



the LEADER

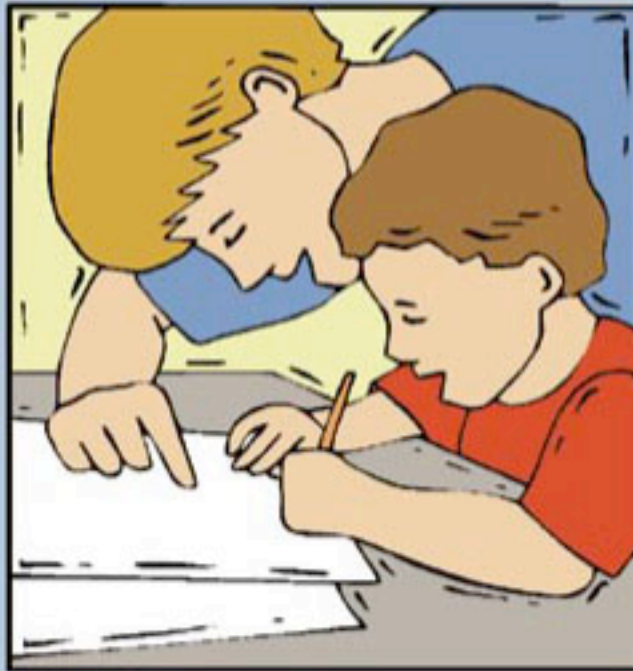
2005 Fall Edition, Vol. 5

GETTING READY FOR TAKE OFF

- Students Build an Airplane
- WILL, Teaching and Learning
- Deputy Opines on Key Issues
- Trustee Pursues Love of Education Governance
- New LEADS Members
- Saskatchewan Literacy Commission
- Ile a la Crosse Unique Hospital/School



Saskatchewan Association of
Supervisors
and Consultants
Annual Conference



Dr. Edie Holcomb presents

Getting Excited About Data

Working Together to Improve Student Learning

January 23 & 24, 2006
Radisson Hotel
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

www.stf.sk.ca/prof_growth/ssc/sasc/sasc.html

EDITORIAL THOUGHTS

If an issue of *the LEADER* magazine ever contained something for everyone this must be it. We range from the north of Saskatchewan to the south in sources of articles for this, the last issue before the disestablishment of so many small divisions and the establishment, in reality of our new larger school divisions. We are part of the history of education in Saskatchewan and we have much to celebrate.

It is encouraging to note several school division and association websites are now showing schedules for events to celebrate the end of some divisions as they prepare to move into partnerships with their neighbors. Let's hope the tone of those events will be celebratory, rather than doleful. Let's hope the prevailing notion is not sadness that something is coming to an end, but unrestrained joy that we have had opportunities to be part of it. History is filled with comings and goings, creation and modifications. Saskatchewan, in its centenary is making major changes. Everybody reading this magazine has had something valuable to contribute to what was, and now each has a wonderful opportunity to make further contributions to what will be. That in itself is something worth celebrating; it won't just happen to us; we will influence it.

Our cover picture and the uplifting (pun intended) article by Lee Cummins are so symbolic of wonderful things related to public education in Saskatchewan. Consider the inspiration, planning, collaboration, and cooperation that were required to build an airplane. Schools and teachers don't commonly do something so astonishing. But there, in the backyard of a modest farmstead in southern Saskatchewan the enabling nature of a curriculum came to life, not simply with a keen teacher and a few students, but with a mix of community volunteers and students from several school divisions. What life lessons abound in this effort! Read Lee's article and consider the amazing achievement here.

Far to the north another amazing

story is developing. Dr. Bill Duffee tells it with enthusiasm that is obvious in his writing. Who ever heard of building a hospital and a school together? Few in this country, obviously, but if you consider with Bill what this has meant to the potential for programming and bringing reality of daily life into the school experiences of Ile a la Crosse students it becomes obvious why he is so enthusiastic.

One of the first directors of a major amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan, Shirley Gange has provided her insights into amalgamations, teaching and learning with experiences in north Central Saskatchewan and Taiwan. We welcome Shirley's contribution as a superannuate, who still has much to offer to public education. Shirley spoke at the WILL breakfast in Waskesiu this past summer; her remarks there have been edited for this publication.

With Shirley Gange, another member of the Local Accountability and Partnerships Panel chaired by Craig Melvin is featured in this issue. Gary Shaddock has a long relationship with education in Saskatchewan and across Canada. We caught up with him at a Saskatchewan School Boards Association Seminar to interview him about his views on amalgamations and local engagement.

Dr. Margaret Lipp, Saskatchewan's Literacy Commissioner found time for an interview about her new and critically important work as well. Readers will be impressed by the breadth of her assignment, the breadth of definitions of literacy and her enormous enthusiasm for what a successful implementation of the Commission's work will yield in this province.

A major contribution from the office of Deputy Minister of Learning, Bonnie Durnford highlights her focus on initiatives of the Department and expectations for results of the amalgamations that are featured with statements from the newly appointed directors of the larger school divisions.



Ernie Dawson

Executive Director Dick Nieman, without prior awareness of the airplane article has, in fact taken a sky view with his comments in this issue. Dick reviews major challenges facing public education and all of the partners is this wonderful enterprise and urges LEADS members to contemplate the value of dedicated efforts to achieve success for our students.

With every fall issue of *the LEADER* magazine we welcome our new members. We go beyond that this time because we have received word of the appointment of our new public representative on the executive, Patricia Roe and our new Assistant Deputy Minister of Learning, Dr. Larry Steeves. We look forward to their contributions.

Finally, with changes as major as those we are in the midst of in Saskatchewan, it behooves us as LEADS members to contemplate what all of this will mean for the organization itself. What will the membership lists look like in a year or so? What will be the ability of LEADS to do the kinds of things we have become used to its doing? Will there be an ability, a desire even to publish a magazine? Will we see reorganization within our own professional group? Contemplate these matters, please. The next issue will look at the things we do, how we do those, and why.

the LEADER

Published by the League of Education
Administrators, Directors and
Superintendents of Saskatchewan

Offices located at:
#1 - 1359 Fletcher Road
Saskatoon, SK
S7M 5H5

Phone: (306) 683-2266
Fax: (306) 683-2243
email: leads@sasktel.net
Web Site: www.sasbo.com/LEADS.html

Dick Nieman, *Executive Director*

Linda Butcher, *Administrative Assistant*

Dr. Vance Mokelky, *President*

Elena Marin Beke: *Desktop Publishing*

Ernie Dawson: *Editor*
email: be.dawson@sasktel.net

IN THIS ISSUE

- Students Build an Airplane – Lee Cummins
- WILL, Teaching and Learning – Shirley Gange
- Deputy Opines on Key Issues – Bonnie Durnford
- Trustee Pursues Love of Education Governance: An Interview with Gary Shaddock
- New LEADS Members
- Saskatchewan Literacy Commission: An Interview with Dr. Margaret Lipp
- Ile a la Crosse Unique Hospital/School – Dr. Bill Duffee
- Executive Director Remarks – Dick Nieman
- New LEADS Members
- Amalgamated Divisions: Newly Appointed Directors
- Mark These Dates
- Editorial Thoughts – Ernie Dawson

MARK THESE DATES IN YOUR DAYTIMER

- *Dealing with Difficult People: Practical Solutions to Real Problems – Norm Dray*
November 25, 2005 at Radisson Hotel, Saskatoon
Contact Fran Roberts at SELU – 966-7634
- *Appreciative Inquiry: A Process for Strengthening Local Capacity – Dr. Larry Sackney and Dr. Keith Walker*
November 30, 2005 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
December 1 & 2, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Radisson Hotel, Saskatoon
Contact Fran Roberts at SELU – 966-7634
- *LEADS Annual Policy Conference*
March 5 – 7, 2006
Delta Bessborough, Saskatoon
- *11th National Congress on Rural Education*
March 26 – 28, 2006 at Radisson Hotel, Saskatoon
Featured presenter: Susan Aglukark
- *LEADS Summer Short Course*
Hawood Inn, Waskesiu
August, 2006



Viewing Learning From Wide Open Spaces....

A summertime conversation with LEADS colleague Bryan Tallon prompted a search for more information about a student airplane building project in southern Saskatchewan. The LEADER magazine thanks Lee Cummins, Director of Education of Gull Lake School Division for providing details and pictures of this remarkable multi-divisional educational effort.

One of the most interesting aspects of working in education comes when we examine the “open spaces”, the silver linings, or the opportunities for creativity within structure and conformity. In the spring of 2002, one of those opportunities began to emerge and now, in 2005 the project is complete and we’re flying high.

In a somewhat casual conversation focused on the opportunities within the Practical and Applied Arts curriculum, I asked John Stock and Terry Kelln, teacher and principal of Tompkins School, “If you could do any unit of study with children in the PAA area what would you elect to offer?” With only a moment of reflection the response was, “...we would build an airplane.”

Knowing that the Gull Lake School Division, Board of Education, embraced diversity and enjoyed providing opportunities for students, and realizing that curriculum was the guide for learning that contained many more possibilities than one might initially think possible, our adventure began. Were the foundational and learning objectives achievable through a theme or project? Indeed, in the spaces created amid these objectives there was enough room to launch the airplane project, and enable students to receive credit for PAA courses.

From the educational and instructional leadership view, I saw my role as one that required understanding of the potential available in the curriculum, the potential that teachers have to work creatively, and the potential that the Board of Education has to create learning opportunities for students. To view learning and curriculum in only a traditional and predictable fashion begets traditional and predictable learning and educational experiences. To sneak in, examine the spaces, and create learning environments that are out of the ordinary was what we were after.

So rather than reviewing the curriculum objective by objective in their “typical” strands we began to consider the building of an airplane as the theme and looked for ways and means of tying that to aspects of the PAA curriculum. It’s there. Without question it works...and it provides such a seemingly new opportunity to learn. I think the difference is that to some degree, we began by exploring the spaces, an area that doesn’t really seem to be there, something that really isn’t obvious, and in that we found a remarkable opportunity, and one that the students and staff embraced wholeheartedly.

