

# The School Trustee

## Introducing Hon. Russ Marchuk, Minister of Education

From student to teacher to vice-principal to principal to trustee to Minister of Education.

Sounds so simple, but there was a lot of work involved throughout Minister of Education Russ Marchuk's life that led him to this point.

"As an educator for the best part of 40 years, being the Minister of Education kind of lines up," asserted Marchuk. "All of those past experiences have provided me with grounding in terms of my current role. Whenever you can draw on past experiences, it's a bonus."

Elected in November 2011 by the constituents of Regina Douglas Park, where Marchuk was born and raised, it's been a whirlwind of activity over the last seven months that included being named as Minister of Education.

"In all honesty, as a sitting MLA, you wonder about Cabinet appointments but I really had no idea about the process. That, in itself, was a tremendous learning



*Hon. Russ Marchuk*

experience," asserted Marchuk. "I got the call that the Premier wanted to meet with me and I wondered, 'Is that the call?' And, indeed, you don't sleep the first night, you don't sleep the second night, then you go to the meeting and the Premier asks you to join him and his Cabinet colleagues. It's truly a humbling and honouring experience."

Prior to being named to the Provincial Cabinet, Marchuk worked on the province's math curriculum with fellow MLA Gene

Makowsky.

"That was a great experience. Minister Harpauer sent us on this mission and we saw the work first-hand of very passionate teachers and administrators," explained Marchuk. "It was a very good introduction to what's going on around the province."

As a government, Marchuk believes the vision for education is "very well articulated" and aims to have Saskatchewan students "at the top of the class."

The number one goal is student achievement.

"Minister Harpauer before me articulated a student achievement agenda that is our top priority and we've engaged school divisions around that goal," said Marchuk.

A second priority is to have smooth transitions with the funding model and fix any issues school divisions are facing.

"All 28 boards have unanimously

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# Hours of Instruction

A “high point” of this past year actually began as something many boards regarded as a “low point.”

During the 2011 provincial election in Saskatchewan, Premier Brad Wall announced – without consulting school boards – that, if re-elected, the Saskatchewan Party government would amend the *Education Act* to legislate that the school year for all Saskatchewan students would begin after Labour Day and end on June 30.

The SSBA expressed concern with this announcement saying there is no “one size fits all” when it comes to the school year and that

boards, in consultation with staff, parents and communities, set their calendar with the educational needs of students in mind.

However, the SSBA was determined to take this lemon and make some lemonade. With the *Education Act* being opened up, the Association seized the opportunity to address a variety of outstanding issues including the hours of academic instruction being received by Saskatchewan students. Our students are currently not achieving as well as their counterparts in Alberta and are performing below the national average.

Therefore, with the support of

boards of education, LEADS and SASBO, the SSBA lobbied to have the *Act* state that boards will be required to ensure a minimum of 950 hours of direct academic instruction to students (a 25-50 hour per year increase) and that boards will have the flexibility to schedule the school day and week to best meet the needs of the education programs and their communities.

Both of these changes will be included in the *Act*'s regulations which will be implemented in the 2013-14 school year.



# Aboriginal Trustee Recruitment

It is estimated that by 2016, 45 percent of all students entering Kindergarten in Saskatchewan will self-identify as Aboriginal.

This is an exciting opportunity – and a critical challenge – for school board leadership.

With this in mind, a strategic goal of the SSBA Executive and Aboriginal Council is to engage First Nations and Métis peoples to serve on boards of education. With the input and support of the members of the Aboriginal Council, the SSBA has developed a resource which highlights the need for First Nations and Métis leadership, describes the role of the board member and provides guidance to those considering seeking office.

This resource will be widely distributed to all education sector and First Nations and Métis

organizations in Saskatchewan. School board elections will be held this fall. The SSBA's goal is to increase the representation of First Nations and Métis peoples on boards of education by 2 percent.

“Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.”  
Sitting Bull

Become a  
Locally Elected  
School Board Member

Available on the SSBA website scrolling news.

Vernon Linklater  
Saskatoon Public S.D.

