

# The School Trustee

## 2011 Fall General Assembly

Saskatchewan's boards of education gathered in Saskatoon on Nov. 28-29 to discuss issues of importance to publicly-funded education.

Under the banner of this year's Fall General Assembly theme, *Teach Our Children Well*, members of the province's 28 public and separate boards and the Conseil scolaire fransaskois participated in the Annual General Meeting of the Association where they debated and voted on resolutions and SSBA position statements.

Delegates also enjoyed a panel discussion featuring students from across the province and a keynote address from Ray McNulty, President of the International Center for Student Leadership and author of the book, *It's Not Us Against Them: Creating the Schools We Need*. The Hon. Donna Harpauer, Minister of Education, also addressed the Assembly.

Sandi Urban-Hall and Janet Foord were both acclaimed to their third term as SSBA President and Vice-President.



Ray McNulty



Roy Challis and Ernie Cychmistruk were presented with Star Blankets by Elder Mary Lee in recognition of their work for First Nations and Métis education (above). Marion Graham's Drum Corp from Saskatoon opened the Assembly (bottom left).



2011-12 Provincial Executive



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Address	2	Student Panel	
2011-12 SSBA Executive	3	Candid with Trustees	8
Minister Harpauer Addresses the Elephants in the Room	4	Student Vote:	
SSBA Annual Report Highlights	5	Stand Up for Democracy	9
Award of Distinction	6	Fall General Assembly Photos	10
Honourary Life Membership	6	SSBA Scholarship Recipients	11
Premier's Board of Education Award	6	Fall General Assembly Sponsors	11
Resolutions Results	7	Calendar of Events	12
		Fall General Assembly Evaluation	12

## President's Address

In her address to the SSBA membership, President Sandi Urban-Hall focused on the themes of leadership, challenge and change.

Urban-Hall explained that the SSBA Executive felt blindsided by the Premier's provincial election campaign promise to have the school year start after Labour Day in all Saskatchewan school divisions. She went on to state, however, that the Executive was determined to "take this lemon and make some lemonade".

After expressing the concerns of boards, the SSBA President, Vice-President and Executive Director were promised a meeting with the Minister of Education immediately following the election.

"At that meeting, we again spoke about the shared leadership needed on the part of the government and boards of education to improve student achievement," Urban-Hall said. "Frankly put, Saskatchewan students are not achieving as well as their counterparts in Alberta and Manitoba. This cannot continue. Something has got to change. The *status quo* is simply not working."

Urban-Hall informed delegates that the SSBA representatives used the meeting as an opportunity to draw the government's attention to the Instructional Time Report developed jointly by the SSBA and LEADS. The report calls for changes to *The Education Act* to ensure sufficient academic instructional time is provided for students in order for them to

achieve their learning outcomes.

Said Urban-Hall, "I am happy to report that the government of Saskatchewan has agreed to engage in a consultation process with all of the education stakeholders with an eye to finalizing possible recommendations and making the necessary changes through the regulations to *The Education Act*. Working with LEADS and our other education partners, we look forward to participating in these discussions and moving forward.

Leadership also applied to Urban-Hall's remarks regarding Provincial Teacher Collective Bargaining. She thanked and congratulated the SSBA Government-Trustee Bargaining Committee representatives for their hard work, and expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Provincial Executive and boards of education throughout the bargaining process. She also reminded trustees about the pressing need to reflect on the local bargaining process.

"Concerns about local bargaining agreements have been expressed by the government of Saskatchewan – and by boards of education. There are issues that must be addressed. Local agreements vary greatly – some would say too greatly... We need to think strategically and remind ourselves that regardless of who is funding education, trustees are the elected and accountable stewards of the public purse."

Eliminating the achievement

gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students was cited as another urgent challenge. Urban-Hall said that this is an issue of great importance to both boards of education and the government of Saskatchewan.

"Boards have the opportunity to prove their relevance, their leadership and their necessity in addressing Aboriginal student achievement and well being. Boards are in the best position to make progress in this area."

The President mentioned the need for the Association and boards to continue their efforts with respect to public awareness of and engagement in the publicly-funded education system, and the need to promote and recognize the value of locally-elected boards of education. She also commended the Education Equity Working Advisory Group for their efforts over the past two years.

Urban-Hall concluded her remarks with a focus on change.

"Change *is* our work," she said. "The great personalities in history are not those who left this world exactly as they found it. Rather, they were the changers of the *status quo*... We can embrace change and serve as leaders who will leave the world a better place than we found it. And I truly believe that we can. And that together – with students always at the centre of all that we do – we *will*."



