

# The School Trustee

## Education Sector Strategic Plan Launched

After months of consultation with boards of education, senior leaders, Ministry of Education officials, students, teachers and support staff, the provincial Education Sector Strategic Plan was launched at the SSBA's Spring General Assembly.

The plan was approved by boards of education and accepted by the Ministry of Education, marking the first-ever strategic plan developed in partnership by Saskatchewan boards of education and the government.

"This is an opportunity to celebrate the shared leadership of boards of education with the Minister and senior Ministry leadership on this important and exciting undertaking in K-12 education," said SSBA President Janet Foord. "Boards of education are accountable for the outcomes of students in our schools and having input into the process for developing those desired outcomes and working towards common

goals will ensure we are working in partnership for the success of students."



*SSBA President Janet Foord and Minister of Education Don Morgan co-presented the official launch of the Education Sector Strategic Plan.*

In total, more than 1,000 staff members were consulted throughout the development of the ESSP. The plan's specific work objectives for 2014-15 focus on reading targets and developing a shared plan for First Nations and Métis education.

"The work and feedback provided

by senior leaders, professional and support staff cannot go unnoticed and we will continue to trust in their leadership as we work towards implementing this plan," said Foord. "In particular, thank you to all of our directors of education who were tireless in their pursuit of developing and finalizing this plan, which provides a blueprint for success in reaching desired outcomes in education."

Minister of Education Don Morgan, a former school board member, echoed Foord's sentiments in thanking all of the partners in education who were involved.

"Without your thoughtfulness, dedication, insight and participation, we could not have created this strategic plan – one that puts the needs of all Saskatchewan students at the forefront of the education system," said Morgan. "This is an exciting time for the education

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# 'We Will Reach Our Ambitious Vision for Education'



*Representatives from the 28 boards of education in Saskatchewan, SSBA President Janet Foord and Minister of Education Don Morgan gathered to celebrate the official launch of the province's first-ever shared Education Sector Strategic Plan at the SSBA Spring Assembly on April 11.*

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sector and I look forward to moving ahead with all school boards on a unified approach to education in Saskatchewan."

The ESSP will guide the work of the sector from 2014-2020 with five long-term goals:

- By 2017, the increase in education operational spending will not exceed the general wage increases and inflationary costs within the sector, while being responsive to the challenges of student need, population growth and demographic changes;
- By June 2020, 80% of students will be at or above grade level in reading, writing and math;
- By June 2020, collaboration

between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partners will result in significant improvement in First Nations and Métis achievement and graduations rates;

- Saskatchewan's graduation rate will reach 85% by 2020; and
- By June 2020, 90% of students exiting Kindergarten will score within the appropriate range in four of the five domains, as measured by the Early Years Evaluation.

One key message from Foord was that although the ESSP and the SSBA's Vision 2025 strategic plan reflect provincial priorities, boards of education will continue to be responsible for setting the direction at the school division level to support the unique needs of local

students, families and communities.

"In our Association plan, we envision an education system in Saskatchewan that others wish to emulate," said Foord. "If we continue to work in shared leadership, align the goals and outcomes for students, and put the sector plan into action we will realize our ambitious vision for education as well as meet the various targets we wish to achieve locally and provincially. There will continue to be challenges in the delivery of education, but we believe our continued and invigorated focus on ensuring students have the tools they need to succeed is a positive first step to success."

# President's Address at Spring Assembly



President Janet Foord addressed delegates at the 2014 Spring Assembly on Thursday April 10.

A major focus of Foord's address was the Association's shared leadership with its education partners.

In this regard Foord spoke about the Joint Conference with SSBA, LEADS and SASBO that will take place in November 2014. This conference marks a "first" for these three education partners.

"Based on the theme "Navigating Our Future – Sharing the Vision",

the conference will be an important celebration of education in Saskatchewan," explained Foord. "We are excited to be partners in this first ever education sector event."

Other events boards can look forward to are the CSBA Congress which is being held in Saskatoon and hosted by the SSBA in 2015. The 100th anniversary of the SSBA also occurs in 2015 and the Association has petitioned the Ministry to designate 2015 as the Year of the Trustee. Foord shared that boards can expect to see some memorable celebrations to honour this milestone.

The President's Address also touched on the importance of continued engagement with school boards, STF and the Ministry as work continues on provincial bargaining and locally determined

terms and conditions for teachers.