Cheryl Ross  
Lloydminster Public S.D.

Barbara Flett  
Ile-a-la-Crosse S.D.

succeed

# Government Announces Achievement Initiative

In May 2012 the Government of Saskatchewan announced that it is launching a new initiative to improve student achievement in the province.

The goal of the undertaking is to ensure all students from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 are provided with regular and consistent feedback on their progress. The government maintains that it will also identify and provide the assistance each student requires in the classroom.

According to then Minister of Education Donna Harpauer, “We have excellent schools in our province and some of the most dedicated and professional teachers working with our students. But as a system we know we can do better for our students. We see our scores on international and national testing falling below the Canadian average. We want to ensure that when Saskatchewan students apply for jobs or post secondary institutions anywhere in Canada or around the world, those applications rise to the top because of our reputation.”

In her speech to stakeholders on May 16, Minister Harpauer said that Saskatchewan is the last province in Canada to have a province-wide approach to student assessment, and that the approach has proven to be successful in other provinces. She also maintained that the current overlap of assessment practices from school division to school division leaves students and parents



Donna Harpauer

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*“The SSBA looks forward to continuing our discussions with the Ministry of Education and other sector partners to ensure our efforts toward increased student achievement are consistent moving forward. The SSBA’s goal is to ensure that all students, no matter where they live or their personal circumstances, have the opportunities to succeed.”*

*- Sandi Urban-Hall*

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without consistent, practical and predictable information regarding a student’s achievement.

An advisory committee of key stakeholders will provide advice and guidance to the Ministry of Education on the implementation of the student achievement strategy. The SSBA’s representative on the advisory committee is Duane Favel, member of the Ile-a-la-Crosse board of education and Chair of the SSBA’s Aboriginal Council. The committee will also include members representing the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation (STF), the League of Educational

Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS), the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO), as well as the First Nations and Métis communities. The Ministry has also indicated that parents and teachers will be involved as the process moves forward.

In response to the announcement SSBA President Sandi Urban-Hall said, “The SSBA looks forward to continuing our discussions with the Ministry of Education and other sector partners to ensure our efforts toward increased student achievement are consistent moving forward. The SSBA’s goal is to ensure that all students, no matter where they live or their personal circumstances, have the opportunities to succeed.”



# Trustees Meet to Discuss Funding, Labour Legislation

## New Funding Model Implications

On June 20, close to 200 trustees and school division senior administrators met in Saskatoon to discuss the province's New Education Funding Distribution Model introduced in the 2012-13 budget.

Trustees were asked whether the new funding model adequately recognizes important cost factors and what cost factors most need improvement. The top three factors identified for improvement were:

- Non-Teacher Compensation
- Facility Costs/Inflation
- Growth (in terms of overall enrolment increases, EAL, vulnerable students, etc.)

Trustees were also asked whether the new funding model provides sufficient resources to maintain programs, and what actions boards have taken to deal with insufficient funding. These actions included:

- Staff Reductions
- Education Programming Reduction or Elimination
- Facility Maintenance Reductions

With the responses in hand, the SSBA's "next steps" will be to:

- Review and include the information from the meeting in the SSBA's response to the new funding model.
- Engage school division senior staff to further define the



identified concerns.

- Make the material available for discussions regarding the new funding model with the Minister of Education this fall.

## Labour Legislation Renewal

This spring the Government of Saskatchewan announced its intention to review the province's labour legislation. A questionnaire containing approximately 140 questions was developed and distributed to interested stakeholders and the public.

At the June 20 meeting, trustees and senior administrators discussed questions from the questionnaire germane to the education sector. These included:

- Should government exclude principals from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation?
- Should government preserve in legislation local bargaining for teachers? If so, what issues should be bargained locally?
- Should government eliminate local bargaining for support staff and bargain all terms and conditions of employment for support staff at one provincial table?
- Should the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation be

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# Campaign School for Candidates

To provide leadership in encouraging and educating any potential candidates – seeking election or re-election – to Saskatchewan boards of education, the SSBA will offer a “Campaign School for School Board Candidates” on August 15 in Saskatoon.

