

# SSBL Newsletter

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## President's Message



I remember when I first became a principal. There were some times in the year, where you could find some opportunity to catch your breath, catch up with the

mounds of paper work on your desk, and actually feel like you were ahead of the game. It was always short-lived, but at least there were opportunities. Not sure if that is the case anymore. Busy times; all the time.

I am very excited about this journal, as it highlights some key workings of the SSBL. First of all, there is a summary of The Future of the Principalship in Canada. This was a pan-Canadian survey completed in 2012, and it focuses on the issues and trends that administrators are experiencing. Saskatchewan administrators had the opportunity to participate in this survey through forums that were held in Saskatoon and Regina. Please see an SSBL executive's response to the findings in the survey, found in this journal. Secondly, the SSBL is hosting its second workshop, the SSBL Spring Summit. **Please mark Friday, March 20 on your calendar!** We are continuing with our focus on FNM education, and have found teams of administrators in our province to share their experiences and success stories. As a workshop, our goal is to provide administrators with

professional development that will support the work being done in our schools; addressing the current reality. Check out our advertisement about this day. More information pertaining to the workshop can be found on our website, [www.ssbl.ca](http://www.ssbl.ca). Lastly, some articles of interest to Saskatchewan administrators are included; a focus on FNM issues through the eyes FN administrator, legal issues and concerns in looking at the Criminal Code, as well as a look at strategies for effective leadership.

Also important to note is an opportunity that is coming our way; to host the CAP 2017 Conference. Every year the CAP conference is hosted at centers across Canada, travelling from West to East rotationally. The SSBL executive is trying to establish a committee that would be interested in working on this event. If you are interested in being part of the organizing committee, please email me at [casarich@gscs.sk.ca](mailto:casarich@gscs.sk.ca). We are aiming to have our first planning meeting on **January 17, 2015**.

The SSBL aims to be a voice for administrators in our province, but we can't do this without you. I ask you to consider being a member of the SSBL – Saskatchewan School-Based Leaders. As a special subject council, we work with the STF in addressing issues and concerns specific to administrators. We

are also affiliated with CAP, Canadian Association of Principals; out of every \$35 membership, \$10 goes to CAP. We seek to provide meaningful opportunities for professional development through workshops and our journal, and recognize exemplary principal and student achievement. We are always looking for new members at the executive table. If you have any questions about the SSBL and/or have interest in joining us at the executive table, please give me a call at 306-659-7371.

Carol Sarich  
Principal, St. Luke School  
Saskatoon Catholic School Division  
SSBL President

### In This Issue

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



SASKATCHEWAN  
SCHOOL BASED  
LEADERS

# The Future of Principalship in Canada:

## A National Research Study – Some Thoughts

By Jackie Peat

The Saskatchewan School Based Leaders, a Special Subject Council of the STF, represents in-school administrators throughout Saskatchewan. In 2012, members of the SSBL became aware that the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) and the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) were conducting a National Research Study entitled *The Future of the Principalship in Canada*. The executive of the SSBL expressed concerns that Saskatchewan was not participating in a Canada-wide study; the SSBL approached the STF about our possible participation. In late 2012, the STF facilitated a forum in Saskatoon and another in Regina so that Saskatchewan in-school administrators could provide a Saskatchewan voice to the study. The results of the pan-Canadian study were compiled with findings noted through a national view and also disaggregated provincially.

The study involved 500 Canadian principals from nine provinces and two territories. Administrators were given an opportunity to provide their thoughts on trends in school, administrator needs, as well as demographic information about their schools.

The final report was released in the fall of 2014. The report details the national findings of the study. Researchers identified six broad coding categories of content; these are areas of social changes or influences that impact the work of a school administrator. *Diversity of Students* includes increasing EAL populations, program diversity and specialization, and mental health. *The Changing Family* identifies changing family dynamics and parental engagement. The category of *Teaching and Learning Conditions* identifies some areas in which teachers and administrators feel overwhelmed; these include school role overload, external demands, and administrative role overload. Technology and social media were also identified as a concern. The changing economy is another categorical area, as well as *Social and Cultural Influences*.

The general summary of the report indicates that administrators seemed to focus on the immediate concerns within their buildings. "While the overall tone of the study is pessimistic, two sources of promise were evident" (p.47). In-school administrators seemed positive about the use of instructional

technology and its ability to engage students, and the diversity of our school populations were "a source of learning and celebration" (p.47).

The report also presents *A Declaration of Hope: Five Ways Forward*. These are five areas of opportunities for improvement and growth. The first area is *Teaching and Learning for Diversity*; this includes areas of First Nations, Métis & Inuit education, mental health and social development, and English language learning. *The Collaboration and Building of Professional Capacities in School Staff* is a second area that would alleviate concerns facing school administrators. *Building Family and Community Relationships* is the third area of hope, followed by *Using Technology for Creative Learning and Good Citizenship*. The final area of hope is the *Promotion of Continuous Leadership Learning*; administrators identified a need for their own professional development.

Saskatchewan administrators were invited to participate in one of two forums. 42 participants took part; this represented nine percent of the national representation. Regarding

social changes and influences, Saskatchewan administrators identified many factors affecting the workload of school staff and administration. Some of the most frequently indicated areas were:

- Diversity: EAL Students (53% of respondents identified this)
- Family: Fragmented Families (42%)
- Schools: External Demands (58%)
- Schools: School Overload (42%)
- Schools: Teachers Need Support (40%)
- Technology: Policy Problems (38%)
- Economy: Local Poverty (40%)
- Society: Negative Impact of Social Values (36%)

In terms of supports that would alleviate some of the workload on Saskatchewan administrators and school staff, **short-term** supports include Specialists in Schools (49% of respondents identified), Teacher PD (42%), and Increased Funding/More Staff (42%). The most frequently identified **long-term** solutions were Specialists in School (38%) and Political Vision and Commitment (27%).