## 2011-2012 SSBA Executive



**Sandi Urban-Hall**  
*President*



**Janet Foord**  
*Vice-President*



**Glen Gantefoer**  
*Catholic Constituency*



**Dan Danielson**  
*Urban Public Constituency*



**Connie Bailey**  
*Southern Constituency*



**Eldon Van Den Bossche**  
*Central Constituency*



**Duane Favel**  
*Aboriginal Constituency*



**Joe Daigneault**  
*Northern Constituency*



**Élizabéth Perreault**  
*Conseil scolaire fransaskois*

## Minister Harpauer Addresses the Elephants in the Room

Among the issues Minister of Education Donna Harpauer discussed at the Fall General Assembly, the new funding distribution model and the school year start date promise were the two most prominent topics.

“We have one elephant that’s been here so long it thinks it’s at home, and that is the new funding distribution model,” said Harpauer.

Prior to the election a technical review of the model was provided to stakeholders and the Minister thanked school trustees for the feedback provided from that meeting.

Ministry of Education officials used last year’s budget as a benchmark to review the funding structure had the model been in place at that time.

A demonstration of how the funding model will be implemented is planned before the March 2012 provincial budget announcement when the model will be introduced.

The “second elephant” she referred to was the Premier’s commitment to have the school year begin following Labour Day long weekend in September 2012.

In early December, members of the SSBA, LEADS, SASBO, STF and the Ministry of Education will discuss what impact the change may have on student achievement.

“We will be able to thoroughly review this issue along with other changes we’re looking at within *The Education Act*,” stated Harpauer. “So that we can all understand what is going to



*Minister of Education  
Donna Harpauer*

be happening when the *Act* is introduced in the house this fall session.

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*“We have one elephant that’s been here so long it thinks it’s at home, and that is the new funding distribution model.”*

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“I don’t think these two topics are negative issues, they are just the issues that are raising the most questions as to where the government is going,” concluded Harpauer regarding the “elephants.”

With regard to capital funding Harpauer admitted, “A lot of work needs to be done.”

The government is developing an inter-ministry committee to look at infrastructure as this issue is pervasive across the province.

She assured trustees that prioritization of capital projects will continue to be locally determined.

A priority that will continue with the current government is early childhood intervention and supports, said Harpauer.

“You are all aware that early intervention is very important to students’ achievement and success. It is even more important for our vulnerable children.”

This priority has resulted in increases to pre-kindergarten spaces available in the province, and support for licensed child care spaces.

Harpauer also addressed the resolution regarding full-day, everyday kindergarten, which the SSBA delegates passed at the Fall General Assembly.

“I think everyone will have to see the funding model before we have that meaningful discussion as to how full-day kindergarten would fit,” explained Harpauer. “I’m not opposed to full-day kindergarten and at this point I’m kind of opinionless without having had those meaningful conversations.”



## SSBA Annual Report Highlights

Executive Director Darren McKee presented the highlights of the SSBA 2011 Annual Report which included:

- A wide range of services continued to be provided to the membership in 2011 including Legal, Employee Relations, Communications, School Board Development, Employee Benefits and Disability Management, and Insurance and Risk Management Services.
- Provincial Teacher Collective Bargaining was a major undertaking of the Association in 2011, leading to the ratification of the 2010-2013 collective agreement this fall.
- Public Engagement and Awareness continued to be a key strategic priority of the Association. Public Engagement workshops were held on a constituency level and a province-wide media campaign was undertaken this fall in support of the value of publicly-funded education and the importance of locally-elected leadership.
- A great deal of work was completed with respect to First Nations and Métis education over the past year. The Aboriginal Council continued to provide leadership in planning for strengthened First Nations and Métis education outcomes through specific strategies and actions. The First Nations and Métis Education Working Advisory Group also continued



*The Association continued to offer a wide variety of networking and inservice opportunities for trustees and their senior administrators.*

their work. The Spring Assembly was devoted to First Nations and Métis Education and the need to eliminate the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Finally, the SSBA's Aboriginal Council proudly hosted the first ever National Aboriginal Trustees Gathering in Saskatoon in June.

- The Education Equity WAG established in 2010 completed their work this year. This WAG was charged with establishing a shared and better understanding of what equity in education looks like in Saskatchewan.
- The Association continued to offer a wide variety of networking and inservice opportunities for trustees and their senior administrators including Spring and Fall Assemblies, Members' Councils,

workshops, webinars and seminars.