Finally, Foord spoke about the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) conversations that have occurred and will continue to unfold. The recommendations made by the TRC have been shared with boards and the Association is examining what processes other provinces have taken and what resources have been developed in response to the recommendations.

"There is good work being done across Saskatchewan by teachers who have integrated residential schools into their lesson plans. But this work is being done in pockets," Foord said. "So what's next? If we want to ensure this part of Canadian history is taught to all students in all schools, we need to hear from boards about the leadership role we will play in moving this important endeavour forward."

## Boards Respond to Provincial Budget

Following the release of the provincial budget in March, SSBA President Janet Foord said the Association was pleased with the priority placed on education as reflected in a 3.1 percent increase to operating funding. But she also told the media that the devil is often in the details. A post-budget survey was sent to board chairs, directors of education and chief financial officers which asked two questions:

- What are the greatest impacts of the provincial government's 2014-15 budget on your school division – positive, negative or both?

- What two key messages would you ideally like to see the SSBA raise with the Premier and Minister of Education?

Based on the responses and conversations with trustees at the SSBA's Spring Assembly, the following concerns and observations were shared with the Minister of Education:

- While the local impact of the budget varies from division to division, the new "Efficiency Factor" was the issue of concern raised most frequently by board members;
- Boards expressed concern over

the fact that the new funding formula has not yet been completed with issues regarding transportation and locally-determined terms and conditions still outstanding; and

- Transitional funding has been appreciated by boards who since 2009 have required and received it, but anxiety exists about the predictability of such funding going forward.

The Minister has arranged a meeting with President Foord to discuss these concerns. The outcome of these discussions will be shared with boards.

# Spring Assembly Summary

This year the SSBA's Spring Assembly featured a variety of speakers coming from as far away as New Zealand.



*Daniel Murfitt*

## Te Kotahitanga

Daniel Murfitt, Principal at William Colenso College High School in New Zealand informed delegates about Te Kotahitanga at a Spring Assembly pre-conference workshop and during plenary sessions.

Te Kotahitanga is a World Innovation Summit for Education Award winning program that supports teachers in helping to improve Māori students learning and achievement.

## School Nutrition Programs Showcase - Breakfast for Learning



*(l-r) Beth Bonner, Dale Reed, Lesa George, Michelle Braun, Kelly Berlinic and Vicky Bonnell.*

The Regina Catholic School Division and Breakfast for Learning joined forces at the Spring Assembly to share information about the good work being done at Archbishop M.C. O'Neil High School in Regina. The panel, which consisted of four staff members from Archbishop M.C. O'Neil, board chair Vicky Bonnell and Kelly Berlinic of Breakfast for Learning, stressed the importance of nutrition as it relates to learning.

## Martin Aboriginal Showcase

Panel members Victor Thunderchild from Carleton High School, Carlana Lindeman, Education Program Director Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative and Jamie Lerat SSBA Strategic Advisor in First Nations and Métis



*(l-r) Victor Thunderchild, Jamie Lerat and Carlana Lindeman.*

Education, shared current updates and information about the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program from a national,

provincial and classroom perspective.

## The Time Has Come: Education About Religion(s) in Public High Schools— Dr. Mark Anderson, Principal, Luther College



*Dr. Mark Anderson*

Dr. Mark Anderson shared his views on Education about Religion(s) or EAR. Anderson proposed that the current education system should be arming students with information about numerous religious denominations and preparing them to engage in effective dialogue on these topics in light of our increasing multicultural democracy.

## Breakfast for Learning Receives Two Major Donations

Breakfast for Learning (BFL) Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan students were big winners at the Spring Assembly. BFL was presented with two donations to help with their nutrition programs for Saskatchewan students. The SSBA donated \$25,000 and BHP

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# Small Schools, Big Programs in Prairie Valley

*2013 Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence submission*

School boards strive to attain equity in the delivery of all education programming regardless of school size or location. In order to effectively deliver programming often limited to larger centres, the Prairie Valley School Division (PVSD) thought outside the box to offer programs relevant to students.

The *Small Schools, Big Programs: Magnet Programming* initiative at PVSD provides students with opportunities to take specialized programming that in the past their

community would not have been able to access.