While the data generated from this research is valuable in assessing how

Canadian administrators were feeling at that moment in time, I recognize that it is just that, one moment in time. I know my answers from my administrative assignment in 2012 may not be the same as my responses would be today in my current assignment two years later. – I also wonder about the accuracy of responses with only 500 administrators represented nationally, can the data truly be extrapolated and assumed to stand for the majority of Canadian administrators? And with only 42 administrators within our province providing responses can we say the results are representative of Saskatchewan principals? Well, to some extent, yes. Even looking through the literature review of past years, many of the issues and concerns remain the same; the concerns may change in their order of importance over time or among the provinces, but the concerns are still there.

I also want to say that I appreciate the task that was taken on by these researchers. As they indicated in the literature review, there is very little literature regarding Canadian principalships. Very few studies have been done regarding Canadian administrators, and those that have been conducted vary widely in focus, location, and sample size.

One of the most important points that I, personally, took from this report came from the literature review. I felt a sense of both sadness and joy for our position as in-school administrators. The literature review noted ten areas in which the principalship has changed. The one item that spoke to me the most was how decreased family time and personal time has deterred people from seeking the principalship (p.25). It saddens me that people are hesitant to take on this position of added responsibility, yet it says much about educators that we are placing our family and our personal life before career change. In this fast-paced world of technology, economy, and change, we all need to ensure we have a successful balance between our work and our personal life.

As educators, we are taking on more roles within the lives of our students. We are no longer just their teachers. Schools are expected to meet more than just the educational needs of our children. Our children come to us with social, emotional, and physical needs. Often we need to address these areas of a child's well-being before we can expect them to be ready to learn. Is it really our role to address all aspects of the child? If it is not us, then who?





# THE FUTURE OF THE **PRINCIPALSHIP** IN CANADA

**A NATIONAL RESEARCH STUDY ON THE TRENDS  
SHAPING THE WORK OF CANADIAN SCHOOL LEADERS  
AND THEIR ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE.**

## **Strategic foresight as a declaration against fatalism**

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) and the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) took on an ambitious research project to identify the trends and influences that will shape the work of the principal as school leader and to ascertain the short- and long-term supports that administrators hoped to receive in their ever-shifting roles.

This study aims to support the work of the principal, now and in the future. By glimpsing into the future of the principalship, researchers, policymakers and communities can find ways to support and strengthen it.

## **To understand how Canada's changing landscapes affect principalship, researchers sought the perspective of school leaders**

Five hundred principals contributed their views in focus groups held across Canada. Participants engaged in reflective dialogue using resources such as *Changing Landscapes in Co-creating a Learning Canada* and an accompanying student video.

# THE TRENDS AND CRITICAL INFLUENCES SHAPING THE WORK OF CANADIAN PRINCIPALS



## Diversity of students

**36%** Meeting Diverse Student Needs  
**23%** Supporting EAL Students & Families



"Diversity" in the context of this study describes almost endless variations in student needs, including medical conditions, learning disabilities, language learning needs, mental health issues, cultural differences and basic needs. There is no such thing as a "typical" student in the classroom when so many sources of diversity must be taken into account. First and foremost though, respondents saw diversity as an asset and foundational to the future of public education and what it means in the context of Canadian identity. As one respondent concluded, "We don't pick and choose who gets to be counted as part of the 'public' in public education - to me this is the work."



## The changing family

**28%** Fragmented Families  
**22%** Unhealthy Home Environments



The instability in the composition of Canadian families can increase the resilience of children and youth; however, administrators suggest that schools are increasingly asked to meet the social, emotional, and basic needs of students who are not having these needs met at home.



## Teaching & learning conditions

**43%** School Role Overload  
**34%** External Demands



Principals frequently characterized the working conditions as stressful. Schools are overloaded with responsibilities, partly due to increasingly stringent accountability measures coupled with a lack of long-term vision for public education.



## Technology

**41%** Policy Problems via Social Media  
**29%** Technology Presents Opportunity



Schools' uptake and management of technology were central concerns in this study. Participants noted workload increase, cyberbullying and digital divides as issues related to technology. Too often technology acquisitions are pushed by vendors without adequate research regarding benefit to student learning and total-cost-of-ownership considerations.



## Economy

**18%** Poor Local Economy  
**18%** Growing Disparity



Though some noted broader trends in provincial and federal economics—from the reliance on primary resource extraction to the rapidly changing nature of the labour market—most participants remarked on the economy's impacts on families and on teaching and learning conditions. Across the country growing inequity was seen as the single greatest barrier to student learning.



## Social & cultural influences

**24%** Negative Impact of Social Values  
**20%** Political Economy



Many principals' comments about school communities referred directly or indirectly to shifting social values. Respondents felt one of their biggest challenges is organizing and networking to share ideas and develop strategies to create inclusive school communities.