Often we talk about taking risks and supporting people when they have creative ideas, ideas that are apart from the norm. Generally speaking, these creative or different endeavors are the ideas that are more difficult to convince all stakeholder groups to support. It seems to me that much of the success of the airplane project is rooted in the passion and knowledge base that was held



Leila Cummins

by the teachers, and the willingness of the Board of Education to embrace, “the space”, trust their professionals, and provide a unique opportunity for students.

Ideas like these are sometimes, “what if” away. A conscious decision and commitment to celebrating success, and a, “go with runners” mindset, has guided our school division through a number of creative endeavors. The Board celebrates diversity and talks about opportunities for students that are apart from the norm on a regular basis. They spend their energy on what might be possible rather than on why it might not be possible. And then they put supports in place so it can be accomplished.

Additionally, they make it possible for all students in our area to take part in the learning by extending invitations to neighboring school divisions to participate. In the case of the airplane project, students from Swift Current, Rockglen, Gull Lake (Tompkins) and Hazlet Schools participated in the project. It required reconfiguration and flexibility in regular timetabling (which are not always easy to get), transportation arrangements that extend the traditional format, and teachers and community members who worked together to fill the learning space with an unforgettable project.

“Thinking outside the box” took on a new set of wings, in leadership, in teaching, in learning and in the final results of the project, both figuratively and literally.

Students who participated in the airplane project:

- Brett Knoss - Rockglen
- Wade Fernquist - Gull Lake
- Jason Cote - Gull Lake
- Mark Forsyth - Gull Lake
- Daryl Winter - Gull Lake
- Jim Willman - Gull Lake
- Kent Davies - Gull Lake
- Taylor Erdelyan - Hazlet
- Kyle Shaw - Hazlet
- Rory Ellis - Hazlet
- Rylan Anderson - Hazlet
- Arlyn Anderson - Hazlet
- Orrin Robertson - Hazlet
- Chad Andrews - Hazlet
- Heather Schwartz - Swift Current
- Thomas Olney - Swift Current
- Trent Peters - Swift Current
- Nathan Reimer - Swift Current
- Kirby LeBruno - Swift Current

Teachers who worked on the project:

John Stock and Terry Kelln

Community members who assisted with the project:

Brian Line and Kent Nelson

Create...Reward...Learn



John Stock is assisting students Jason Côté and Mark Forsyth with the building of the wing.



Wade Fernquist is working on the tail section of the airplane.



Bryan Line, a community helper, working with Kent Davies



Parts of the airplane before construction began.

These pictures show stages in the assembly of the airplane. The lower two pictures indicate the skin being held securely in place with clecos before the rivets were in place.



Executive Director's Report: THE ROAD AHEAD

As we near the end of celebrations of Saskatchewan's 100th Birthday we look ahead to Saskatchewan's future and ponder its possibilities for the twenty-first century. In many ways, Saskatchewan's future looks very bright. On the economic front we see record returns on oil and gas resources, jobs creation, employment rates, mining and manufacturing growth and hope in the agricultural sector despite difficulties with the harvest weather. Many of us enjoy the riches and bounty of our province. Yet we know very well that we have much work to do to address child and family poverty, and racism. Drug addiction among our youth, particularly the abuse of crystal methamphetamine is exacting a terrible toll in both rural and urban Saskatchewan.

A good place to start the forward look is the announcement of a Literacy Commissioner for the province, an appointment which highlights the importance of literacy in the success of each citizen.

The press release emphasizes that efforts will "concentrate on the life-long development of essential skills through early learning and child care initiatives, in formal K-12 education, in apprenticeship programs, in post-secondary education and skills training, adult basic education, learning in the workplace, family literacy and senior years literacy". This is truly an initiative to promote life-long learning.



Dick Nieman

A long list of other societal issues is brought to the doorsteps of our schools. Some schools can handle many; others require assistance and there may be some where schools can have little impact.

We need to be very clear in terms of where we are going and where we want to be. We need to have a common vision and an understanding of our common purposes. This will require leadership at the provincial level, at the school division level and at the educational interorganizational level.

This is the promise and hope of restructured school divisions. The new divisions are a response to the changing demographic realities in our prov-

ince. But that alone is an insufficient reason for doing what we are doing. I hope that through these efforts we are building capacity to address those challenges. We need to assemble our financial and human resources in such a way that the synergy permits our ability to respond effectively. I have growing nervousness when public comments are made about restructuring saving us money. If that was the purpose, there may have been alternatives. I truly hope that the real reason for doing this is to create a greater capacity of the system.

A very important piece to achieving equity for students and equity for taxpayers is a review of the Foundation Operating Grant. The Minister assured us on May 20, 2004 that, "Saskatchewan Learning will work with stakeholders to develop a new system of school operating grants that is simpler, fairer and more transparent with a renewed focus on providing more equitable per pupil grants." In addition the Minister said, "I am also directing the Department of Learning to develop a new process of provincial funding of the school system." To date, little apparent progress has been made on this front. It is time to address this matter and to bring greater equity to the system.

First, we collectively need to commit to the principles and belief statements in the Good Practices & Dispute Resolution Report. There is agreement among the educational partners at the provincial level. We need that same level of agreement and commitment to exist at the local level. As divisions create or recreate school division cultures, they must be inclusive and based on the principles of collaboration.

As we chart new territory and tackle new problems, our commitment to a common set of beliefs will guide us in our decision making and we will create a system truly in the interests of students.

LEADS EXECUTIVE 2005/2006

President – Dr. Vance Mokelky
President-Elect – Marc Danylchuk
Harold Laich – Region 1
Joanne Weninger – Region 4
Janine Otterson – Region 6
Dr. Sandra Hill – Region 2
Evelyn Novak – Region 4

Ben Grebinski – Region 3
Alan Sharp – Region 5
Dolores Wagner-Owens – Region 3
Austin Gerein – Northern Region
Patricia Roe – Public Representative
Dick Nieman – Executive Director



Shaddock – All Around the Circle

Over the years members of LEADS have attended conferences, workshops, seminars and myriad functions with thousands of stakeholders, have been impressed with their passion for public education and have marveled at their dedication in what must be one of the lowest paying roles in the country. The truth is that no school board member has ever become rich being a trustee. Remuneration does not drive trusteeship.

Over the years LEADS members have become familiar with some of the prominent trustees, those who have assumed more public positions within their own association.

One of those, whose history as a trustee traces back to 1985, is Gary Shaddock, currently chair of the board of education of the newly formed South West School Division. Shortly after he was, by his own description, nearly finished the harvest on his farm in the south of Saskatchewan the LEADER magazine caught up to Shaddock at a Saskatchewan School Boards Association workshop on Strategic Policy Governance in Saskatoon. The purpose was to learn about his work as a trustee, his motivation in staying involved and his reactions to the reorganization effort that is currently the focus of attention throughout the province.



Gary Shaddock

His work as a school board trustee began with the Local Board in Ponteix, in the far south of this province in 1985. After cutting his trustee teeth for three years Gary Shaddock was elected to the board of Shaunavon School Division in 1988, became chair from 1990 to 1997 and filled his time with service as Branch Rep, vice-chair and chairperson of the South West Branch until he became Vice-President and President of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association. During that time he was also president of the Canadian School Boards Association. Small wonder then, that given his long involvement in trusteeship at all levels that he was asked to join Craig Melvin and Shirley Gange as a member of the LAPP (Local Accountability and Partnerships Panel).

Shaddock traces his long and continuing participation in public education this way. "It followed the 1991 Scharf-Langlois Report on School Finance and Governance. I became a member of the SSTA Task Force on Restructuring and Amalgamation. That sort of got me going on the bigger picture."

At one point Shaddock thought that

his work as a trustee was finished. It was his participation on the LAPP that whetted his appetite to continue in the governance role.

"After I was past president of the School Boards Association, four boards in the South West were in the process of talking about possible amalgamation so I let my name stand as a board member for another three year term. That was going to be it, until I got involved with the LAP Panel, traveled around the province and saw what the potential was, in what was likely coming down the pipe. I decided to let my name stand for the new South West Board on June 15."

"I think there is a lot of potential for K-12 education in this province. Everyone has been trying to provide the best education they could but it became much more difficult over the past few years to provide what we would call a high quality education because of the dropping student populations and budgetary problems. The money just wasn't there unless the mill rate increased. The amalgamations will provide the children with better opportunities and more options. Staff in the

schools and the central offices will be able to deal with some of the concerns and issues that we may not have been able to deal with properly or as efficiently as we may have wanted. We are now going to have the opportunity to provide specialists where previously we had generalists, who had to be jacks of all trades."

"I am very optimistic. I think technology is going to help considerably. Where we can't have face to face contact with all of the students; technology is going to help that by providing options to students and teachers."

How do you deal with the skeptics? "It doesn't matter what you do, you will always run into naysayers. You just have to be patient and explain what can and will happen. In a year or two the results will alleviate most of the concerns."

Will it save money? "Only in as much as the money will be redirected. There is always a concern about increased administration, a new bureaucracy, if you will. There has to be a concerted effort to ensure that the students are the beneficiaries of the new organization."

"There is going to be some need for windshield time. Our divisions are now so large that instead of driving up to 100 miles for a meeting we will have to

use technology to enhance the meeting possibilities. We won't be able to expect so much face to face time as we once did. That is really the old way of dealing with issues and it really comes down to changing a paradigm. It will take some getting used to, but we will be able to change the way we work."

"In the South West we have 63 schools, 30 of them Hutterite schools. That, of course will pose specific challenges for our structure. We have about 40% of the Hutterite colonies in the province located in our new school division and the numbers will grow as the colonies continue to split. It means we have a real diversity in our school division and, like every other new division, we will have to deal with that creatively, no matter what the diversity is."

