



***the* LEADER**

2004 Fall Edition, Vol. 3

Celebrating the Sunset - Anticipating the Dawn

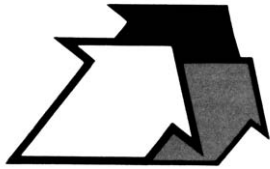
Keith Walker looks at the Changing Times

A Teacher Looks at the Dawn with Hope

**Perspectives on the Sunset from Partner
Organizations**

Lessons Learned in Amalgamation

LEADS Welcomes New Members



**Appreciative Inquiry:
A Process for Strengthening Local Capacity
November 24, 2004 (7-9 p.m.)
November 25 & 26, 2004 (9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.)**

Presented by: Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit

THE TOPIC

This level I two and one-half day workshop on Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is designed for senior administrators, program consultants, School^{Plus} coordinators and middle managers in education, health, social services and justice. Participants will develop an understanding of Appreciative Inquiry and its practical application in supporting personal and organization development. Participants will:

- learn to use AI in the development of learning communities that encourage teamwork, collaboration and shared decision-making;
- develop an understanding of AI and its practical application for planning, needs analysis, problem solving, coaching for success and using diversity as an organizational asset, and
- become familiar with strategies and tools used to strengthen personal, interpersonal and organizational capabilities

A level II workshop has been designed that builds on prior learning and will be offered in 2005.

THE PRESENTERS



Dr. Keith Walker and Dr. Larry Sackney

Both are professors of Educational Administration, College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. Keith brings to the workshop extensive training in Appreciative Inquiry and its practical application in supporting personal and organizational growth. Larry's extensive research and writing in the area of Learning communities provides a School^{Plus} focus in supporting positive organizational change.

Location: Saskatoon - Saskatoon Inn, 2002 Airport Drive
Cost: \$285.00 + \$19.95 GST = \$304.95

Please make cheque payable to SELU
Mail Registration to: SELU, Room 3063, College of Education, 28 Campus Drive
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E-mail: selu.info@usask.ca

EDITORIAL THOUGHTS

The magnificent cover photograph provides the symbolic launch to this ambitious edition of *the LEADER* magazine. Saskatchewan is renowned worldwide for the enormity and the beauty of our skies. Whatever happens in Saskatchewan happens under the great canopy that many of us too frequently take for granted, that too few of us celebrate often enough. So it is with education in this province.

We are embarking on the knife edge of a revolution, described by Andrew Thomson, Minister of Learning, as the most significant change in education since the implementation of the Larger School Units Act well over fifty years ago. We are fortunate in many ways to be living during times that have provided us opportunities to take part in revolutions. Consider the computer age. How many of us realized at the time just how fortunate we were to be riding the crest of computerization beginning, for some of us in the late seventies? Because we were there we were able to learn, develop and grow along with computerization. We influenced it just as that revolution influenced and changed us.

Chris Kelly's wonderful cover picture, taken at Emma Lake is symbolic in many ways. Similar sunsets have provided joy for thousands of us at virtually every lake in this province. Look at the picture and recognize that it is not peculiar to one place, or one time. It represents this province.

Cynics may look at the picture and reference the sitting ducks. That kind of thinking should be dismissed out of hand. This revolution has asked for our involvement in ways that few have. Change is not happening to us; we are part of it. To see it too simply as something imposed would be wrong; to see it as an opportunity to influence and lead seems a more optimistic perspective.

That is why this issue of *the LEADER* magazine has chosen the theme: *Celebrating the Sunset - Anticipating the Dawn*. At no other

time in the history of LEADS publications can the editor recall a specific theme dominating a single issue. Because of the sea-change in educational governance, most notably identified in the work of the Education Equity Task Force, but also carried forward in virtually every response to Minster Thomson's announced intentions for public education it should be evident to everyone that this is not tinkering. This is real change.

Anxieties associated with change have been evident to every reader for months now. Some readers will identify with the mindset of acceptance of coming change. Some, the impatient ones perhaps, will feel like suggesting that embracing change and assistance with its development and evolution might be better than writing briefs intended to convince planners to change their minds, but to their credit they have resisted. All of us must come to our own decisions. And we will.

As the sun sets on the era of public education that we have known so well, there must surely be much to celebrate. Saskatchewan has much educational history of which we can be proud. We need to remind ourselves of that. We need also to anticipate the dawning of the new public education.

We have challenged them and they have responded. Without hesitation the executive directors of SASBO, LEADS and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and the General Secretary of the STF answered in the affirmative when we asked for their contributions to this thematic issue. That is the kind of partnership that we enjoy and, which we sometimes take too much for granted.

In addition, Dr. Keith Walker, a friend of LEADS, currently on sabbatical leave from his position as a professor of educational administration, has prepared his thoughts on the key matters inherent in the Saskatchewan change.

Dr. Sharon Roset, a recently completed dissertation and doctoral program defense to her credit, has agreed to provide a teacher's perspective. Readers will appreciate her sincerity and insight.

We happily present another article in the series about jewels in the crown of supportive educational organizations in Saskatchewan with a piece on SELU.

Tied in with these is an article by Lynne Saas, one of those LEADERS who can't seem to expunge the passion for public education from her daily thoughts. We are glad of that and of the contribution Lynne makes with her personal account of dealing with the changes and challenges of amalgamation from many perspectives.

Take a close look at the photographs of our new LEADS members. The changes in the cohort of LEADS members oblige our keeping in touch in so many ways. We welcome all of our new members and wish them well.

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And now for something completely different. Not new, you will soon realize, but different from the material above. Those who know this editor at all will realize that his love of the English language sometimes finds him in conflict with current usage. Those who care will realize that this editor has campaigned, alas without success, to rid our educational writing of the scourge of quality. Quality is everywhere. It should be jettisoned and quickly. Advertisers are in a special category by themselves. They are unreachable, it seems. We must deal with education first. And then....

Those who are unsure about quality may appreciate this little mini-lesson. Quality is a noun. It is an abstract noun. It is **not** an adjective. Adjectives modify nouns; they do not take their places. Therefore, when one uses the word quality correctly it should be as

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EDITORIAL THOUGHTS

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a noun. This past summer a radio commercial spoke of, quality prices. Pray tell, what are quality prices? Think that's funny? What then is quality education? Is that good quality? Is that low quality? Is that high quality?

Here is a challenge for you. Read the documents produced in your offices. Does your motto use the

word quality? Does your mission statement use the word quality? Is it used as a noun? Is it used as an adjective? Do your speeches talk about the quality of education in your division? Or do your speeches talk about quality education? One is correct. The other is slovenly, sloppy and simply wrong.

Consider this. When the map of Saskatchewan educational jurisdictions is finally established there will be a wonderful opportunity to

rework much of the written material that will be amalgamated with the newly formed jurisdictions. What a good time to eviscerate quality from its current, inappropriate usage. Nor does that mean, of course that there isn't also work to be done within some of the jurisdictions where changed boundaries will not occur. LEADERS in those are urged to check out their use of the offensive word as well. Fix it. Please.



- Hope is Helpful - By Dr. Sharon Roset
- Celebrating and Anticipating - By Dr. Keith Walker
- SELU - Another Jewel in the Crown - By Brian Keegan
- Editorial Thoughts
- Celebrating the Sunset with Partner Organizations
- Dick Nieman - LEADS
- Lyle Vinish - Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation
- Bill Wells - Saskatchewan School Boards Association
- Paul Baskey - SASBO
- Amalgamation Lessons Learned - By Lynne Saas
- Pages of New Members Pictures
- LEADS Welcomes New Deputy Minister of Learning
- Mark These Dates
- Fitting the Pieces in the Puzzle

MARK THESE DATES IN YOUR DAYTIMER

Appreciative Inquiry: A Process for Strengthening Local Capacity
with Keith Walker and Larry Sackney

November 24 - 26, 2004

Contact Fran Roberts at SELU - 966-7634

Legal Issues - Emerging Trends
with Reynold Robertson et al

Winter, 2005

Contact Fran Roberts at SELU - 966-7634

Educational Indicators: Data for Decision-Making
with Brian Noonan

Winter, 2005

Contact Fran Roberts at SELU - 966-7634

LEADS Annual Policy Conference
February 27, 28 & March 1, 2005

Delta Regina Hotel

Is the Principalship For You?

With Pat Renihan

Winter, 2005

Contact Fran Roberts at SELU - 966-7634

Tenth National Congress on Rural Education
Saskatoon Centennial Auditorium

April 6-8, 2005

Guest Speaker: Stuart McLean

LEADS Summer Shortcourse

August 1-4, 2005

Waskesiu - Hawood Inn

the LEADER

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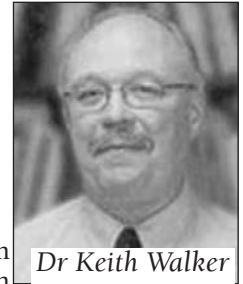
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Celebrating the Challenge of the Dawn

Despite his hectic work and travel schedule Dr. Keith Walker accepted the challenge and developed a major article for this edition of the LEADER magazine. Readers will understand why he was asked to contemplate what Saskatchewan is changing from, and what we must actively pursue, to make the restructuring changes effective. Dr. Walker calls on LEADS members to think deeply about what a K-12 education system could be and challenges us to remember the pivotal role senior educators must assume.



I won't take for granted the unique benefits afforded by our varied geography, climate extremes, grace of welcoming Nations, wonderful mix of people, strongly forged values, rooted-ness to the land, and God-given circumstances. In part, these features account for the resolute character, historic resilience and common sense of us as Saskatchewan people. Occasionally, we lurch into awareness, just in time to take notice of the world around us. We adjust and adapt, we catch up or slow down, we doff and don habits and, eventually, we get back into the rhythm of living the good life. I suggest that in these moments we need to shift our focus from "beating the bounds" and exiting the boxes that served us well, to embracing new ways and means of doing well where it matters, in ways that guard what we all cherish. We need to agree on what must be retained and what should not.

As we exit yesterday and today, we take with us what works, a cognizance of those least served, our most prized shared values, and a sense that our collective efficacy is high, but realistic.