*"We need to find ways to build an inclusive culture, where children's strengths are celebrated and they all are seen as active participants in the school community."*

*"After twenty years as a principal I appreciate the fact that there will always be a line-up of people outside of my office door—but it is the growing number of bureaucrats, consultants, and other 'experts' hovering outside the school yard telling me how to do my job that I find most frustrating."*

*"The 21st century skills mania that swept up policymakers and the media hasn't turned out to be much more than a shell game."*

*"Increasing government demands to quantify student achievement forces a school-wide focus on numbers, not learning. The goals are misplaced. We should be raising a generation that is creative and brave, not anxious and compliant."*

*"The current economic downfall has had a tremendous effect on communities and families. This increases the stress level for families, and also results in challenges to provide needed resources to support children."*

## SNAPSHOTS OF THE WORK LIFE OF THE CANADIAN PRINCIPAL



► While **90 per cent** of principals find their work very fulfilling, **95 per cent** report growing, unsustainable workload and complexity in their schools

► Growing signals regarding the **intensification of work**: in one province psychiatric disorders account for half of long-term disability leaves among principals

► An average of a **58 to 60 hour work week** is increasingly characterized by business management functions and increased reporting and documentation

► **Growing authority dilemma**: increasing expectations to share decision-making and for collaborative school cultures yet accountability ultimately resides with the principal

► **95 per cent** of principals want to spend more time in classrooms working with teachers yet typically only 4.7 hours per week can be committed to instructional leadership activities

► **The school leader's paradox**: be an agent of innovation and transformation while not unsettling those resistant to change

# SEEKING PREFERRED FUTURES:

## FIVE WAYS FORWARD FOR CANADIAN PRINCIPALS



### Teach and learn for diversity

- Use technology to enhance and engage student learning, with a consistent and high-quality technology infrastructure to bridge the digital divide.
- Implement a flexible curriculum.
- Create integrated service models, with support of government.



### Collaborate & build professional capacities in staff

- Create more time and space during the school day for professional collaboration.
- Establish mentorship programs.
- Encourage professional development.



### Build family & community relationships

- Engage all to support student learning.
- Introduce wrap-around services, with specialists in school.
- Foster meaningful conversations between schools, parents and students.



### Promote continuous leadership learning

- Engage in leadership development programs.
- Disseminate information to staff with the support of the district.
- Share promising practices.



### Use technology for creative learning & good citizenship

- Encourage awareness of what it means to be a citizen in a digital age, with support of policymakers.
- Advocate for a healthy balance between face-to-face and digitally-mediated relationships.



## Top Supports Participants Called For

Participants indicated the following as the top needed short- and long-term supports



*To ask principals to be at the front line of educating for diversity, managing accountability systems, mediating technological conflicts, and improving community relations—all while focusing their energies on the improvement of teacher quality and student learning—is to raise expectations to a level that few individuals on their own are likely to be able to meet. With the courage to confront the problems forthrightly and the right calibration of public and professional will to rethink expectations and to redeploy resources, Canada's principals can persevere and even thrive in their indispensable social roles.*



—Dennis Shirley, Boston College



**66%**  
Teacher PD



**64%**  
Political Vision  
& Commitment



**62%**  
Leadership &  
Capacity Building



**57%**  
More Specialists  
In Schools



**47%**  
Community Partnerships  
& Wrap-Around Services



**46%**  
Increased Funding  
(More Staff)

## Provincial & Regional Comparisons

The national sample indicates that administrators in provinces and territories across Canada are experiencing similar concerns. However, there are some regional particularities that speak to the importance of context in understanding changes in principalship.

### A range of key areas of concern across Canada



Meeting diverse student needs



English as an additional language students



External demands



School role overload



Policy problems related to social media



Technology-related problems (other)

## International Comparisons

The recently released Teaching and Learning International Survey (commonly known as TALIS) Results by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reinforce many of this study's conclusions. Though Canadian principals in this current study share global concerns, the top areas of concern derived from each study seem notably different. However, the categories overlap and intersect: school role overload reflects high workload and responsibilities; social media issues call for regulation and policy; and a school's ability to meet diverse student needs is limited by inadequate funding. While the TALIS study and the OECD continue to advance the view that school leadership is one of the most critical factors in supporting student learning, Canadian principals in our study offered a vision of public education as a community endeavour grounded in trusting relationships - a vision that is many ways at odds with the OECD's preoccupation with efficiency, standardization and a privileging of technology.



### Top 3 Concerns from our study

1. School role overload
2. Policy problems related to social media
3. Meeting diverse student needs



### Top 3 Concerns from TALIS study

1. Inadequate school budget and resources
2. Government regulation and policy
3. High workload and level of responsibilities in the principal's job

## Strategic Foresight to Enhance the Future of School Leadership

Three domains of transformational leadership to ensure equity in a vibrant future for Canadian students:



1. **Thinking ahead:** being bold, visionary and forward-thinking in aspiring to create a great school for all students.
2. **Delivering within:** materially supporting and committing to the goals one sets while avoiding the distractions of "doing business as usual;" continually asking, "why do we do things this way?"
3. **Leading across:** principals, teachers and students crossing school and jurisdictional boundaries to learn from each other.

—Adapted from Pasi Sahlberg, Harvard University



## PRINCIPALS ASPIRE FOR SCHOOLS IN WHICH



- ▶ parents and educators work in respectful and mutually supportive ways to nurture the social, emotional and cognitive growth of children and youth
- ▶ flexible, local leadership and sufficient funding allow schools to be responsive to the needs of students and their families
- ▶ citizenship is modeled and enacted in local partnerships, formal democratic processes, and globally through understanding and respect for diversity
- ▶ all students are able to transition effectively to the workplace, or to further post-secondary education
- ▶ social services are readily accessible to families in need
- ▶ all students feel safe and valued
- ▶ educators have time during the school day to share professional learning
- ▶ technology is used critically and effectively in teaching and learning, and is accessible to all students

**“ In this important pan-Canadian study, the authors set out what is happening to the principalship from sea to sea. Principals are, in many ways, at the centre of a rapidly changing society and the impact it is having on its children. ”**

—Andy Hargreaves, Thomas More Brennan Chair in Education, Lynch School of Education, Boston College

**“ The report is a call to action—get rid of or blunt the distractors, and position the principal to lead the learning culture of the school and to be a system player connected to other schools and the district. ”**

—Michael Fullan, OC, author of *The Principal: Three Keys to Maximizing Impact*

**“ What this report makes clear is that the principalship is a paradox. While it is a nearly impossible job, it is done remarkably well by most practitioners—even though they are usually understaffed and under-resourced—given the demands that are made on them. ”**

—David Berliner, Regents' Professor Emeritus, Arizona State University

The full study, *The Future of Principalship in Canada*, is a joint effort of the Canadian Association of Principals and the Alberta Teachers' Association. Further background information about this publication is available from J-C Couture at the Alberta Teachers' Association, 11010 142 Street, Edmonton, AB T5N 2R1; phone 780-447-9400 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (toll free in Alberta); e-mail [jc.couture@ata.ab.ca](mailto:jc.couture@ata.ab.ca).