- A Resolutions Advocacy Action Plan was developed and implemented in 2011 with progress made on almost every resolution passed at the 2010 Fall General Assembly.
- Finally, the SSBA spearheaded efforts at the provincial level to advance shared leadership of publicly-funded education between the Ministry and boards of education, and at the national level, with the help of former Minister of Education Ken Krawetz, between the Canadian School Boards Association and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.



## Challis Receives Two Awards

Former SSBA President Roy Challis was honoured with two awards at the SSBA Fall General Assembly. Challis was the recipient of both a Life Membership and the Award of Distinction.

The Award of Distinction honours school board members who demonstrate outstanding service to public education in Saskatchewan.

Challis has been involved in education in one form or another most of his life.

Challis is recognized as a teacher

who supported all children and as a leader who reminds everyone that all children are important and deserve the best education possible.

Challis has served as a board member for Living Sky School Division for the past 14 years and has been active on many committees during that time. In 2004 he was elected to the SSBA Executive as Urban Public Representative and was elected President of the SSBA in 2006 where he served a term of three years.



*Challis receives an Award of Distinction and Life Membership from SSBA President Sandi Urban-Hall.*



*SSBA President Sandi Urban-Hall presents an Honourary Life Membership to Ernie Cychmistruk.*

## Honourary Life Membership

At the Fall General Assembly, former SSBA Executive Director Ernie Cychmistruk received an Honourary Life Membership.

Cychmistruk was the tenth person in the 96-year history of the Association to receive this honour.

An Honourary Life Membership is the highest award the SSBA can

bestow on a person who is not a trustee.

“With his soft spoken manner, wisdom, humility, humanity and kindness, Ernie rose to the immense challenges put before him more successfully than any of us could have ever predicted or expected,” said President Sandi Urban-Hall.

## Premier’s Board of Education Award

The Premier’s Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence recognizes educational innovations and improvements focused on student achievement which have been advanced or directed by boards of education. The award is sponsored by Xerox Canada Ltd. with the support of the SSBA and the Premier.

This year’s award was presented to the Saskatoon Public Board of Education for their program *Collegiate Renewal: Engaging All Learners*.

Minister of Education Donna Harpauer and Xerox representative Lori Griffith presented the award to Board Chair Ray Morrison at the Fall General Assembly banquet.



*Minister of Education Donna Harpauer (left) and Xerox representative Lori Griffith present the award to Saskatoon Public Board Chair Ray Morrison.*

## Resolutions Results

A number of resolutions were debated at the 2011 Fall General Assembly.

### Carried Resolutions

- **Budget 2012** – The portion of the Association’s operating budget paid by membership fees of \$2,334, 212 (69% support).
- **2.1-A** – Partner with the Ministry of Education to develop an initiative to support and facilitate the transition of high school students into journeyman, technical programming and 21<sup>st</sup> Century career options (89% support).
- **2.1-B** – Petition the government of Saskatchewan and the Ministry of Education to expand kindergarten programming to a full-day, everyday program supported by full educational grant resources for kindergarten aged students in the province of Saskatchewan (61% support).
- **2.2-B** – Lobby the provincial government to study the current evaluation system for 30 level courses on the principles of equity and relevance for 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning and make recommendations to the Ministry of Education for changes to the current evaluation system (79% support).
- **3.1-A** – Lobby the government to recognize the voluntary participation and fund the extra costs associated with the requirements of the provincial auditor for Boards of Education and the Conseil scolaire



*In total, 13 resolutions were debated and voted on during the Annual General Meeting at the Fall General Assembly.*

- fransaskois (74% support).
- **3.2-A** – Request the Ministry of Education to remove the requirement for portables as part of major construction in areas where student population is stable or increasing (88% support).
- **3.2-B** – Lobby the Ministry of Education to change its process for allocating relocatable classrooms so that they are allocated annually in October based on enrolment numbers in September of that year (97% support).
- **3.2-C** – Lobby the provincial government to provide pressing necessity capital funding to school divisions that need to replace existing schools due to proven issues of health or safety where age of the facility makes improvement or adequate renovation of the existing facility impractical (86% support).
- **5-A** – Position statement on public engagement (98% support)
- **5-B** – Support the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse’s *Portfolio of Canadian Standards for Youth Substance Abuse Prevention* as the standard for prevention programs (94% support).
- **5-D** – Lobby the provincial government to amend *The Education Act, 1995* to change the spring break from the five consecutive days following Easter Sunday to five consecutive days at a fixed time in the calendar year (59% support).
- **5-E** – Lobby the Ministry of Education to maintain existing guidelines surrounding alternative school year arrangements on a permanent basis (84% support).

