



# the LEADER

2005 Spring Edition, Vol. 4

## THE SUN RISES ON A NEW SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

- Larry Sackney speculates on Reculturing Divisions
- Michael Tymchak reviews SIDRU
- How School Divisions Will Celebrate Their Sunsets
- Excerpts of Key Speeches at LEADS APC
- Corporate Rebranding and Name Calling





Vance Petriew with his daughter, Emily.

*Pictorial images on magazine covers are incredibly important to editors. They act as hooks for readership; they convey thematic content; they encourage anticipation about what might be contained within, and they are extremely difficult to find. We have been very fortunate with our cover images since we converted the LEADER from a tabloid to a magazine format. This issue continues the trend. Because we wanted to maintain the emphasis on the changes in public education, the amalgamations, the restructuring activities and because we wanted also to be consistent with the theme of the last issue where we featured articles about celebrating the end of an era and the welcoming of a new kind of system, the editor searched for an appropriate picture of a Saskatchewan sunrise, a dawning of a new day.*

*Our efforts were rewarded with a link to a website published by a young Saskatchewan resident, Vance Petriew. Within his website was the picture of the sunrise featured on this magazine's cover. The photograph was taken by Vance at his parents' farm in the Radisson area. The weather vein made by Vance's father, symbolic as an indicator of changing winds and as a monitor of direction, enhanced the potential of the picture for this issue. The overlay map of the new Saskatchewan school divisions completes the picture of what is really just developing. History will judge the success of the practical changes implied by this visual imagery.*

*Vance's willingness to share his picture with us and his encouragement to contact him for more information about his astronomy hobby was refreshing. Readers may recall Vance Petriew as the discoverer of a comet in 2001, the first comet ever discovered from Saskatchewan, and the only comet discovered in the world that year by an amateur astronomer. His interest in astronomy, lively since he was a child, has been stoked by his discovery. He has made several presentations to Saskatchewan school groups to discuss astronomy. Much more information is available on his website at [www.ras.sk.ca/CometPetriew/CometPetriew.htm](http://www.ras.sk.ca/CometPetriew/CometPetriew.htm).*

*We thank him sincerely for his contribution to this issue.*

*Many readers have commented on the phenomenal picture that was featured on the cover of the last issue of the LEADER magazine. The photographer, a Saskatoon music teacher, Chris Kelly took that picture at Neis' Beach, Emma Lake. He responded to our request among photographers for a sunrise picture with another that we feature on the back cover of this issue. This one shows an early riser standing on the western shores of Waskesiu Lake in Prince Albert National Park anticipating the sunrise of a new day. The symbolism of this picture matches the theme of this issue as well. We appreciate Chris' generosity in sharing his skills and his photography with us.*

The editor of a little magazine, such as *the LEADER* probably should not expect scholars and university professors to so willingly produce new work and timely articles for publication, without remuneration, should he? That said, a review of the excellent material that we have been given over the past several issues of *the LEADER* is a testament to this not being a reality in Saskatchewan. Perhaps that is something we should all remember as we celebrate a hundred years of this province's existence. It is a given that we support one another. Our parents and grandparents did so and we carry on the tradition.

This issue of *the LEADER* presents a wonderful article, developed especially for this publication by Dr. Larry Sackney of the University of Saskatchewan. When a hoped-for article from another source could not be produced Larry responded immediately to the editor's request for assistance. Readers will find his paper, a long one at that, challenging and capable of forcing thought about many aspects of the new rural education in Saskatchewan.

Because their speeches at the LEADS Annual Policy Conference in Regina were so timely and in many minds worth hearing again, we have reproduced them in edited formats. Norman Dray and Dick Nieman may be wondering what to

do with all of their spare time after the whirlwind of collaborative activity during this past year. Both are still part of the maelstrom of discussion and advice-giving as part of the Restructuring Coordinating Committee and, of course both maintain the busyness of their day jobs as well. The Minister of Learning, Andrew Thomson continues with his leadership of the biggest changes to occur in school governance and organization in a half century. We hope a review of what all three have said will prompt thought and discussion.

Dr. Michael Tymchak, long a supporter of LEADS with his attendance and participation at our conferences and workshops has written a review of the work of SIDRU, which organization he now leads at the University of Regina. This is the third and final article in the series detailing the work of the three jewels in the crown of supportive educational institutions. His review may amaze LEADS members when they realize just how much good work has been done by SIDRU since its inception in the mid-eighties.

Some members of LEADS supplied ideas for celebrating the sun setting on the rural school divisions that they are part of. This issue provides a listing of close to twenty discrete celebratory activities. If it acts as a catalyst for others who may be wondering how to say farewell in a

constructive fashion then it will have achieved its purpose.

Dr. Helen Horsman provided her response to requests for information about amalgamation activities and division-ending functions. Helen's claim about working together in the Catholic tradition caught my attention. It may be arguable that catholicity is no guarantee of collaborative effort, but it may also be argued that keeping the need for empathy, understanding and awareness of individual and divisional uniqueness in front of everybody involved in amalgamations is a wonderful idea. Doing just that speaks to the development of culture within an organization and that takes us back to the function of leadership in the paper by Dr. Sackney.

Finally, with tongue planted firmly in his cheek the editor recently wrote a piece about corporate rebranding as he sees it.

This will be the final edition of *the LEADER* magazine prior to the election of twelve new boards of education in June. When we return in the autumn there will be still more about this exciting, ambiguous and sometimes unsettling process to report and comment on. Enjoy the read and enjoy the ride.

—Ernie Dawson



## SNIPPETS

A few weeks ago the editor received an unsolicited email from Australia from a man who had emigrated from Romania about fourteen years ago. He had been web browsing and came upon *the LEADER* magazine online. While he maintains a professional interest in education, he was drawn to the name of the lady who does our desk top publishing work, Elena Marin-Beke. Elena and her husband, George were friends of this man back in their home country during their university days. Through the magazine we have been able to provide them with contact again. Small, wonderful world!

- Mark These Dates
- Reculturing Amalgamated School Divisions by Dr. Larry Sackney
- The SIDRU Story by Dr. Michael Tymchak
- Final Presidential Remarks by Norman Dray
- Excerpts from Minister Thomson's Speech
- Executive Director's Remarks by Dick Nieman
- Meeting the New LEADS Executive
- Corporate Rebranding by Ernie Dawson
- How Divisions Will Celebrate Their Sunsets
- A Briefing on Amalgamation by Dr. Helen Horsman
- Editorial Thoughts

## MARK THESE DATES IN YOUR DAYTIMER

*Saskatchewan Principals' Short Course  
Saskatoon Inn  
July 4-8, 2005*

*LEADS Summer Short Course  
Waskesiu, Hawood Inn  
August 1-4, 2005*

*LEADS/SASBO Fall Conference  
Saskatoon, Delta Bessborough Hotel  
October 13, 14, 2005*

*Professional Learning Communities - Richard and  
Rebecca Dufour  
Regina Centre of the Arts  
October 18, 19 & 20, 2005*

## Making Changes

E D O V R T N S N S M C V P M R S B S S  
 V X L I D E U O U O O F H T E S D P T R  
 O N E V W N C N S N S I T G F A P M E E  
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 K A N E K C I O T E U S T J T E B O D A  
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 F I F T Y O Z E N S L O B M Y S X U O X  
 E Z H K C I P A M G J Q O C K A Y Q J Y

Solution on page 11

# the LEADER

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*By the time of publication of this edition LEADS members and prospective members will have given much thought to their roles in the new school divisions that will soon be created in rural and suburban Saskatchewan. Nobody of course, has all the answers about what kind of person should be selected as the CEO. There will always be speculation about that. But, there are some desirable characteristics, styles, personalities and qualities that will help the newly-elected board of education members choose their new Director/CEO during the upcoming summer. LEADS is appreciative of Dr. Larry Sackney's willingness to ponder our challenge to him in describing what some of those characteristics are. We encourage readers to note the biographical information about Dr. Sackney at the conclusion of this article.*

## Re-culturing Amalgamated School Divisions: The CEO's Leadership Role



### Introduction

The amalgamation of school divisions into larger units of administration requires that a new culture be developed. Where a number of school divisions come together as one, it necessitates that some changes will have to occur. In many instances, people new to the system will bring with them old habits, beliefs, values and ways of doing things. The new director (hereafter referred to as CEO) has to engage in re-culturing the system to ensure that effective teaching and learning conditions prevail and develop.