Is local engagement going to work? "It is going to take time, but it will. School Advisory Committees will become the vehicle for parent and community involvement at every school. They will provide valuable and necessary input. It won't happen overnight, but if boards of education spend time encouraging the new approach, it will certainly speed up the process. There is a big need for local communities to become involved in schools. If the senior administration of the school divisions encourages community involvement then the principal is more likely to be a booster of involvement in his or her local school. And the reality is that if the day-to-day practice in a school community, or more broadly

in the division itself, is more inviting then the culture of involvement will build from that."

Shaddock has been around school board tables for a long time. He has sat with the executives of both provincial and national school board organizations so one could expect him to have ideas about what might be the ideal when it comes to creation of a school division. He responded to that query by saying, "...clearly we will need a larger share of the costs of public education to be borne by the province. The non-parent part of the taxpaying public needs to see the benefits of the school division, no matter what size it is. I think that we should expect that no more than 30 per cent of the financing should come from the local tax base, but that part is important in order to maintain some board flexibility throughout the province."

He suggests as well that students should have some regular and meaningful contact with the new boards of education in Saskatchewan. "At the least the LAPP anticipates student seats on the School Advisory Committees, but it is not out of the realm of possibility that some students could be members of boards of education either, as they do in Ontario," he said.

In addition to pushing for meaningful contact with parents and community members in every school he feels very strongly that all boards of education

must create closer ties with other agencies serving the needs of students and their parents. "We need to get past the hurdles of exclusive use of information; we need to serve our students and their families, not keep important information from each other and thereby disallowing appropriate attention to student needs," he said, "...it comes down to not forgetting about SchoolPlus and its wonderful potential."

Boards of Education, the School Boards Association, senior administration and staff are all critical players in this effort, he said. "Good things have happened in the school divisions that are being disestablished and we should remember that we don't have to reinvent the wheel for everything; we can learn from what other jurisdictions have done well, not just in this province and emulate that."

Gary Shaddock recognizes that a huge amount of work lies ahead of every new system administration once the teams are selected. The same applies to boards of education. His advice? "Don't run away from change. Remember that static is not improvement; relish change and maintain a positive attitude."



STUDENT TRUSTEES? ... REALLY?... YES, IN ONTARIO

Student Trustees chosen by members of the York Region Presidents' Council (all Student Council Presidents in York Region public secondary schools) act as a liaison between the school community and the Board.

Student Trustees give the student population a meaningful voice in Board deliberations and act as a conduit for information and ideas between trustees and the student body. Candidates must be full-time York Region District School Board students, 16 years or older, have strong academic standing and outstanding leadership and communication skills.

Student Trustees sit at the Board table, participate fully in the discussion portion of public board meet-

ings and provide a Student Trustee report, included as part of the official Board minutes. Student Trustees do not vote on matters before the Board for consideration.

York Region District School Board policy on Student Trustee Guidelines, governs the role of Student Trustees during their term on the Board. York Region trustees approved in principle, over a year ago, the appointment of two Student Trustees per school year. The first Student Trustees' term commenced in August, 2004 and concluded at the subsequent July board meeting.



Shirley Gange on Amalgamation and Taiwan Teaching and Learning

Superannuate Shirley Gange addressed the WILL (Women in Leadership in LEADS) group at the LEADS Summer Workshop in Waskesiu this past summer. Her remarks, ranging over an array of matters related to education have been edited to reflect a broader readership. We thank Shirley for making her material available to all readers of the LEADER magazine.



Shirley Gange

WILL was a very special group for me during my stint in senior administration. My only regret is that it came so late in my career. I was at our first gathering in Regina, and what I remember most is that it was the first time I could share some of my difficulties and dreams. We shared our stories and what a wonderful opportunity that was. I knew of the camaraderie our male counterparts shared and envied their telephone conversations that usually took place before the business of the day. I had no such contacts before WILL.

One of the great things about retirement is that I have opportunity to reflect on past times. I golfed in the Superannuated Teachers golf tournament this spring and I have curled in the Superannuated Teachers bonspiel. I have even taken up skating as we live on a lake and it is great fun to keep a path clear for skating. I try to limit stresses in my life and golf is my greatest stress this summer.

I was asked if I would share with you my experiences as a director with amalgamating boards of education. What can I say about that? Well for one thing, while working with the Local Accountability and Partnerships Panel and making our way across this province, one trustee ask me if I would be interested in applying for a position as an interim director for a new board. I said that a person should only have to do that once in a lifetime, and I have had my turn. I have learned not to confuse my career with my life. My experience as a director with amalgamating boards of education was tremendous and I am forever grateful that I was able to support some very progressive board members, teachers, administrators, staff and parents in their endeavor.

There was no one group that can take the credit for the formation of the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division. It was a group effort with a common vision. We believed that we could improve the educational services for children through amalgamation. From what I see today as a grandparent and ratepayer, I still think we were right.

The journey was not easy, however. There are always

things that we would change if we could and nothing clears our vision more than an opportunity to look back.

As a director of a new school division, my efforts were focused on helping our board members create a new vision for a new division. This was not just four communities working together; this was one educational community.

The journey to creating new behaviors based on new beliefs was a lengthy one that had many side trails.

When our new board and its administration sat as a group, we were experts at “talking the talk” and espousing beliefs we wanted to hear. We could speak of the new entity as needing equity in the delivery of services. We could describe policy driven boards and the need to let administrators do the job of administration. But we all needed time to learn how to put these beliefs into action. Our board members had support from outside consultants but there was no such support for our administrative team. We were expected to make the change without support.

The problem as a new school division was that there were so many issues to tackle from local contracts to choosing services, from transportation to facility issues that the only efficient manner of handling those topics was through committees. And here is where trouble was waiting to happen. Old behaviors, cronyism, pet peeves and all those hidden beliefs were just waiting to jump out and scuttle the process. Our vision was sometimes lost when we worked separately. It was almost impossible to monitor all the committee work and the train was wont to jump the track more times than one could possibly imagine.

The key was communication and of course the need to provide time and support for our administrative team. We did take the time to talk with all the partners, to keep written documentation of what the board had identified as its vision and purpose and we did present it to every meeting. My perspective in looking back is that we needed to do more for our administrative team. Perhaps this is an area for LEADS and WILL to consider in the coming year.

Because I live in the north of our province it is fitting to use a northern analogy in thinking about the change you are entering. When there is change in a forest either through logging or fire, we can think of it as disaster or as an opportunity to plant new trees; do the right thing, do it big and do it with flare. You are now the pioneers in education and we need to think of this change as an opportunity. Trust your intuition; it is that great mixture of experience and knowledge that all of you possess.

I am going to share a story with you about intuition and my opportunity to test it.

My husband, Howard and I decided to teach English as a Second Language in Taiwan. We did this less than a year after my retirement; Howard had been retired for about six years by this time. I could tell so many stories about the total experience of living in a different culture, about my time in the schools, our travel in Asia and much more, but I want to share my story about a successful teaching and learning experience.

I believe three things about learning. **First, we start the learning process too late.** Children are able to learn at a much younger age than 5 but not in the formal atmosphere of the traditional classroom and certainly not with the same time commitment. **Second, parents are the primary teachers of young children.** It is only when the parents become partners that true success in learning will occur. **Third, learning must be enjoyable to both teachers and students.**

At the time of retirement, I regretted being caught in an educational model that stifled my intuition and feared I would never have the opportunity to try a new model.

My teaching of English in the bushiban was fairly standard in Canadian terms. The original director of the program was from Edmonton so the model of Canadian education, complete with texts, was imported to Taichung. Once I was in my classroom, I was able to make changes but the children were all over 6 years of age and because of the language barrier and the fact that the school, like Canada, was more of a child

care institute, there was limited contact with parents. They certainly weren't partners in teaching and learning. My two exchanges with parents were limited to one telling me that I should hit the child if he did not answer questions correctly and the second was a situation where I learned that the first born boy in a family could do no wrong. That was one of many interesting perspectives into the Taiwanese culture.

One day as I was checking out a small store close to our apartment, a gentleman who called himself Johnson approached me. He had seen me in the community, determined that I was a teacher and he was looking for a teacher for his daughter, Peggy. Johnson had limited English speaking skills but enough that we were able to communicate. Peggy was three. To begin with, I saw this as an opportunity to meet a Taiwanese family and to learn more about the people. I told him that I would be pleased to meet his daughter and wife and perhaps we could discuss how I could teach Peggy some English words and he in turn would share information about the Taiwanese way of life.

When the group grew to 10 families in the next week, I knew that I had to change how I would teach the children. This was my opportunity to work with young children and their families. I divided the families into two groups. Each group would meet with me for about an hour, twice a week. Parents must come with the children and if there were younger children, they should come as well. I would teach songs, poetry and games to the parents and they could teach the children at home.

I had a wonderful time. Our apartment had a large unfurnished room where I decorated the walls with posters and kept stools to use as chairs, a few toys, and five large cardboard boxes. The boxes became vehicles for the children as we sang the "wheels on the bus – all around Taichung". We marched to the rhythm of the nursery rhyme, "to market to market to buy a fat pig". The parents enthusiastically joined all of the lessons. A chef of the largest hotel in Taichung, dentists, teachers, and computer experts were all there

twice a week, learning English with their children who ranged in age from about 2 ½ to 3 ½ years. Fathers took time off work to join us and one family brought their nanny. Two families brought babies as I had requested and to all these children, I became grandma. Considering the fact that I had left five grandchildren at home, it was a thrill to become part of these families.

The wonder of this experience is that I began the program in November and by May the children had all surpassed the parents in their spoken English skills. I was off traveling twice during that time but I left a homemade tape for the children and parents, so the learning did continue. When I left them in May, most of the children were speaking in complete sentences with no foreign accent. The parents did not learn so quickly but were delighted with their children's progress. I think the person that was the most impressed, however, was my husband Howard. The children and I often had long discussions about the things they saw around them and even the babies, who were just at the crawling stage, were using English words along with their Taiwanese vocabulary. The children continued to develop their native language skills at the same rate and one little fellow learned Hacka, a native Taiwanese language, and could switch from one language to another so he had to be reminded that his Canadian grandmother could only understand English.