### Defeated Resolutions

- **5-C** – The Saskatchewan School Boards Association and the Ministry of Education review the legislative qualifications to hold the position of Director of Education (29% support).

## Student Panel Candid with Trustees

Seven students from across the province shared their views on the provincial education system with trustees at the Fall General Assembly.

The student panel discussed barriers in the system, what engages students and what they think education should look like in 20 years.

The students provided insights regarding what works in the classroom and shared diverse viewpoints.

Shae Shatilla from Buffalo Narrows in the Northern Lights SD talked about barriers related to distance learning for science as his school is without a senior science teacher.

For students learning English as an additional language, Elyas Adam, originally from Ethiopia, said mentors provide guidance and assist with language barriers that prevent parents from being more involved in their children's learning.

Joseph Chiliak, a rural school graduate from Marengo, explained that a lack of resources for some courses, such as industrial arts, require students to be transported to nearby schools which takes time away from other courses in their schedules.

A student involved in the international baccalaureate program at Campbell Collegiate, Hitesh Sharma said, "It helps when you walk away from the classroom and think, 'Yes, I learned something new today!'"

The students suggested a variety



*(l-r) Joseph Chiliak, Westcliffe Composite School in Marengo, Elyas Adam, Central Collegiate in Moose Jaw, Ashley Cronk, Riffel High School in Regina, Shae Shatilla, Twin Lakes School in Buffalo Narrows, facilitator Cheryl Thorson, principal at Bishop James Mahoney High School in Saskatoon, Destiny Ironbow, City Park School in Saskatoon, Hitesh Sharma, Campbell Collegiate in Regina, and Molly Cross, Carlton Comprehensive High School in Prince Albert.*

of ways to inspire learning. The use of humour, exercise routines and collaborative learning engages students in interactive learning.

Providing students who are struggling, or who may be dealing with other issues away from school, with second chances to improve assignments and gain a greater understanding of the material was regarded as beneficial.

Parental and peer supports were deemed monumental to school success.

"I'm thankful that my parents allow me to choose my own path and set my own parameters," said Molly Cross, a student at Carlton Comprehensive High School in Prince Albert.

It was also noted that in some schools many of the students are from group homes and the support of their friends to stay in school is a primary motivator.

Ashley Cronk, a Riffel High School student from Regina, explained that sports events and school clubs allow "students to

connect like never before."

Trustee Grant Gustafson, Saskatchewan Rivers SD, asked a question about transition to post-secondary affirming that "students are excellent teachers" to guide decisions.

Students indicated that some feel overwhelmed by the thought of the future.

"In elementary school, they put information in your hand. In high school, they throw the information for you to catch it. And in university, they make you run to catch it," explained Sharma.

Destiny Ironbow from City Park School in Saskatoon offered the humorous observation that, "Maybe in 10 or 20 years teachers will be robots, who knows what the future will bring?"

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*The discussion was facilitated by Cheryl Thorson, principal at Bishop James Mahoney High School in Saskatoon.*



## Student Vote: Stand Up for Democracy

Voter turnout continues to be a hot button issue at the conclusion of every municipal, provincial and federal election.

To combat voter apathy and engage younger generations in the voting process, Student Vote continues to bring the democratic process into classrooms.

Student Vote provides registered schools with resource materials to engage in election campaigns and participate in a Student Vote Day one week prior to an official election.

“There’s no reason why students shouldn’t have the chance to learn and practice every time an election comes around, be it municipal, provincial or federal,” asserted Katie Reidel, Chief of Staff for Student Vote.

The process allows students to campaign, debate and take part in an election that effectively mimics the “real thing.”

“We had some students who are 18 years old that got to vote in class, then had the opportunity to exercise their real vote later,” said Loretta Morhart, teacher librarian at St. Mary High School in Prince Albert. “Those students said they just felt more comfortable knowing the procedure and the importance of being aware of the issues.”

All grades are eligible to participate in Student Vote but the process may look slightly different for younger students.

Lindsay Perry, principal of Drake Elementary School, had students in Grades 3, 4 and 5

participate in the Student Vote process and although issues about health, education and highways were mentioned, to make it fun the students also debated about issues important to them.