Re-culturing is a leadership process. Organizations begin to create culture through the actions of their leaders. The most powerful primary mechanisms for culture embedding and reinforcement are: (1) what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control; (2) leaders' reactions to critical incidents and organizational crises; (3) deliberate role modeling, teaching and coaching; (4) criteria for allocation of rewards and status, and (5) the criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, and excommunication (Schein, 1985, pp. 224-225). Other reinforcement mechanisms include the organizational design and structures; the organization's systems and procedures; the stories, legends and myths that develop; and the formal statement of organizational philosophy, creeds and charters.

The CEO in the amalgamated school division will have to play a crucial role in developing the culture for the new system. This paper outlines what is meant by culture, and how culture gets embedded, reinforced and transmitted in organizations. It also outlines some leadership skills and processes that are necessary for developing effective teaching and learning environments in the re-cultured school division. I conclude the paper with an indication of what makes an effective school division and the CEO's role as a transition manager.

### Culture Defined

Culture has been variously defined. Deal and Patterson (1999) contend that "culture consists of the stable, underlying social meanings that shape beliefs and behavior over time" (p. 3). Schein (1985) provides the most comprehensive definition. He defines culture as:

a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with problems. . . that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 9)

I have defined culture as "what keeps the herd moving in roughly a

western direction" and "how the work of the division gets done" (Sackney, 1994).

In essence, culture denotes a historical pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about, and attitudes toward, organizational life. The culture of an organization is grounded in the shared assumptions of individual participation in the organization. As such, organizational culture results in a complex web of traditions and rituals that build up over time and that is highly enduring. These cultural patterns have a powerful impact on performance, and shape the way people think, act and feel.

### Some Theoretical Understandings of Culture

In order to understand how groups form we need to understand group dynamics theory, leadership theory, and learning theory. It is beyond the space available here to examine the theoretical notions in any great detail. Only a brief overview is provided.

#### *Sociodynamic Theory*

Sociodynamic theory would predict that when new groups come together, individuals are faced with external survival issues and internal integration issues. According to

McGrath (1984), each individual in a new context has three primary needs. First, every individual needs to develop a viable role or identity within the organization. Second, every person needs a certain amount of influence and control over his/her environment. Third, every person in a new environment has a basic need for acceptance.

### **Leadership Theory**

Leadership theory, on the other hand, claims that one cannot separate the process of leadership from the process of building culture. Leadership is the creation and management of culture. At the same time, leaders are influenced by their own prior cultural learning (Schein, 1985). Consequently, a complex interplay of creative and constraining forces operate inside the leaders and those whom they lead. Once leaders have created a culture they become constrained by that culture. Leaders therefore need to live on the “edge of chaos” (Marion, 1999)-that is, between complacency and creativity.

### **Learning Theory**

Learning theory deals with how groups learn cognitions, feelings and behavior. Culture is always learned through group interactions. Schein (1985) claims that there are two types of learning situations: (1) positive problem solving situations and (2) anxiety-avoidance situations. Positive problem-solving situations lead to rewarding learning outcomes and tend to be repeated when similar problems arise. Anxiety-avoidance situations are often one-trial learning and not repeated.

### **Culture Embedding**

Groups vary in the kind of culture that develops. It depends on the emotional energy that is invested in developing the culture. How group members view the leader is important because that involves making emotional investments. Members early in the culture for-

mative stage will develop feelings of “good boss” or “bad boss” perceptions. Depending on how the “boss” is perceived can lead to dependency or flight-fight assumptions. Culture is comprised of the beliefs, values, myths, norms and symbols that characterize the work of the organization (Ott, 1989). In an effort to stabilize the group environment and make it safe for all members norms and standards arise, and ultimately these norms are consensually accepted and enforced. Generally norms arise from marker events or critical incidents.

Culture is therefore learned and taught through a variety of explicit and implicit mechanisms. The things that solve group problems repeatedly and reduce anxiety will survive and become part of the culture (Deal & Peterson, 1999). It should be noted that culture does not start from scratch; it is based on prior experience. Consequently, in the initial formation of the enlarged school division, members will tend to fall back on what worked in their previous place.

Powerful members will also try to impose their assumptions. The creation and embedding process therefore has to be viewed simultaneously as a learning and teaching process. Leaders need to recognize that unless they actively undertake to develop the type of culture they desire, others will do it for them. Consequently, the process of embedding is crucial in the early stages of school division amalgamation. Leadership is managed culture change. It is created in the first instance by the actions of leaders; culture is also embedded and strengthened by leaders. The advantage leaders have in the early stages of amalgamation is that participants have an affinity to be socialized. People in a state of transition tend to be anxious and ready to be socialized to learn the assumptions, values, beliefs, and behaviors necessary to reduce anxiety (Ott, 1989).

## **Leadership Characteristics**

Leadership has been defined in many different ways. For the purposes of this paper, I use Goetsch's (2005) definition: “effective leadership is the ability to inspire people to make a total, willing, and voluntary commitment to accomplishing or exceeding organizational goals” (p. viii). When organizational members are inspired, they voluntarily make a commitment to the organizational goals.

According to Goetsch, effective leaders exhibit a number of characteristics: persuasiveness; positive influence; good communication skills; positive role model, and balanced commitment. Effective leaders are committed to the job to be done and the people who must do it. They are good role models and project a positive example at all times. Further, effective leaders are good communicators. They communicate their ideas succinctly, are good listeners and are respectful. Further, effective leaders are persuasive and have a positive influence on their employees. They are able to make themselves heard and understood in a way that involves others.

## **Effective Leadership Strategies**

In the following section I outline a number of strategies that the CEO needs to engage in if s/he is to establish an effective and efficient restructured school division.

### ***Develop the Purpose and Vision and Commitment to Achieving It***

When an organization has a clearly defined purpose and vision, it gives direction and meaning to those who work there everyday. Kouzes and Posner (2002) contend that one of the most important practices of leadership is to give life and work a sense of meaning and purpose by providing an exciting vision for the future.

The CEO must be able to enunciate what s/he values, the purpose, and the vision for the system. This does not mean this is the only and correct vision for the organization, but it must start at that level.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to outline the process for developing a vision statement; however, there are a number of building blocks. One is to enunciate the values and guiding principles that will drive the organization. The second is to develop the mission/purpose statement. The mission challenges members to reflect on the fundamental purpose of the organization and asks the question: "Why do we exist?" A third is to develop the vision statement. The vision statement addresses what we hope to become. Whereas the mission establishes an organization's purpose, the vision provides a sense of direction. "An effective vision statement articulates a vivid picture of the organization's future that is so compelling that a school's members will be motivated to work together to make it a reality" (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 62)

The vision will have minimal impact unless it is widely shared, understood and connects with those working in the school division. This is where the leadership process kicks in. The CEO has to model the purpose and vision and demonstrate its usage in various places. In our work we have found if the CEO and board can demonstrate the vision as being a living entity, others will become imbued with its meaning.

The fourth building block is to develop goals that will bring the vision to fruition. These goals need to be reflected in the lives of the employees in the division. It is also important that there not be too many goals-they should however, be important. Finally, the goals need to be reflected in action plans, budgets, policy making and everyday work.