We know that children are able to learn language most efficiently when they are very young, but I believe that there were other factors to consider with this teaching/learning experience.

The first and most important was the parent as a partner in learning. Now you know where I am going with this concept. The Taiwanese parent has a much greater reason for giving his child the best learning experience he can and most of these parents considered this as getting a "leg up" on other children. English is taught in all Taiwanese schools but it is not started until the child is in grade four and it does not result in children having good English speaking skills. The children are often sent to English schools after

a full day in school and their full day at school is much longer than ours. Learning English before they entered school would give the child a much better rate of success and the Taiwanese have a testing system that begins as early as grade six that places children in streamed schools. The competition is extreme. Parents will go to no end of effort to ensure the proper placement for their children. The child is the parent's investment. There are no social support programs in Taiwan and the ability of children to get a good paying job is a parent's security in old age.

I am not suggesting we repeat this experience in Saskatchewan but I want to tie some of this story to the work of the Local Accountability and Partnership Panel. I was delighted to be invited to serve on the Panel. I saw this as an opportunity to provide for change that could make a significant difference in the quality of education for children in our province. I want to share these dreams with you.

The report of the Panel has been presented to the Minister with his initial response being very favorable. We expect to see this report presented to the legislature soon and hope that it will come into effect along with the new boards of education in the New Year.

It comes as no surprise at all that the first of the criteria listed for the work of the Panel was that the framework was to enhance the learning outcomes for all students. We took this message very seriously.

The research is clear that the most effective support for learning comes from the family. To meet the needs of students from all types of families and backgrounds, we need to take a very different approach to creating family friendly schools and communities.

We cannot provide for the learning needs of children and youth through a handful of professionals and parent and community leaders. No one group can come up with simple, one-size fits-all answers.

Learning success for all students requires a greater degree of commit-

ted involvement, the kind of involvement that gives ownership to the people affected and encourages a sense of stewardship. When a whole community is involved in setting goals and finding ways to meet these goals, the community is more inclined to do whatever it takes to monitor progress and ensure success. My Taiwanese parents worked with their children singing the songs and playing the games even though they often didn't understand the language. They knew that I would take the songs and poetry and turn those into the spoken language for their children.

The Panel's recommendation of a School Advisory Committee will put in place a body at every school with a responsibility to engage parents and community in the education of their children and youth.

Our schools currently make use of a variety of parent/community supports that exist outside of legislation. Our recommendation that a School Advisory Committee be established at each school will replace all other legal entities including Parent Advisory Committees and Local Boards of Trustees. It is not intended to eliminate those groups that encourage parent and community involvement in the school as they, in fact, will support the work of the School Advisory Committees.

School Advisory Committees are seen as part of the education system. They work under the guidelines as established by the Board of Education but are held responsible for fostering positive, student focused and forward looking relationships among parents, the school and community. To accomplish their role within the education system they are treated as key partners and essential contributors to school planning and decision-making.

As policy makers, Boards of Education will play a key role in seeing that they are established and supported to fulfill their mandate. Senior administrators of school divisions will play a significant role by providing leadership and the necessary supports required to help these new entities function. Without the support of leaders such as you, this proposal for change in educa-

tion will be worthless. You are truly key players in making the School Advisory Committee a success.

A major element in supporting School Advisory Committees requires the building of high levels of trust and valuing the role of the lay voice as representing student needs and aspirations held for them. It is a process that requires patience, persistence, and support at the highest levels and willingness on the part of all to take risks, share power, and be accountable.

While the School Advisory Committee is envisaged in an advisory capacity for many areas in the life of the school, the Panel believes that there is a clear distinction between those areas that are seen as more properly a professional responsibility. For example, staff recruitment, selection, supervision and deployment are professional responsibilities. This does not preclude School Advisory Committees from having some input into advising professionals in the selection of staff. This advice would be limited to general criteria rather than suggesting or recommending individuals for the jobs.

This division of lay and professional responsibilities is also a helpful way of managing those complaints about school and staff issues that may be directed to School Advisory Committees. The Committees should not be involved in issues that relate to individual students, parents or staff of the school. In general, complaints or concerns that relate to the functioning of the Committee should be the only issues addressed to them. The development of a constitution, and perhaps a code of conduct, will help the School Advisory Committee in determining issues such as these.

One of the concerns frequently raised is the issue of SchoolPlus and its relationship to the School Advisory Committee. I still don't know if the formation of School Advisory Committees will finally bring our partners in health, social services and all other partners in what we used to call, "integrated services" into the school. We understand their dilemma. We are calling on them for help in the development of a prevention model and they are trying to

put out the fires. We all understand the pressures these services are under but we also know that we will never have success in the many supports for learning if we do not have their help.

The model for School Advisory Committees allows for representatives of these and other services to work with the Committees on an “as needed basis”. Let me give you an example of how this might work.

My teaching success in Taiwan was, for me, a demonstration of the vital role of parents in children’s learning. However, what I saw in their schools made me happy to call Saskatchewan home; it is the best place for my grandchildren to be educated.

The school staff working with the School Advisory Committee in the formation of a plan for school improvement may be advised to focus on only two areas for growth. One area should come from the learning program and the other from an area that is a support for learning. If we were working in an integrated fashion, one would assume that at least the learning program goal would be directed by the school division strategic plan, which in its formation will reflect the provincial focus. Can you see the benefit of having a province working together to focus on one area at a time for academic improvement?

The areas of support for learning provide more opportunity for individual school focus. So if a School Advisory Committee working with the principal and school staff were to select improving school attendance as an area of growth, would it not make sense for

other affected agencies to become partners? What impact might it have if the local business district representative or the manager of the mall became a partner in this endeavor? In other words, I think that the concept of the School Advisory Committee working in partnership supports the work of other agencies. We can only hope that we can start working together in a prevention model and reduce the number of fires that require our attention.

In my world, the health nurse would talk to parents about reading to children at the same time they are giving the first immunizations; the local hockey coaches would become involved in the work of the community in combating bullying and the teacher would become much more proactive in teaching skills to children that prevent the spread of infections.

My teaching success in Taiwan was, for me, a demonstration of the vital role of parents in children’s learning. However, what I saw in their schools made me happy to call Saskatchewan home; it is the best place for my grandchildren to be educated.

There is always a balance in celebrating our successes in education in Saskatchewan and making changes that sometimes involve taking big risks. On the celebration side, former members of LEADS who work in leadership posi-

tions outside of our province will tell you how much better we do things in Saskatchewan. On the other hand, we didn’t get to this level of success by doing what we’ve always done. We are prepared to find new and better ways of ensuring success in learning for our children and that means change.

Success is not an option; it is our purpose.

A hiker became lost while traveling in the south of our province and was greatly relieved when he came upon a small ranch. A former minister, who was more than happy for the company and the opportunity to help, owned the ranch. When the time came for the hiker to leave, and because he had to travel quite a distance, the rancher offered him a horse.

The rancher, being a former minister, said there was just one complicating factor. He had raised the horse and taught him to go on the signal, “thank God” and stop with the phrase, “amen.” Well the hiker thought that he could remember that so off he went with several “thank Gods”. He was galloping very quickly over the hills when he realized that he was headed towards a steep cliff and tried in vain to stop the horse with several “whoas” when he remembered to say “amen”. This brought him to an abrupt halt at the edge of the cliff. The hiker leaned back in the saddle, wiped the sweat from his brow and said, “Thank God”!

Don’t lean back in the saddle and please remember to learn the new vocabulary of your school division.

Readers of the LEADER magazine will be aware that the LAPP reviewed local engagement practices in many areas of this country as part of its work. Immediately after editing Shirley Gange’s piece, this quotation came to my attention in an internet search for an appropriate entry to fill a small space. Note the emphasis on development of new approaches. Ed.

“Even if I am not a customer of education, as a citizen I have views on education and a right to express them, as I have a duty to listen to others.... Of course it will be said that citizens are apathetic. Examples will be quoted of attempts to involve citizens that have failed. The low turnout in local elections will be quoted in confirmation of that apathy. But too often attempts to involve citizens are on the organisation’s terms. Little attempt is made to work with the grain of how people behave. Old tired forms of public meeting are hardly likely to generate public involvement. New approaches have to be developed based on an understanding of the reality of people’s attitudes and behaviour.”

– from John Stewart, “Thinking Collectively in the Public Domain”, Soundings, Autumn 1996, pp. 213-23.

Directors On The Future

During the past summer, usually a time of relaxation, many LEADS members were involved in selection activities of Saskatchewan's boards of education as they sought their new Director/CEO to lead the new public school divisions. Since then the LEADER magazine asked each of the twelve newly appointed Directors of Education to make a comment about their feelings as they head into this new format in education in Saskatchewan. Their statements follow.

In another place in this issue of the LEADER magazine we also identify two other new school divisions, the voluntary Catholic Separate jurisdictions and their directors. We also thank those directors for their cooperation and contributions.

What an exciting time in education in Saskatchewan!

Janet Casswell-Beckmann – West Central School Division No. 207



My colleagues in LEADS have been so cooperative in a relatively novel process of sharing information and comparing notes on a variety of circumstances. I look forward to that continuing. The learning experience to date has been positive. We are committed to shaping a system that serves students in our area in the best possible manner. Establishing and building relationships continues as we proceed through policy governance workshops, professional development activities and decision-making about what we want this new division to be.

Liam Choo-Foo – Chinook School Division No. 211



The task ahead is one of particular importance...it is rare, if ever, that an opportunity to make such critical change presents itself. We have a chance to build on present strengths and create something new that will better prepare all children in this province for success in a variety of life experiences. This "once in a career opportunity" is a daunting task but the rewards for all those involved will be worthwhile.

Bill Cooke – Saskatchewan Rivers School Division No. 201



Dr. Cooke has opted not to supply a statement of his feelings to the LEADER magazine.

