

The School Trustee

Meeting with the Media

In an effort to educate the media about pertinent issues for boards of education, the SSBA met with editorial boards, news directors and assignment editors at the primary media outlets in Regina and Saskatoon.

The SSBA was represented by President Janet Foord, Vice-President Connie Bailey, Executive Director Darren McKee and Director of Communications Leslie Anderson. Urban Public Constituency representative Kevin Waugh also joined the discussions in Saskatoon.

Editorial boards are the leaders of newspaper newsrooms, news directors are the leaders at TV stations and assignment editors choose stories for reporters.

The three primary topics discussed were:

- Erosion of school board autonomy;
- “The Children’s Infrastructure” or capital funding; and



President Janet Foord discussing the meetings with the media at Trustee Academy.

- First Nations and Métis education.

At Trustee Academy, Foord explained these off the record discussions with media and the outcomes generated from those discussions to date.

“Although we are locally elected boards, too often major decisions are being placed upon us with a top-down approach,” said Foord.

“In the public opinion polling that we have completed, respondents overwhelmingly believe decisions are best made closest to home by locally elected leaders – not by the provincial government and bureaucrats in Regina.”

It was noted that the SSBA has become frustrated with the lack of consultation regarding decisions that directly affect boards of education and, by extension, student achievement.

“We used the mandated start of the school year after Labour Day as a concrete example of how something that seems very innocent at first glance can have very real impacts on students and their educational outcomes,” said Foord.

One discussion topic that has already made traction with the media was “The Children’s Infrastructure.”

“We explained that a long

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Trustee Networking at the Academy

Following President Janet Foord's opening remarks, trustees engaged in a session to discuss issues boards of education are working to improve or have an enhanced understanding of.

Trustees were encouraged to sit and discuss with colleagues from different areas of the province. As a result, there were many discussions that focused on similarities but also the differences in the governance of PreK-12 education across the province.

One of the differences discussed was the variance in urban and rural education governance, including better understanding growing and declining enrolments and the challenges associated with both; and issues with capital funding and how those issues impact student achievement.

Capital funding and the announcement of enhanced public-private partnership, P3, school development was another topic of interest to boards, particularly possible implications for boards of education if the government moves forward on these plans.

Funding was a topic most tables discussed with some boards facing cuts heading into next year, meanwhile some divisions received increases to deal with growth

pressures, and how these will affect student achievement – negatively or positively.

The anti-bullying strategy the government has been discussing was also mentioned. There were concerns voiced that the

need to have the resources to follow through on those goals.

Distance learning and bandwidth issues were also discussed as improvements in these areas are crucial to support student achievement. In rural areas, for example, distance learning is necessary to offer students a range of programming that are otherwise not available depending on locations.

Meanwhile, it was discussed that the capacity within schools is not sufficient for learning needs and, in many cases, not comparable to what students can receive at home or even on smartphones. The infrastructure has been built but

the capacity for schools is still not available. This is a concern that all boards share as many students rely on, and in many cases must rely on, stable Internet connections to meet the demands of 21st Century learning.

Finally, the need for common messaging among boards of education with the support of the SSBA on these issues was highlighted. Working together and having a shared understanding of the concerns all boards face is necessary to advocate effectively as individual boards of education and as an Association.



Trustees take the opportunity to network and discuss issues of importance affecting boards of education.

government is moving ahead with this agenda with a lack of understanding by and consultation with boards of education. President Janet Foord explained that she found out about this work at the STF Spring Council and through the media.

The government's Plan for Growth and the targets placed upon boards of education and education sector partners was also a point of concern. As has been repeated by the SSBA, there must be reciprocal accountability regarding these targets. With the government solely funding education, when targets are developed education sector partners

Past President Shares Thoughts on Governance Training

Past President of the SSBA Al Klassen spoke highly about his experience with governance training mandated by the Ministry of Health for appointed health region board members.

Currently a board member with Five Hills Health Region, Klassen was the president of the SSBA from 1995-1997. Although tailored to the education sector, the School Board Member Education Certification program follows the same principles as would any governance training program for health region or corporate boards, for example.