### ***Project Unquestionable Integrity and Selflessness***

Leadership is about character more than anything else and "integrity is the most important aspect of character to those who would lead (Goetsch, 2005, p. 28). People with integrity adhere to a strict code of ethics. Ethical leaders have a moral compass that guides their work. They show consistency in behavior, in decisions and they are more concerned about substance than image. People with integrity act with selflessness. They are not self-centered, self-serving individuals. Instead, they are good stewards of resources-human, financial and physical. As Goetsch states, "This means the leader must think first of the organization and people he hopes to lead and puts their needs-in the context of the organization's goals-ahead of his own" (p. 29). Selfless people do not operate from the philosophy of, "I'm looking out for number one." Instead, they are concerned with the welfare of all whom they work with and serve.

Integrity builds trust among the organizational participants. Integrity also establishes the standards by which organizational life will be lived. Leaders with integrity consistently set a positive example of doing the right thing as opposed to taking a self-serving path. Their actions convey the message of "do as I do" rather than "do as I say." High standards are necessary in a knowledge society. Kouzes and Posner (2002) in their study of leaders around the world have found that leadership credibility is the most important trait that leaders can exhibit. This is especially important in restructured school divisions. A leader without integrity has no followers.

According to Kouzes and Posner, employees who believe in their leader's credibility are much more likely to:

- take pride in their organization,
- exhibit team spirit,
- believe that their values match those of the organization,

- feel they are a part of the organization, and
- make a commitment to the organization.

Goetsch (2005) states five rules for maintaining credibility:

1. Set the example (practice what you preach).
2. Support your people (take the blame and share the credit).
3. Admit mistakes (learn from mistakes and move on).
4. Follow through (do what you say you will do).
5. Be consistent (be equitable and fair with all employees) (p. 56).

### ***Be a Good Steward of Resources***

Effective leaders are good stewards of resources for which they are responsible-human, technological, financial, and physical. Stewardship means that the organization will be in better shape when you leave than when you started. Good stewards get to know their followers personally and invest in their growth and development. They manage their budgets efficiently and their technologies effectively.

Good stewards know how to organize and develop their people. In terms of personnel, the CEOs will no longer, in many cases, be the sole decision makers in their division. They will be surrounded by a variety of assistants and support staff. They need to be able to organize the office in such a way that the work gets distributed equitably and that uses the talents of its people. The CEO should not have more than five people who report to him/her directly. At the same time, the CEO needs to surround himself/herself with highly competent people and then empower them to get the job done. Further, the CEO needs to develop his/her people so that they become better at their jobs.

Early in the amalgamation process the CEO will have to deal with the following organizational tasks:

- Budgets
- Transportation
- Central office structures and design

- Facilities and facilities management
- Staffing protocols
- Staff development
- Collective agreements
- Curriculum
- Special education and support services
- Purpose and vision
- Communication protocols
- Board operations

It is recommended that a matrix be developed that outlines all of the tasks that have to be accomplished in order to move the system forward. The CEO must remember that s/he is not alone in these tasks. The CEO must, however, ensure that the tasks get accomplished if the school division is to commence operation effectively and efficiently.

#### *Develop a Can Do Attitude*

No one likes to work for an individual with a bad attitude. Goetsch (2005) contends that the attitude of the leaders is often mirrored by his followers. "A leader with a bad attitude is likely to spawn bad attitudes in his followers; if, that is, he can maintain any followers (p. 75). Maxwell (1993) similarly contends that "people catch our attitudes just like they catch our colds-by getting close to us." He argues that it is important to possess a great attitude, not only for our own success, but also for the benefit of others.

The CEO should periodically assess his/her personal weaknesses. I have found Kouzes and Posner's (2002) 360 degree evaluation to be useful in gauging how the leader is perceived by his/her followers. I would particularly suggest that the instrument be administered to central office employees as well as the school administrator's group.

#### *Be an Effective Team Builder*

Teamwork is important for organizational success. A group of individuals is not a team. A team is a group of people acting together who solve problems and who move the organization forward. Teamwork is important since it is well established that teams outperform individuals.

Senge (1990), for one, includes teamwork as one of the five disciplines of a learning organization. Elsewhere (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000) we have argued that teamwork is necessary for building capacity for a learning community.

Part of the reason that teams and teamwork are so important is that the collaborative process enables the development of socially distributed knowledge, whereby individual knowledge bases become part of the collective discourse and expand the professional capacity of the entire team. Mitchell and Sackney similarly state,

"Team learning aligns individual activity and creates a synergy among individual efforts. Members of the team provide cognitive scaffolds upon which others can stand as they reach for new insights. Team members test their theories and assumptions about teaching and learning with one another, and the public testing helps educators to confirm, to discard, or to reframe their original thoughts. In these ways, the discourse that goes on in a team improves individual and collective cognition and learning." (p. 61)

It is especially important that the CEO develops the central office staff and board to work as a team that is collaborative, reflective and forward looking. Goetsch (2005) contends that teams should not be bossed, but rather they should be coached. Good coaches are mentors, establishing a helping, caring, nurturing and respectful relationship with team members.

#### *Be a Creative Problem Solver and Decision Maker*

Leading is decision making. Every organization has problems and it is in the moments of decision making that leadership comes to the fore. A problem is said to exist when there is a discrepancy between the current and desired state of affairs. There are problems that the leader needs to solve on his/her own

and others that should involve the leadership team.

Problem solving entails breaking down the problem into its component parts. All problems can be broken down into five components as follows:

1. Who is the problem affecting?
2. What is the problem?
3. When did the problem first occur, and when did it last occur? How often is it occurring?
4. Where does the problem occur?
5. What is the extent of the problem? (Geotsch, 2005, p. 127)

Identifying the causes is a critical step in the process. To isolate the cause of the problem, I would use systematic tools such as Pareto charts and cause-and-effect diagrams. Once the cause has been identified, the next step is to find the optimum solution, or the desired result. This is generally accomplished by considering a range of alternatives, weighing each alternative and then choosing the best alternative. The alternative is then implemented, monitored and necessary adjustments are made as needed.

#### *Develop the Learning Community and be an Effective Change Agent*

Given that we live in a knowledge society, I am of the opinion that we need to build our organizations as learning communities. For us, "A learning community consists in a group of people who take an active, reflective, collaborative, learning-oriented, and growth-promoting approach toward the mysteries, problems, and perplexities of teaching and learning" (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000, p. 9). A learning community has a value premise and a cultural orientation. What this means is that there will be certain norms, beliefs, assumptions, and value systems that bind the people in the learning community. Learning communities are characterized by a shared vision, authentic pedagogy, communities of practice, high levels of trust, collaborative

relationships, shared power and decision making, learning networks, a risk/innovation propensity, a knowledge management focus, and data sensitive decision making. (For a more detailed appreciation of learning communities see Mitchell & Sackney, 2000). In promoting learning communities, the CEO has to act as a change agent. By their efforts, CEOs either create the conditions for change or diminish it.

### *Be an Effective Conflict Manager*

Conflict in organizations is inevitable. Conflicts arise over resources, incompatible goals, role ambiguity, value differences, and communication. Conflict also arises because of politics and the struggle for power. How the CEO deals with conflict and works toward consensus will determine the health of the organization. Leaders should not suppress conflict since it can be a healthy way of stimulating the growth of the organization. What is important is that conflict needs to be dealt with in such a way that it results in positive outcomes. It is also important that conflict be handled expeditiously and not allowed to fester.

### *Promote Data-Sensitive Decision Making*

Systems are not very likely to improve unless the school division establishes a culture of using data to improve teaching and learning. Conzemius and O'Neil (2001) argue that we need to transform processes into results. The problem in most school systems is that they only have process goals, with no goals that measure the effectiveness of the processes and results. They suggest the use of SMART goals (specific and strategic, measurable, attainable, results-oriented and time-bound) as a way of checking to see whether our efforts make a difference and by how much.