"Our board is committed to ensuring all students have equitable learning opportunities and access to the programs that will help them to succeed," said Board Chair Janet Kotylak. "To do so, we must find innovative ways to offer programs to the rural students who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity."

The challenge is to offer quality programs that are not only accessible but cost-effective and sustainable.

"We can provide quality education with limited programming, but we want quality education with equitable

programming options," said Director of Education Ben Grebinski.

As a result of a program review, the magnet program concept was introduced in September 2010 with the purpose of enhancing course options for students in rural high schools. "Centres of Excellence" would be developed in different locations and students



Source: Prairie Valley School Division

from other schools would travel to each location to participate in the program.

As a result, administrators in the school division had to align school programming and schedules to ensure students from various schools could attend these specialized programs, such as welding, food sciences, outdoor education and construction. Currently there are 35 course offerings in the magnet program, some of which require distance learning technologies.

"Why don't we create sites of excellence or specialization in our communities and magnet these students to the facilities as

opposed to taking the facility to the students?" said Grebinski. "We completed interest surveys with students to find out what programs they were interested in, and then we looked at existing facilities and what we could do to enhance facilities. Yet we didn't want to create permanent labs because within a few years desires may change and you might be looking at robotics or other

technical programs."

The division looked at various facilities and what could be done to transport students within a "reasonable radius" of no more than 20 or 30 minutes on a bus per day between home location and the magnet schools, explained Grebinski.

The response from students has been positive with high demand for the programming and successful student outcomes.

"Learning opportunities impact learning achievement. It's not just about raising the achievement bar; it's asking, 'How do I engage kids through opportunities that are appropriate?'" explained Grebinski. "What students want today is relevance. They want to take the curriculum that's in front of them every day and make it come alive in some way in the real world. That's what the magnet program does."

Learn more about the program by [clicking here](#).

# Let's Lead at Saskatoon Public Schools

2013 Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence submission

"The task of leadership is not to put greatness into people, but to elicit it, for the greatness is there already."

- John Buchan

Developing leadership skills at an early age is important, and when it comes to our at-risk youth, developing good leadership skills can be crucial to future success.

Two innovative teachers in Saskatoon Public Schools (SPS), Chris Clark and Gillian Strange, believed that giving at risk students the opportunity and encouragement to develop leadership and teamwork skills would enrich their lives and help them to fully develop and reach their true potential.

"Let's Lead *Nīkānētān* was the vision of Clark and Strange who knew what this kind of program could do for some of their students," said Bruce Bradshaw, Superintendent of Education for SPS. "They were both encouraged to pursue this to see what it might look like and the program evolved from there."

Clark and Strange knew that not all students thrive in a typical school atmosphere, and for those who don't, it is important to recognize this and offer alternatives.

*Let's Lead Nīkānētān* offers just such an alternative. It is a unique and innovative experiential program offered to all SPS students in Grade 8. Once a year, 50 students can apply to the program. Those 50 are then invited to a special two day,



Source: Saskatoon Public School Division

one-night camp. At the end of that camp the number is pared down to the final 28 who are accepted into the program.

Clark, Strange, and one educational assistant provide the supports for this program which was officially launched in 2007 at Westmount Community School in Saskatoon.

"Donations assisted the launch of the program but now the funding for this program is provided almost completely by the board's operating budget," said Bradshaw. "The board sees the need for the program, which is evidenced by the number of applications this program receives each year."

The difference between this program and many others is that it is offered at no-cost to the participants. It is the only program in which no fees are charged.

"All fees – from supplies to transportation – are covered by the board," explains Bradshaw.

The financial costs may be high for the program but the rewards are equally great. The students are given the opportunity to develop independence, leadership and teamwork skills. The result is teachers and students working together, creating a special bond of trust and friendship that extends beyond the confines of a classroom.

"For example, try working to bring together a three or four night camping trip. All 31 out there – teachers and students – each with a job to do to bring the event together," said Bradshaw. "Now add in potential obstacles such as weather and transportation that can wreak havoc on the best of events. These students learn to pull together as a team to make things happen. They grow, they develop, they thrive."

"*Let's Lead – Nīkānētān* is a truly remarkable program for

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developing leadership skills amongst elementary students. We know if given the right conditions for learning – in this case, through hands-on experience in a close-knit group – we can foster students’ passion for exploration and personal

development,” said Morrison. “The connections that develop between the students and the teachers help build confidence and allow students to reach their potential. Our school board is proud to support this program, which has had a positive impact on every student who has taken part in it through the years.”