Beating the Bounds

I recently read of a 2000 year-old custom, "beating the bounds," still practiced in ritual celebrations of European cultures. On Ascension Day, people walk around farm, manorial, church or civil properties, pausing at landmarks (trees, walls, hedges) that mark the boundaries and there they pray, exclaim, and ritually beat the landmark with sticks. When map-reading was uncommon, these periodic (every 7-10 years) inspectoral, tribal strolls

served to ensure that boundaries remained intact, were well-known by both locals and foreigners, and that these markers had not been impinged upon by neighboring landlords.

Preventing encroachment, reinforcing authority, asserting tenants' rights, reminding succeeding generations of bygone allegiances, fixing land entitlements and property rights are perceived benefits for perpetuating this custom. It would not be unusual to attend a service in Britain now, where at each pause beside a landmark, the priest would say, "we declare this is the boundary of the parish [of such and such] . . . , cursed be he who moveth the boundary." In Northern England beating the boundary is sometimes called "ganging day" from the ganging together in procession around the boundaries. Some customs fix this ritual around the February 22nd Festival of Terminalia, (after Terminus, the god of landmarks).

To those who continue to beat the boundaries and who feel strongly about the importance of physical boundaries because of their desire to preserve certain entitlements, distinguish neighbors, punctuate local identity, preserve historic legacies and even control who and what belongs (and, therefore, who and what does not) I sympathize with what must feel like a losing cause. The world has moved on. I confess that my first response to learning of the beating the bounds was the thought, *these people need to get a life!* Then I relented, *don't be harsh, this is an old, outdated practice, not one experienced in this day and age.*

However, in Britain, and even Saskatchewan, the practice continues. They perpetuate the practice with cause but they do so for lack of a greater cause. I think the fortress building and moat dredging mentalities of beating the bounds may be a symptom of not having a larger or sufficiently inspiring shared vision. I understand the sense that the familial and familiar (*gemeinschaft*) might be lost in an impersonal and imposing world system (*gesellschaft*). I believe in boundaries, margins, and parameters. These ought to be viewed instrumentally, or as means to ends rather than ends, in and of, themselves. There must be more worthy ends to put our lives into?

Thinking the very best of our own provincial beating the bounds (dutifully and diligently performed by Task Force members, political pundits and parochials), certainly, they will use appropriate geographic markers; cultural and trade patterns; gravity centers, population thresholds; hard and soft data from consultations; a myriad of sophisticated technical data; and common sense to adjust and arbitrate the bounds. We've been incrementally shrinking and staking out our boundaries since 1944 (Larger School Act), with unprecedented speed. Sixty years later we continue to define major change as moving, reducing and beating the bounds. After this is done...I hope we can get a life!

At its best, Saskatchewan is rightly recognized as having one of the best educational systems in the world. The current high quality of our teaching force, the ongoing cur-

ricular reform, initiated 20 years ago, the enviable and authentic agency partnerships in education, and the unwillingness of government, partners and practitioners to compromise sound educational values to other diluting or distracting interests, all commend our efforts on behalf of children and their best interests.

The potential for leading the way in the world remains, but there needs to be a willingness to create and live with new wineskins (structures, resources, power arrangements, and relationships). No province has been so resistant to structural change. Our stability and strength is our procrastinating weakness. The problem is that our one best way is not giving us high enough an adaptability quotient to address the most fundamental challenges. I've noticed a huge movement toward the balkanization, entrenchment and distancing of the educational partners over the last five to eight years. I hope it dawns on us soon that we need each other even if our distinct agency identities and positionality get confused once in a while.

While other jurisdictions have morphed into different forms or parlayed their challenges into new opportunities, Saskatchewan's child, youth, and young adult population is mainly shrinking and stuck. Yet we are tempted to fix our eyes today on border issues which five years from now, when the realignment dust settles, are not going to address our fundamental challenges sufficiently. Doubtless, we need make some of these changes. The demands for educational resources required by our fewer students are increasing. Our First Nations population is increasing, and the relative supply of resources apportioned from provincial and local taxation are shrinking because of provincial depopulation, other legitimate demands, and a fragile collective will. Reducing costs, downsizing the system, lowering quality of education expectations, goal displace-

ment, services dumping, and other status quo "stop-gaps" are certainly minimalist strategies for coping.

Os Guinness once suggested that such circumstances are addressed by three distinct value orientations: tribespersons, idiots and citizens. As critical decisions of public philosophy are called for in Saskatchewan, some people will respond as "tribespeople" by seeking security in a form of tribal solidarity and intolerance of everything alien to themselves and their interests. Some will respond as "idiots," in the Greek sense of the private, personal or career interests, who don't subscribe to any form or process of negotiated and chartered public philosophy. These people are oblivious to the importance of "civility," best interests, and the common good. Most, I believe, will respond as "citizens," in the sense of those who stand for their local constituents' interests but, who also recognize their membership and leadership in a "commonwealth." These people appreciate the social values, relationships, knowledge and skills that underlie the best of Saskatchewan communities.

Guinness advocates that orientation of citizens provides the greatest promise for resolving deadlock, honoring diversity and sustaining superordinate values, relationships and interests. In my view, Saskatchewan is mostly a place of citizen-oriented leaders, least a place of idiots, and most threatened by the extremes of geographic, economic, and sector tribalism.

Certainly in times like these, we have opinion leaders, LEADS members, executives from educational partners, public and business sector spokespersons and others declaring responses to possible amalgamations. It has been interesting to filter these into the three categories. Is the person speaking from exclusive tribalism, from extreme individualism, or from a citizenship perspective? Of course all three responses will always be with us, but we should aim to see citizens

predominate the conversations. Leave the incessant beating of the bounds to tribes and idiots elsewhere. Citizenship means that I act as if this larger place were mine to create with others.

In his June, 2004 speech to a Special Assembly of the School Boards Association our Minister of Learning shared the Government of Saskatchewan's vision to enact, "...real and substantive change that will create a solid foundation for the future of our education system," a "...long-term, sustainable approach to restoring fairness and equality to funding education," and "...the first phase of education reform focusing on financing our K-12 education system." The reforms are described as, "improving the equity, affordability, and sustainability of our system." The second stage will review FOG [Foundation Operating Grant] and the third phase concerns property tax relief.

These are all reforms of means. I have no problem with the idea of these reforms but I believe we are under-visioning. Perhaps the most startling admission in that speech was related to the "extreme disparity in terms of financial resources [that school boards have] at their disposal to educate . . . specifically, the fiscal capacity of our richest division is 25 times that of our poorest division."

Most would no doubt now agree that for more than 10 years, we have been tinkering around the edges of "border and boundary talk" where more significant reform has been needed. While through the good will of trustees, teachers, parents, administrators, support staff, students, Saskatchewan Learning personnel, and communities, we've generally been doing an admirable job on a classroom-by-classroom level.

So the now urgently needed system reforms are underway. I hope we will avoid a beating of bounds leadership style that is driven by

extremist and gated interests, NIMBY [Not in My Back Yard] tribalism, parochialism, exclusionary tactics, external direction, putting in appearances, deafness to external prompts for change, comfort-leaning problem solving, reactive stances and beggarly actions. The best responses of Saskatchewan people would direct us to act otherwise. Perhaps good fences make poor neighbors. We do well to remember that Saskatchewan's strength has always been found in good neighbors.

Exiting the Bounds of Yesterday and Embracing the Possible

A great opportunity lies before us. Just 20 years ago we led the world in curriculum and instruction reform. In the next few years Saskatchewan's educational systems will not only catch up to the rest of the first world in structural reform but will lead the way in the work of sustaining integrated learning communities, producing boundary-spanning educational leadership, delivering high quality, whole-family public services, and demonstrating exceptional and measurable levels of learner engagement (life-long, life-wide, economically-relevant, personally meaningful, socially cohesive, and healthy).

We have only 800 schools and under 200,000 K-12 students in this province. I sense some skepticism and absorb some imputations of naiveté when I suggest that we have a relatively manageable and realistically achievable constitutional mandate when it comes to education.

I believe our largest challenge and greatest opportunity right now is to develop our own unique provincial charter or compact with the citizens of Saskatchewan about the future of educational and other human services. This isn't only about making and fulfilling election promises. It is about implementing a negotiated and fully-

funded CORE plus, womb to tomb, educational delivery system for our next 20-25 years. It's about holding tightly to the things that have been working for us (those we hold dear), and moving out of the self-imposed constraints that we've created, going beyond our comfortable bounds, to find solutions (locally and provincially) to what we covenant together to keep and to get working well.

I'll speculate that 75% of our challenges have to do with getting the right people in the room, matched with the right definition of tasks to be done, and opportunities to be seized, and adequate resources to get the job done. Small IS beautiful - we can be a self-led people with manageable challenges. We either know each other or could do so easily enough to sustain and restore, where necessary, the good will and trust sufficient to serve each other. We need to work to design a new set of social spaces - spaces of learning, with value-rich realism, intimacy, imagination, inclusion and compassion.

The tendency to obsess on "how" questions needs to be subjected to second place, after, "who we are at our best, and who we might be" questions. I don't mean to be sanguine about, or to trivialize the demographic trends, governance quandaries and economic means questions but the minimalist tinkering, "just make do" and means-focused solutions are both far below our potential and frustrate our optimal progress.

Many of the education system challenges are NOT educational. They have to do with our province's capacity in a federal and global economy. Provincial leaders need to see education not as a problem to be solved but as an asset to be embraced and engaged to increase our capacity.

We need multi-sector, full community brainstorming sessions all around our province that take us off the "coping" track and onto the "Imagine Saskatchewan" track.

The Zeigarnick Effect was introduced to LEADS members in the 2001 Work Life Study. This Effect is the indicator of a leader's capacity to stay open to possibilities, engage new ideas, and pick up on opportunities right up to the last moment. When "Zeigarnick" is zero, the leader has a real urge to get things over with, follow the schedule and ignore any synchronicity, synergy, symbiosis, and serendipity within their sphere of experience and influence. The higher the stress the less adaptable leaders can be without Zeigarnick; we tend to stay with the familiar and incrementalism or "muddling through" replaces any curiosity or sensitivity to other peoples' ways of knowing and doing. It is said that "as the burden of the ox increased, it lowered its head to the ground." Comfortability, orthodoxy, complacency, and mediocrity are the offspring of zero Zeigarnick. High levels of opportunity-sensing produce resilience and transformation beyond imagination, but with attendant risks and failures.