As a team member of a study conducted by Maguire (2003) we examined the relationships between district practices and student achievement. Four consistently improving Alberta school districts were identi-

fied on the basis of Provincial Achievement Test (PAT) completed by students in Grades 3, 6, and 9, and the Provincial Diploma Examinations (PDE) for Grade 12s. From the data, we concluded that districts which generated consistent gains in academic achievement demonstrated a greater emphasis on improving the understanding and use of assessment data among school staff. In the improving school districts superintendents examined the data, and helped schools develop strategies that dealt with the deficiencies.

### **Effective School Divisions**

Literature is beginning to appear on what makes an effective school division. In the Alberta study (Maguire, 2003), we learned a number of lessons. School districts that generated consistent gains in academic achievement demonstrated the following feat.

- A powerful concentration by the district's administration on improving student achievement, coupled with at least one senior leader whose passion and energy were sufficient to fuel the district's vision.
- Widespread, top-to-bottom understanding of the district's mission, vision and goals.
- A collaborative culture which values leadership at all levels and employs transparent performance criteria which trigger both celebrations for success and consequences for inadequate performance.
- Significant efforts and resources aimed at classroom-embedded teacher development.
- Identification of principals as the primary instructional leaders in their schools and active contributors to district-level decisions.
- Recognition that action-research is essential to improvement and goes hand-in-hand with a program to build instructional capacity and assessment literacy among district staff.

This study also raised a number of policy issues for decision-makers. Given the critical role of superintendents, it was recommended that districts should invest in additional education and leadership development programs for superintendents as a strategy for large-scale improvement.

Similarly, Fullan, Bertani, and Quinn (2004) set out 10 lessons for effective districts. Effective districts have:

- Internal leaders with a clear driving conceptualization.
- Collective moral purpose,
- The right bus (structure and roles),
- Leadership development,
- Lateral capacity building (schools learn from each other),
- Deep learning,
- Productive conflict,
- Demanding cultures,
- External partners, and
- Growing financial investments.

They concluded by saying the district capacity is the least developed of the state, district and school capacities. Fullan argues that district success is a matter of serendipity. Effective districts remain in the minority, and do not last beyond the tenure of two or so Directors and Boards. What is needed, he argues, is that the state, district and schools work together in collaborative ways.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper I have argued that the number one responsibility for leaders is their own discipline and growth. If they can not lead themselves, they can not lead others. I have also argued that leadership is managed culture change. Culture is created in the first instance by the actions of leaders.

When educators give up something they have held on to for a long time they suffer loss, and they grieve (Bridges, 1997). The leader needs to acknowledge such losses openly and sympathetically. The grieving process needs to be validated and honored. Managing transition also means moving beyond the endings to attend specifically to new begin-

nings. Bridges contends that leaders should design strategies around four Ps: the purpose, a picture, the plan and a part to play. He claims that participants need to be clear about the purpose, and they need to have a picture of what the new beginning looks like. They also need to see the plan and the part they play in the plan.

The model I have attempted to articulate implies a number of individual, group, organizational and cultural elements that are likely to find their way into transition processes. In terms of organizational elements, a key element is the infrastructure: resources, policies, and work arrangements that brings people together, furthers the work of learning, and conveys the importance of community building. Another element is leadership: transformative, empowering, facilitative, and decentralized that provides for a safe ground to experiment with new configurations. Another element is a learning agent: transitions are supported when the leader encourages the search for new knowledge, skills, information, theory and practice, and who fosters a culture of inquiry. Still another element is feedback: when school

people pay attention to outcomes, they have greater capacity for learning and can use that capacity to expand and enhance what they hope to accomplish or to create. This allows them to develop accountability standards that resonate with their context and improve their professional practice.

Profound improvement happens from within, "from a deep internal search for meaning, relevance and connection" (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000, p. 139). When people see that organizational life has authenticity and purposefulness, they are more likely to take the journey. Bridges (1997) says, [leaders] forget that while the first task of change management is to understand the destination and how to get there, the first task of transition management is to convince people to leave home" (p. 32).

I have tried to present ideas and frameworks that might spur some musing and pondering about tough problems in trying to re-culture the new school divisions. That is not to say there are not other ways, but these seem to me to be ones that I have pondered and explored with some intensity.

*Dr. Sackney has agreed to provide the complete listing of references for this article. He may be reached at [larry.sackney@usask.ca](mailto:larry.sackney@usask.ca).*

*Dr. Larry Sackney was born in Saskatchewan and received his B.A., B.Ed., and M.Ed. from the University of Saskatchewan. He completed his Ph.D. from the University of Alberta in Educational Administration. His career has taken him to work in the chemical industry and in schools as a teacher, vice-principal, and principal of a regional secondary school. He joined the faculty at the University of Saskatchewan in 1976 and has been on staff since, with the exception of a brief period when he served as Director of Research and Planning with Edmonton Public Schools.*

*Among his many activities Larry has served as the President of the Canadian Association for the Study of Educational Administration (CASEA) and as Canadian representative on the Commonwealth Council on Educational Administration. Dr. Sackney is actively sought out as a conference speaker and as a workshop leader.*



## SNIPPETS

*It may not be unusual for all members of a school division's administrative team who are LEADS members to attend a major function such as the Annual Policy Conference, but given the time of year, the potential for inclement weather and the great travel distances involved credit is due to all members who came from the great white north of Saskatchewan. This list includes Austin Gerein from Creighton, Dr. Bill Duffey from Ile la Crosse and Ralph Pilz, Larry Ahenakew, Dr. Bruce Decoux, Neil Doell, and Marion Hemingway from Northern Lights School Divisions.*



Austin Gerein



Bill Duffey



Ralph Pilz



Larry Ahenakew



Bruce Decoux



Neil Doell



Marion Hemingway

His speech, made at the opening session of the Annual Policy Conference summarized much of what Norm Dray saw as important during his presidential year. Edited excerpts from that speech are provided below.

## Presidential Remarks at APC - Norman Dray

The most powerful changes to hit the structure of Saskatchewan education since 1944 are on the horizon and there has been much to do to prepare. The work of our Executive Director, Dick Nieman has been crucial over the past year; and I am pleased to report, he has handled the challenge with grace and professionalism. Our organization grows in stature because of his efforts and his credibility.

Our executive has been a great sounding board and source of support for the work we have done at the Restructuring Coordinating Committee table and its many sub-committees. I thank them for their work over the past year. For president-elect Vance Mokelky the challenges are not over and both he and I will need your continuing support in the coming year.

I speak now about some ideas and values that are important to me. I want to address three core values that are close

**I challenge all LEADS members to be able to articulate a vision of what you do and what you want to do and then to answer what you want to achieve. If you can do so you will be leaders among your colleagues, and more specifically among your staff and your community.**

to my heart and then provide some comments about what it has meant to represent you over the past year. The theme is "keeping children at the centre of our world."

The first of the core values is leadership. That means bringing meaning to the work of others. I adopted this definition years ago and, in my experience it has stood the test of time. If we, as educators or as leaders, believe in something bigger than ourselves and see ourselves as part of a process that is more than just a day to day job, then we will aspire to be more than we are. This enables us to work on behalf of others and to put children at the centre of what we do. There is a story of three workers I like to refer to. Three people involved in construction are apparently doing the same job. A passerby asks the first, "...so, what are you doing?" "Laying bricks," he responds. The second worker is asked the same question and replies, "...building a wall." The third worker, asked the same question by the passerby responds, "I am making a home for a family; a place they can call their own and a place where they can have safety and security."