SPS is currently examining the possibility of expanding *Let's Lead Nīkānētān* to grade nine students. For more information on *Let's Lead Nīkānētān* [click here](#).

## Spring Assembly Continued

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Billiton Canada donated \$ 150,000 to the program. Kelly Berlinic, BFL Director, Community and Organizational Development and BFL Chapter Members Glen Revet, Serge Pelletier, Ruth Griffith, and Bev Closson were on hand to receive the award.



*Russ Mirasty*



*Andrew Will, CEO 3sHealth*

### School Board Member Education Certification Program Participants Recognized

The first participants in the School Board Member Education and Certification Program were recognized at the SSBA Spring Assembly. SSBA President Janet Foord acknowledged the hard work and success of these board members in this groundbreaking program and presented each participant with a pin to signify their achievement.

### Shared Services 3sHealth

Andrew Will, CEO of 3sHealth shared information about the work being done by 3sHealth.

3sHealth is dedicated to achieving efficiencies and improving quality through shared services. Their 5 year strategy was established by the Ministry of Health as a result of the recommendations from the Patient First Review.



*Back row (l-r) Serge Pelletier, Bev Closson and Glen Revet  
Front row (l-r) Janet Foord, Kelly Berlinic and Ruth Griffith*

### Student First Update.

Russ Mirasty and Patricia Prowse shared with Spring Assembly delegates the work they had undertaken in the Student First Initiative since beginning their school visits in the fall of 2013.



*The first cohorts of the School Board Member Education Certification Program*

*"The mission of the SSBA is to provide leadership, coordination and services to member boards of education to support student achievement."*

**President:** Janet Foord

**Vice-President:** Connie Bailey

**Northern Constituency:** Janine Boucher

**Aboriginal Constituency:** Duane Favel

**Conseil scolaire fransaskois Constituency:**  
Élizabeth Perreault

**Urban Public Constituency:** Kevin Waugh

**Catholic Constituency:** Glen Gantefoer

**Central Constituency:** Ronna Pethick

**Southern Constituency:** Janet Kotylak

**Executive Director:** Darren McKee

**School Board Development Services and  
Strategic Human Resources:**  
Ted Amendt

**Communications Services:** Leslie Anderson

**Insurance, Risk Management and  
Legal Services:**  
Dave Jackson

**Employee Benefits Plan:** Jeff McNaughton

**First Nations and Métis Education:**  
Jamie Lerat

**Corporate Services:** Lori Mann

*The School Trustee* is published approximately  
five times per year (September - June).

Saskatchewan School Boards Association  
400-2222 13th Avenue  
Regina, Sask.  
S4P 3M7

Phone: (306) 569-0750

Fax: (306) 352-9633

Email: [admin@saskschoolboards.ca](mailto:admin@saskschoolboards.ca)

If you would prefer to receive  
*The School Trustee* by hardcopy, rather  
than electronically, please contact the  
Association at the email address above.

## Newsletter Delivery

In response to a survey sent to the membership in January, *The School Trustee* newsletter will now be delivered electronically to the membership.

If you would prefer to receive a hard copy please contact the Association at [admin@saskschoolboards.ca](mailto:admin@saskschoolboards.ca).

## Calendar Update



### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### **Employee Benefits Plan Administration Seminar**

May 8-9

Elk Ridge

#### **Trustee Academy**

June 11-13

Jackfish Lodge, Battlefords Provincial Park

## Joint Conference

The 2014 Joint Conference of the SSBA, LEADS and SASBO will be held from November 17-19 at TCU Place in Saskatoon.

Information will be sent to board members and school division administrators over the next months to keep you updated on the progress for this exciting event.

The Conference hotels are the Hilton, the Radisson and the Sheraton.

We hope to see you all there!



## CSBA Congress

The 2014 CSBA Congress on Education will be held from July 3-5, in Niagara Falls and is being hosted by the Ontario Public School

Boards Association.

The conference hotel is the Sheraton on the Falls Hotel

For more information on this event go to [http://www.opsba.org/index.php?q=what\\_we\\_do/annual\\_events/agm\\_and\\_program](http://www.opsba.org/index.php?q=what_we_do/annual_events/agm_and_program)