Why not get creative in our responses to the fundamental questions of education:

- 1 who should go to school?
- 2 what should be the purposes of schooling?
- 3 What should children and youth be taught?
- 4 who should decide issues of school direction and policy? and
- 5 who should pay for schools?

Let's get creative. For example, why can't we reflect our high value of the emerging generation and an extended definition of public interest by offering every qualified Grade 12 graduate a tuition-paid post-secondary education, in Saskatchewan? What about redesigning our learning system for the meaningful education of youth who are not university bound? Why don't we provide universal day care? Why don't we get into more service learning? What about giving some further energy to early childhood and parent education initiatives? Why not work to lead the world in formal,

informal and non-formal learning for adults? What if we said that K-9 students could experience their learning in any size school, but that Grades 10-12 learners should have at least 300 fellow students in their schools?

Why don't we ask each of our 800 schools to periodically undertake external, research-based and community-involving chartering and validating processes to see how their strategic development and growth as effective learning communities is progressing? Why don't we aim to be able to claim that we have the highest engagement of diverse learners anywhere? Why don't we commit ourselves to doing whatever works to enhance childhood literacy and eliminate social and educational deprivation for every person in this province? Why not find ways to welcome and incorporate the thousands of young people who will stay in Saskatchewan to raise their own families by providing them with fitting jobs? Could we work to meet the needs of tens of thousands of new people to Saskatchewan who come here because they have it on good authority that, from a health, education, community and lifestyle perspective, there is no better place to live?

We need to hold our course of responding effectively to diverse learner needs through a variety of learning community settings. We need a new resource allocation model (less complex, more transparent, flexible, efficient, and student focused). We need a disciplined strategy for building educational leadership capacity and integrative services for our entire educational continuum. We need a means for driving systematic improvement and thoroughly supporting schools, human services agencies and learners as they flourish in their good works.

Walker!! You are dreaming . . . Yes, I am. What are your dreams? Emerson said "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny mat-

ters compared to what lies within us." He had it right.

There are certainly some challenging issues staring at us. The formal declaration of LEADS members that a leader with integrity is distinguished by being uncompromising when confronted with clear ethical versus unethical behavior is vivid and paramount. LEADS members have their longstanding conceptual map or model of leadership which entails the leader's spheres of operation within four distinct but interrelated roles (leader of leaders, servant of leaders, professional advocate for education, and steward of educational resources). Each role is to be vitally infused with the core commitments (voice of personal conscience, common ethical principles, professional convictions, and professional constraints/coda) and members seek to walk with integrity through complex times, guided by this heuristic.

It is in times such as these LEADS members will work as transorganizational influencers; mediators and peace makers; trust-brokers; provincial system vision catalyzers, and hope-fostering agents. The call to be **Leaders of Leaders**.

On the ground where the educational action takes place, LEADS members will "stick with the knitting," provide authentic presence, make time, space and provide support for learning communities to serve the educational and service connecting needs of children, youth, adults and their families. The call to be **Servants of Leaders**.

In transition times, situations and decisions that deal with political or ideological values must never be confused with, or be allowed to undermine, ethical principles. There are four sets of convictions sometimes seen as political or ideological values, liberty, equality, efficiency and community. All four are important and must be advocated with conviction. Leaders help medi-

ate and navigate the tensions created by these contesting values.

Reasonable people will say that each of these values is important but may disagree on which should be emphasized in particular times and circumstances. Mature leaders will be able to see that people of good will disagree on particular issues, as advocates for different senses of the balancing of these values. Wisdom is surely needed to navigate through ambiguous and alternative choices for action, and to bring a resolve to deadlocks and stuck polarities. These different viewpoints, polarities or positions may be seen as competing dreams. While all the system changes are taking place, members will voice strongly held convictions about what constitutes good, right, just and virtuous public views of education in the public interest, for the common good, and in the best interests of each child and all children. The call to **Professional Advocacy**.

The exercise of value-rich pragmatism to manage the material and human resources, garner and deploy resources to the right people and places at the right time, develop policies for the just distribution of services, and development of accountable systems is crucial to the organizational integrity of educational institutions. The call to **Stewardship of Educational Resources**.

I enjoy the disconcerting television commercial where the plane is being built as the people fly along. The metaphor of "building the bridge as you walk on it" carries a similar message for me. These are reluctantly appealing images because they resonate more closely to my sense of where we are in our educational world than more fixed versions of beating the bounds.

I agree with the sociologist (Leonard Sweet) who reminded his readers that the terra firma is no longer all that firma and that our new aqua-institutions require more

vigilance and diligence on the part of leaders to keep afloat and move purposely than did those institutions and their leaders in the past. There needs to be more conversations (not just talk) and more measurable outcomes resulting from our dialogue. As a land-locked people, we need to remind ourselves that our navigational GPS, compass, and gyroscope operators (leaders who sense, who listen, who depend on each other) need to be constantly consulted.

It is good in times like these to do an asset and liability inventory. I would invite LEADS members to sit down with their *2001 Work Life Study Report* and to read pages 8-20,

and 78-129. It is all there. In your own words, you'll find cause for hope, some poignant definitions of reality and an agenda for parrying the change forces into extraordinary progress for learners and their communities. You accurately anticipated change. I have this belief that Saskatchewan people have more than sufficient creativity, energy, good will, and intelligence to fully meet the challenges and develop an attractive, generative, sustainable, "made-in-Saskatchewan" system of educational and economic success. Our stewardship needs to focus on developing the instruments for saying yes together, and to do so through carefully forged charters, covenants, or compacts; commit-

ments of consensus on what matters most. This will effectively displace our increasing fragmentation of purpose and re-emerging survivalist-orientation.

In my view, LEADS members and key partner influencers need to join in promoting provocative conversations and meta-dialogue, foster what Parker Palmer calls the "grace of great things," decide to be divided no more, develop communities of congruence and practice, generate widespread public and political will to put education on the agenda as a vital means and end to our shared and, I think, bright future.



Leadership With Hope is Helpful

This article extends from recent research conducted in the area of hope within the context of leadership. Specifically the research described hope from the perspective and experiences of ten human services leaders, purposefully selected based on their reputation of exemplifying and fostering a sense of hopefulness. I described how these leaders conceptualized, experienced, and sought to foster hope with those they served. This article applies the concepts and knowledge gained from these leaders to the context of restructuring in the Saskatchewan rural school divisions. When leaders are conscious of the role of hope in their personal and professional lives, they work to think, believe, feel, and act in hopeful ways. Indeed, it is the leader's responsibility to personally practice and to seek to foster a sense of hope with those s/he serves.

Recent writers on leadership recognize the importance of hope in individual lives, in organizational vitality, and society. Leaders, by virtue of position, have the opportunity to create an environment where the spirit of hope may be fostered within individuals. Koestenbaum asserted, "A leadership mind is characterized by hope What is needed is hope, the realistic perception that there is a way out, that there is a future, that there is a solution The leader has the capacity and the will to take charge of generating hope." In addition, Carter maintained, "Nourishing and drawing on hope, leaders can gain powerful leverage for lifting their organizations' performance."



Sharon Roset

My research study participants indicated that hope was perceived to be a choice to improve, change, make a difference, move forward, find a solution, and influence the

future positively toward the desirable state of one's circumstance in life, another's situation, community, workplace, or society. In short, hope is a decision to think and to

act toward an anticipated good future possibility.

Hopeful individuals choose to hope because they are open to change and possibilities beyond what are presently known. They are motivated in their pursuit of goals, perceive them as having some measure of control in their lives, anticipate problems, plan solutions, and appreciate challenge.

As the amalgamation process accelerates in Saskatchewan, leaders are in need of hope as they move into the uncertain future. Hope is most needed in situations of uncertainty and challenge. Not only is it important for leaders to sense a spirit of hope in themselves but to project a sense of hope as they seek to lift many of those they serve from the anxiety that has accompanied the perceived uncertainty of the restructuring process. Indeed, Kouzes and Posner encouraged

leaders to act in ways that “uplift our spirits and restore our belief in the future.” They said, “Leaders must keep hope alive” and “arouse optimistic feelings and enable their constituents to hold positive thoughts about the possibilities of success.”

Marcel noted the one who hopes actively, and often courageously, decides to move forward despite the trials. Batten said, “Without hope, we have no motivation to live, to work, to grow.” In fact, Ronna, a study participant stressed, “First of all you have to get it that without hope you die. Without hope, your communities die. Without hope, your teachers go get other jobs. Your kids can’t learn. You don’t

Choose to Act Hopefully

To choose to hope in the midst of restructuring will be evidenced by the leader’s action. One leader-participant, Brendan, described hope as a choice:

Hope is a decision. We can be beacons of hope. I can’t do anything about the lack of hope in somebody else, but I can do something about it in myself. I think you start with yourself. We can’t just talk about hope. We have to be hopeful, we have to do things that indicate that we are hopeful.

Another leader, Bob, echoed the importance of choice in relation to hope:

tion, to be aware of one’s resources, and to plan for the future possibilities were aspects of hope, articulated by the research participants, which can be transferred to Saskatchewan education.

When an educational leader is conscious of choosing to live as a hopeful person, he or she may become intentional about practicing hopeful thoughts and actions. Ronna asserted:

I was very intentional about life When I would have a dream about my future, and it would be taken away, I knew I had to create a new dream. Grieve the old one but it’s not enough to grieve the old dream, you have to have a new dream. And so, I was very intentional and conscious.

She continued, “So if I didn’t have choice over external factors, I at least had some choice over internal factors.” For the participants, to choose to be hopeful was to make a decision to think and act in hopeful ways.

Thus, within the context of restructuring, we may learn that rather than be immobilized by a perceived loss of control of the future due to uncertainty which may lead to feelings of hopelessness, it is suggested that leaders become conscious and intentional about hope and anticipate and act in ways that allow for possibilities to become realities. Ronna asserted, “Hope is the unequivocal willingness to believe that there is a future in which I am willing to participate. Maybe not wanting, but willing. It’s the capacity to co-habit with uncertainty.” She added, “Hope is about possibility not about probability.” One is to be always open to possibilities - to intentionally remain hopeful.