Clearly, the third person, the one making the home for the family is the one with a bigger vision. I suggest this person

Norman Dray delivers his final address as President of LEADS



will perform at his best in his work. That is why I believe in leadership. If we can create an environment where people will see something bigger than themselves and are inspired to be more than they are, by making a difference for others, then we are well on our way to being successful.

But, it is not enough to plan for today. We must know where we are going and identify a direction for our organization. We must know how our work supports a larger whole. This leads to vision, the next key concept.

Vision is a common word in organizations these days. It is extremely important. Among the latest phenomena in educational literature is the concept of professional learning communities. For those to exist the organization must have a clear vision. It must be going somewhere and know where it is going. Educators must similarly have a vision for what they want to achieve.

As a Director of Education I must have a vision for our school division. It should provide a clear method of operation and contain the core beliefs of the division. Similarly, a school principal must have a clear vision for his or her school. A classroom teacher must have a clear vision for what the classroom will be like. What will the students feel, see, experience daily? What will the teacher hope the students will become at the conclusion of those experiences? What impact will this have on their development?

We ask young, newly-hired staff members what their vision is regarding the job they are going to do. How do they see their role fitting with the organization? How do they see themselves performing on a daily basis?

I challenge all LEADS members to be able to articulate a vision of what you do and what you want to do and then to answer what you want to achieve. If you can do so you will be leaders among your colleagues, and more specifically among your staff and your community.

Another key value is public education. We do not select our students. We take what comes in our doors. Our challenge is figuring out how to work with our students and how to teach them, how to create a meaningful experience for each of them. We must touch their hearts, just as we

Continued on page 10

## Presidential Remarks at APC - Norman Dray

Continued from page 9

must understand the notion that all children have the right to a rich and fulfilling set of experiences.

We receive many students, in increasing numbers, I would suggest, who do not feel good about themselves. They often come from families with challenges, economic or otherwise. It becomes our job to provide a haven for these students, to provide a place where they can feel safe, where they can be whole, where they can be free to be themselves and to grow and learn, even if it is only for a short time in preschool, or kindergarten or in a grade one to twelve classroom. Making children, all children feel accepted is necessary; they must be at the centre of our worlds.

As President of LEADS I was proud to represent Saskatchewan. I love this place! For a number of reasons it provides an educational system that gets some of the highest ratings for parent satisfaction anywhere in this country. We tend not to swing the pendulum too far in any one direction here. I am firmly convinced of the strength and value of our system. That is because we approach issues, concerns and problems as opportunities with strength, determination and collaborative resolve.

Being your president has been an honor. I hope what I have said here resonates with you. It is a pleasure to work with people like you, who give of themselves so freely that we can all help others.



## Excerpts from Minister's speech at APC

A common feature of the LEADS Annual Policy Conference involves an address by the Minister of Learning. Andrew Thomson continued that tradition when he spoke to delegates and then followed with a question and answer session. Without printing his entire speech we believe some aspects of the minister's address deserve highlighting. Those follow:



Minister of Learning, Andrew Thomson spoke to APC delegates for about thirty minutes and then participated in a question and answer session on February 28, 2005.

- I value the important role you [LEADS members] play in providing the best possible educational experience and opportunities to Saskatchewan students. Your work in supervising the operation of your school divisions, policy development, professional standards and in promoting the cause of education is appreciated.
- Last May I announced a series of changes to the way we organize the education system in our province. Those changes, coupled with School<sup>PLUS</sup> will fundamentally reshape and renew our education system.
- In many ways, School<sup>PLUS</sup> is the new mechanism we will use to develop a new set of 3R's in education. These new 3Rs will reposition our education system to become: more responsive to communities, more relevant to learners, and more results oriented.
- These new 3R's will help us expand beyond the traditional reading, writing, and arithmetic approach to learning that was the hallmark of the past century and help us deal with the very real changes and challenges we face today.
- ...new resources are particularly important if we are to ensure that [high] quality education is available to students throughout the province, and that we do not drift into a two-tiered approach to education based on geographic location.
- Simply put, our system is characterized by rising costs ... used to educate fewer students while achieving essentially the same outcomes despite our best efforts. In other words, we are paying more to educate fewer students to about the same standard. This is not sustainable.
- ...more money for fewer students should mean better outcomes, not declining outcomes in math and sciences, and reading levels that have actually fallen.
- ...restructured school divisions have shown an increased ability to offer:
  - more programs for students;
  - increased purchasing power due to economies of scale;
  - additional supports for students with special needs;
  - enhanced curriculum implementation, and teacher professional development.
- The new, restructured school divisions will all have the capacity ... to offer a full range

of programs and services to the students in their new divisions, today and well into the future. These new divisions will have comparable tax bases, student populations, and access to resources. Property taxes levied in the region stay in the region and boards will be democratically elected and responsible to the local communities they represent.

- To achieve the full benefits of restructuring, we need to ensure that there are new accountability mechanisms at the local level. This will ensure that community and parent input is heard and used to shape the direction of our education system.
- The task of restructuring has renewed the importance of local involvement and a strong sense of personal investment in our communities. School<sup>PLUS</sup> provides an important platform from which to explore opportunities and strengthen local involvement. School<sup>PLUS</sup> exemplifies how a team approach helps us achieve our goals across the education spectrum. From government, to schools and the community, we are moving forward with implementing School<sup>PLUS</sup> on a pilot project basis throughout Saskatchewan.

- School<sup>PLUS</sup> is designed to bring the support of the community to the classroom so teachers and students can focus on teaching and learning success.
- School<sup>PLUS</sup> Service Areas will align with the province's new divisions and provide a cohesive and comprehensive mechanism for implementing School<sup>PLUS</sup> in all of the province's schools. These changes will help ensure our schools and our school system is more responsive to communities, and will provide an important underpinning for renewal of our education system.
- ...the province's graduation rates have increased by 4%, which is just above the national average. ...statistics show that in the past decade we have cut our drop-out rates in half. ...there still remains one out of five youth that does not graduate with secondary completion.
- It is incumbent upon us to ensure our young people have the skills they need to take advantage of future opportunities.
- ...we need to look at new ways for us to improve student-learning outcomes. We know we generally do a good job of preparing students for adult life.

- We do not ... have a ... good way of measuring our success or demonstrating to taxpayers the value of the services we ask them to pay for.
- By developing an Assessment for Learning Program that promotes the continuous monitoring of student progress, we can access valuable data to help us determine new ways to support students and teachers to achieve the agreed upon learning outcomes.
- [The secretary-general of UNESCO recently] indicated that our schools also need to foster social cohesion and build citizens within our communities. This new School<sup>PLUS</sup> approach to education, coupled with the education reforms we have launched, has the ability to put Saskatchewan at the forefront of education.
- Today, at the start of Saskatchewan's second century, we have [an] opportunity to re-invent our education system. We need to re-invent this system to ensure it is sustainable. Together, we are develop[ing] a system that is not only sustainable but more responsive to our communities, more relevant to our students and more results oriented.