At the Canadian School Boards Association Board of Directors meeting this spring, representatives from Ontario and Alberta shared the fact that they had hosted Campaign Schools for Candidates prior to school board elections in their provinces.

With the goal of increasing public awareness of the role of school boards, and to encourage citizens to seek the position of school board member, the SSBA will undertake a



*If viewing online, the picture is a link to more information.*

similar initiative this summer.

The Campaign School, under the banner “Do You Care About Kids and Community? Become a School Board Member!” will focus on the roles and responsibilities of school board members, how to run an election campaign, becoming a better public speaker and perspectives from experienced candidates.

Saskatchewan boards of

education have been asked to distribute the Campaign School information to School Community Council members, to parents by sending the information home with students, to provide a link to this information on their school division website and to post the material in the board of education office.

This material has also been provided to members of the First Nations and Métis Education Provincial Advisory Committee for distribution within their respective organizations.

The SSBA extends a special thanks to the ASBA, and in particular, ASBA Director of Communications Suzanne Lundrigan, for their help with this initiative.

## Public Awareness Campaign

In anticipation of the October 2012 school board elections in Saskatchewan, the SSBA Executive voted at their June meeting to provide leadership in promoting the importance of locally-elected boards of education in our province.

Previous professional public opinion and focus group research undertaken by the SSBA revealed that there is little understanding among the public regarding the role of school trustees and the school board election process.



*The 2011 SSBA Public Awareness Campaign asked people to “speak up for a strong education system in your community.” That campaign is available on YouTube.*

In order to increase public awareness and understanding of the

role of school boards, and to encourage participation in school board elections, the SSBA will sponsor a province-wide media campaign in late August/early September of 2012 – prior to the September 19 deadline for the filing of candidate nomination papers.

Similar to the SSBA’s fall 2011 pre-provincial election media campaign, the 2012 campaign will include daily and weekly newspaper, radio and television advertisements. The cost of the campaign will be funded from Association reserves.

# Response to Intervention Initiative

2011 Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence submission



How does data drive decision making? Just ask the South East Cornerstone Board of Education.

Using data as the basis for program decisions, South East Cornerstone has created a program called the Response to Intervention (RTI) Initiative which targets every student in the division to improve their learning outcomes.

“We’re invested in learning as a board. We really work on analyzing data as a team, but that doesn’t mean we’re hands on,” said Board Chair Carol Flynn. “We’re certainly the leaders, however, in the kinds of areas where we want to see improved student achievement.”

More than supporting the program through budgeting, the board has been “in a constant dialogue analyzing what the needs are, what the direction of the education system is, and then having frank conversations about alignment with the Ministry of Education,” explained Director of Education Marc Casavant. “This program fits in with all the priorities of the school division, so the board has been very supportive.”

In 2009, the division hosted a “Data Day” that showcased the variety of unique programs that assist in improving student achievement and helped set the strategic direction for the board. The RTI Initiative was one program that resulted from that work.

with other educators. The division tailored those concepts to apply them locally.

Currently in its second year of implementation, Little admitted that “we’re continuing to add and grow” the program. For example, this year the division used a “universal screen” process for Grades 1, 2 and 3 in reading to identify children who may not be achieving at grade-level.

“We’re hearing very positive stories from children and staff about

those interventions, and the growth that students are experiencing,” explained Little.