Karin noted the questions a leader may ask in the midst of uncertainty:

What are the possibilities here? That’s one of the biggest questions - What are the possibilities? That is the scanning of the environment

Seldom does the LEADER magazine get access to research that is so current. Sharon Roset, a veteran teacher in Delisle has taught students in Saskatoon (West) School Division since 1977. Both her Master of Education thesis and her recently completed doctoral dissertation from the University of Saskatchewan researched the concept and practicality of hope in leadership. the LEADER magazine congratulates Dr. Roset on her recent success in defending her dissertation and thanks Sharon for the significant contribution she makes to this issue with her thoughtful piece on hope as it relates to amalgamation and restructuring.

recover from illnesses.” Carter indicated that hope is necessary for leaders since it is a “key element in the capacity of people to mobilize energies to confront life’s challenges.” Many writers noted that hope-generating leadership evokes positive thoughts and actions directed toward possibilities of success in achieving personal and collective endeavors, goals, and aspirations. Indeed, De Pree stated that hope could be thought of in terms of the obligations of leadership.

Educational leaders are constantly being watched by those they serve. If leaders are to instill a spirit of hope into environments they influence, not only must they be hopeful people, but they must be perceived by others as hopeful, as visionary, and capable of carrying out that vision.

You have to consistently make a choice to try and make an improvement in your life, your community, your work, whatever you’re doing.

To transfer these insights to the proposed restructuring process in rural Saskatchewan can help to enable leaders to seek possibilities within the new boundaries since, as Ronna suggested, “Limits are just things that invite you to envision differently.” As educational leaders, when the decision is made to be hopeful, to engage in the future, then, the ability to adapt may be strengthened.

Hopeful people accept trials but allow a creative and imaginative process to occur. Shade observed, “As circumstances change, we need to be ready and able to adapt. The imagination assists us by spinning out alternative matrices of means and ends.” To use one’s imagina-

- that is part of the cognitive domain. But then also being able to say out of those possibilities, how do we really feel about those possibilities? What is the part that each of us plays to make this happen so that this can be a true hope and not just a wish?

On hope and leadership, Karin maintained, "I think the leader needs to create [an] environment of hope." Leaders who are hopeful believe and act in ways that benefit the well-being of constituents and bring the organization's goals to fruition.

To Involve Stakeholders in Shared Leadership

Since one's sense of hope is influenced by positive social interaction, it will be critical for leaders to maintain communication with those served and to involve them, to the measure possible, in the creation of the shared vision for the future. Perhaps leaders need to balance the prescribed changes mandated by the amalgamation procedures with input from educational stakeholders. Jevne and Miller stated, "Hope is on display when people dream together and then work to make those dreams come true." When leaders encourage dialogue and consider the participation of others' perspectives in the discussion of possibilities that help to bring about the birth of the new school divisions, the consideration of stakeholders' perspectives may function to elevate a sense of hopefulness as they sense a meaningful role in its creation. In short, an atmosphere where people work together in dignity and respect, within an organization that cares for individuals and the collective, will promote an aura of hope.

Therefore, leaders who want to create an environment where hope may be fostered do not function alone but invite the wisdom and the intelligence of others into the discussion; they are willing to share leadership. Many of the participants stated that they did not have all the

answers but functioned as guides or facilitators of decision-making so that others may develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for outcomes. Where difficult administrative decisions were to be made, a team approach engendered hope and sustained those less hopeful about outcomes. It is here where leadership teams construct and reconstruct their visions.

To Model Hopeful Leadership

In order to seek to facilitate hope around the notion of amalgamation, leaders may consider being models of hope as they guide and motivate others in the accomplishment of the new endeavor. Indeed, Kanter posited, "To change an organization, start with behaviors, and especially with senior management's modeling of desired behaviors." Louise, a leader-participant, believed that "hopeful people breed hopeful people and therefore we have to be hopeful people." Wendy, another leader-participant, noted that others can "borrow" the leader's hope: "So that when we follow them [leaders], we can pick up on their hope." Kouzes noted that leaders who build hope in organizations model and arouse positive thoughts and images. Palmer affirmed that leaders, "project either a spirit of hope or a spirit of despair." When leaders set an example of hopefulness they encourage others to be hopeful as well.

Hope as Action

Hope cannot be separated from action. It involves cognition, purpose, and effort. Karin observed that hope is not an opiate that prevents people from taking action with comments like, "I'm just hoping that something is going to happen." Instead, she argued, "There are things they can do and there are things that they can't do. But what they can do, they do to bring about whatever it is that they're imagining as this good." Thus, unlike "false hope," which denies reality, hope

confronts what one is faced with and strives to achieve advancement toward the anticipated future.

Many participants indicated that any movement toward the goal was one that provided a sense of hope. Wendy would present the question: "What is the smallest thing I can do here?" As well, Ronna spoke of the importance in choosing to act in a hopeful manner in order to generate and sustain one's sense of hope. She indicated that she would ask the question, "What would a hopeful person do in these circumstances? Not what needs to be done, but what would a hopeful person do?"

Supportive Relationships

There was agreement among the participants that the most significant aspect of the element of hope was the role of relationships in its formation and enduring quality. The relational component of hope is critical for, as James noted, "nothing gives hope more than being attentive."

With the sense of uncertainty among those in education, a critical consideration will be for leaders to be present and to engage with stakeholders. Kouzes noted that hopefulness may be fostered by increasing social interaction and by encouraging others: "Credible leaders give help. They drop by for visits and check in to see how people are doing. They listen to complaints and offer counseling. By increasing human interaction, we increase optimism and we increase credibility."

The leader's projected hope may encourage, generate, and sustain the other's own hope as was noted by James: "You have given me hope, which I didn't have, so I'm trusting in your hope for me, even when I did not have it for myself." Cardianni stated, "Encouraging the heart is the most important leadership practice because it is the most personal." This was echoed by Kouzes and Posner who affirmed, "If people work with leaders who encourage the heart, they feel better about themselves." Educational

leaders may consider how they will make personal connections with those whom they serve.

Conclusion

Hope is a conscious decision to imagine a future possibility, plan for its attainment, and work toward the goal with a sense of expectation and confidence. Educational leaders are to “look on the bright side” of restructuring and seek to adapt, reframe, and bring hope into the future of education.

Creating a culture that engenders hope may be thought of in terms of the obligations of leadership. It is critical that educational leaders be cognizant that they may project either a spirit of hope or a spirit of despair. When leaders understand and connect with those whom they serve, provide encouragement, and maintain belief in future possibilities, it works to elevate hope where, in turn, the constituents may be more open to seek positive future possibilities for themselves and the

organization. Educational leaders may bring hope to the amalgamation process by choosing to think and act in ways that will bring about the possibility of achieving a future good for all stakeholders in rural education.



LEADS Welcomes New Deputy Minister

In the last issue of the LEADER a similar headline identified a different person. It was not an error on our part. Changes occurred soon after publication with the departure of Neil Yeates. This has occasioned another similar message in the magazine. This time, we are hopeful the information about our new Deputy Minister remains accurate for a much longer time. *the LEADER* magazine appreciates biographical information and the picture supplied to us by the Department of Learning and welcomes Ms. Durnford as our Deputy Minister of Learning.

Bonnie Durnford has been employed in the Saskatchewan Public Service for over 18 years, serving mainly in justice and social policy areas.

Bonnie began her career with the provincial government in 1986. She has held progressively responsible positions within the department of Social Services including Assistant Deputy Minister (December 1997), Acting Deputy Minister (February 2001) and Deputy Minister of Social Services on May 1, 2001.

Bonnie was appointed Deputy Minister of Learning on August 1, 2004.



Bonnie Durnford - New Deputy Minister

A graduate of the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, she holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws. Bonnie practiced law in Regina prior to joining the provincial government and has served as a sessional lecturer for the Faculty of Business Administration at the University of Regina.

Some Chuckles from the Glossary of Administrative Terms

It's in process: *We forgot about it until now.*

It's under consideration: *We're trying to locate the correspondence.*

We'll take this up at our next meeting: *That will give you time to forget about it.*

The members think: *The last one I talked to...*

Reliable source: *The man I just met.*

Unimpeachable source: *The guy who told the man I just met.*

Forwarded for your consideration: *You hold the bag for a while.*

Project: *A word that makes a minor job seem major.*

CELEBRATING THE SUNSET - ANTICIPATING THE DAWN

We've been told by the politicians that the most significant changes to impact education since the creation of the Larger School Units Act in the 1940s are unfolding before us. The August 6, 2004 publication of the proposed new school division alignments released by the Education Equity Task Force lends credence to the massive changes that are afoot.

What lies ahead, in the months preceding the ultimate decision-making? Quite obviously the consultation phase will provide opportunity to describe interests, concerns and biases to the Task Force. What lies ahead for the partner organizations in education in Saskatchewan?

As the sun sets on the organization of education as we have known it for decades there are all sorts of things that we can and should celebrate. As the dawn of a new era approaches what should we anticipate from each organization's perspective?

Following are the responses to those questions the LEADER magazine posed to the senior official in each of the partner organizations. We are indebted to them for their thoughtful responses.

In 1944, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation was a mere eleven years old. Its formation had consolidated the teaching profession into one provincial voice. The mandate of the organization, even then, balanced and integrated the interests of teachers with the interests of students and publicly funded education. *The Larger School Units Act* sought to accomplish a similar consolidation to administer education more effectively and to move toward equity in education at that time. That effort was largely successful, with most of the province's school districts participating in the restructuring process. However, a long anticipated sunset must now fall on the status quo. At the same time, as the topic suggests, it is important to celebrate the progress in publicly funded education in Saskatchewan under that regime.

Now, sixty years later, reorganization is happening once again as a result of a new spate of inequities that have developed with time. It is long overdue. The Federation has matured over the course of that time, with a much broadened scope of activities and services. The Federation experiences the inequities while attempting to balance representation in its own governance structure with a broad diversity of local associations.

Restructuring will assist the Federation in creating, with its members, larger local associations with enhanced capacity to serve their members, the profession, and publicly funded education. As the Federation implements its own governance review in parallel with the provincial restructuring initiative, there is much potential for new relationships, new structures, and a revitalized way to look at how K-12 education is delivered.