**Making Changes  
Solutions**

SOCIODYNAMIC	MOKELKY	AMALGAMATION
STEWARDSHIP	NAMING	BUILDER
STRATEGIES	NIEMAN	CAPACITY
SUNRISE	NINE	CONFLICT
SUNSET	NORMAN	DANYLCHUK
SYMBOLS	NORMS	DIRECTORS
THOMSON	NOVAK	EMBEDDING
TRANSITION	OTTERTSON	EXECUTIVE
TWELVE	PARTNERS	FIFTY
VALUES	PHILOSOPHY	HERRON
VISION	RECURRING	LEARNING
WENINGER	SACKNEY	MAP
	SELFLESSNESS	MELVIN

# APC Candidats



*Gwen Dueck, Assistant General Secretary of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation spoke to APC delegates about the critically important work of LEADS members in assisting with the implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the Joint Committee on Good Practices and Dispute Resolution. Her presentation raised the key point of understanding the differences between power and authority in management practices.*

*Regina Public School Division Director, Bob Brown sheds his jacket as he prepares to talk to APC delegates about the administrative structure in place in his division with participants who will need to understand delegation in new ways.*



*Saskatoon Public School Division Director, Dr. Jim Jutras shared information about span of control and organizational structure in his division for members who wondered about how the new divisional structure will change expectations of leaders.*

*Craig Melvin is the chairperson of the Local Accountability and Partnership Panel that will report to the Minister of Learning by May 31, 2005. He is sharing the task with former LEADS member, Shirley Gange and former SSTA President, Gary Shaddock.*



# APC Candids



*Barry Stangeland, President of the College of Alberta School Superintendents brought fraternal greetings and noted that his organization does not yet have the legal professional status in Alberta that LEADS enjoys in Saskatchewan.*

*Saskatchewan Rivers School Division Director, Bill Cooke spoke about life in a larger school division following the amalgamation of four separate legal entities. Bigger is better, he claimed.*



*John Darroch, Assistant Superintendent of Palliser School Division in Southern Alberta encouraged LEADS members with his presentation about amalgamation and life after.*

*Ray Derksen is the Vice-President of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents. He brought fraternal greetings to delegates at the APC.*



# LEADS Executive Director Reports to 2005 APC

It is my pleasure to submit my third Executive Director Report to the 2005 LEADS Annual Policy Conference.

The past year has been active, busy, productive and fruitful.

My remarks are limited here to comments on three major areas:

- work of the Educational Leadership Committee
- work of the Restructuring Coordinating Committee
- progress on the 2004-2005 Action Plan

Through the guidance and direction of the LEADS Educational Leadership Committee two major documents were created and distributed to members this year. The first was the document "Mapping the Network: A Technology Planning Handbook for Saskatchewan's Educational Leaders." It was developed to assist LEADS members with tasks associated with planning for technology and its implementation.

The evolution of that project has been spearheaded jointly by the Educational Technology Consortium, which provided the necessary funding and LEADS, which accepted the leadership role in conceptualizing and developing the document. Those of you who responded to the on-line survey also made an important contribution to the document.

LEADS is grateful to the Reference Committee of Brian Boechler, Norm Dray, Helen Horsman, Tim Tarala and Dennis Sabat, and Scott Tunison, who wrote the handbook, for his his time, expertise and experience in on-line learning and technology planning. We hope that regardless of your present level of sophistication in technology planning that you will find it of value, and that those who will be creating a technology plan for the restructured divisions will find it useful to guide discussions.

The School<sup>Plus</sup> Handbook for LEADS members is intended to provide a synthesis of the implications for LEADS members who are responsible for, or directly involved in, implementing School<sup>Plus</sup>

The guide is organized into five sections:

- The context of the conceptual framework
- A series of questions and answers that might be typical of LEADS members
- Some practical suggestions for advancing School<sup>Plus</sup> initiatives.
- A listing of selected resources for School<sup>Plus</sup>
- An appendix of related information.

The project was guided by a committee including Norm Dray, Jan Chell, Ron Ford, Randy Fox Dr. Helen Horsman, Dr. Ivan Yackel and Darrell Zaba. We appreciate Dr. Brian Noonan, University of Saskatchewan for writing it. Brian consulted widely with a number of individuals and organizations including the STF, SSBA, SPDU, SELU and SASBO, the two Universities and the Department of Learning.

Don Hoiium of Saskatchewan Learning made the project possible financially and offered his professional support with Kevin Tunney. They devoted significant effort in providing a clear understanding of the role of School<sup>Plus</sup> in Saskatchewan schools.

The LEADS executive dedicated itself to the achievement of the Action Plan discussed at last year's APC.

Additionally, the Fall Conference on Early Literacy and the Summer Short Course on Inclusion and Community were highlights and very successful professional development activities for our organization.



*Lauded for his exceptional organizational work with LEADS, Executive Director Dick Nieman presented his third annual report to members at the Annual Policy Conference.*

LEADS continues its discussions with our educational partners to enhance our commitment to cooperation and collaboration.

Regarding restructuring, if the number of meetings is any indication Norm Dray and I have probably a severe case of "collaborativitis." We believe the LEADS perspective was heard. The process has been inclusive and respectful.

The Local Accountability and Partnership Panel is a very important piece of the restructuring process. We are pleased that Chairperson, Craig Melvin accepted our invitation to participate in our conference. The panel's recommendations will have a significant influence on how we include parental and community perspectives in the education of our children. I urge you to give your attention and input into these very important consultations.

As we move toward January 1, 2006, there will continue to be ambiguity and uncertainty. When

new boards are elected in June and they begin to do their work it will be our responsibility as their most senior advisors to provide guidance and direction.

This calls for the highest level of ethical leadership from LEADS members. Decisions will be made that will affect your lives directly and those of fellow LEADS members. In turn, you will direct and influence the future of so many people's lives. How we treat and respond to each other will be part of the LEADS legacy concerning restructuring. There will be some difficult times ahead and I am confident we will meet the challenge.

As important as the restructuring process is, it is imperative that we continue to devote our energies to fulfilling the LEADS purpose, values, vision and mission. We are dedicated to promoting leadership for excellence in education, to be advocates for children and youth and to be committed to working together with our educational partners.

We must never forget that we are here to lead an educational system so that our students get the best opportunities possible and that their full development can be realized. We must never lose that focus.

*I acknowledge and thank the representatives from regions 2, 4, and 6 whose terms are complete. Glen Winkler, Jim Jutras and Lyle Neher we thank you.*

*We thank LEADS members who serve on committees.*

*Thank you, Linda Butcher for managing so many office and conference details, coordinating our Blue Cross benefits plan and many other things so routinely that I now take them for granted.*

*I am honored to be your Executive Director.*



## 2005-2006 LEADS Executive



*President-Elect  
Marc Danylchuk*



*Past President Norm Dray presents the gavel and a potted plant to new President Vance Mokolky.*



*Region 1 Representative  
Harold Laich*



*Past President  
Norm Dray*



*Region 2 Representative  
Dr. Sandra Hill*



*Region 3 Representatives  
Ben Grebinski Dolores Wagner-Owens*



*Region 4 Representatives  
Evelyn Novak Joanne Weninger*



*Region 5 Representative  
Alan Sharp*



*Region 6 Representative  
Janine Otterson*

*Public Representative - Vacant*



*Executive Director  
Richard Nieman*



*Northern Region  
Austin Gerein*

# Neighbors offer advice about amalgamations

In addition to significant input from Saskatchewan members, who have been through the process already, program planners for the 2005 LEADS Annual Policy Conference reached into our neighboring provinces and specifically to the College of Alberta School Superintendents and the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents for key presenters on the topic of amalgamations. John Darroch, soon to retire from his work as Assistant Superintendent in Palliser School Division and Jean-Yves Rochon with Lorne Miller from Manitoba spoke at the opening session of the APC.

Their consistent message was that communication will be the determining element in success of the mergers of school divisions. Darroch noted that frequent, often informal discussions, before the actual changes, with colleagues in similar positions in amalgamating divisions, provided opportunity for candor, support and a growing trust that served his new division well after the amalgamation. He noted, however that the Palliser Division was a merger of just two divisions, not of many, as will be the case in Saskatchewan.

Rochon stressed the need to provide information over and over again. "You can never communicate enough," he said. Communication linkages need to be established and well-maintained with all Central Office staff members particularly, he noted. Those are the people who will be wondering what lies ahead for them. Changes in the schools will be far less noticeable and therefore staff anxieties will be less.

Lorne Miller urged those involved in the upcoming amalgamations to, "...live out of your imagination, not your history." Citing William Bridges book, *Managing Transitions* Miller suggested that leadership must demonstrate a sense of where it wants to be. "Imagine, believe and then act," he said.