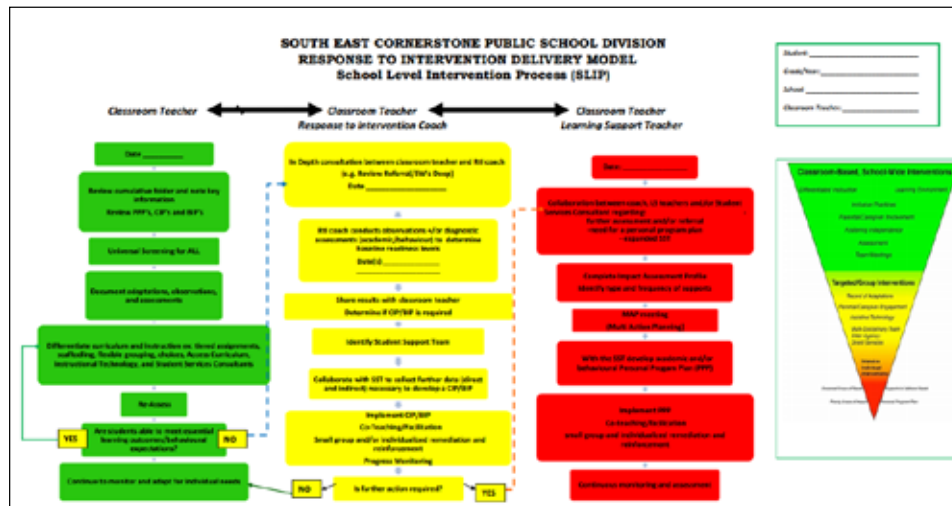
But what they continue to hear from teachers is that there are always more children who could use supports.

“What we’re hearing from staff is that they’re reaching more students than they

had ever been able to reach in the past,” explained Coordinator of Student Services Donna Steeves. “Certainly there have been some growing pains in developing the right protocols but the feedback has been positive.”

When looking at the RTI Model, it’s a “philosophical framework,” said Casavant.

“Every student in our school division is accounted for within



An example of a SLIP form used to track student progress in the RTI Initiative delivery model.

“We originally had supports put in place to work with students who had diverse or intensive needs,” said Superintendent of Education Lynn Little. “When analyzing the data we were noticing some of the students with diverse needs weren’t meeting the outcomes, so we needed a system for both identification and support for those students.”

The RTI Framework was something the learning leaders in South East Cornerstone had been made aware of through consultation



# Schools in motion Project

*2011 Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence submission*

A partnership between Holy Trinity Catholic Schools and Prairie South Schools continues to “move” forward.

The *School in motion* Project began as a pilot initiated by the Five Hills Health Region in 2008 and has since proliferated to 20 schools in the two divisions.

“We have all heard the statistics regarding childhood activity levels so, from a board perspective, this is an easy program to support,” said Mark Corbin, Chair of Holy Trinity RCSSD.

Prairie South Schools Board Chair Colleen Christopherson-Cote echoed those sentiments. “With the focus on student achievement, we see many benefits to this type of program. Research shows that student health and well-being directly affects student success in school.

“Students that build healthy, active lifestyles at school also carry those behaviours home and into their communities helping to spread this positive message.”

With this in mind, Prairie South Schools Superintendent of Operations Barb Compton said, “In an ideal world, we’d like to see all of our K-8 schools onboard with the *in motion* initiative. The challenge we’re having is the targeted support that goes along with it. We’re at the point in the project where we need to find out if there is financial commitment towards that.”



*A video on YouTube dedicated to the Schools in motion Project reminds us that only 15 percent of children receive the required amount of moderate to vigorous daily physical activity. That's four students in a classroom of 25!*

Through the process, the divisions have been able to collect data to support the project that points to improved daily physical activity (DPA) among students.

“We triangulate the data around this. We certainly look at qualitative data from the catalyst leadership teams who report in the fall and spring. We also look at the quantitative data in the monthly DPA reports submitted by each of the schools,” said Holy Trinity Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Geri Hall.

A Saskatchewan Educational

Leadership Unit (SELU) report identified through a survey that the teachers involved in the *School in motion* Project admitted that implementation “refocuses and reenergizes students when it comes to learning,” stated Hall.

The program enacts the guidelines set forth in the Ministry of Education’s *Inspiring Movement* document which advocates a Comprehensive School Community Health (CSCH) approach to student wellness that “supports improvement in students’

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# Minister: 'I've Lived for Education'

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agreed that the formula is fundamentally sound but we need to do some work to iron out some issues," said Marchuk. "We have some growth pressures in the province, which is a good problem to have, but it does create some specific issues."

Improving First Nations and Métis student outcomes and graduation rates are also important

goals of the government.