# Leadership: Forms and Fads

By Dr. Darryl Hunter

## Article 1:

This is the first article in a series, based on an international study of successful leadership practices and student achievement, that has been supplied by the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit, University of Regina.

The evidence suggests that successful leadership can play a highly significant – and frequently underestimated – role in improving student learning. Specifically, the available evidence about the size and nature of the effects of successful leadership on student learning justifies two important claims:

**1. Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.**

While evidence about leadership effects on student learning can be confusing to interpret, much of the existing research actually underestimates its effects. The total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of total school effects. This evidence supports the present widespread interest in improving leadership as a key to the successful implementation of large-scale reform.

**2. Leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most.**

Especially when we think of leaders in formal administrative roles, the greater the challenge the greater the impact of their actions on learning. While the evidence shows small but significant effects of leadership actions on student learning across the spectrum of schools, existing research also shows that demonstrated effects of successful leadership are considerably greater in schools that are in more difficult circumstances. Indeed, there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader. Many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst.

These results, therefore, point to the value of changing, or adding to, the leadership capacities of underperforming schools as part of their improvement efforts or as part of school reconstitution.

The total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of total school effects. When we think about “successful” leadership, it is easy to become confused by the current evidence about what that really means. Three conclusions are warranted about the different forms of leadership reflected in that literature.



**1. Many labels used in the literature to signify different forms or styles of leadership mask the generic functions of leadership.**

Different forms of leadership are described in the literature using adjectives such as “instructional,” “participative,” “democratic,” “transformational,” “moral,” “strategic” and the like. But these labels primarily capture different stylistic or methodological approaches to accomplishing the same two essential objectives critical to any organization’s effectiveness: helping the organization set a defensible set of directions and influencing members to move in those directions. Leadership is both this simple and this complex. “Instructional leadership,” for example, encourages a focus on improving the classroom practices of teachers as the direction for the school. “Transformational leadership,” on the other hand, draws attention to a broader array of school and classroom conditions that may need to be changed if learning is to improve. Both “democratic” and “participative leadership” are especially concerned with how decisions are made about both school priorities and how to pursue them.

The lesson here is that we need to be skeptical about the “leadership by adjective” literature. Sometimes these adjectives have real meaning, but sometimes they mask the more important underlying themes common to successful leadership, regardless of the style being advocated.

**2. Principals, superintendents and teachers are all being admonished to be “instructional leaders” without much clarity about what that means.** The term “instructional leader” has been in vogue for decades as the desired model for education leaders – principals especially. Yet the term is often more a slogan than a well-defined set of leadership practices. While it certainly conveys the importance of keeping teaching and learning at the forefront of decision making, it is no more meaningful, in and of itself, than admonishing the leader of any organization to keep his or her eye on the organizational “ball” – in this case, the core objective of making schools work better for kids.

Sloganeering uses of the term “instructional leadership” notwithstanding, there are several quite well-developed models carrying the title of “instructional leadership” that do specify particular leadership practices and provide evidence of the impact of these practices on both organizations and students. Hallinger’s model has been the most researched; it consists of three sets of leadership dimensions (Defining the School’s Mission, Managing the Instructional Program and Promoting a Positive Learning Climate), within which are 10 specific leadership practices. Both Duke and Andrews, and Sodder provide other well-developed but less-researched models of instructional leadership.

The same two essential objectives are critical to any organization’s effectiveness: helping the organization set a defensible set of directions and influencing members to move in those

directions. Displacing the sloganeering uses of the term “instructional leadership” with the more precise leadership practices specified by well-developed leadership models is much to be desired.

**3. “Distributed leadership” is in danger of becoming no more than a slogan unless it is given more thorough and thoughtful consideration.**

As it is frequently used in the field and in education leadership research dating back nearly 70 years, the ideas underlying the term “distributed leadership” have mainly common-sense meanings and connotations that are not disputed. Neither superintendents nor principals can do the whole leadership task by themselves. Successful leaders develop and count on contributions from many others in their organizations. Principals typically count on key teachers for such leadership, along with their local administrative colleagues. In site-based management contexts, parent leaders are often crucial to the school’s success. Superintendents rely for leadership on many central-office and school-based people, along with elected board members. Effective school and district leaders make savvy use of external assistance to enhance their influence.

While many in the education field use the term “distributed leadership” reverentially, there is substantial overlap with such other well-developed, longstanding conceptions of leadership as “shared,” “collaborative,” “democratic” and “participative.” Furthermore, when viewed in terms of the definition of leadership suggested here, practical applications of leadership distribution may easily get confounded with the mere distribution of management responsibilities.

Promising efforts have recently begun to extend the concept of distributed leadership beyond its common-sense uses and provide evidence about its

nature and effects (e.g., Gronn, 2002; Spillane, in press; Leithwood et al, 2004). These efforts suggest, for example, that it is helpful for some leadership functions to be performed at every level in the organization; for example, stimulating people to think differently about their work. On the other hand, it is important for other functions to be carried out at a particular level. For example, it seems critical that leaders in formal positions of authority retain responsibility for building a shared vision for their organizations. Also, it seems likely that different patterns of leadership distribution throughout districts and schools, for example, might be associated with different levels of effects on students. This is a promising line of research that may prevent distributed leadership from becoming just another “leadership flavor of the month.”