Marc Danylchuk – Horizon School Division No. 205



This is a very sobering time. What lies behind us will soon be history – amazingly rich and storied, but history nonetheless. What lies before us is a tremendous "once in a life time" opportunity – to fashion a bright new model for education in Saskatchewan. God grant all of us associated with leading this change the wisdom, fortitude, foresight and the collaborative spirit required to "get it right" for our children and youth. It is incumbent upon all to creatively fashion this new model with collaborative precision and acuity combined with a flair for the artistic. To do anything less will simply be terribly insulting to the students and families whom we serve.

Brenda Edwards – Prairie South School Division No. 210



I feel very privileged and honoured to to become the first Director of the South Central School Division No. 210. This is a once in a lifetime gift to be able to influence and impact education for our students today and into the future on such a large scale. I always view challenge as an opportunity for growth and sincerely look forward to building something new.

Ron Ford – Battleford School Division No. 202



This amalgamation process is exciting! Professional opportunities such as this are seldom experienced. It is an opportunity to reinforce and enhance effective practices to strengthen student learning. It is an opportunity to help shape a division that respects, a division that cares and a division that appreciates the good fortune we have, the good fortune to serve students.

Evelyn Novak – Prairie Spirit School Division No. 206

Transition, as the psychological process that the person must go through to unplug from his or her old identity and become reoriented to the new one, I am thinking and experiencing, is the difficult aspect of our restructuring change process. This experience of the “wilderness” or neutral-zone, letting go of what we were about and creating something new, is awkward and uncomfortable, for some of us, I suspect. It is difficult to articulate, so giving our support, patience and understanding to one another is important. On the other hand, as the old reality disappears, we have a chance to create a new reality, an improvement, and that is the exciting and positive aspect of this transition that I hold on to and look forward to experiencing.



– schools and teachers – have the authority to do so, life in education where it matters most, the classroom, will not have changed that much at all.

David Steele – Regina District School Division No. 208

I see this position as an exciting, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a difference. The summer, however, seemed like an episode of ‘Survivor’. The province has taken the political action; we must make the administrative decisions that will result in better educational opportunities for students and creative work places for employees.



Dwayne Reeve – East Central School Division No. 204

The next few months for K-12 educators in Saskatchewan will be the most exciting and challenging times most of us have experienced in our careers. The opportunity to be a part of the group that leads this process is truly a privilege. We will be challenged to ensure everyone involved feels they were part of the process rather than innocent bystanders.



Glen Winkler – Northwest School Division No. 203

Amalgamation for the rural division will present many challenges and opportunities for education. Building culture and maintaining meaningful engagement with our partners across the larger geographic division will be an ongoing challenge, while the opportunity for 28 provincial school divisions to communicate a new vision for education in Saskatchewan is a great opportunity.



Don Rempel – South East School Division No. 209

The challenge for LEADS members will be to operate larger systems in ways responsive to the needs of schools and community. This means an investment in building the capacity of schools at the community level. There will be many challenges involved in creating a new culture, determining best practices, and managing a larger system, but if we begin with the assumption that all students can learn at high levels and that authority and responsibility are linked so that those responsible for getting the job done



Ivan Yackel – North East School Division No. 200

I encourage every one of us to rise to the challenge of the great opportunity that lies before us. We have been directed to be part of a great educational and social experiment and our single focus in all of it must be ensuring that meeting the needs of all students comes first.



POSITIVE THINKERS

The preponderance of positive thinking required to effectively change from a governance structure that encompassed small and shrinking boards of education into larger vital and dynamic school divisions is a gift to the students of Saskatchewan. Certainly there were early moments of doubt, clouds of uncertainty, skepticism and downright fear, but the emerging leadership of school

divisions, those hired to carry out these enormous changes implicit in such conversions deserve credit for their attitudes and their fortitude. The directors, whose positive outlooks are expressed in statements above deserve credit, but they will need enormous support from colleagues in LEADS. The early pictures emerging throughout the province show that happening. Good!

Ed

Saskatchewan Establishes Literacy Commission

In early September, Premier Lorne Calvert announced the formation of a Provincial Literacy Commission headed by former Assistant Deputy Minister of Learning, Dr. Margaret Lipp. Because of her history of involvement in many aspects of education in this province Dr. Lipp is very well known and highly respected for her work as a teacher, counselor, researcher and curriculum developer. She has been a long-standing Associate member of LEADS and a frequent contributor to workshops and conferences in her various roles, most notably with Saskatchewan Learning. She was interviewed recently for the LEADER magazine about her new work.

Listening to the new Literacy Commissioner for Saskatchewan, one could be forgiven, if he thought he had heard some of this before. One would absolutely be wrong if he suggested that what he thought he had heard before was tied to another *ho hum* been there, done that moment. Throughout a recent forty-five minute interview Dr. Margaret Lipp referred to the value of *Directions*, the seminal collaborative curriculum development work of the mid-eighties, Common Essential Learnings, SchoolPlus, and local engagement, the current headline grabber of the LAPP headed by Craig Melvin. She spoke with such fervor and enthusiasm that it seemed pretty well impossible for the work she heads to be anything but successful.



Dr. Margaret Lipp

scientific and technological literacies, in other words the blueprint for life and work success. We are really talking about the essential skills that a person needs to be successful in managing life and their contributions in terms of work.

In the K-12 world there will be a reemphasis on the Common Essential Learnings which, if matched up with literacies, are those that need to be developed in all young people. The CELs work done in the mid-eighties will be something the Commission will be turning to in new ways.

LEADS members, responsible for senior levels of administration can concentrate their efforts on teachers, parents, and community members understanding they are focusing their attention on ensuring that young people have the outcomes we are looking for in basic literacy. All of the national, international, provincial level testing programs are looking to ensure that young people in our system are developing their literacy and we are looking to see that they are coming out of our

systems with the competencies that we are focusing on; we are evaluating in terms of indicators of the health of our system to determine that young people are actually achieving those outcomes that we had actually planned for them. A fundamental piece would be the development of those basic literacies. It's not a new thing for LEADS members, but a refocusing on what young people are learning and how that will make them successful in their lives. We want to be able to say to the people of Saskatchewan that our young people are literate, competent in those essential literacies that we think are necessary for a successful life.

In the new school divisions the Commissioner suggests that LEADS members will be asked to take a leadership role in the work taking place with the School Advisory Committees associated with every school. Formation of these local advisory groups will require knowing what the communities' learning needs are and Lipp hopes that these committees will help to focus on literacy, so that community literacy needs can be determined and that similarly they can pay attention to the children in each school regarding their needs. LEADS members will put a focus on literacy that they want these committees to focus on as a first order of business.

We should see advocacy groups developing in every community and they will look at whatever they can do to support the development of literacy in the community and the school. This will give LEADS members a chance to shape what goes on in the school division to respond to literacy needs of people in the community, not just the children in the school. In my role I am going to be trying to develop in every community advocates for literacy that will be helpful for the school just as we now have

Literacy seems like such a simple concept, but listening to Margaret Lipp permits an understanding that the myriad interpretations of literacy need to be focused to really understand what will be the work of the Commission. Members of the twelve person commission, reflect various interest and advocacy groups in Saskatchewan. Their task will be to provide relevant advice and encouragement to the Commissioner and her staff to achieve their goals of improved literacy, not simply in K-12, but certainly emphasizing the enormous contribution that our public system has for improved literacy for all citizens in this province.

Lipp defines the concept this way. *The Literacy Commission is going with a definition that is a very broad understanding of literacy, meaning multiple literacies and we are focusing attention on what is called essential skills, essential learning and the skills that are necessary for you to live your life. We are talking specifically of numeracy, and literacy as we have always understood it, and we are also talking about*

advocates for early learning and child care closer to the school. The schools will be centers of literacy for the community. School advisory committees, in bringing information to the school will be focusing on family literacy, library literacy initiatives and so on. LEADS members will be looking at their divisional resources, such as Community Net connections and bringing other resources into their schools for adult learners, but also using the supports that are present in all of those schools to shape them as learning centers for all of the community.

Community input to schools isn't just a series of demands; the schools, because they already have a literacy agenda can put something back into the community and on the other hand the community can suggest what it could provide to

There are lots of indicators that I will be aiming for, but they will really fall out of the long range planning that I am doing for the Literacy Commission.

help schools to meet their needs.

*It is very clear the new work now dominating her efforts is part of a big picture for Margaret Lipp. Several times she emphasized how important it is, and will be for Saskatchewanians to see how it all ties together, from the school to the local workplaces, to the community to the division and from there to the entire province. She said, *The Literacy Commissioner position is really a wonderful opportunity to capitalize on everything that I have worked on in my career. It is something that is waiting here to happen. To take a literacy agenda to the community level in Saskatchewan we need to be working with the schools. Through the e-learning world the Regional Colleges can work their Basic Education agenda back into the school system. We want to see connections in all schools in the province. Now is the time to make those connections.**

Education Industry Councils will help us get connections to the workplace to assist with student transitions. New school divisions and LEADS members can organize these at community and school division levels to give practical application to students at the secondary school level. It will take people in

LEADS to support an active involvement of secondary students in particular out there in the workplace making those kinds of reinforcements of their skills, making their education relevant to them. Then we will be really fostering the notion that we tap into the community, where we live preferably. The Local Advisory Committee could help us find meaningful workplaces to support the students find practical application of their school-based learning. It all works together.

Success measures to determine her effectiveness will be many, she suggests. Literacy will be piggybacked on agendas of every department of government and a measure of that will be memoranda of understanding she is able to sign with those departments. Literacy mandates in all of the gov-

ernment departments will be a sign of success. The K-12 system will be urged to open new pathways to certification in many domains. Policy development featuring literacy agendas in many areas will be pursued actively. Indicators of success will be what has actually been developed, not just what can be done in a hopeful kind of way. Bursary support for early childhood specialists, SCN features and technology opportunities for teachers to improve their credentials will be used as well.

There are lots of indicators that I will be aiming for, but they will really fall out of the long range planning that I am doing for the Literacy Commission.