The development of equity for students is the overriding purpose of the current initiative. The critical goal is the ability of the system to provide equitable opportunities for students in their school environments. Teachers and students in their classrooms need to feel the effects of the change, through enhanced supports and resources, if the result is to be positive.

Saskatchewan is a large, sparsely populated province. Geography is a major barrier to providing equity for students. This phenomenon is exacerbated by significant demographic shifts that have affected the distribution of the province's population. The challenge that arises from this reality manifests itself in questions



Lyle Vinish

involving the ability of the system to adequately provide the desired quality of education for children and youth, irrespective of their location in the province. The prospect of larger school divisions with enhanced capacity to provide effective services within schools and classrooms brings an equally enhanced potential for more effective teaching and learning environments within even the smallest, most remote schools.

Whereas current small and resource impaired school divisions are seriously challenged to provide these environments, despite their best efforts, the larger, albeit more geographically challenged, school divisions have the potential to deliver the much needed and often lacking opportunities. If we are to address these challenges in a meaningful way, structural change is necessary.

The change in demographics has also contributed to inequities for taxpayers. The combination of uneven distribution of students and uneven distribution of assessment has resulted in the inability of the Foundation Operating Grant structure to deliver equity in the distribu-

tion of provincial funds. The inequities that have developed as a consequence must be addressed in two ways. The first is the restructuring of school divisions, and the second is a rationalization of the balance in the tax sources funding education. Fairness in the tax system is critical to the success of the restructuring process. Stability in the system depends on stability in funding.

Effective restructuring will depend on certain factors coming into focus. The first is the establishment of a shared vision of the goals of the exercise. Much dialogue among all participants will be necessary to achieve the result. There will need to be good will and the ability to focus on the big picture. The second is the development of a sound implementation plan that attends to the need to create effective governance and administrative structures that are able to deliver education service to the benefit of teachers and students in their own schools. This will again require dialogue and sound cooperation of all involved. Leadership by provincial organizations coupled with involvement of people at the local level is necessary. The third is the contin-

ued effective operation of the system while restructuring is underway. Changes must not have a negative impact on the education of students. The first evidence of change at the classroom level must be enhanced services and resources that arise as a result of restructuring. Support for teachers must be provided in order to achieve this. The fourth factor is the willingness of all Saskatchewan people to provide the resources necessary to provide the quality of K-12 education that has been expected. Everyone has a role to play in making this happen.

Teachers will play a pivotal role in this restructuring process. They have a profound interest in the success of the process as it stands to benefit their students. They have much to offer, positioned as they are at the centre of the education enterprise. Teachers, along with their local and provincial professional organizations will be counted on to ensure that education continues to function effectively during restructuring. They will need time and other resources at the school level to accomplish this task.

Teachers will also have the responsibility to participate fully in the

implementation process. Leaders at the local level will expect to work with their current boards, as well as the new boards to ensure that there is a coordinated effort to create new entities and to build new educational cultures designed to meet the needs of the students of the province. The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is committed to providing supports to teachers at the local level as they do this important development work.

Teachers look forward to processes that will address their concerns relating to such issues as transfers, negotiation of new local agreements, and involvement in the creation of new board policies as they relate to teachers and their working conditions.

The Federation will cooperate fully at the provincial level as well to ensure that the new structures, processes, and cultures endure far into the future. Success depends on all partners to maintain a focus on the future, bringing the best from the past, and discarding the rest.



What a daunting assignment our editor has given me to write about for this issue for *the LEADER*. The image of sunsets and the breaking of dawn is particularly significant for a province that proudly proclaims itself as the "land of living skies".

Sunsets have been symbols for identifying or marking the conclusion of something be it life, a contract or an organization. Sunsets also give us signs as to what we might expect the next day to hold. Sailors for years depended on reading the signs of the sunset.

If sunsets mark a conclusion it is also a time to reflect on the day, the era. In Saskatchewan, we mark the end of an era in educational admin-

istration that has served us well for the last sixty years. In terms of organizational theory, and behavior this would be seen as a significant period of success without substantial adjustment to the overall structure.

So what have the last sixty years given us?

It is not possible in this article to document all of the changes in our province, but it is fair to observe that the changes have been monumental.

Witness the changes in agriculture. When I grew up on a mixed farm in the 50's and 60's, it was fair



Richard Nieman

to say it was "a fairly simple life". A modest size farm of 800 acres provided a comfortable living for a family of five. We had a dairy herd, sold milk to the town folk, raised chickens, pigs and beef for sale and personal use. Over that time, particularly during the 70's to the 90's, there was a major change in the ways we did farming. We essentially turned our backs on the family farm and forced farmers into agri-business. Rightly or wrongly, we forever changed the face of rural Saskatchewan. That change was fueled by major technological advancements in the agricultural

sector. Farming husbandry, the size and kinds of equipment meant that different and new varieties of crops could be grown.

The use of chemicals to assist crop growth or to discourage unwanted plants meant that the input costs of farming were rising dramatically. We responded by acquiring more land, which meant bigger equipment to service the land. Now, instead of neighbors a few miles apart a few became many miles. This shift occurred at a time when we witnessed a great demographic shift with fewer births, more seniors, movement to urban areas and so the momentum continued. There became fewer reasons for our young people to remain in rural Saskatchewan. In my case, because I chose not to take over the family farm, I had to move.

My point in reviewing some of the past is that the people of Saskatchewan have adapted and adjusted to the new realities remarkably well. In fact, in many ways those changes were initiated by people in rural Saskatchewan.

Those same years witnessed many educational and academic achievements for Saskatchewan's young people.

In fact our greatest and most valuable "export" has been our young people. This can be viewed both

positively and negatively. When we start to look at the sheer number of Saskatchewan graduates who have assumed leadership roles on the world stage that should say something about the quality of its educational system. In other words, we have developed a pretty good "product".

Our youth stay in school longer than at any time in our history. Completion rates are similar. We developed pre-school and kindergarten programs. We agreed on a set of goals for education in the 80's. We have a strong consensus on the importance and value of education and the need to work together to accomplish those goals. This is often cited with envy by others outside the province. We developed new and better learning resources, improved teaching methods and approaches to evaluation. We offer a variety of language instruction. We are world class in our response to developing programs for children with diverse needs.

We are responding to the changing needs of the work place. We have a much better understanding of the need for life long learning. We experimented with different ways to organize the school day and year to better meet the needs of the students. To say Saskatchewan people do not like change would be a gross misunderstanding of what has happened in the last sixty years. We

know that not everyone likes change but for most people change happens and people adapt.

So a new dawn is breaking. To some extent it will depend on us to get out of bed "on the right side". We can approach the new days as a Monday (blue) or a Friday (TGIF). I am absolutely convinced that optimism will prevail. Saskatchewan people are that way. They will approach a new way of educational governance in the Saskatchewan way, by being practical, honest, and optimistic and with a whole lot of common sense.

We know that if we work together and support each other that we will figure this out. We will find a better way to fund education; we will find a governance model that works to the betterment of educational program for students. We will address curriculum, educational outcomes, assessment, student diversity, the needs of aboriginal students, effects of poverty, integrated school services, school improvement, technology in the classroom, school to work transitions, career counseling, job skills, school-business partnerships. I could go on. Suffice to say that "we" are the leaders we have been waiting for. We will again become the envy of a country and people across Canada will again ask, "How do you people in Saskatchewan do that?"



LEADS Executive 2004-2005

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In the article that follows Bill Wells talks about the intensity of the work demanded of the staff and executive of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association since the May announcement by the Minister of Learning, Andrew Thomson. Given what little we know from a distance it is even apparent that all organizations are running at full throttle to deal with the anticipated changes. To Bill Wells and all other contributors for taking their time to write for this magazine we are grateful.

Reflecting on What To Celebrate and What to Anticipate

There hasn't been much time to pause and reflect since the Minister of Learning's announcement on May 13, so the request from the editor of *the LEADER* magazine to do just that - in writing - was appropriate.

Since the Hon. Andrew Thomson announced the "...most sweeping changes to our education system in 60 years," the pace has been frantic for the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and its member boards of education.

We held a Provincial Assembly to enable our members to provide direction as we move through a difficult time.

The Task Force announced that it would meet with stakeholders and boards in the summer, so presentations had to be prepared by our members as well as the Association.

Once fall arrived, the various committees started up, then subcommittees, and now recommendations and decisions seem to be made weekly.

So to be able to celebrate what was, in order to look forward to what will be, is a positive exercise.

There is no doubt that the next year will be difficult and challenging. But, it should be looked upon as a time of opportunity as well.

The response to the announcement has been varied. Some board of education members wanted to fight the decision, to take on the government. Others felt it was time to take this step. Most believed that amalgamation should have been done in a collaborative manner, the decision based on what would be best for students. The process by which we got here is what has upset

many, including the Association.

The past five months can almost be looked upon as a time of grieving. Many of those who worked so hard to create what they have, are going through the stages of grieving, sad to let go of what is, especially when it's hard to envision what will be.



Bill Wells

But here we are - it's happening.

The Association sees its role as assisting boards in whatever way possible as they go through the process. The Association also has to be part of that process, serving on the various committees to ensure that if forced amalgamations go through as described, the result will create the best possible world for students, boards of education, senior administrators and other staff.

We believe that the process must result in a better education system across the province. This cannot be done simply to solve funding issues, assessment issues, or property taxation issues. The end result must be enhanced programs, supports and resources. The end result must create communities that work together, not communities in strife. The end result must be better for kids.

We know we have board of education members and staff who will make that happen.

So what should we celebrate?

We have developed a local governance system that is responsive to communities, is fiscally responsible, and that delivers a high quality edu-

cation system to students every day. Despite complaints about property taxes, people told the Boughen Commission that boards of education must be elected because local autonomy makes them accountable, responsible and responsive. That cannot be lost.

We should celebrate the cultures and symbols of what was: from Maple Creek to Nipawin, and Moosomin to Meadow Lake. Keep them as a part of history, a key component in the new systems. We must also create new cultures, symbols and identities to celebrate.

We should celebrate all the board members and staff in each of those divisions who, over the years, created viable, high quality systems, who believed in their rural communities or their urban communities, who made sure that students - wherever they lived - would receive the finest education.