"This is a goal of government and is on my list of goals, personally. I've spent time working with First Nations and Métis communities in education and see their desire to succeed. We want to partner with First Nations and local school divisions to have students transition as smoothly as possible," asserted Marchuk.

There's more to it than ensuring First Nations and Métis students

have the tools to succeed.

"Part of finding that success is telling First Nations and Métis stories. With the work done by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, we intend to tell those stories," said Marchuk.

At the end of the day, these goals are not new to him. "I've lived for education – for contributing to an environment for our students that is conducive to learning."

## 'Many Kids Meeting Outcomes'

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this framework and we resource the framework to meet the various needs of students within our school division," he said. "It doesn't matter what level a student's performing at. There are resources in place every student can access if staff notice a decline in achievement for any particular student."

To reach its full potential, the division has started the conversation around implementing a similar universal screening process and RTI Initiative at the high school level.

"We just started digging into what the delivery and support would look like at the high school level," explained Little. "It will look at little different at the high school level so that is our next area of attention with regard to the RTI Initiative."

A focus committee of high school administrators and RTI coaches has been developed and are looking at what the program could and should look like at the high school level.

"Not a lot of research has been done at the high school level," said Steeves. "But certainly this committee is very interested in working together."

As could be imagined with a program of this scale being implemented throughout the

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*"A parent pulled me aside in a hockey rink this winter and was telling me that the level of support their child is receiving in our school division is second to none."*

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division, a number of professional development (PD) opportunities have been undertaken by administrators, RTI coaches and teachers.

"It's ongoing PD and, really, there is never enough PD," said Steeves.

Next year, a PD plan has been

developed to support teaching literacy at all grade levels.

This early on in the program, data has been collected but it won't be impactful until some comparisons can be drawn in future years. Data from the universal screens and classroom intervention plan (CIPs) are the basis of the data so far.

"I've taken a random sampling of some of this data and I can pretty much say without a doubt that there are many kids meeting outcomes who probably wouldn't have without the additional supports in the classroom from the RTI Initiative," asserted Steeves.

But further to the quantitative data that is associated with the initiative, Casavant was impressed with the qualitative remarks he has heard.

"A parent pulled me aside in a hockey rink this winter and was telling me that the level of support their child is getting in our school division is second to none," he explained.



## LAFOIPP Update

Important work is being undertaken to improve school divisions' understanding and application of *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (LAFOIPP) Act* legislation.

The LAFOIPP stakeholder committee was organized as a result of provincial teacher bargaining and is being led by the SSBA with LEADS, SASBO, STF and the Ministry of Education representation on the committee. The Ministry of Education provided a \$120,000 grant to support the work of the committee.

The committee, after two initial meetings, has completed most of its groundwork. The goal of this committee is to provide board members, administrative staff, school-based staff, support staff, parents and students with the tools necessary to effectively address and respond to privacy issues in school divisions.

## Labour Legislation Renewal

Continued from Page 4...

- certified under *The Trade Union Act*?
- Should education be legislated as an essential service?
  - Should the current LEADS formula be eliminated with “out of scope determinations” based on job function?
  - Should teachers continue to be exempted from *The Labour Standards Act* provisions in respect to hours of work, public and annual holidays?

The responses received at the meeting will form the basis of the SSBA's submission to the Minister's Advisory Committee reviewing Saskatchewan's Labour Legislation.

## 'There's Strength in Numbers'

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educational outcomes while addressing... physical activity in a planned, integrated and holistic way.”

The goal of improving student wellness is one shared by Premier Brad Wall in his mandate to the Minister of Education.

Some of the results from a qualitative analysis of the classroom dynamics have been very positive.

“I have seen an increase in instructional time, a decrease in off-task behaviour and seamless incorporation of physical activity into the instructional day,” stated Hall. “If there is more instruction, there should be better opportunity for achievement.”