Literacy is becoming a focal point for other jurisdictions in Canada as well, according to Lipp. Through the Council of Ministers of Education it has been brought into sharp focus for each province and territory with literacy one of three priorities (along with aboriginal education and post-secondary capacity building) having a dominant place in every jurisdiction's planning. That is supported by labor market ministers who have made literacy/essential skills high on their agenda. OECD has made it a priority and the newly formed

Canadian Council on Learning has made it a focus. All of this, Lipp suggests goes back to Canada's apparent drop in standing as a most desirable place to live, a decrease in our standards of living and the accompanying attention to literacy. International testing shows a slow decline in Canada's results and all of these things draw attention to our work in literacy. Ontario and B.C. have either established or made plans for literacy secretariats within their education departments.

The Literacy Commission has been given resources that the Department of Learning has always been spending on literacy development along with an additional amount this year to establish the commission and a further on-going commitment to enable the commission to operate year by year as part of base budget. Further, an innovation fund will be grown over the coming years. At the moment \$1.1 M will be allocated to her work in the Commission.

Her office will be located on the twelfth floor of the Conexus Building in Regina.

Lipp claims she will use any tools at her disposal to get done the work of the Commission. It will be about building relationships, partnerships, using channels now available and establishing new ways to make gains in literacy, she said.

Lipp concluded by emphasizing that the work is broader than K-12, but because K-12 plays such an important role at the heart of the community it will be a very important part of the success of literacy development within the larger community. Developing literacy skills for those who have not yet become literate, or who were previously unsuccessful in school, by encouraging them either to return to school or to participate in community programs will be a major part of the work of schools.

Her enthusiasm for the work is obvious. LEADS members are encouraged to contact Dr. Lipp for information or suggestions about their involvement with her work.



Separate Systems Amalgamate

Minister Thomson's announcement that public and rural school divisions will be involved in large scale amalgamations and the eventual release of "the map" meant that the world around existing separate school divisions would be changing – and in a big way. Long-standing relationships with neighbouring public boards would, by necessity, be changing as well.

The Minister's request of the fourteen Catholic divisions to voluntarily reduce their number to eight or nine meant that the separate boards would not be immune to the change which has engulfed the public and rural boards around us. A look at the map of the existing Catholic school divisions suggested some natural geographical groupings into larger regional divisions – albeit on a scale of about one third, on average, that of the new public school divisions. As we all know by now, natural geographic boundaries do not necessarily come free of political resistance – which is often deeply rooted in history. Overcoming such resistance often requires a tremendous amount of time, energy, patience, understanding, and compromise. Everyone is afraid of the unknown and of losing something they already have and this fear sometimes clouds the view of the opportunities such change can bring. While our particular amalgamation came about voluntarily, that is the only really identifiable difference from the public/rural amalgamations around us. I am truly gratified and excited that the three boards which have come together to form this new larger school division could work through their differences, withstand the forces opposed to the amalgamation, and embrace the vision of what, together, they could become.

I very much look forward to the challenges and opportunities this bright new future brings and to all my colleagues

in LEADS and the new school divisions they lead, I wish all God's blessings for a smooth transition and success in creating new school divisions which will address the needs of students and families with an even greater degree of effectiveness than ever in the past.

Brian Boechler – East Central Catholic Separate School Division No. 212



The amalgamation of Saskatoon Catholic Schools with St. Alphonse in Viscount, St. Gabriel in Biggar and Humboldt Catholic schools will be a win-win situation in terms of learning from each other. We will have more resources to share with our rural partners and we know they will have ideas and resources to bring to our school division. There will be increased support for our students and their families. Amalgamation of Catholic School divisions will strengthen Catholic Education in Saskatchewan. Together we are better!

Helen Horsman – St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20



LEADS WELCOMES NEW PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE

LEADS has a new public representative on its executive. Since the departure of Norm Rebin in May of 2004 the public representative position has been vacant. Now, with an Order in Council appointment Patricia Roe of Saskatoon has been named to the executive.

Patricia Roe was born in Regina and has lived in Saskatoon since the early 70's. She took teacher training, but her work career has been in an administrative role in health care leadership. Currently she is Director of Development and Public Relations for



Patricia Roe

Sherbrooke Community Centre in Saskatoon, a leading facility for care and services to people with cognitive impairment and severe disabilities.

She is well known in Saskatchewan for her nine years on Saskatoon City Council, her lifelong commitment to community and volunteer associations in sport, culture and education.

LEADS welcomes Patricia Roe and thanks her for her willingness to serve on the executive.



Deputy Minister Muses on SaskLearning Initiatives and Amalgamation Activities

Building a culture of achievement for student learning

Saskatchewan's Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 12 education system has been through some major changes in the past few years. School Division Restructuring is the most significant structural education reform our province has undertaken in 60 years. This is the initial step toward the revitalization of our education system and the change has been orderly and productive. This is a testament to the professionalism of the stakeholders, and a strong indication that they have placed priority on providing a high quality education for Saskatchewan children.

The increase of people running for boards of education during the June election was very encouraging. The interest and enthusiasm is a positive sign that newly-elected board members will continue the historic commitment of trustees and board officials to our province's young people and to the education system as a whole.

This is an exciting time as we work together on this new venture to renew the province's education system for the future. Our collective efforts will create a solid foundation for excellence and innovations in the province's education system, ensuring every child and young person receives a high quality education and succeeds.

Review of the education system and the provincial picture

Saskatchewan's pre-kindergarten to post-secondary education system is at a critical crossroads. The province is experiencing changing social and labour market demographics. As we look to the future, we must focus on accessible high-quality programs and services, and on promoting and encouraging student achievement. The direction we take now will have a significant impact on future generations.

The Department of Learning, and partners in the Pre-K – 12 education system, are asking some important ques-

tions about our entire Pre-K through post-secondary system. Many of these questions have been shaped through discussion and planning processes undertaken by Minister Thomson. The objective has been to promote shared understanding of the current context and to set shared goals for the future. Minister Thomson's vision for education in this province is for programs and supports that are responsive, relevant and results-oriented.

A review of the Saskatchewan Training System, chaired by Douglas McArthur, former Minister of Education in Saskatchewan is currently underway in the province. As well, Saskatchewan Learning is conducting an Accessibility/ Student Financial Assistance Review. These reviews are part of an on-going effort to ensure that the post-secondary education system continues to meet the needs of learners by providing high quality programs, services and resources that are readily accessible to help learners succeed in their post-secondary programs and career objectives.

As education leaders, we are challenged to reflect on where we want to be in the future and to assess how the education system is benefiting students and communities, and the province as a whole. Making progress to strengthen the education system will involve all education stakeholders – including boards, teachers, parents, students and the department.

We need to guarantee that every individual has the opportunity to acquire literacy and essential skills that are key to economic and social inclusion. We need to make sure that there are accountability mechanisms at the local level that will allow community and parent input to shape the direction of our education system at the school division and provincial levels to maintain confidence in the system. We also need to develop seamless programming from pre-K to post-secondary to facilitate smooth transitions between all levels of learning and into the workforce.



*Deputy
Minister
Bonnie
Durnford*

Literacy – the foundation for lifelong learning

In today's knowledge-based economy, strong literacy skills are essential. Literacy is more than the ability to read and write. It is the ability to understand and use written information – at work, in the community and at home. Strong literacy skills are the foundation of lifelong learning. Literacy helps build a strong economy, a skilled workforce and a healthy province. People with good literacy skills enjoy a higher standard of living, have better opportunities for finding jobs, and are able to continue to learn new skills that will help them in the workplace.

SaskSmart is a new initiative designed to provide all Saskatchewan people with the basic literacies and essential skills they require in English, Mathematics and Science/Technology. The SaskSmart initiative and new Saskatchewan Literacy Commission initiative will help provide a strong, coordinated approach to basic literacy and essential skills for learners throughout life. It will raise the profile of literacy in the province, and ensure that children, youth and adults understand the relationship of their literacy levels to their success in work and life. High levels of literacy benefit individuals and society collectively.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Commission will develop and coordinate a comprehensive literacy strategy. Saskatchewan's Literacy Commissioner, Dr. Margaret Lipp and the Commission will work to raise awareness of the importance of high-levels of literacy for all Saskatchewan people. The Commission will bring together and

develop solid relationships with a broad range of individuals involved with literacy programming. Members of the Commission's Advisory Board will work with:

- the Saskatchewan Literacy Network
- educational Institutions
- First Nations and Métis peoples
- Libraries
- KidsFirst
- Business and industry
- Community-based organizations
- Adult Basic Education
- Volunteer organizations, and
- The research community

The Government is committed to building a bright future for all Saskatchewan people to have a chance to grow, develop and reach their potential. Literacy development makes it possible for people to participate successfully in the labour market and to create a better quality of life for themselves and their families. Literacy is the foundation of strong communities and a vibrant economy.

Raised expectations - community involvement

Saskatchewan schools have done much to engage parents and community members, with Community Schools and SchoolPLUS providing approaches for authentic involvement. A strategic and consistent approach is needed across all provincial school divisions and within every school.

The creation of larger school divisions highlights the importance of parents and community members in being actively engaged in the decision making of their boards of education. We are committed to ensuring that the development of larger divisions will not be at the cost of local involvement in the education system.

The Local Accountability and Partnerships Panel was asked in February by the Minister to consider and offer recommendations on how to provide a more coherent approach to developing partnerships at the school and community level. This review requires us to think about new models and new approaches to our parent and community engagement in schools

Education partners responded favourably to the Panel and had many opportunities for input. A number of key issues was discussed extensively with stakeholders. The Panel also conducted a review of relevant literature, investigated legislation and practices in Canadian provinces and territories, and held public consultations at seven provincial sites to gain grassroots insight of the current situation in communities and schools.

The Panel released its report in late September. The Minister is expected to respond to the Panel's recommendations later this fall after conducting an analysis of the recommendations and reviewing the response of the public and stakeholder groups.

The report contains a vision for the development of School Advisory Committees to be established in every school and 25 recommendations that speak to the roles and responsibilities of the Committees and their implementation.