What became very obvious to the audience was that the processes of amalgamation will not be replicated in every case in Saskatchewan. No single model will ever suit all and the people involved will have to become used to dealing with ambiguity even more than they are in their daily work now.

The encouragement offered by the three speakers was welcome. They all found positive matters to discuss as part of the amalgamations they had been a part of. Most noteworthy, perhaps was the emphasis they all placed on the need for constructive leadership and the need for leaders to identify successes and celebrate those as part of the communicative process as the events unfold.



*Lorne Miller and Jean Yves Rochon, superannuated Manitoba Superintendents shared their experiences with forced amalgamations with delegates.*



*John Darroch, Assistant Superintendent of Palliser School Division in Southern Alberta encouraged LEADS members with his presentation about amalgamation and life after.*



## **Lance Bean and Bill Wells**

*School Boards Association President, Lance Bean shares a laugh with that organization's Executive Director, Bill Wells at the APC.*

*This is the third in the series of articles featuring what we have called the “jewels in the crown” of supportive educational organizations in Saskatchewan. LEADS thanks the current SIDRU Director, Dr. Michael Tymchak who wrote this piece for the magazine.*

## Seizing the Day, Shaping Tomorrow: The SIDRU Story

Many readers will recall the heady days of Directions, and the development of the Core Curriculum in the mid-1980s. They will also be familiar with the Educational Development Fund (EDF) and the opportunities for innovation that it represented. The Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit



(SIDRU) - along with SELU and SPDU - were born during this educational reform era. The 'Units', as they became known, were creatures of a collaborative initiative between the Department of Education (now Learning) and the host institution. In SIDRU's case, the host institution was the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina.

By the mid-80s the Faculty of Education in Regina had become well known for its commitment to teacher education, especially its internship program with an emphasis on teaching skills and the integration of theory and practice. When it came to assigning special mandates and emphases to each of the Units, it was natural that instructional development and research were assigned to the University of Regina. Like the other Units, SIDRU received core funding from the Department to support its mandate. Dr. Evelyn Jonsescu served as SIDRU's first Director (1984), shaping the unit's character and operations in this first year of operations.

One of SIDRU's early projects was the creation of the Instructional Strategies Series (ISS) of handbooks, under Director Dr. Paul

*Pictured above are members of the current staff of SIDRU, Dr. Michael Tymchak, Director with long time employee Juanita Duncan and Assistant Director, Ann Curry.*

Hart, and in cooperation with SPDU. The Series supported Core Curriculum thinking and teaching by addressing topics such as: This is a YES: Concept Attainment (1991); Opening the Door to Cooperative Learning (1991); and, Reflective Teaching (1993).<sup>1</sup> Given the success of this series, in the mid-90s, with Dr. Caroline Krentz as Director of SIDRU, the Unit once again teamed with SPDU to produce the popular Diversity Series. Its titles included: Honouring Diversity in the Classroom: Challenges and Reflections (1996); Aboriginal Cultures and Perspectives: Making a Difference in the Classroom (1997); and A Voice for all Students: Realizing Gender Equity in School (1996).<sup>2</sup> Both series continue to be popular with Saskatchewan teachers.

While SIDRU today builds on its past record of service, it has also adapted in response to important changes in the educational landscape. By 1997 with Core funding from the Department eliminated, SIDRU had to survive in a cost-recovery world. Several years later,

when Dr. Michael Tymchak, then Dean of Education at the U. of R., was asked to Chair the Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School, SIDRU was invited to play a key role supporting both the consultation and the publication processes. The Director of the day, Dr. David Friesen, and Sandra Allan, the Assistant Director, helped design the qualitative research dimension of the project and train members of the Task Force in data-collection techniques. The publication of School<sup>PLUS</sup>: A Vision for Children and Youth (2001),

written by Michael Tymchak, captured the imagination of many educators and human service providers in the province, while the endorsement of six Government Ministers has given the document public policy status.

SIDRU followed-up its commitment to School<sup>PLUS</sup> by participating with the other Units in the SchoolPLUS Research Consortium and the School<sup>PLUS</sup> Leadership Institute. This past year SIDRU also provided leadership for the School<sup>PLUS</sup> Congress held in Regina (Nov '04). Some 375 delegates, from a wide interagency spectrum - were treated to reports and speakers who highlighted projects, issues and challenges related to the implementation of School<sup>PLUS</sup>.

At the conclusion of the Congress, delegates were treated to a remarkable presentation by Saskatchewan photographer, Courtney Milne, who provided an inspirational School<sup>PLUS</sup> message via images, music, poetry and his own inimitable commentary. LEADS members will want to note that

<sup>1</sup> There are 18 titles in this series; a list of titles, and copies, are available either through SIDRU (585-5142; [juanita.duncan@uregina.ca](mailto:juanita.duncan@uregina.ca)) or

SPDU (1-800-667-7762; [wruclm@stf.sk.ca](mailto:wruclm@stf.sk.ca)).

<sup>2</sup> There are 7 titles in this series, available through SIDRU or SPDU.

Continued on page 18

Congress II is planned for November 2006, and that Dr. Barbara Keirnes-Young has agreed to again serve as Congress Director. Saskatchewan can lead the way!

Overall, 2003-04 was enormously busy for SIDRU, involving work with contracts totaling some \$1.3 M.

There has also been a lot of activity beyond School<sup>PLUS</sup>, for example, major projects in the area of Instructional and Communication Technology (ICT). Dr. David Friesen led the BrainBinder Project (2001) for SIDRU, to assess the effectiveness of the Sun Microsystem platform and network in five Saskatchewan school divisions. The following year Industry Canada asked SIDRU to evaluate two First Nations SchoolNet programs - the Network of Innovative Schools, and Grassroots (2003). In quite a different area SIDRU was, for many years, the centre of Climate Change Saskatchewan's Public Education initiatives, as well as serving as the province's Climate Change Hub.

There have also been several significant projects related to Aboriginal education. Last year SIDRU conducted a community consultation for the Urban First Nations/Métis Educational Partners that focused on Albert School, and Scott Collegiate, two community schools in the Regina Public School Division. There have also been several out-of-province Aboriginal education projects, including two major evaluations: one, of the TEP Program at Aurora College in the NWT (2002), and the second, an evaluation of the Mikmaw Kina'matnewey Agreement in Nova Scotia (2004).

Since 2000, SIDRU has been involved in a longitudinal study of pre-kindergarten in the province for Saskatchewan Learning. Building on this experience, as well as the lessons learned from School<sup>PLUS</sup>, SIDRU was recently invited to conduct a province-wide public dialogue on Early Learning and Care, for the Department of Community

Resources and Employment (DCRE) and Saskatchewan Learning, designed to inform provincial policy development in this vital area of public interest. On a smaller scale, but along a similar vein, SIDRU was invited to conduct a public consultation for KidsFirst in Yorkton, as well as a feasibility study for a daycare facility in Greer Court in Regina.

SIDRU also does some work in post-secondary education and, recently, was privileged to win a competition to design and deliver a Faculty Certificate Program (FCP) for SIAST. The project represents SIAST's determination to provide high-quality professional development for its instructors in the area of pedagogy and instructional strategies.

The Faculty Certificate Program consists of six U. of R. courses, and six SIAST courses, all adapted to the SIAST learning environment. SIDRU created the program by teaming with Adult Education in the Faculty of Education at the U. of R., thus allowing students to ladder from the FCP Certificate to a Bachelor's degree in Adult Education. The program features two innovative 4-week Summer Institutes (I and II), that are required of all students. Claude Naud, SIAST's Vice-President of Programs, and Michael Tymchak developed an initial program template. Ann Curry coordinates the program for SIDRU, and Ann Hrabok serves as the program's Director for SIAST.

