all the other requirements and outside classroom activities"

An identification of the key barriers and challenges to sustainable implementation are key in overcoming these obstacles. Whether at the school level, the board level, or at the program development level, such challenges need to be addressed and strategies put in place to minimize the perceived challenge. Once well managed, the program is more likely to be implemented in its entirety.

Theme 4: Training is the key to sustainability

Just as administrators have a keen sense of challenges to program implementation, they boast opinions based on experience

with regards to program sustainability. To assess administrator opinions on sustainability of the Fourth R Healthy Relationship curriculum, they were asked not only which additional components would increase sustainability, but also questioned on what could get in the way of program sustainability. Overwhelmingly, the most popular answer for both (90% and 83% respectively), administrators identified the need to train new teachers to use the program. Booster training for teachers, and up-to-date technological versions of resources and handouts were also identified as components to increase sustainability. The overarching message becomes one of currency – keeping current with school staff changes, training and resources.

Conclusions

Administrators play a large part in the implementation and resulting success of integrated violence prevention programs, even when these programs are integrated within existing provincially mandated curriculum standards. With so many competing priorities for both teachers and administrators, it becomes apparent that when an administrator is supportive, engaged and sees benefit of the program for their students, the teachers are much more likely to complete program implementation. Administrators are also key in the identification of program barriers and challenges, and provide support as part of a team to ensure the proper training and information is being delivered to ensure program success.

If you would like to receive the lessons for grades 7, 8, 9 that were used in the study described above, or another program called Healthy Relationships PLUS for small groups of students that has been used for building help seeking and enhanced mental health skills, please email Canada4thR@gmail.com with your request.

Berman, P., & McLaughlin, M.W. (1978). *Federal programs supporting educational change, Vol. III: Implementing and sustaining innovations*. Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation.

Open Forum Meeting: Leadership in Time of Uncertainty

The SSBL executive held an open forum meeting on November 26, 2016, inviting STF President Patrick Maze to participate in the conversation. All Saskatchewan administrators were invited to participate and 28 individuals were able to attend.

School divisions represented included Greater Saskatoon Catholic, Saskatoon Public, Regina Catholic, Regina Public, Sun West, Lloydminster Public, Horizon, and Saskatchewan Rivers. The forum lasted about three hours and consisted of

topics such as the Task Force on Teacher Time Report, principal supervisory practices, and transformational change. The SSBL is pleased to host a similar event in Regina on January 28, 2017.

School-Based Administrators of Saskatchewan are invited to attend

Continuing the Conversation: Leadership in Times of Uncertainty

Hosted by SSBL

January 28, 2017

10:00 a.m.

St. Bernadette School
727 North McIntosh Street
Regina, Saskatchewan

In attendance will be STF President Patrick Maze and
Associate Executive Director Randy Schmaltz

Please RSVP to casarich@gscs.ca

School Boards in Saskatchewan Taking on Reconciliation

By Angela Hill, Communications Consultant, Office of the Treaty Commissioner

Angela Hill is a journalist and professional writer on the path to Reconciliation.

She is based out of Saskatoon, but has recently spent time in Iqaluit, Brazil and South Africa.

You can find her on Twitter @AngelaIsLost.

Momentum for reconciliation is growing in Saskatchewan schools. Youth, teachers and school administrations are finding creative ways to inspire action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Reconciliation is a word with many meanings. For the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Reconciliation is about exploring the past and choosing to build a better future. It's understanding each other and building trust. It's recognizing that We Are All Treaty People.

The OTC believes Reconciliation and Treaty implementation are means towards the same goal; sustainable partnerships – economic, social, political, community – between strong and empowered participants.

Past Treaty Commissioner, George E. Lafond said, "Reconciliation is the restoration of a friendship after an estrangement. It does not require agreement on every aspect of how to live together. It is not an apology that has been accepted once offered. Rather, it is about the process of coming together – a conscious choice that the future will be better if we work through difficulties and differences with an openness to hearing about, and responding to, the harm that has occurred."

It is clear that education is a crucial part of reconciliation work and schools are the front line. The Office of the Treaty Commissioner continues to

facilitate the Treaties in the Classroom curriculum, working with teachers and administrators to graduate a generation of students with much better knowledge on Treaties than their parents.

This work is picking up momentum. The number of Treaty resource kits requested by schools this year is triple what it has been in the past. Over 500 teachers have signed up for Teaching Treaties in the Classroom workshops in the month of January alone. There is also increased demand for speakers from the OTC's speakers' bureau. A new website (otc.ca) provides an easy link to these resources. More people are also engaging on Facebook and joining the conversation on Twitter (@TreatyOfficeSK).

"We're seeing a real hunger in Saskatchewan for knowledge and ideas related to Reconciliation," said Rhett Sangster, the OTC's Director, Reconciliation and Community Partnerships.