The Panel's vision calls for Committees to be implemented in *all* schools and there is sufficient flexibility within the framework to meet individual community needs and preferences. The majority of people on these committees would be parents. Their focus for the new structures envisaged by the Panel would include coming to understand the community and its expectations, working cooperatively with the school to participate in the development of the school growth plan, and providing advice to boards of education. Committees would also approve fundraising activities and fees, and the code of conduct for the school community.

These Committees will need to engage parents and community members in a more meaningful way to address real issues affecting student well-being. For example, there may be issues such as bullying, child health/development, physical education, or immersion in arts and culture.

Implementation of the proposed School Advisory Councils would provide a concrete mechanism to enhance

accountability of boards of education for the engagement of parents and community members. The proposed structures would have the capacity to provide parents and community members in both urban and rural areas with a strong voice in the education of their children. As well, they would engage parents and community members in those aspects of education that have the greatest potential impact on improved student outcomes. LAPP also recommends that the School Advisory Committees be representative of the demographic make-up of the school population, and be responsive to individual differences in circumstance or culture, such as First Nations, Métis, rural/urban, special needs and minority faith students. Additionally, in all schools where First Nations students who reside on-reserve attend the school, there must be a First Nations representative on the Council.

Continuous improvement – advancing student outcomes

A Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 12 Continuous Improvement Framework will be introduced in the autumn of 2005 to accompany restructuring initiatives and focus attention on provincial and local priorities to improve learner outcomes. The Framework will apply to all Saskatchewan school divisions.

The Framework will address planning and accountability for all parts of the Pre-K-12 system and support a culture of innovation and change among Saskatchewan Learning, school divisions and schools. It will assist all stakeholders in working to improve student results by enhancing the ability of directors, trustees and School Advisory Committee members to establish, coordinate and monitor system and school priorities and actions. It will also enhance the ability of teachers and school administrators to guide improvements in instructional practice, staff development and school operations. Parents, students and community will better understand school and division operations and ways to participate in the improvement process.

The Improvement Framework will be developed as an iterative process and evolve over time. It will be implemented over a three year time period from

December 2005 to November 2008. Principles will be established to guide and support shared leadership and collaboration.

The Continuous Improvement

Framework will:

- focus on advancing student outcomes
- clarify the shared leadership roles and responsibilities of Saskatchewan Learning, school boards, school personnel and community
- introduce a planning, monitoring and reporting cycle to advance common system priorities
- support the alignment of school division operations with identified provincial and local priorities
- ensure flexibility to reflect local conditions and needs
- support effective staff development practices that use student data to improve instructional practice, and
- ensure relevant, consistent and timely financial and statistical information to support public reporting and school division and government decision-making.

The primary purpose of the pre-K-12 educational system is to ensure that students are prepared to be contributing citizens in a democratic and prosperous society. This requires the province and school divisions to focus energies on advancing student outcomes in four broad areas where:

- students attain high levels of achievement in a broad range of studies commensurate with ability.
- students demonstrate personal and social skills for well-being and citizenship.
- students attain high school completion.
- students make successful transitions to post secondary education and/or employment.

To assist in advancing these critical outcomes, Saskatchewan Learning will establish provincial measures for each outcome and provide division-specific information for each measure. These measures to be applied consistently

across the province will provide a core set of student outcome indicators to assess the progress of system improvement.

The Saskatchewan pre-K-12 education system is based on shared leadership and governance involving the province, boards of education, school personnel, students, parents and community. To focus system energy on improving student outcomes, the Improvement Framework will introduce an annual planning, monitoring and reporting cycle involving Saskatchewan Learning, boards of education and school level advisory committees. The cycle will enable all stakeholders to establish programming priorities, monitor their impact and report system priorities and resulting student outcomes to their respective publics.

As part of the planning process, school divisions will indicate the alignment of system priorities with required supports in human resources (staff deployment and development), infrastructure (material resources, facilities, information technology and transportation) and finance (budget allocation and reallocation). The impact of this work will be assessed against changes in student outcomes.

Saskatchewan Learning will also formally engage all school divisions in a bi-annual monitoring process to review local programming in relation to provincial policy direction and trends in student outcomes. The purpose of the monitoring is to support continuous improvement at the provincial and local levels. The process will be collaborative and solution oriented.

School divisions will prepare annual financial statements in compliance with Public Sector Accounting Standards. In addition, a summary statement will be included in the annual public reporting document as part of this framework. Financial reporting elements may be further refined following the Foundational Operating Grant Review.

Moving forward after amalgamation

We have the successes of amalgamated school divisions to serve as our guide through this important process.

Saskatchewan Rivers, Saskatchewan Valley and Qu'Appelle Valley are three excellent examples of how larger divisions have significantly enhanced programs for students, who continue to be the key stakeholders in everything we do as we continue to improve on the province's high-quality education system.

Separate school divisions are also to be commended for the leadership they have demonstrated in reducing numbers from 14 to 8. Saskatchewan Catholic Schools have embraced amalgamation as a medium to preserve, enhance, and support the distinctiveness of Catholic education in Saskatchewan and ensure its viability.

SaskSmart, the LAPP recommendations and the pre-Kindergarten – Grade 12 Continuous Improvement Framework mark the beginning of the most important step in the renewal of our education system and will raise issues about how we meet the needs of individual communities and cultivate positive relationships with emerging education governance while providing the same infrastructure for all.

The key will be the strength of the relationships between the parties involved. Boards of education, committees, parents, educators, and, of course, students will have to work closely together throughout the transition period for restructuring success. Divisions that have gone through voluntary amalgamation all agree; it is a tough process but the result is a more efficient, cost effective system enabling more resources to go directly to the students.

With the creation of the Holy Trinity Catholic School Division in 2003, comes a stellar example of how this process might play out. A steering committee comprised of Board members and administrators was formed and acted as an umbrella group to provide the framework for processes that led to their successful amalgamation. It was comprised of two subcommittees which dealt with educational planning and finance. With their guidance, the steering committee was able to make educated decisions. At the same time,

teacher groups formed a new Local Teachers' Association to create the new division's constitution.

The experience and guidance of voluntarily amalgamated divisions will be invaluable during the next few years as we complete the process of restructuring and bring Saskatchewan in line with governance structures in other provinces so students, no matter where they live, can benefit from attending schools that have the capacity to provide a full range of programs and services.

Cultivating relationships for success

Together we have the responsibility to ensure Saskatchewan students are provided with the opportunity to develop to their full potential and become dynamic members of economic and cultural life in Saskatchewan. As stakeholders, you have a unique and strategic vantage point from which to identify opportunities that work toward developing learning communities.

Broadly speaking, these communities will support professional development, provide resources needed for learning, and engage in community building to strengthen the province's education system. Restructured school divisions are providing the motivation for change, and a renewed structure on which to build on our strengths.

As we move forward, we must examine our outcomes, reflect on what the evidence tells us and put into action the improvements that will bring about the desired change. I look forward to further cultivating the strength of our relationships as we work together to ensure our education system is sustainable, responsive to our communities, relevant to our students, but most of all, guarantees the most positive educational outcome for all children in Saskatchewan.

Larry Steeves Appointed Assistant Deputy Minister

Larry Steeves was appointed Saskatchewan Learning Assistant Deputy Minister by Premier Lorne Calvert effective September 19, 2005.



Dr. Larry Steeves

Previously, Larry served as Deputy Minister for Saskatchewan Northern Affairs during 2004/2005 as well as having been appointed Assistant Deputy Minister for Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs in March 2002. Prior to that appointment, he served as the Director of Education for Estevan Public School Board No. 95 and of the Estevan Composite School Board.

Along with a strong commitment to public policy and public administration, Larry has wide ranging professional and management experience in government and in the education sector. He holds a PhD in Education Administration from the University of Saskatchewan, a Master's degree in Education from the University of Saskatchewan and Bachelor degrees in Education and in Arts from the University of Regina.



ON LEADERSHIP

Christina Baldwin

To work in the world lovingly means that we are defining what we will be for, rather than reacting to what we are against.

Lance Secretan, Industry Week, 10/12/98

Leadership is not so much about technique and methods as it is about opening the heart. Leadership is about inspiration—of oneself and of others. Great leadership is about human experiences, not processes. Leadership is not a formula or a program, it is a human activity that comes from the heart and considers the hearts of others. It is an attitude, not a routine.

More than anything else today, followers believe they are part of a system, a process that lacks heart. If there is one thing a leader can do to con-

nect with followers at a human, or better still a spiritual level, it is to become engaged with them fully, to share experiences and emotions, and to set aside the processes of leadership we have learned by rote.

Peter F. Drucker

Leadership is not magnetic personality—that can just as well be a glib tongue. It is not “making friends and influencing people”—that is flattery. Leadership is lifting a person's vision to higher sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations.

John Maxwell

The first step to leadership is servanthood.

LEADS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS



Bruce Baldwin
Assistant Superintendent
School Administrative Services
Regina School Division No. 4



Larry Bedel
Superintendent of School Services
Horizon School Division No. 205



Juanita Brown
Superintendent
Melville/Deer Park School
Division



Greg Enion
Assistant Superintendent
School Administrative Services
Regina School Division No. 4



Sheila Johnsrude
Superintendent
School Services
York School Division No. 36



Lisa Kuntz
Superintendent of Education
Holy Family School Division
No. 140



Kim Newlove
Superintendent of Schools
Saskatoon School Division No. 13



Morgan Reed
Supervisor of Student Services
Regina School Division No. 4



John Wandzura
Director of Education
Battlefords First Nations High School
Joint Board of Education
(Sakewew High School)



Mark Williment
Superintendent
Northern Lights School Division
No. 113



Celeste York
Acting Supervisor – SchoolPlus
Regina RCSSD No. 81



Jason Young
Superintendent
Northern Lights School Division
No. 113

LEADS AND SASBO FALL WORKSHOP CANDIDS



Darci Lang, keynote speaker and presenter urged delegates to get to know their employees, learn about their families, nurture them as individuals and celebrate the preponderance of positives in our work lives.