“It clarifies the mandate of authority in the relationship between boards and management – that’s a big takeaway,” said Klassen. “Some boards, if it’s a big corporation or not, have a tendency

to walk into the weeds, dish it all out and control it after instead of being a policy board then hand over the control to management. Those four modules deal with this issue in a big way.”

With years of experience as a school trustee and health region board member, Klassen asserted that any board member could find value in the governance training, “As an experienced board member, it’s as beneficial as it is for a new board member.”

With the changes to school division boundaries, much like health regions over the past 10 years, the primary emphasis for boards is to develop policies and strategic plans to support student achievement.

“What the program does really

well is it paints the bigger the picture, and it asks what is in the best interests for the education of students?” said Klassen. “For health boards, much like it will be for education, there are case studies in the program that really spell that out.”

Furthermore, the opportunity to network with and learn from not only your own colleagues at the board table but with others across the province has proven extremely valuable.

“The conversations have changed around the table,” explained Klassen. “But you’re not just sitting with your own board at these sessions. The interaction with other board members, especially when working through the case studies, is

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‘The Media Instantly Got It’

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term, predictable and transparent provincial strategic plan is critical to address the issue of a capital funding backlog,” stated Foord. “The unpredictable, piecemeal approach to school capital has simply not worked and must be fixed.”

A week following the discussions with the *Regina Leader-Post* a two-part series on school capital funding was published.

“I don’t think it was a coincidence that we were there speaking about this issue and the next week there was a series of in-depth reports,” asserted Foord.

The final topic of discussion was

First Nations and Métis education and the mutual goal among education partners to eliminate the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in Saskatchewan.

“We all know as boards of education what the statistics say and what our reality is in reaching our strategic goals,” explained Foord. “We also know that securing dedicated funding for these initiatives is an issue.”

In the 2013-14 Provincial Budget, less than 0.5 percent was dedicated specifically for First Nations and Métis education initiatives and improved outcomes.

“We told the media that less than

\$7 million commitment of a total \$1.775 billion budget is simply not acceptable and does not support this government’s repeated statement that Aboriginal student success is a top priority,” said Foord. “The media instantly ‘got it.’ They agreed with us completely.”

The reception from the media when discussing these issues was positive and there was a lot of interest in the issues boards of education are facing.

“Many times, these senior media leaders said to us, ‘I didn’t know that’ or ‘We have to do this more often,’” recalled Foord.

Trustee Academy Summary

Office of the Provincial Auditor

At Trustee Academy, representatives from the Office of the Provincial Auditor explained their role in providing advice to the public sector as an independent officer of the legislative assembly.

Mark Anderson, executive director of strategic initiatives, and Kelly Deis, deputy provincial auditor who has education within his portfolio, explained the analysis of the PreK-12 education sector.

The mission of the Office of the Provincial Auditor is, “To serve the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan, we provide independent assurance and advice on the management, governance, and effective use of public resources.”

The agenda of the discussion for the education sector was the audits performed regarding:

- Governance;
- Transportation safety;
- Student safety;
- Capital asset planning; and
- Seeking input on future audits.

The week following Trustee Academy, the Office of the Provincial Auditor released its report in which the SSBA applauded the work regarding capital asset planning.

A media release was sent out on June 20 and was shared with the media, on Twitter, and with trustees, directors of education and other education sector partners. The [media release](#) is posted on our website. The Office of the Provincial



Leora Diakuw (from left), Jason Xiao, moderator Kevin Waugh, Brittany Haughey and Joshua Noel were the participants in a spirited debate.

Auditor’s report can be found at auditor.sk.ca.

Saskatchewan Debate and Elocution Association: Education for Citizen Development vs. Education for Career Development

Four students from the [Saskatchewan Debate and Elocution Association](#) (SEDA) argued in favour and in opposition that education’s primary purpose should be that students are taught how to become citizens in a democratic society as opposed to develop workers.

Jason Xiao, Grade 10, and Leora Diakuw, Grade 9, from Walter Murray Collegiate in Saskatoon, Brittany Haughey, Grade 12 from Campbell Collegiate in Regina, and Joshua Noel, a Grade 10 student who is home schooled, brought a variety of experience and knowledge to the debate. They were supported by Saskatoon Public Schools educator and SEDA President Wendy James and SEDA Executive Director Lorelie DeRoose. Saskatoon Public Schools board member and SSBA Urban Public Constituency representative Kevin Waugh acted as moderator for the debate.