Given the state of our understanding about distributed leadership, therefore, policymakers and leadership developers would do well to adopt a more cautious attitude toward the concept until more evidence is developed to move the term beyond the obvious and provide a clearer understanding of its actual impact on schools and students.

#### **Further Reading:**

Kenneth Leithwood, Karen Seashore Louis, Stephen Anderson and Kyla Wahlstrom (2004). Review of research: How leadership influences student learning. The Wallace Foundation.

*Dr. Darryl Hunter lectures in administrative behaviour and organization at the University of Regina. His current research focuses on educators' interpretations and use of statistics--which bridge the gap between the art and science of educational administration and teaching. He was a former school administrator in Melville, and has managed assessments as a civil servant in Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Ontario.*

## Article 2:

This second article in a series of three, is based on an international study of successful leadership practices and student achievement, has been supplied by the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit, University of Regina.

### **Leadership: Evidence-based practices**

In organizational sectors as different as schools and the military, and in national cultures as different as The Netherlands, Canada, Hong Kong and the United States, there is compelling evidence of a common core of practices that any successful leader calls on, as needed. Many of these practices are common to different models of leadership, as well. These practices can be thought of as the “basics” of successful leadership. Rarely are such practices sufficient for leaders aiming to significantly improve student learning in their schools. But without them, not much would happen. Three sets of practices make up this basic core of successful leadership practices: 1. setting directions, 2. developing people and 3. redesigning the organization.

#### **1. Setting Directions**

Evidence suggests that those leadership practices included in Setting Directions account for the largest proportion of a leader's impact. This set of practices is aimed at helping one's colleagues develop shared understandings about the organization and its activities and goals that can under gird a sense of purpose or vision. People are motivated by goals which they find personally compelling, as well as challenging but achievable. Having such goals helps people make sense of their work and enables them to find a sense of identity for themselves within their work context.

Often cited as helping set directions are such specific leadership practices as identifying and articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals and creating high performance expectations. Monitoring organizational performance and promoting effective communication throughout the organization also assist in the development of shared organizational purposes.

#### **2. Developing People**

Evidence collected in both school and non-school organizations about the contribution of this set of practices to leaders' effects is substantial. While clear and compelling organizational directions contribute significantly to members' work-related motivations, they are not the only conditions to do so. Nor do such directions contribute to the capacities members often need in order to productively move in those directions. Such capacities and motivations are influenced by the direct experiences organizational members have with those in leadership roles, as well as the organizational context within which people work.

Often cited as helping set directions are such specific leadership practices as identifying and articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals and creating high performance expectations. More-specific sets of leadership practices significantly and positively influencing these direct experiences include,

for example: offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support and providing appropriate models of best practice and beliefs considered fundamental to the organization.

#### **3. Redesigning the Organization**

The contribution of schools to student learning most certainly depends on the motivations and capacities of teachers and administrators, acting both individually and collectively. But organizational conditions sometimes blunt or wear down educators' good intentions and actually prevent the use of effective practices. In some contexts, for example, high-stakes testing has encouraged a drill-and-practice form of instruction among teachers who are perfectly capable of developing deep understanding on the part of their students. And extrinsic financial incentives for achieving school performance targets, under some conditions, can erode teachers' intrinsic commitments to the welfare of their students. Successful educational leaders develop their districts and schools as effective organizations that support and sustain the performance of administrators and teachers, as well as students. Specific practices typically associated with this set of basics include strengthening district and school cultures, modifying organizational structures and building collaborative processes. Such practices assume that the purpose behind the redesign of organizational cultures and structures is to facilitate the work of organizational members and that the malleability of structures should match the changing nature of the school's improvement agenda.

#### **Further Reading**

Leithwood, K. A., & Riehl, C. (2003). What we know about successful school leadership (pp. 1-14). Nottingham, UK: National College for School Leadership.



## Article 3:

This third of three articles, is based on an international study of successful leadership practices and student achievement, and has been supplied by the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit, University of Regina.

School-based leadership and Improved student learning International evidence leads to three conclusions about how successful leadership influences student achievement:

### **1. Mostly leaders contribute to student learning indirectly, through their influence on other people or features of their organizations.**

This should be self evident by simply reminding ourselves about how leaders of all but the smallest districts and schools spend the bulk of their time and with whom they spend it – whether successful or not. But a considerable amount of research concerning leadership effects on students has tried to measure direct effects; rarely does this form of research find any effects at all.

It is only when research designs start with a more sophisticated view of the chain of “variables” linking leadership practices to student learning that the effects of leaders become evident. These linkages typically get longer the larger the organization. And, on the whole, these chains of variables are much longer for district leaders than for school leaders. Leaders’ contributions to student learning, then, depend a great deal on their judicious choice of what parts of their organization to spend time and attention on. Some choices (illustrated below) will pay off much more than others.

### **2. The evidence provides very good clues about who or what educational leaders should pay the most attention to within their organizations.**

Teachers are key, of course, and impressive evidence suggests that their “pedagogical content knowledge” (knowledge about how to teach particular subject matter content) is central to their effectiveness. So, too, is the professional community teachers often form with colleagues inside and outside their own schools. At the classroom level, substantial evidence suggests that student learning varies as a consequence of, for example, class size, student-grouping practices, the instructional practices of teachers, and the nature and extent of monitoring of student progress.

At the school level, evidence is quite strong in identifying, for example, school mission and goals, culture, teachers’ participation in decision making, and relationships with parents and the wider community as potentially powerful determinants of student learning. District conditions that are known to influence student learning include, for example, district culture, the provision of professional development opportunities for teachers aligned with school and district priorities and policies governing the leadership succession. Districts also contribute to student learning by ensuring alignment among goals, programs, policies and professional development.