The research in this area is fairly recent, yet abundant, and it's becoming clear to educators that this is an important topic that

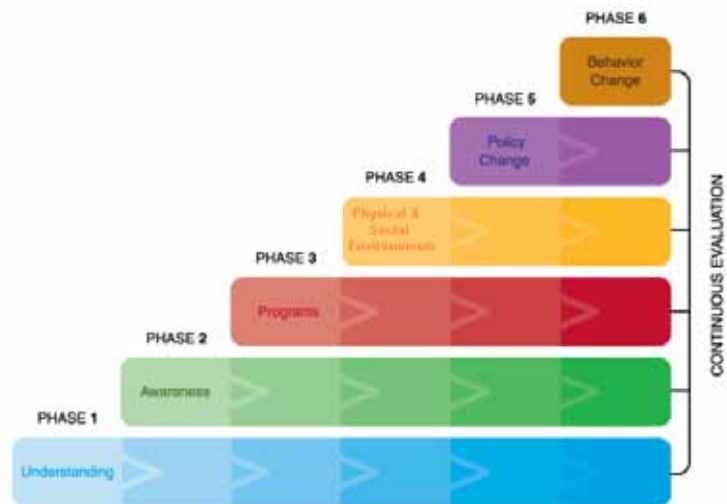
shouldn't be overlooked in the classroom.

“We don't think this is one of those phases in education. We really see this as an important part of what we do because it creates healthy citizens,” asserted Hall.

The work done by both divisions in this project is a testament to the

strong working relationship the two divisions have with each other.

“There's strength in numbers,” asserted Compton. “And when we bring the teachers and students in to meet, they really enjoy the ability to share with people outside their building and school division. It builds capacity and leadership.”



This visual provides the framework for getting schools “in motion” which is provided in the Schools in motion Project report.

# Trustee Academy Photo Gallery



*Trustees (from left) Heather Jacobson (Creighton),  
Bob Gagne and Kathy Ponath (North East).*



*Dale Shattenkirk, President / CEO of LTS  
Consulting, presented on "What is LEAN?"*



*Kelly Deis, Deputy Provincial  
Auditor, addressed "School  
Division Audits".*



*CÉF board members Murielle Rousseau and Élizabéth Perreault.*



*Bruce Willis of KPMG spoke to participants about  
"The Board's Work – Directing and Controlling".*



*Bonnie Lysyk, Provincial Auditor, spoke about  
the "Role of the Provincial Auditor, Governance  
and Grade 12 Graduation Rates".*

# Know Your Neighbour

## Chinook

Check out the school news and photos recently added to the website at [chinooksd.ca](http://chinooksd.ca).

## Southeast Cornerstone

The division's June newsletter *And From This Corner...* included a Weyburn student's "artful" discussion with Prince Charles. The newsletter is available at [cornerstonesd.ca](http://cornerstonesd.ca).



Source: [www.pvsd.ca](http://www.pvsd.ca)

## North East

A school closure transition plan was posted on the website to improve transparency and provide an understanding of the steps necessary for the transition to go smoothly. View the plan at [nesd.ca](http://nesd.ca).

## Prairie Valley

Seven students from the division helped build a Habitat for Humanity home and participated in the key ceremony on June 16. Read more at [pvsd.ca](http://pvsd.ca).

## Living Sky

Take a look at the photo gallery on the website at [lskysd.ca](http://lskysd.ca).



Source: [www.lskysd.ca](http://www.lskysd.ca)

## CÉF

The Conseil des écoles fransaskoises was awarded \$3.3 million from the provincial government in a May court ruling by a Court of Queen's Bench justice. An article by the [Saskatoon StarPhoenix](#) explains the decision.



*“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:**  
Lionel Diederichs, Director

**Legal and Employee Relations Services**

**Communications Services:**  
Leslie Anderson, Director

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

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

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

## Calendar Update



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

#### EVENTS

#### CSBA CONGRESS

July 4-7, 2012  
Québec City, Qué.

## Photos from Executive Meeting



*Minister of Education Russ Marchuk (left) and his Chief of Staff Gary Hutchings.*



*Public Section Executive Director Larry Huber (left) and President Bert de Gooijer.*



*Catholic Section President Tom Fortosky (left) and Executive Director Ken Loehndorf.*