"People want to talk about how to build a better future for all, but aren't sure where to start, or even what language to use. The OTC works to help with that – by providing advice, resources, facilitation, and examples of what others are doing on reconciliation in Saskatchewan. We want to build a common vision for successful reconciliation in Saskatchewan – a vision that everyone can support and work toward."

The more the OTC looks the more the office sees that there are stories of reconciliation happening everywhere.

Recently the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools held a Day of Prayer for Reconciliation and Healing, for the staff and students from their 44 schools.

According to the division's superintendent of learning services, Gordon Martell, there is a deep investment in answering the TRC's Calls to Action.



Mural Created by students of Bishop Klein School, Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division.

"The day of prayer is an opportunity to demonstrate our support for residential school survivors and their descendants, celebrate our strengths and seek guidance for the work yet to come," he said in a release.

"The day of prayer is a special celebration that punctuates our year and reminds us of the importance of balance and supporting the mental, physical spiritual and emotional development of children and youth."

During the day, a reconciliation flag flew outside the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools offices.

The OTC is ready and able to form partnerships with individuals and organizations in the education system as they journey on their path to reconciliation.

This summer was the first Rock Your Roots, Walk for Reconciliation event, the result of a partnership of over 30 organisations coming together under the banner of "Reconciliation Saskatoon". Government, business, civil society and faith communities – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – were all involved. Thousands of people filled the streets of downtown Saskatoon, including hundreds of students.

Rock Your Roots saw people from different nationalities representing who they are, from the colourful kente fabric of Africa, to Scottish kilts, to beaded regalia of Canada's First Nations.

"The schools were all out there and I didn't see unhappy kids there. They were having a good time and it was a good event for them," said Harry Lafond, Executive Director of the OTC. Lafond, and Director of Education Programs, Brenda Ahenakew, are

constantly working to offer support and resources for reconciliation projects.

Recently Lafond was speaking with the representatives from the Prince Albert Grand Council, where he learned they are working with their teachers to ensure that reconciliation and treaty education is part of the curriculum in the First Nations schools under their jurisdictions

"That's a positive move and I think we'll see things happening there in the next couple of years," he said.

With the support of Ahenakew, Lyndon Linklater, a powerful storyteller from the OTC speaker bureau, and artist Leah Dorian, the students from Elaine Sutherland's Kindergarten class at Bishop Klein school in Saskatoon worked to create a mural of the treaty relationship in Saskatchewan.

Over nine sessions the students learned about Treaties through promises, culture and the creator; they created the piece that situated themselves inside Treaty 6 and carried with it symbolism of as long as the sun shines, the river flowing and the grass is green.

The main piece of art hangs in the school, but copies are at the education ministry office and the Saskatchewan Arts Board.

Ahenakew says it's important to have kids learning about reconciliation.

"They are our future. They are learning in school what you and I and all the rest of Canadians never learned in school about Treaties and the concept of sharing the land," she said.

But working with youth goes further than what they are learning in school.

"I think the kids are being good messengers for their families and their communities," Lafond said.

Sarah Longman, Supervisor of Aboriginal Education for Regina Public Schools, says that for the past three years more and more of the schools are taking part in Orange Shirt Day on Sept. 30. And she is starting to hear from parents of students who want resources to help talk to their children about residential schools and Treaties.

Projects are also being undertaken on smaller scales as well. The grade 7/8 class at Howard Coad in Saskatoon wanted to do something for this year's Orange Shirt Day. They created a short video to share their learning around Treaties and/or residential schools and we've posted it to otc.ca.

We are encouraged by the leadership being taken by the education community and are excited about ways to support future initiatives. The OTC has educational materials on Treaties and what it means to be Treaty people and our speakers' bureau works to match our great speakers with organizations and institutions looking to learn more.

On the new, redesigned OTC website (otc.ca) we are focused on sharing stories of reconciliation from across the province. Not only does it provide a place looking to see what others are doing, but people can share their stories and help the movement gain momentum.

There are great examples of reconciliation happening all over the province everyday. What's your story?

We look forward to hearing from you.



Growing Together Cultivating Change

The Future of Principals in Canada

Canadian Association of Principals 35th Annual Conference

MAY 23-26, 2017 • SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER:
WWW.CAPCONFERENCE2017.CDNPRINCIPALS.ORG



SASKATCHEWAN
SCHOOL BASED
LEADERS



SSBL Executive

SSBL President and CAP Director

Carol Sarich
casarich@gscs.ca

SSBL Treasurer

Dean Lucyk
d.lucyk@rcsd.ca

SSBL Secretary

Jackie Peat
j.peat@rcsd.ca

Members at Large

Garth Anderson
garth.anderson@hzsd.ca

Nevan Halyk
nevan.halyk@hzsd.ca

Tricia Shynkaruk
t.shynkaruk@rcsd.ca

Wanda Spooner
wspooner@gscs.ca

Guy Werbicki
gwerbicki@gscs.ca