Although it was presented in an

informal setting, the students were passionate in presenting well rounded and cohesive arguments with respect, which is the goal of debate. The vote at the end was split among the audience, which is typical for debates.

Following the debate during the question and answer session with the audience, it became clear that the students believe there should be a balance of both perspectives – that citizen development and career development in PreK-12 education have equal value in education and the challenge is to find that balance.

Community Engagement at Fairview School in Saskatoon

Donna Banks, Saskatoon Public Schools board member, and Yves Bousquet, principal at Fairview School in Saskatoon, described the work they’ve done to ensure parents and the community are engaged to support student achievement.

Fairview School is situated in a low socioeconomic neighbourhood in Saskatoon where the need for community engagement is magnified.

The presenters acted as facilitators with many opportunities for trustees to discuss the issues presented. One example Bousquet mentioned was to engage parents with technology, such as using text messages to inform parents and having student/parent portals online that provide updates and information that will support student achievement.

Trustee Academy Photos



Education Equity Working Advisory Group

In response to membership feedback and to hold the government accountable to promises made, the Education Equity Working Advisory Group (WAG) has been reestablished to review the funding model.

The WAG met on June 20 and will develop a report that will be submitted to the SSBA Executive in September for approval before being sent to the Ministry of Education by the end of September, in time for the government's 2014 budget development process.

In 2011, a report was developed by the original Education Equity WAG titled **Responding to Diversity: Examining Education Equity in Saskatchewan**.

After the new funding model was released the government committed in speeches to the SSBA that the

Ministry of Education will revisit the funding model calculations to help ensure equity throughout the province.

The WAG has begun to collect data from boards of education to determine if funding model implementation is aligned with principles that were originally established. The collection of data will also seek clarification regarding any areas where the funding model may not be working. Data will be analyzed in July and August with a report of the findings presented to the WAG on August 24.

The following is a list of members of the WAG who represent the SSBA, LEADS and SASBO:

- Co-Chair Janet Kotylak, SSBA Southern Constituency representative and Prairie Valley Board of Education;
- Co-Chair Scott Sander, Sun West

- Board of Education;
- Lisa Lambert, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education;
- Lorna Black, Northern Lights Board of Education;
- Cindy Anderson, Regina Public Schools Board of Education;
- Élizabeth Perreault, SSBA Conseil Scolaire Fransaskois representative;
- Bert Provost, Prince Albert Catholic Board of Education;
- Ben Grebinski, director of education, Prairie Valley School Division;
- Marc Danylchuk, director of education, Horizon School Division;
- Bernie Girardin, chief financial officer, Prairie South School Division; and
- Debra Burnett, chief financial officer, Regina Public Schools.

Unique Partnership Between Sun West and U of S

Sun West has established a partnership with the University of Saskatchewan's Edwards School of Business. This partnership has seen the development and implementation of a dual credit online business course.

Students throughout Saskatchewan can now take an online business course that provides them with a credit towards their high school diploma as well as providing them with credits for a first-year business course should they pursue a post-secondary education at the U of S.

These two partners are now developing a relationship which

will see the development and implementation of an online finance course.

Other U of S departments are now exploring partnership opportunities with Sun West. For example, the Faculty of Agriculture will be partnering with the Sun West Distance Learning Centre (DLC) in providing a couple of pilot dual credit agricultural courses for the 2013-2014 school year.

This partnership was highlighted by the **CBC**, in which it stated that, "The course will feature U of S professors and instructors doing online lectures, plus self-directed research in areas such as the global

marketplace, business ethics, entrepreneurship and marketing.

In a **media release by the U of S**, it stated, "Introduction to Business will educate students 'about the various roles and functions of business, and about the types of personal skills and qualities they need to succeed in business,' said Keith Willoughby, associate dean academic in Edwards (School of Business). 'They'll not only learn to identify these skills and qualities in themselves but the course will also give them the chance to practice and refine those skills.'"

Privacy and Access in Saskatchewan Schools

The Privacy and Access in Saskatchewan Schools website is set to launch in September to coincide with a number of seminars, webinars and other educational opportunities for education sector partners.