Dr. Larry Sackney, Professor of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan followed up on his major article in the last issue of the LEADER magazine with a break out session dealing with Reculturing of school divisions.



Craig Melvin, among the busiest retirees in the province reported to delegates on his work as the Chair of the Local Accountability and Partnerships Panel and its recommendations to the Minister of Learning.

Jim Shields – Superintendent of Finance and Administration – Prairie Spirit School Division No. 206, **Grant Drever** – Transportation Manager – Prairie Spirit School Division No. 206 and **Val Hvidston** – Supervisor of Transportation and Technology – North East School Division No. 200 told delegates about the benefits they have experienced running a board-operated transportation system.



George Rathwell and **Stan Laba** using a series of architectural charts presented to delegates on the topic of Facilities Management, something that will become more critical as new divisions undertake reviews of their facilities and determine how to rationalize all of the buildings that will be part of the amalgamated school divisions.



*Retired professor of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan, **Dr. Red Williams**, at eighty years of age still vitally interested in making this province and country great places to live presented to his break out group on the theme of rural economic development and sustainability in rural Saskatchewan.*



*Regional Director of Education **Darlene Thompson**, an original member of the Good Practices and Disputes Resolution Committee introduced the topic to a large audience in the Top of the Inn by providing the background and context of that work.*



***Kevin Tunney**, now a member of the implementation committee working towards the emplacement of practical approaches to Good Practices and Disputes Resolution province-wide, worked his audience through a series of scenarios intended to emphasize the value of working with, instead of against partners.*

*President of the University of Saskatchewan **Dr. Peter McKinnon** kept his appointment to address a plenary session of delegates with an insightful and encouraging look at the priorities and successes of the University. Then, he hurried off to the airport for another engagement in Regina.*



***Members of the Thompson/Tunney presentation group** worked with good humor and ultimately with positive results in problem solving a visual puzzle presented to them at the beginning of their session. The smiles indicate success in solving the puzzle.*

A School and a Hospital in One Building? Yes, In Ile a la Crosse

A casual springtime conversation with Ile a la Crosse Director of Education Bill Duffee about matters in that northern community became the genesis of the article that follows. Bill shares his enthusiasm about a large capital project with readers, and goes beyond that with his insights into what building such a large structure has meant for the thinking that typically surrounds construction projects and those involved.

Philosophies espoused by Community Schools in Saskatchewan and School^{Plus} and the movement toward integrated service delivery through partnerships have had a significant impact on the direction for this project for the Ile a la Crosse School Division. The provision of services to students and the community will be much enhanced as a consequence of the partnership approach to design, construction and service delivery that will result from this integrated facility.



Dr. Bill Duffee

When, in 2000-2001 Ile a la Crosse was informed that a new high school was imminent and St. Joseph's hospital was scheduled to be replaced, the School Division requested a dialogue with the planning committee from St. Joseph's Hospital. From that meeting arose the concept of a joint-use facility, a facility that would house both a high school and a health centre, where education and health professionals would work together to provide the community with a range of services accessible within one building. It was not long, however, before discussions led to suggestions for expansion of participants and services that could logically be part of such a facility. So it began.

The first step was to convince potential participants that such a facility was viable and there were sufficient commonalities between a health centre and a high school to warrant such a plan. The second, was to work through the issues that would arise in getting two provincial departments to work together and in working through two significantly different planning, funding and design processes. Third, was to select an architect who could envisage such a building and lead the partners through a design process. Fourth, came the development of what we termed a capital agreement and, fifth, finally after four years, the construction stage. However, construction is far from the end of the story – operational agreements, “how we live together” agreements, separate unions working together agreements, maintenance, security, technology, leases with other partners and so on are still to come.

The first step, however, was extremely exciting – what an opportunity to sit down with another department and service provider to explore how we could come together to make such a facility a reality. The first question was, “why would we want to do something that appeared foolish to many?” So, we had to sell it, which, as it turned out, after people had an opportunity to think about it, was not such a difficult thing.

Consider the potential advantages:

- a. common mechanical, electrical, plumbing systems
- b. savings in design and construction as a result of a shared design team
- c. as a result of sharing common areas such as mechanical rooms, server rooms, staff rooms and other spaces savings could be (and were) committed to other programming areas
- d. a shared cafeteria and commons room (the school plan did not include a cafeteria)
- e. an ability to broadcast closed circuit television to long term care patients, who will be able to watch their grandchildren play basketball, volleyball, and so on via an in-house channel
- f. the opportunity for work experience opportunities for students as part of their programming and volunteer experiences in a health setting within their own building
- g. economies of scale in design, construction, fit-up and operations
- h. capacity to bring in other players was significantly increased – the school division will build and lease community school space to DCRE (including SaskCan), a 32 space daycare was created out of saved space, and space for early learning and care was supported by SaskLearning and DCRE, including offices for such services as Kids First North
- i. a shared spiritual room and Elders' spaces
- j. services for community people to be centralized and more easily accessed such as health clinic, mental health, addictions, dental services, and nutrition
- k. a weight room and a walking track on the mezzanine were created so they can be shared with physiotherapy
- l. the counselor's office is to be located in space next to DCRE and other related services so that team issue resolution can become much more functional
- m. adult education space is incorporated in the design
- n. conference space was carved out of common space along with committed health space to provide the ability to host conferences, distance education and professional development opportunities.
- o. the building of community capacity in many different areas
- p. career education and career modeling for students
- q. opportunities to develop personal relationships between professionals who work in different service areas
- r. joint shipping, receiving, recycling and garbage areas
- s. systems benefits: environmental improvements through such things as shared systems, shared air conditioning, back-up power generation, and so on.

Architectural Rendering of Ile a la Crosse facility



There are several other significant reasons to justify creating a joint use facility but these are sufficient to illustrate the potential that captured everyone's imagination. However, one additional comment should be made here. From a philosophical perspective, we also believe that the opportunity to participate in the cycle of life on a daily basis is of great value to our youth and their understanding of their own lives and those of their family members. To this end, enabling our students to live and work in the same building as the very young (daycare) and the elderly (i.e. Elders in long term care) will, we hope, help students build an empathy and understanding of all aspects of life and of persons in each of their life path phases

The second significant piece was bringing together the two primary partners: Keewatin Yatthe Regional Health Authority and Sask Health with Ile a la Crosse School Division and SaskLearning. The two Departments have significantly different processes for designing and funding projects. Hence, considerable time was spent mediating, facilitating and integrating the processes. Certainly we all learned a significant amount about the importance of detailed communication. Additionally, time factors are quite different between the health processes and learning processes – it takes much less time to plan and build a school than it does a health centre. However, the school division was able to learn a great deal and sustain its patience in light of the benefits to be achieved for the community and the partners. Ongoing as part of the partnership development were the discussions that have taken place with other service providers including such organizations as Kids

First North, Successful Mothers, ECIP, Adult Education, DCRE, Early Learning and Care and the Saskatchewan Daycare Association.

After two years, design changes, budget issues, staff changes and many other pieces, we were almost ready to finalize design when early learning and childcare entered the picture. With the daycare already committed to and with Sask Daycare Association and Kids First North committed to the daycare space, an ideal opportunity presented itself with early learning and childcare. A presentation was made to DCRE and SaskLearning and with the strong support of both, along with SaskLearning Facilities Branch, an additional space was created to house an early learning and childcare component in the building. With this piece, we are able now to have a building which is designed to be functionally integrated in many aspects and through its shared design to provide space for conferences, daycare, weight room, walking track, DCRE space, public library and several other community service/recreation spaces.

We are now at the third major stage of the project – construction. As we begin this phase, we are realizing the extent to which the two partners must continue to be involved. It was hoped that with the contractor on site and with the prime consultant and his construction supervisor in place the two of us who had co-chaired the planning committee could go back to our primary jobs and make the construction phase secondary. Alas, this is not to be – with community communications, community labor involvement and other related community activities, with ongoing construction issues, change orders, cost

distribution, payments and reconciliation of financials between the partners that need to be part of a partnership venture, and with the creation of an operational agreement along with a "how we live together in our building" piece, and a transition and purchasing agreement the construction phase will be at least as time consuming as was the design phase.

At this point readers may be asking "was it really worth it?" The answer continues to be an unqualified "Yes!". Not only has the project resulted in several aspects of design and construction being improved but it appears that some processes during the construction phase on the part of the contractor and prime consultant will also be improved – in fact, on various occasions the prime consultant has said, "...we don't usually do that – I'm not sure why not – it's something we should be incorporating in all our projects". Further, we continue to have enquiries from various parts of the country about the project and in all cases the enquiries have ended with, "what a great idea!" Finally, the end result will be much greater than what two separate, individual projects would have resulted in. The capacity to provide health services, education services, community services, adult education services, conferencing capacities, video-conferencing and other distance professional development and meeting capacities, supporting families whose family members may be hospitalized, and so on are greatly enhanced. There is no doubt in my or my Board's opinion, nor I believe in our partner's opinion, that this has been the right way to go and that we have created much more than a health centre and a high school.

School ^{PLUS}

Congress II



NOVEMBER

1 - 3, 2006

Regina Inn

Regina,

Saskatchewan

NEW LANDSCAPES
NEW PARTNERS



UNIVERSITY OF
REGINA

Call for Proposals

- Re-imagining communities
- Re-shaping practice
- Re-thinking social, economic & education policy

Founded by: Faculty of Education, Faculty of Social Work,
and Saskatchewan Innovation, Development & Research Unit

DEADLINE
for Receipt of Proposals

FEBRUARY 28, 2006

**For more information about
proposals, contact the SIDRU office**

**PLEASE
SUBMIT**
your Proposal

by email, fax, or mail to: Barbara Young, Congress II Director
SIDRU, Faculty of Education, University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 0A2
Phone: (306) 585-5142
Fax: (306) 585-4880
Email: sidru@uregina.ca