We should celebrate the Saskatchewan School Boards Association's provincial Executive, which continues to lead the organization through one of its most difficult times, ensuring that boards remain united to remain strong.

What should we look forward to?

We should anticipate building a system that embraces those same qualities. A bigger system does not mean we have to lose those qualities.

We will still have dedicated people running for boards of education, who care about children, who make their decisions based upon what is best for all their students, who value

their staff, who learn and grow and make the system better by being part of it.

We will still have teachers who care, support staff who care, and communities who care.

We will still have an Association that will take direction from its members and advocate provincially for what is best for all students in this province. We will still provide the highest quality services to our members. These services may be even more vital in getting through the amalgamation process.

The Association must also continue to work with LEADS, SASBO, the

STF and other partners. Such partnerships are vital in creating the best system for our students.

We must ensure that the key values of our education system remain, local autonomy; access to the property tax base; collaboration and co-operation in decision-making.

We must make sure we don't forget the real issue behind all the change - inadequate funding for education.

We must begin, as a province, to believe what those in the education community believe - education is an investment, not a burden.

Education is the key to our future, not an unreasonable bill about which we gripe.

Education is a right for all children, whether they live next to the Legislature in Regina, or in Camsell Portage, or Consul, or Storthoaks, in Saskatoon, or Porcupine Plain, or Paradise Hill, or Creighton.

Education is an investment we share, whether we have kids or not, whether our children are grown or not yet in school.

Ultimately, education is what we must celebrate and protect. Our kids deserve it.



Trust the Process

Paul Baskey, the first Executive Director Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials provides his reflections on the changes that await members of his group, based upon personal experiences with amalgamation of several divisions over the past several years.

I am not certain who first said, "times are forever changing," but that particular expression, when applied to education in Saskatchewan, has never been more true than during the past number of years. Change is about to be even more evident with the proposed restructuring of school divisions along with the ongoing review of the funding of K to 12 education.



Paul Baskey

I enjoyed 35 years as a superintendent of administration with the North West Catholic School Division until my retirement two years ago. During those years with the school division we witnessed many changes in both instructional offerings and administration. I was involved with the voluntary amalgamation of three school divisions in 1997.

Many members of our Association have also seen significant changes in education. For example, in earlier years the secretary-treasurer was the board's employee and the superintendent of education was departmentally employed. About the time that boards began to employ their own directors of education, the equalization grant changed to the Foundation Operating Grant formula. Bargaining of teachers' salaries went from local to area and then on to provincial bargaining. Now we have the phenomenon of zero grant boards.

Without going into any detail, suffice it to say that I have witnessed many far reaching changes in the educational offerings to students and in improved staffing demographics, both in the schools and in the board offices. Simply put, many of us are not strangers to change.

For the past two years I have been serving as the Executive Director for the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO). I am enjoying this position and the mandate given to me to serve in this capacity. The Association is proud to be celebrating its sixtieth anniversary next year in the same year the Province celebrates its 100th anniversary. The Association and its members have served sixty years starting with the School Unit Boards of yesteryear and continue to serve School Division Boards of Education today. Over those years change was commonplace.

It has only been months since the Minister of Learning announced plans to restructure school divisions in our province. Following release of the preliminary map showing the proposed new school divisions, the Education Equity Task Force met with the executive of SASBO in August. At that meeting we were informed that school divisions would number no more than forty, with student registrations at a minimum of 5,000. Setting the sub division boundaries and seeking fair assessment per pupil were other anticipated tasks. The timeline for effecting these changes is January 1, 2006. This obliges us to question the

possibility of establishing a satisfactory administrative team for each of the new divisions within such a confined time frame. Another critical question remains, what is the future for the many members of SASBO as this restructuring comes about?

At the time the province organized all the small school districts into larger units under the Larger School Units Act of 1944 education was obliged to undergo several major changes. I feel that the proposed restructuring of school divisions anticipated for 2006 will be considered the most significant change to impact education since that era.

To assist the Minister of Learning in the decision making process associated with the restructuring of school divisions two committees were created, the Restructuring Coordinating Committee and the External Reference FOG Committee. Several meetings of these committees have been held as I write this article. It is at these meetings, where all the educational partners and stakeholders enjoy the necessary opportunities to discuss and prepare for the significant changes, and share a vision of the impact these proposed changes will have on education. We are obliged to ask what effect will the restructuring of school divisions have on the lives of the senior administrators who will be affected?

Through committee involvement with the restructuring process we have asked both Saskatchewan Learning and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association to provide fair and equitable treatment and consideration for all the members of the boards' senior administration.

Several school divisions have amalgamated voluntarily since 1997. We can learn much from their successes and from any situations determined to need special consideration. As we are now in the midst of talks and discussions around the restructuring of school divisions we would be wise to learn from these previous experiences. If we make mistakes, they should be new. Past amalgamations have not produced much evidence of significant reductions in costs. Instead a reallocation of funds has largely resulted in improved access to services for students and teachers. Appropriate redirection of savings will enhance the instructional opportunities for students. Therein lies an important consideration.

The geographically large school divisions that emerge with restructuring will reduce the number of zero grants boards. However, it remains clear that unless more funding is made available for education there will be little relief for the property taxpayer. The challenge will be finding a more equitable per pupil assessment while looking into the

cause and effect within the present school grants formula. The Foundation Operating grant is deemed fair in its present form in providing for the equitable distribution of school grants to school boards, but the fact remains there is a wide disparity in property assessment in each of the school divisions.

The variance of property assessment per pupil is the dilemma that seems to have created some funding differences between school divisions in the past. Unless we are prepared to think innovatively at this time we will not achieve as much success in equity as we currently hope for. And realistically, there is a need to reduce the number of factors contained in the existing grant formula.

During our deliberations about the impact of the proposed educational changes all stakeholders need to come to definitive interpretations and common understandings of

what we mean when we use the terms "basic education, equity, autonomy and accountability."

The following is an excerpt taken from the Minister of Learning memo sent to Boards of Education dated May 20, 2004. *This initiative seeks to improve equity across the divisions, to re-establish simplicity and transparency in providing*

provincial financing for education, and to respond to the needs for a more sustainable, affordable model of education delivery in our province. These changes recognize and build on the strengths and successes of previous amalgamations. They reflect the challenges of changing demographics and declining student numbers, and they will work to ensure that we have an affordable, sustainable education infrastructure and financing system in place in support of the educational needs of Saskatchewan students.

Herein reside our challenges as we look to the proposed restructuring of school divisions and ask ourselves, If bigger is better is there an economy of scale? Will it provide long term benefit for students? Will it provide more programming opportunities?

I am extremely pleased to represent SASBO and honored to be a participant with other educational stakeholders as we look ahead to these challenging times of change in education.

Kevin Burns of Red Deer, Alberta a motivational speaker at our annual convention in June this year, very aware of the changes facing the delegates repeated over and over "...trust the process". That's a great starting point for us all.

We are obliged to ask what effect will the restructuring of school divisions have on the lives of the senior administrators who will be affected?





The following article, written by Brian Keegan continues the celebration of supportive educational organizations in Saskatchewan. In the last issue we featured SPDU and next issue we will feature SIDRU.

SELU - Changing Times and Changing Roles

The Saskatchewan Educational Leadership was created in 1985 to support the educational reform movement in the province. These were exciting times with the release of Directions: The Final Report by the Curriculum and Instruction Review Committee and creation of the Educational Development Fund to support these reforms.

SELU was formed in response to Action Recommendation 14 in Directions which stated "...that leadership roles and functions be defined, and that skill training be provided at all levels of the system in order to meet changing needs". Specifically, it identified the need for training programs and in-service education, and called for a review and revision of graduate programs in educational administration to support leadership development in the province.

In 1986 the unit was organized as part of the Department of Educational Administration in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. Its formal administrative structure included a Director as the liaison with the Department of Educational Administration and an Associate Director as the manager of the Unit. Kevin Wilson, Pat Renihan, Larry Sackney, and Earl Newton, have served as Directors. Associate Directors include Bill Stodolka, Susan Bates, Barry Earl, and Dave Hawley. Murray Scharf and Brian Keegan currently serve in these respective roles.

SELU operates with an interagency advisory committee including representatives from major educational organizations in the province, Saskatchewan Learning and First Nation organizations, a structure that serves the unit well.



(clockwise from left back row)
Dr. Murray Scharf, Director, Brian Keegan, Associate Director, Fran Roberts, Administrative Assistant, Marion Loiselle, Office Assistant

The highly recognizable logo adopted by SELU in 1986, represented by three arrows, reflects the original thrust for the unit, which was the tri-fold mandate of cooperation, development and research.

During the early years, SELU, SPDU and SIDRU were highly subsidized by the Department of Education. In 1991 funding from Saskatchewan Education was halved and eliminated in 1992. With this change, SELU adjusted to become a self-sustaining unit. Since that time SELU has assumed a more entrepreneurial stance in support of leadership development.

Over the past eighteen years, SELU has expanded its role in the province by offering extensive professional development for educational leaders and consultative services to school boards, First Nations education authorities and other

organizations. SELU prides itself in personalizing these services to meet client needs. Since its inception, SELU has worked with every school board and First Nation Authority in the province.

Because SELU is an autonomous organization as part of the University, it maintains third party objectivity in completing politically sensitive projects. For example, SELU has been involved in projects related to school and system sustainability, Board and Director studies, administrative evaluations and Director searches. As well, SELU is contracted by Boards for projects that require extensive time commitment beyond their staff capacity or expertise unavailable within their own system.

SELU has developed a pool of consultants, which is available for in-service and research. Faculty mem-

bers, because of their expertise in research and leadership development, provide essential consultative support. Additionally, SELU uses consultants from other College departments, and outside experts to expand the expertise in meeting requirements of projects.

SELU organizes two major annual events in the province, Saskatchewan Principals' Short Course and the National Congress on Rural Education.

The Saskatchewan Principals' Short Course usually takes place during the first week in July and continues to be a key in-service opportunity for school administrators. This week long event draws recently appointed school-based administrators, those with an emerging interest in educational administration and experienced principals seeking renewal. The short course provides participants with large and small group sessions on current and emerging topics. An important feature is the opportunity for school-based administrators to talk with experienced administrators and network with colleagues. LEADS members serve as group leaders and are instrumental in making the Short Course a success. The course typically registers over 100 participants.