“Some of the discussions focused on more playground structures that could directly benefit them,” said Perry.

In the case of Drake Elementary School, groups were formed to

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*Check out the  
“Saskatchewan Votes”  
Student Vote  
webpage at  
<http://bit.ly/rrbsD3>*

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represent the Sask. Party and New Democratic Party. Other teachers approached the process differently but all had a similar goal.

“We have a lot of voter apathy within Saskatchewan, Canada and much of the free world,” stated Morhart. “It is important for students to recognize that there are people in other parts of the world that walk miles and miles to cast a ballot and that our forefathers fought for that right to vote.”

Many other teachers are compelled to participate in Student Vote for the same reasons. So many, in fact, that 276 schools participated in Saskatchewan and

nearly 20,000 students cast a ballot.

“The response from Saskatchewan schools is beyond what we ever expected,” said Reidel, Chief of Staff for Student Vote.

Interestingly, the results from Saskatchewan students nearly mirrored the actual results from the Nov. 7 provincial election. The students voted a majority Sask. Party government attracting 54 percent of the popular vote; the NDP had 28 percent of the popular vote with 13 seats; the Green Party didn’t win a seat but garnered 15 percent of the popular vote.

The only major difference in these numbers was the popular vote was more than 10 percent higher for the Green Party, which was largely taken from the Sask. Party when comparing Student Vote to the provincial election.

Perry explained that it’s a great initial step to get children and youth engaged in the democratic process.

“When we first started this, when I asked students if they knew who their Premier was most said, ‘No,’” said Perry. “I think it provided them with a basic understanding of what our political structure looks like.”

Like Morhart, Perry said it’s important to make the connection to other parts of the world where either a) citizens and/or women can’t vote; or, b) people risk their lives to vote.

## Fall General Assembly Photos



## SSBA Scholarship Recipients



*Siera Bearchell*

The SSBA awarded two \$2,500 scholarships at the Fall General Assembly.

Siera Bearchell, a bachelor of science student at the University of Saskatchewan, won the university scholarship. Bearchell graduated from A.E. Peacock Collegiate in the Prairie South School Division.

Janelle Regier, a dental assistant student at SIAST – Wascana Campus, was awarded the applied science and technology scholarship. Regier graduated from Winston High School in the Horizon School Division.



*Janelle Regier*

## Fall General Assembly Sponsors

### Gold Sponsor \$4,000

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### Level Three Sponsors \$1,000



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*“To serve and provide leadership as the voice for elected boards of education, who are the accountable stewards of publicly funded education in Saskatchewan.”*

**President:** Sandi Urban-Hall

**Vice-President:** Janet Foord

**Northern Constituency:** Joe Daigneault

**Aboriginal Constituency:** Duane Favel

**Conseil scolaire fransaskois Constituency:**  
Élizabeth Perreault

**Urban Public Constituency:**  
Dan Danielson

**Catholic Constituency:**  
Glen Gantefoer

**Central Constituency:**  
Eldon Van Den Bossche

**Southern Constituency:** Connie Bailey

**Executive Director:**  
Darren McKee

**School Board Development Services:**  
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**Legal and Employee Relations Services:**  
Bonnie Ozirny, Director &  
General Counsel

**Communications Services:**  
Leslie Anderson, Director

**Insurance and Risk Management:**  
Dave Jackson, Director

**Employee Benefits Plan:**  
Jeff McNaughton, Director

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Association at the email address above.**

## Calendar Update



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

#### EVENTS

#### MEMBERS' COUNCIL

February 9-10, 2011  
Travelodge Hotel, Regina

## Fall General Assembly Evaluation

Rate the Content	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1. Mon. Banquet Entertainment: Ovide Pilon	0	0	6	22	27
2. Tue. Keynote: Raymond J. McNulty	0	1	2	15	47
3. The Association's Annual Report	1	4	24	30	6
4. Table Discussion - Budget Resolutions	0	11	16	23	15
5. Student Panel	0	5	13	19	27
6. Ministry Advocacy	3	2	12	14	3
Rate the Overall Event Coordination	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1. Processes for Bylaws and Resolutions	0	4	34	23	4
2. Use of Time and Pace of Activities	2	10	22	23	6
3. Event Location (Radisson Hotel)	2	3	19	21	19
4. Audiovisual	0	3	14	29	19
5. Meals	0	3	16	25	21
6. Parking	11	3	13	18	14