Development of the website is to continue throughout the summer and a number of individuals have agreed to test the site throughout the summer to solicit feedback on how the site works for the various target audiences the website has been designed for.

A memo was sent to directors of education, CFOs, superintendents, communications personnel with information regarding the intended audience for each presentation being made and a link to the event registrations. You can also find the



registration and more information on the [Events page of the SSBA website](#).

The following is a list of the dates and information regarding the presentations:

- **LAFOIPP “Boot Camp”: A Workshop for LAFOIPP Coordinators** – intended for senior administrators and those responsible for dealing with privacy and access issues.
 - September 18, 2013 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel in Saskatoon. Cost is \$100 with breakfast and lunch provided.

- September 20, 2013 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Hotel Saskatchewan in Regina. Cost is \$100 with breakfast and lunch provided.

- **Introduction to Privacy and Access in Saskatchewan Schools Webinar** – intended for senior administrators, principals, vice-principals and other in-school personnel.
 - October 2, 2013 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Privacy and Access Issues in the Schools Webinar** – intended for senior administrators, other central office administrators, principals, vice-principals, teachers and other in-school personnel.
 - October 9, 2013 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Budget Document: ‘We Need to Hear From You’

The Executive approved the SSBA budget at the May Executive meeting and shortly thereafter a budget document was sent from each of the constituency representatives to their constituents for feedback prior to the Members’ Council in September.

“Another action undertaken in response to membership feedback was your Executive’s decision to ensure the membership received the Association’s budget in time to allow for thorough review and discussion at the board table,” said President Janet Foord at the Trustee Academy. “This budget was approved by the Executive members you elected to represent you and who are accountable to you. The

Executive has taken ownership of the budget and all of us at the Provincial Executive table need and

“This budget was approved by the Executive members you elected to represent you and who are accountable to you... This is your budget and this is your Association – we need to hear from you.”

will appreciate the feedback you will provide.”

The budget document was designed to highlight how it will

support the SSBA’s strategic plan *Vision 2025* based on the four strategic themes:

- Accountability for All;
- Engagement at All Levels;
- Courageous Leadership; and
- Alignment at All Levels.

“Your attention to the budget and provision of feedback will enhance the budget discussions at Members’ Council and, ultimately, at the Fall General Assembly,” asserted Foord. “This is your budget and this is your Association – we need to hear from you.”

Feedback provided to constituency representatives by September 16 will ensure it can be discussed at Members’ Council.

Calendar Update



“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: Joe Daigneault

Aboriginal Constituency: Duane Favel

Conseil scolaire fransaskois Constituency:
Élizabeth Perreault

Urban Public Constituency: Kevin Waugh

Catholic Constituency: Glen Gantfoer

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: Yanyan Han

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

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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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CSBA Congress

July 4-6, 2013

Vancouver, B.C.

Members' Council

September 26-27, 2013

Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, Saskatoon

Fall General Assembly

November 12-13, 2013

Radisson Hotel, Saskatoon

'Best Guided by the Association'

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a big takeaway if you genuinely want to learn something from the program.”

Although there are costs associated with the training, he asserted that the benefits outweigh the costs, much like professional development boards provide for their professional and non-professional staff. He warned that if there isn't leadership by the Association on this front the alternative may be less appealing to elected school trustees.

“Somebody has to guide this type of training, in my view,” said Klassen. “In health boards case, it's government. I'm not sure if it's not guided by the SSBA that the Ministry of Education will take that over. There is going to be change, and is it best driven by the Association or by government? My guess is most trustees would agree that it's best driven by the Association.”

The education portion of the program is comprised of four separate two-day modules. The certification portion includes a comprehensive exam based on the learning from the four modules, which include:

- Module One: Governance and Strategy (Sept. 5-6)
- Module Two: Governance and Risk (Nov. 18-19)
- Module Three: Governance and People (Jan. 28-29)
- Module Four: Governance and Resources (Mar. 27-28)

For more information on the School Board Member Education and Certification program contact Ted Amendt at (306) 569-0750, by email at tamendt@saskschoolboards.ca or visit the website at www.saskschoolboards.ca.