The National Congress on Rural Education, held in Saskatoon each year, is the second major event. Usually drawing close to 600 delegates, the Congress is celebrating its tenth anniversary, and is scheduled for April 6-8, 2005. The Congress has featured notable presenters including Pamela Wallin, Rex Murphy, Steven Lewis and Roberta Bondar. The keynote speaker this year is Stuart McLean, a popular radio personality and professor at Ryerson Polytechnic University. Participants register from all across Canada, many returning annually. The Congress is unique as the only continuing event in the province to draw trustees, administrators and teachers into one conference.

SELU has engaged high profile

presenters to deliver workshops to Saskatchewan educators. These include Michael Fullen, Richard Curwin, Carol Rohlheiser, Andy Hargreaves, Michele Borba, and recently Richard and Rebecca Dufour.

At the provincial, regional and local level, SELU has developed courses and workshops to meet specific needs. Through a needs assessment conducted a couple of years ago, SELU identified a need in the province to support administrator skill development in teacher supervision. This led to the development by Pat Renihan of The Supervision of Instruction for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning course that has been delivered in many centers over the past two years. Workshops are planned for Swift Current and Kenosee Lake this year. The three-day course is designed to enhance central office and school-based administrators' knowledge and skills based upon best practices in the area.

To assist school divisions implement strategies for mathematics teaching and learning by initiating change and improvement through supervision of the mathematics program, a three-day course designed by Florence Glanfield was implemented last year and garnered considerable attention when it was delivered in Saskatoon and Aspen Grove School Division. A three day workshop is planned for Regina and Saskatoon locations this year.

Keith Walker and Larry Sackney have designed a two level workshop that trains senior administrators, SchoolPlus coordinators, and middle managers in using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) processes. These sessions develop an understanding of AI and its practical application for strategic planning, needs analysis, problem solving and coaching for success in organizations. The introductory workshop is offered annually in Saskatoon (usually in November) while the advanced workshop will be delivered in the spring every other year.

SELU has published Guide to Saskatchewan School Law, an insight into statutes, regulations and orders that directly relate to provision of educational services in the province. Written by Keith Walker and Jerome Chomos it provides information about legal parameters for teachers, aspiring teachers, trustees, central office and school administrators and parents. Both it and a workshop are available through SELU.

SELU also provides school or division-based leadership training in a number of areas. These workshops can be personalized to meet clients' needs with regard to focus and time. The workshops center on development of a professional learning community and include themes such as developing mission, vision and goals, building a collaborative culture, developing a team, building a community of leaders, expanding the learning community, leadership for instructional improvement and engaging parents and community.

The number of educational assistants in school divisions has increased. Most have been hired to support school-based special education programs. In 2002, SELU and the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education jointly designed and implemented an in-service program for educational assistants to assist the training in school divisions and band schools. We delivered over 40 workshops last year and expect a similar number this year. The Educational Assistant program includes six one-day modules on topics important to knowledge, skill and attitudinal development of educational assistants. Understanding roles and responsibilities, inclusion philosophy, team building, instructional support, behavioral support, social and communication support and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders are included in the program.

A valuable and popular service to school boards and First Nation authorities has been the School Review process implemented by

SELU. It continues to evolve in light of changes and priorities in the provincial schools. The instruments used have been adapted to collect data and report on both strengths and needs of SchoolPlus and Professional Learning Communities. The process fully engages school staffs in data interpretation and action planning. SELU completes about 15 -20 of these reviews annually. Recently SELU has been contracted by some jurisdictions to complete reviews in all division schools to provide base-line data for future planning and needs identification.

A major part of SELU's work is in research and studies for school divisions. These consultant services cover a broad range of topics that serve specific needs in the school systems. SELU consultants have completed studies on

school/school division feasibility, restructuring/amalgamation, strategic planning, division office evaluation, longitudinal studies, shared services evaluation, Board and CEO evaluations, and program studies.

Although the primary function of SELU is to provide support for school boards and First Nation authorities in Saskatchewan, we participate in several international initiatives in conjunction with the Department of Educational Administration and the College of Education. Recently SELU has had contracts with the Ministry of Education in Jamaica and the Tianjin Education Commission in China. SELU works cooperatively with Saskatoon school systems in the delivery of the Principals' Leadership Development Program which involves principals from

Tianjin. The international program provides SELU with additional revenue and a broader educational perspective.

SELU tries to be responsive and proactive in establishing programs that meet a variety of needs. Our goal is to support school, school division, First Nation authorities and other organizations in their efforts to develop and provide leadership. SELU is appreciative of the support we have received and anticipates a continuing a positive relationship with LEADS and boards of education.



The newly amalgamated school division: deciding how it will operate

What is the approval process for overnight field trips? When does a committee review a suspension by the principal? How do we handle requests to attend teachers' conferences? How are parents informed of special education services referrals? Do support staff members help to determine their PD needs? What is the role of the Local Board? What are the new office procedures?

School divisions have traditionally operated according to a set of rules called the Board of Education Policy Manual, documents that served as procedural bibles for board members, staff and contracted services. Typically, these thick manuals were located in central offices, in the principal's office or in the briefcase of the subunit trustee. Recently, some divisions recognized the need for accessibility to staff and to the public by posting them on their web sites.

When three divisions amalgamated to become Aspen Grove School Division, the new Board of Education accepted the suggestion of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and embarked on training sessions, along with their new central office administrators, to learn about functioning as a policy governance board. Their deliberations resulted in a statement of the Board's vision, operation and strategic plan. Their new document did not address any of the procedures for schools, programs, staff or central office in the new division. In a bold departure from tradition, policy would be separated from procedures. Policy would be established by Board and procedures would be determined by staff.

I agreed to facilitate the development of new procedures with the staff of the new school division.

The plan was to develop a set of



Lynne Saas

handbooks. We agreed on three critical differences between these handbooks and the policy manuals they would replace. First, they would be distributed to those staff members most in need of knowing those particular procedures. Second, they would avoid the formal language typical of the old policies in favor of an easy-read point-form format. Third, and most

importantly, because the Board had bowed out of the procedural business, the handbooks would be written by staff for staff. All future revisions would be done by staff.

The initial plan called for three handbooks, one each for Principals, Teachers and the Support Staff. Ultimately, there were six. We added one each for Central Office, Program and School Secretary's Forms.

The process was bottom-up, beginning with full participation from a large group, through committee work and then to school-level input. From the start, it was decided that the development of the handbooks would be kept separate from the formal contract negotiations with staff.

The 250 teachers attended a full-day September session, breaking off into discussion groups, each submitting input data. The workshop was delivered by an interim committee of teachers working with the facilitator. Although dozens of topics would eventually be included in the Teacher's Handbook, it was decided that two topics of most pressing interest to the new teacher group were professional development procedures (both self-selected and division-wide), and teacher supervision and evaluation procedures (both formative and summative). When the handbooks were distributed in the spring, these two topics were among seven chapters of the new Teacher's Handbook. LINC issues were not addressed by the facilitator and committee; these were left to the Teachers' Association and the Board of Education.

Consultation sessions were held with the Transition Management Committee of the new Teachers' Association during the intervening months. Drafts were sent to staffs for critical comment and reaction. Teachers gave the process a supportive rating on the post-process evaluation questionnaire, noting their appreciation for input into rules for the new division. Most

criticisms centered on timing.

Principals attended a two-day November retreat. Theirs was the lengthiest process, involving sessions at several meetings, and a second retreat. Ad-hoc sub-committees evolved to deal with separate issues such as purchasing, facility maintenance, caretaker expectations, and student assessment, evaluation and reporting. This last issue proved to be the most difficult for finding consensus. The committee, with one teacher from each staff, held a full-day study session followed by reports to staff that resulted in compromise procedures.

The Principals Handbook, completed in March, contained all of the procedures dealing with students, facilities, caretakers, transportation, school-based finances, and community. Principals gave the process the highest rating of all groups, expressing a wish for even more time for reflection and review.

Support staff members in the new school division were both unionized and non-unionized. At their initial full-day November workshop the facilitator explained that their handbook would contain some sections that would govern the working conditions of both unionized and non-unionized support staff, referring to the topics not dealt with in the CUPE agreement, such as professional development and communication. Other sections, however, would pertain only to non-unionized support staff, including leaves, hiring procedures, transfers, and seniority. Care was taken to acknowledge the CUPE contract when it spoke to particular topics. After the initial whole-group input, an Educational Support Staff Committee reworked several drafts until the final handbook was distributed to each member of the support staff in May. Support staff members were least supportive of the process in the ensuing evaluation. Their frustration appeared to be delayed wage negotiations, which were not part of the handbook development.

The central office business staff

(six clerks and three business superintendents) self-nominated into the handbook development process. They wanted a set of office procedures to assist them, and worked with the facilitator to develop it, later involving the nine educational coordinators, the Director and the Assistant Director. Again, the progression was bottom-up, providing opportunities for staff input.

Other needs evolved during the process. For each handbook, there was a number of forms. These were packaged into a School Secretary's Forms Handbook. Central office staff provided input into streamlining the forms. Ultimately, the facilitator met with the principal and school secretary in each school, to review forms and explain their use. A summary chart lists who should complete each form, to whom it should be directed, and when each should be submitted. In June the Director instructed all staff to retire old manuals and policies. Effective July 1st, procedures in the six new handbooks would apply. That summer the handbooks were posted on the Aspen Grove web site.

A Program Handbook was added to the set of six handbooks. It contains descriptions and procedural expectations for specific programs such as Career Education, Special Education, Library Services, School Counseling, Community Schools, Driver Education, Pre-Kindergarten, Technology, and other shared programs and services.

The facilitator played many roles. Initially, she presented content outlines for each handbook to the Director and Administrators' Group. Before each process could begin, there was much research to be done, preparing summary comparisons showing the varying practices in the former jurisdictions. There were many workshops to facilitate, meetings to convene, input documents to summarize and revisions to make. Finally, the evaluation forms were sent out and a summary report was prepared for the Board of Education and Administration.