At the classroom level, substantial evidence suggests that student learning varies as a consequence of, for example, class size, student-grouping practices, the instructional practices of teachers, and the nature and extent of monitoring of student progress.

At a minimum, then, this extensive body of research provides direction for leaders’ attention and time. It should

also serve as the basis for the further development of leaders. Leaders need to know which features of their organizations should be a priority for their attention. They also need to know what the ideal condition of each of these features is, in order to positively influence the learning of students.

### **3. We need to know much more about what leaders do to further develop those high-priority parts of their organizations.**

No doubt, many of the basic and context-specific leadership practices alluded to above will be part of what leaders need to do. But evidence about the nature and influence of those practices is not yet sufficiently fine-grained to know how a carefully selected feature of a district or school could be systematically improved through planned intervention on the part of someone in a leadership role.

## **Conclusion**

There seems little doubt that both district and school leadership provides a critical bridge between most educational-reform initiatives, and having those reforms make a genuine difference for all students. Such leadership comes from many sources, not just superintendents and principals. But those in formal positions of authority in school systems are likely still the most influential. Efforts to improve their recruitment, training, evaluation and ongoing development should be considered highly cost-effective approaches to successful school improvement.

## **Further Reading**

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership and Management*, 28(1), 27-42.

# The Criminal Code: Implications for the Electronic Age (Part 1)

By Jerome Chomos

It may have begun as a typical small party involving teen-age high school students, four boys and two girls, at the home of one of the boys in the fall of 2011. As the evening progressed and with alcohol involved, the party turned ugly, and ultimately tragic. One of the girls became so intoxicated that she began throwing up out of a window. Despite this, one of the boys began having sex with her from behind. Another boy decided to take a picture on his cell phone of the two having sex, with the boy of the grinning and giving him the “thumbs up” gesture. The girl was unaware of the photo and was in no condition to give consent either to the sex or the taking of the photo.

The next day, the boy who took the photo sent it to the other boy. Somehow the image was then distributed to numerous people, most of whom attended the same high school as the teenagers at the party. The girl came forward to the police who “looked into” the accusations of sexual assault and the production and distribution of the photo. They, along with the province’s Public Prosecution Service, decided that there weren’t sufficient grounds to lay charges.

For months, the girl involved was bullied and ridiculed as a result of the photo. Finally, in the spring of 2013, she attempted suicide. She suffered severe brain damage and died after being taken off life-support. Her story generated international headlines and ignited another national discussion about cyber-bullying

A week after she died, the police reopened their investigation and charged the boys involved with child pornography charges. In September 2014 the boy who took the pictures pled guilty and will be sentenced this month (November 2014). The other boy will stand trial also this month.

While the high school the students attended was not directly involved, the girl’s death has had an impact on all there and has many implications beyond that. One of the important issues in this case is the conduct of the police in the initial investigation of the girl’s accusations. In response, a review has been launched to examine how police and prosecutors handled the girl’s allegations. One can only hope that authorities there and elsewhere take a more intelligent approach when faced with cases such as these.

Perhaps more importantly, educators and parents must become much more knowledgeable and proactive when it comes to the consequences of the misuse of the many rapidly evolving forms of social media. The law has always tended to lag a bit behind societal developments; certainly that has been the case with laws related to the media and electronic transmission. Until this year, the Criminal Code referred to telecommunications by telegrams, radio and telephones. Significant changes to the Code enacted this year now includes to “any means of communication.” Among many other changes are those relating to child pornography. Section 163.1(1) defines child pornography as any



photographic, film, video or other visual representation of a person under the age of 18 engaged in sexual activity. Section 163 (1) of the Code states that it is an offense for “anyone who makes, prints, publishes, distributes, circulates, or has in his possession for the purposes of publication, distribution, or circulation any obscene written matter, picture, model, phonograph, record or any other thing whatever.”(emphasis added) Do your students, or do parents, know what that means? Or that the penalty for that offense is imprisonment for a minimum of one year, or up to ten years?

Part 2 will deal with more of the fallout from this case as well as more implications from changes to the Criminal Code.

*Jerome Chomos is a superannuated teacher and educational administrator who has been doing research in legal issues and education over a number of years. He has been co-editor of "A Guide to Saskatchewan School Law", now in its third edition, and continues to present workshops on the topic.*

# Concept Paper

By Greg Bubnick

Education has been the main vehicle of assimilation of Canada's First Peoples. A devastating array of actions were perpetrated on Aboriginal families, all having a residual and lasting detrimental effect. Residential schools and their message of Christianity, the savage Indian, evil ceremony and punishment for use of first language had their desired effect of assimilation and destruction of traditional culture. The legacy today is a people whose ancient voice and language is on the verge of extinction.

The atrocities of the colonial past have not ended with the dissolution of church run Residential Schools. Modern schools are still filled with hegemonic, colonistic barriers to successful education of First Nation, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) children of Canada. Although educational systems have become more aware of the problems, and have avowed a desire to right the wrongs of the past, many impediments are ingrained in the system. It will take dialogue, listening, and a paradigm shift for Canada's educators to create a more inclusive and dignified environment for our Aboriginal children to find the success they deserve from our school system. No longer will blaming the victim be an acceptable discourse. We must reshape our schools in a manner that will ensure an effective approach to educating our First Peoples.