Looking back on the process, we know now there was much to be learned. In repeating the process, the facilitator would:

- Provide even more time for small groups to review and revise. Time spent on consultation is very worthwhile.
- Spend less time reviewing old procedures. Staff proved amazingly adept in adapting to a new situation, particularly when they realized their ownership over procedures once guarded by the board.
- Outline every step of the process ahead, in advance. Having tested the process that is now possible.

The Director and Assistant Director of the new school division were extremely busy during the

transition year. It would have been impossible for them to facilitate all of these procedural development sessions along with the many challenges of setting up a new division. Yet it is important to develop plans to guarantee involvement of new administration in the process, along with regular reporting and joint planning sessions. Director Dave Dornstauder and Assistant Director Leona Cote deserve much credit in using their new school division as the "Beta site" for testing this new process.

The main differences between the new procedural handbooks and the old board policies are threefold. First, the procedures are far more decentralized to the school level or the committee level. Second, the

role of the Local Board has been expanded and enhanced. Third, staff members own the procedures and are empowered to make future changes with the approval of their Director.

The benefits, for the new school division, were more far reaching than getting six new handbooks. The results of the evaluation survey show that principals and teachers perceived the process as:

- *Transparent* - "We were aware of what was happening."
- *Fair* - "All groups had equal opportunity for input."
- *Reassuring* - "Former practices were considered."
- *Team building* - "We got to know one another."



Once More... with feeling

After she had submitted her article about the process used to achieve the newly developed materials in the Aspen Grove School Division Lynne Saas was asked to reflect some of her personal feelings about that process and what lies ahead for others. Her remarks follow.

Looking back on the Aspen Grove process, I recall the sense of pride, excitement and empowerment felt by the employees who were given the opportunity to shape their new world. Looking ahead to the new amalgamations, I hope that the Restructuring Coordinating Committee plans for a sequence of events that will give this same privilege and responsibility to the new divisions. Whether the new divisions have transition boards or interim boards, the selection of the new CEO and CFO must happen so as to allow time and opportunity for the training and planning needed to create new teams. Staff will be the most important resources in the new divisions; they have to be built into the process right from the start.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AND L.E.A.D.S. (W.I.L.L.) SEMINAR

Helen Horsman and Dolores Wagner-Owens have announced that a Women in Leadership and L.E.A.D.S. (W.I.L.L.) Seminar will be held on Thursday, November 4, 2004 at Regina Catholic Schools (Gratton Room) from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be served at a cost of \$10.00 per person.

The facilitator will be Dr. Cecilia Reynolds, Dean of the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. Dr. Reynolds has extensive experience with, and a research background centered on, women in leadership.

Agenda items include:

- Review of W.I.L.L. Beliefs, Goals, Structure, etc.
- Discussion of implications of Education Equity Task Force recommendations

Others may be added as the meeting approaches and as participants forward suggestions.

The original date set for this seminar was October 27. Dr. Reynolds was unable to attend on October 27. The change in date may enable attendance of more members by linking this to the dates of the SchoolPLUS Congress.



Dr. Cecilia Reynolds

The LEADER Welcomes our New Members

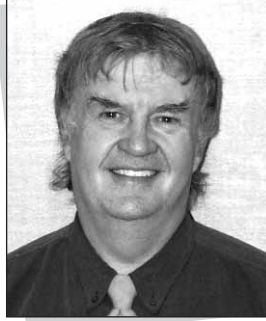
And you thought that fifteen pictures a year ago signaled a large group of new members? Look at these! We feature twenty-six new members, whose pictures represent the changing cohort of our membership. Most of these members are new to the organization this fall. We welcome them all and wish them well in their work on behalf of the children, young people and teachers of Saskatchewan.



Jean Bacon
Assistant Director of
Education Lloydminster
School Division No. 99



Sandra Baragar
Supervisor of Student
Services Regina RCSSD
No. 81



Lionel Brideson
Superintendent of Special
Education & Students
Services Meadow Lake
School Division No. 66



Ross Brown
Assistant Superintendent of
Education Regina School
Division No. 4



John Casavant
Assistant Director of
Education Nipawin School
Division No. 61



Marc Casavant
Director of Education
Eastend School Division
No. 8



Cliff Chutskoff
Director of Education
Melfort Tiger Lily School
Division No. 100



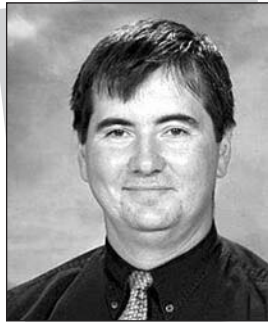
Shirley Dowie
Superintendent of Student
Services Saskatoon (East)
School Division No. 41



Jerry Elliott
Superintendent of Curriculum,
Special Education and
SchoolPlus
Prairie West School Division
No. 75



George Falk
Superintendent of Student
Support Services
Thunder Creek School
Division No. 78



Kevin Gietz
Assistant Director of
Education Lakeview School
Division No. 142



Geralyn (Geri) Hall
Superintendent of Student
Services Holy Trinity
RCSSD No. 22



Sandra Kitts
 Superintendent of Education
 (Jan. 1, 2005) Moose Jaw
 School Division No. 1



Daryl Koroluk
 General Manager Information
 Systems Saskatoon School
 Division No. 13



Kevin Kusch
 Superintendent of Student
 Services Lloydminster
 RCSSD No. 89



Karen LaPointe
 Superintendent of Student
 Services Saskatchewan Valley
 School Division No. 49



Barry MacDougall
 Superintendent of Education
 Saskatoon School Division
 No. 13



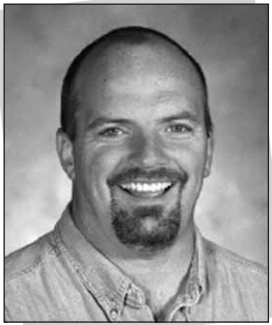
John McAuliffe
 Superintendent of Education
 St. Paul's RCSSD No. 20



Eric Mercer
 Director of Education
 Eston-Elrose School
 Division No. 33



Cathy Mills
 Superintendent of School
 Saskatchewan Rivers School
 Division No. 119



Darren Olson
 Principal/Director
 Athol Murray College of
 Notre Dame



Patricia Prowse
 Superintendent of Education
 Saskatoon School Division
 No. 13



Brian Quinn
 Assistant Director
 Battlefords School Division
 No. 118



George Smadu
 Acting Supervisor
 Regina RCSSD No. 81

Avon Whittles
 Superintendent of Education
 Saskatoon School Division
 No 13



Velda Weatherald
 Supervisor of Support Services
 Moosomin School Division No 9

Fitting the Pieces in the Puzzle

This issue of *the LEADER* magazine is a little unusual compared to previous editions. First, it is thematic, dealing largely with issues associated with restructuring of the K - 12 system in Saskatchewan. Second, it contains more pages than the previous two, and third, because of that it permits some final, or closing words that are ordinarily disallowed because of space limitations.

We wondered about buttonholing some LEADS members and asking for letters about restructuring. Then we thought better of that. Why should some have a say when others might feel denied? We wondered about publishing a blank map and describing a contest for LEADS members to draw in the new school division boundaries, but we thought better of that as well. Fred Herron, Al Klassen and Shirley Batters, the members of the Education Equity Task Force are far better able to do that after their study and consultations than members who have not been privy to all of their deliberations. Besides, what could we have appropriately provided for a prize to the winner? A Dick Nieman joke book? We wondered about a word find, with source words coming from this edition of the magazine, and finally, we wondered about the crossword puzzle. We chose none of those.

Cross words are often commonplace when major change is afoot. More privately than publicly we have heard cross words. We have also heard so many rationales for keeping this or changing that in the past several months that we wonder how Herron and company are going to find their way through the maze of rhetoric, as find their way they must.

We have heard from some that amalgamation of divisions in their

part of Saskatchewan will create geographic entities larger than Belgium. We have heard some folks say that they are remote. Remote geographically? That seems to be the claim, but remote in this world of instant world-wide communication? Hardly.

We have heard some say the process is flawed, because it is so political. For example, why, some



have questioned, do two tiny little divisions, Ile a la Crosse and Creighton get ministerial exemption? Is it because of the political balance in the provincial legislature? Perhaps. Is it because of some lobby unknown to the rest of us? Perhaps. The too political argument doesn't really wash, however, because the drawing of a line on a map is typically a political act. That is why we learned in geography classes in grade school that we had political lines and geographic lines on the Neilson Chocolate Bar maps.

We have heard that senior administrators in current Saskatchewan school divisions are torn between really expressing their feelings and staying silent. How, for example can a director represent his or her

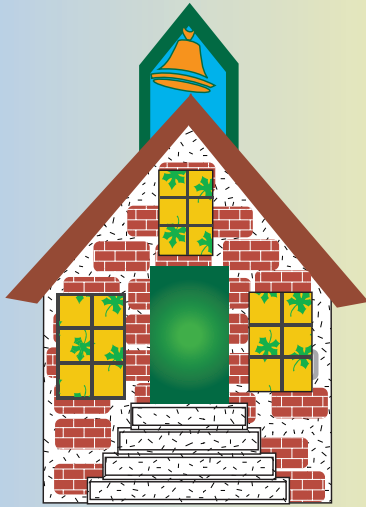
board's opinion in public and at the same time hold onto his or her own, admittedly biased opinions, without appearing hypocritical? In the first case, a director or secretary-treasurer who dares to comment about anticipated amalgamation and who suggests that it might be a good thing, or conversely, a bad thing, runs the risk of alienation of those who might become part of the same jurisdiction once the map is finalized.

What chance, some wonder, might they then have in the hiring processes that will follow if they have been seen to comment in some way that is averse to the thinking of potential hiring board members? There are those who will suggest that this is no different from the situation senior administrators are always in with their boards. They work for their boards and should feel comfortable making clear that an expressed opinion is that of the board, not an individual.

This, however seems different. The number of available senior positions as CEO of the new organizations will be significantly smaller. One would be wise to exercise prudence in his or her proclamations, unless of course political lobbying to impress potential hiring board members is their aim. In that case, perhaps anything goes. But it raises concerns about staying on task, advising board members, leading teachers and working like their lives depended on it, for the children and young people of their school divisions.

E.D.





Saskatchewan Association of Supervisors and Consultants

Annual Conference “SMART Tools for PLC Schools”

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February 27, 28 and March 1, 2005
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