Saskatchewan schools have already begun the process of creating an ethical space for First Nation values. For all my 18 years as an educator in Saskatoon, there has been proactive support for the ideas that we are immersed in through our Land Based Indigenous Studies cohort. It began as cultural awareness training for Western bred teachers. Many teachers took part voluntarily. Some chose not to. But inroads were being laid for Indigenous methods and ways of being. More support was added from the Board level, and excellent practice was being included in teacher programming. The Indigenous way has more than begun its creep into our schools. It is poised to become part of the praxis of many of our classrooms. I am among a swell of teachers hoping to expand our Indigenous knowledge. The Indigenous way by its very nature a slow process. Only when many layers of meaning and experience are added can you begin to understand, and that takes time to acquire and share.

The barricades that are placed in front of us are well established and held together by decades of routine. I often teach in the exact same manner in which I was taught as a child of the same Catholic school system that I now work with. Learning of the Western way runs deep through our schools, and there has been many

successful results for our students. But always lagging behind were the Aboriginal population. Teachers were at a loss when it came to educating FNMI students. They blamed attendance, home life or laziness for the problem and threw up their hands. But the real reason is that Western educational methods were not equipped with the tools needed to teach in meaningful ways for these children. The habits of the schools were themselves a detriment to aboriginal learning styles. The concept of time is a good example. High schools are cut in to 5 or 6 equal length periods per day, each designed to portion out your days' worth of knowledge and scurry off to the next class to do the same. When experiential learning is your orientation, the disjointed approach only serves to reduce the meaningfulness of the lessons.

As educators, where do we go from here? The list of adjustments is long, but it begins with land based instruction and experiential learning. The Earth becomes the teacher and each person adds to their lifelong understandings in their own way. Holistic learning events that promote observation, participation and sensory awareness provide synergies across the curricular elements. One land based experience, such as a trip to the Northeast Swale, can easily be done in a manner that satisfies science, social studies, language arts, visual arts, and practical arts curricular areas. It will require Western elements such as reading and writing, but will be inspired by the Indigenous ways and stories that accompany the event.

It requires dismantling some of the barricades it faces. How can you take a group of high school students for a meaningful land based activity when they must be five other places that day? How can the English teacher and the gym teacher rectify the time and learning that took place? The effort it takes and disruption to other teachers is a major deterrent and effectively ends the opportunity for land based methods. The system just doesn't work

that way. How do we correct this? One option is to stop splitting the students among 5 periods a day and keep them with a single teacher which allows cross curricular learning to happen. One day a week can be set aside for land based opportunities, where a group of teachers come together with the community and elders to experience real events. Development of one hour land based activities that are easily planned and administered in your school yard and area are effective as well. This is only a small sampling of adjustments that can be made within the thoughts and operations of the Western educational paradigms.

It will also mean that First Nations peoples must take control of the education of their children. This already happens in many places around the country, with some having great success in spite of their disadvantaged financial position. Language instruction needs to be part of the solution, and reserve and band controlled schools are the ideal location in which to teach. However, it requires that a Nation is prepared with the knowledge and values it wants to pass on. It has to have maintained and resurrected their stories, places and ancient ways of knowing. It also requires strong leadership within a

school, and support of the community and a sense of continuance with former students becoming teachers and administrators. Make no mistake, the revival of the language, the ways and spirit of the Indigenous cultures of Canada will be ushered in through the schools. Just as education was the main vehicle of assimilation, it will be the driver of the renewal. The task has begun, but the road is long. As educators, our role is great and sacred.

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Jessen Williamson, K. (2011). *Inherit my heaven: Kalaallit gender relations*. Nuuk: Department of Education, Church, Culture and Gender Equality.

Greg Bubnick is a grade eight teacher with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and is currently studying under Dr. Alex Wilson in the Land Based Indigenous Studies Master's program. Greg believes that by Indigenousizing our curriculum and institutions, we not only create a space for inclusion of Metis and First Nations people, we reach all learners with methods that ground and engage them spiritually, physically, emotionally and intellectually.

# First Nations

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teaching

# SSBL

# SPRING SUMMIT

## Closing the Gap – Improving FNMI Student Outcomes

**March 20, 2015**

**Eamer Auditorium, STF Building**  
2317 Arlington Avenue, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

**8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.**

### Sacred Heart School: Reading is our Passion

Starla Grebinski, Adam Ward, Lindsay Shaw

Although Sacred Heart Community School is located in what MacLean's Magazine calls, "the worst neighborhood in Canada," the teaching staff has experienced a great deal of success with their reading initiatives. The school's primary reading assessment scores and attendance have improved significantly. Elder Mike Pinay has stated he feels the neighborhood has changed as a result of the reading program and strategies of the school!

In this session, the Sacred Heart Community School staff will explore and share the many reading initiatives they have implemented within their challenging community context.

### Kitoskâyiminawak Pîkiskwêwak: Our Young People Speak

Sandy Pinay-Schindler, Sheena Koops – Bert Fox Community High School Students

Student and community engagement are at the core of this division wide writing project which has focused on First Nations and Metis leaders, community and family healing, and contemporary treaty issues. Three magazines titled The Leadership Edition, The Healing Edition, and the Treaty Edition have been published since 2011. A celebration in May, 2015 will launch the fourth magazine in this series, titled The Holistic Edition. Traditional education practices have been revived within a shared professional development framework which has included implementation of CRISS teaching strategies. Six schools across southern Saskatchewan are engaged in writing with professional mentors, resulting in the publication of an education resource for all learners.

The Prairie Valley School Division team from Bert Fox Community High School in Fort Qu'Appelle will describe their literary journey during the past four years.

### Oskāyak Nikan: Youth First

Donna Nurse and Rhonda Laslo

Punnichy Community High School will present information about programs through which they educate and train youth to make the transition from school to work. The team will also share and discuss their innovative classrooms which enhance the individual learning experience.

Cost: \$100

- includes all three sessions
- includes breakfast and lunch
- check out the SSBL website at [www.ssbl.ca](http://www.ssbl.ca) for registration and payment options with Paypal
- any further questions, please call Carol sarich at 306-659-7371





May 11 –14, 2015 • Whistler

# Inspiring Learning

Preliminary  
Pre-conference



Conference Guide  
(as of December 3)

*Keynote  
speakers*

**Simon Breakspear  
Wab Kinew  
Jesse Miller  
Frederick Brown  
Stephanie Hamilton**



bcp  vpa

CONFERENCE GUIDE <http://bit.ly/1rq36vW>

REGISTRATION <http://bit.ly/1utETY2>



**The Canadian Association of Principals 2015 Annual Conference**

# Saskatchewan School-Based Administrators' Professional Development Program



Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation  
McDowell Conference Room  
2317 Arlington Avenue  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

**Module Two . . . March 19-20, 2015 – 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**Module Four . . . April 23-24, 2015 – 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**Module Six . . . May 7-8, 2015 – 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**



**Cost for each module:**

\$299.25 (GST, materials and meals included)

The program is for school-based administrators, central office personnel, classroom teachers and learning leaders.

In consultation with the Department Head in Educational Administration in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, students can be granted permission to use a module as part of the requirements for EADM 894.3

## Module One – Working With People

The Learning Community; Ages and Stages; Personal Insights; Personal Balance: Stress and Change; Leadership Practices; Communication; Collaborative Cultures; Meetings; Shared Leadership and Community Relations.

## Module Two – Leadership for Teaching and Learning

Vision; Instructional Leadership; School Climate; Principles of Learning; Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction; Professional Development and Staff Development.

## Module Three – Supervision and Evaluation: Leadership for Nurturing a Culture of Learning

School Improvement; Supervision and Evaluation; Legal and Policy Frameworks for Supervision and Evaluation.

## Module Four – The Law

The Law and Me, Conflict Management; Fundamental Justice; *The Education Act, 1995*; *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*; Human Rights; *Youth Criminal Justice Act*; Ethical Decision-Making; Case Studies; Current Issues in Education Law.

## Module Five – Leading in a Context of Change and Community

Worldview; Perspectives on Education; Diversity; Issues in Education; Leading and Supporting Change; Community Leadership.

## Module Six – Beginning With the End

(It is recommended that participants have completed Modules One through Five to be eligible)

Leadership in a Time of Change; Current Issues in Education; Networking; Problem Solving; Sustainable Leadership; Reflection for Action; Individual Presentations; Case Studies.

Although not a prerequisite, it is highly recommended to take Module One first. These modules are based on current research and are sensitive to the practical needs of school-based administrators. Applicable to real-life situations, the modules are self-directed and experiential. They reflect a diversity of perspectives and address knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Register online at [www.spdu.ca](http://www.spdu.ca)



# Saskatchewan School Based Leaders



Special Subject Council  
2014-15  
Membership Application Form

This membership form is for the use of current in-school leaders. It can for used for new Applications for SSBL and for membership renewals. The SSBL membership is \$35.00.

## Personal Information *(This information is required in order to process your membership application.)*

Name: Last \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_

Administrative Position \_\_\_\_\_ Years as an Administrator \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching Certificate Number (Used to verify STF Membership) \_\_\_\_\_

## School Information Data *(This information is required for mailing and contact purposes.)*

School Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone \_\_\_\_\_ School Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Work E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

School Division Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Home Information *(This information is optional and is for secondary mailing and contact purposes.)*

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Consent for the Use of Personal Information

By applying for membership in the Saskatchewan School Based Leaders (SSBL) special subject council, I consent to the use of my personal information for the following purposes:

1. to make contact with members for the purpose of membership renewals and membership drives;
2. to send to members the journals, newsletters and other correspondence associated with SSBL;
3. to forward to members information about SSBL conferences and other professional development opportunities;
4. to seek members who would be willing to represent SSBL at educational meetings or on educational committees; and,
5. to register each SSBL member as a member of the Canadian Association of Principals (C.A.P.) so he/she may receive the *C.A.P. Journal* and other professional information related to C.A.P.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date {dd/mm/yy}: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form and a cheque for the \$35.00 membership fee to Dean Lucyk, SSBL Treasurer and Membership Co-ordinator at 44 Cardinal Crescent, Regina, SK S4S 4Y5 or online at [www.ssbl.ca](http://www.ssbl.ca).

# A Guide to Saskatchewan School Law: Second Edition is now available

*A Guide to Saskatchewan School Law* has been significantly revised and updated and is now available. Major changes include revisions to:

- General Student Safety
- Harassment and Bullying
- Technology-Mediated Issues in Schools, and Cyberbullying
- The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and Discipline
- Legal Status of Volunteers in Schools
- School Closures
- School Community Councils and Conseils d'Ecoles
- The League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents
- Tri-Council Policy and Academic Research in Saskatchewan Schools
- Separate School Divisions

This edition of the Guide has been significantly reformatted for ease of use. An index has been added, and terminology and policy statements from educational stakeholder organizations have been updated.

To order contact:  
Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit  
Department of Educational Administration  
College of Education, University of Saskatchewan  
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UNIVERSITY OF  
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The **Saskatchewan School Based Leaders** is a special subject council of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. The SSBA was formed in 1986 when the high school administrators and elementary administrators groups joined. It is an organization manned by volunteer administrators in this province. The SSBA is also an affiliate of the Canadian Association of Principals.

### Our objectives are:

- To promote awareness of the role of school based administrators.
- To promote professional development of school based administrators.
- To provide a forum for effective communication.
- To provide a forum for examining issues and directions in education.
- To cooperate with other organizations having similar objectives.
- To create additional avenues of support for the welfare of in-school administrators.

[www.ssbl.ca](http://www.ssbl.ca)

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