As in the past, SIDRU continues to partner with SPDU when possible. The two Units have just received news that their proposal for funding from the Aboriginal Education Research Network has been accepted. The goal of the project is to explore uses of the Treaty Resource Kit developed by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner in Saskatchewan. The kit was widely distributed in the province last year, associated with the offering of numerous teacher workshops. This action research project will work

with six teachers in the Moose Jaw School Public Division, Grades 8 and 9, to determine best practices and develop a teacher handbook. The project builds on an evaluation of the Treaty Resource Kit initiative, conducted by SIDRU for the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (2004).

Along another vein, the photographer Courtney Milne has invited SIDRU and SPDU to play a major role in the development and maintenance of the Teachers' Lounge on a website he is developing that is associated with his 5,000 image archive gift to Saskatchewan educators. On the basis of a Centennial project grant from SASKTEL, Courtney will be touring the province - approximately 80 communities (!) - with an image-and-music concert celebrating Saskatchewan. The archive will be a permanent gift to the province, and SIDRU and SPDU are pleased to have been given responsibility for the Teachers' Lounge, to be accessed by teachers and students throughout the province.

The sheer scope and diversity of SIDRU's projects in recent years has often seemed quite daunting. Engaging and coordinating the work of numerous project and research teams - literally dozens of people, often in many different locations - is a huge challenge.

The office staff has been essential to SIDRU's meeting the challenge. Many different individuals have been an enormous help but mention must be made of Juanita Duncan who has been with SIDRU almost from the beginning; she is currently in her 20th year of service. Director Michael Tymchak, Assistant Director Ann Curry, and Juanita do their best to epitomize the University's motto, "as one who serves". As such, SIDRU is committed to supporting Saskatchewan educators and other human service providers in research and instructional development that promote learning for all ages.



# How will school divisions celebrate their sunsets?

The editor of *the LEADER* magazine has been called a lot of things over the years. Most recently, after his broadcast email to all LEADS members about planning for the celebrations and events to mark the end of the fifty-nine school divisions he was called a few more. One suggested he had scolded members, another said he sounded like John Chyzowski, and another suggested he possessed a capacity to make her feel guilty. I admit to the first; I love the second, since I adored John Chyzowski, and I feel bad about the third. All the rest of the descriptors that have not made this list will have to be filed for a future reference

Thank you to all of the responsive LEADS members for your reaction to the second email. I understand the busyness of leaders. I know that some things just don't seem to resonate on the platter of priorities like others. But, I do not accept that planning now, or even talking now, about the celebrations later this year is too early. By the time the next edition of this magazine is published it will be too late to offer a list of ideas that might be useful for your colleagues in their planning.

I also understand that the budget process is current. By the time this issue is published the provincial treasurer will have rendered the numbers and you will soon know what kind of divisional resources may be available to help with the celebration of the end of an era. For that reason alone the list of ideas that follows is provided to encourage creative ways of saying farewell, for acknowledging the wonderful achievements of the divisions and those people who attended school there or who work therein. If the list is helpful, then I will be pleased. Call me pesky if you want, but because of the response you can also call me happy, because that also works.

## A TEST FOR THE AGES

Everyone over age 40 should have a pretty easy time with this little test. If you are under 40, claim a handicap. Send the editor an email for the answers if you are stuck.

1. Years ago where was the headlight dimmer switch located in an automobile?
2. Why was having milk delivered to households a problem in Saskatchewan winters?
3. What was the name of the popular chewing gum named for a game of chance?
4. What postwar car turned automotive design on its ear because you couldn't tell whether the car was coming or going?
5. What was Butch wax and how was it used?
6. Before inline skates how did you keep your roller skates on your feet?
7. What was the most feared disease in the early fifties?
8. What was the name of the Indian Princess on the Howdy Doodly show?
9. What did all the really savvy students do when mimeographed tests were handed out in school?
10. Who left his heart in San Francisco?

In no particular order here are the suggestions that have been forwarded:

- Trivial Pursuit Challenge-type of game prepared for an all employee reception to encourage mingling and answer finding
- Fifteen minute Power Point presentation or DVD especially prepared to feature individuals and schools of the division
- Placemats for banquet tables (with a quantity prepared as keepsakes). Details will include a history of each school in the division on one side. On the other side will be accomplishments of the board of education
- Staff appreciation banquet - free for all employees and honored guests and at cost for spouses of staff members
- Banquet for all former trustees and teachers with the theme: Honoring the Past - Anticipating the Future
- Pins to identify staff members with service contributions ranging upwards from five years (in five year intervals)
- Focusing the Fall Institute on the theme: Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Present and Looking Forward to the Future
- Inviting former senior staff members to key functions
- Development of a videotape featuring reminiscences by staff members
- Presenting every staff member with a copy of David Bouchard's book, *Happy Centennial, Saskatchewan*. Partial proceeds of this book sale accrue to the LEADER POST - Raise a Reader program
- Presentation of several door prizes to enhance the celebrations at staff appreciation functions
- Athletic events (such as family bonspiel or slow pitch game) or picnic with all staff and family members
- Celebrating the accomplishments of former students through visual and written methods
- *Remember When* power point presentations
- Flip chart graffiti to permit memories and things that will be missed to be recorded visually
- Student-prepared map of the division identifying locations and pertinent details about all former schools within the division including those that closed when the larger school units were formed in the late forties or early fifties
- Celebrating Saskatchewan's Centennial as part of the ending activities
- Children's Festival involving community businesses and volunteers
- Identifying memorabilia for possible inclusion in regional or local museums

*Among the responses to the request for information about how division celebrations and amalgamations were going to be handled in this province came the following piece from Helen Horsman. Because it captures the essence of change in just a few paragraphs we have decided to reproduce it in its entirety.*

## An Amalgamation Story: Holy Trinity Catholic Schools

In the fall of 2003 the Catholic School Divisions in Moose Jaw, Swift Current, and Shaunavon amalgamated to form Holy Trinity School Division. The amalgamation took place immediately following the October 2003 elections and brought together three divisions in the South West section of the province including diverse communities, staffs, and trustees. Geographically the school division is large. It is almost three hours from Moose Jaw to Shaunavon by car.

Throughout the amalgamation process Board members and Central Office administrators, worked together in the Catholic tradition. That may require some explanation. I believe we have an uncommon desire and ability to collaborate, to be inclusive and to honor diversity, in short, to honor the uniqueness of each community. It also means that in long-lasting and successful partnerships there needs to be empathy among partners - a give and take and a concern for the greater good. Whenever we come together, for whatever reason, we remind ourselves of our tradition. Without it we would have no direction. Tradition continually renews itself. To flourish we connect the old with the new. We reach into the old and pull out the new.

The same group also decided that it was important to explore ways that everyone could honour, remember, and yet let go of the past. At the same time they focused on the future of the new Holy Trinity School Division, determined to move forward in creating a new entity. In May and June, 2003 each community held a celebration to commemorate the past. The following descriptions summarize how that was achieved.

In Moose Jaw, the Board invited

the entire community to a coffee house at the Catholic Education Center. Staff of the schools helped to display memorabilia tracing the history of the school division. Choirs and bands from the school division provided entertainment. Board members and administrators greeted and served guests, who included community partners, former and current staff, trustees and parish members. Several large blank posters were displayed on the walls and guests were invited to record their most significant memories of the division.

In Swift Current, Catholic Board members hosted a division-wide barbeque at the Parish Hall. This was advertised as the last Annual Meeting of the Board. It also provided an opportunity to celebrate new beginnings. Board members cooked hamburgers and hot dogs. Parents and children attended to hear more information about the governance and operation of the new division.

In Shaunavon, the Board hosted a ball game and barbeque. Families, community members, and parish partners contributed to the potluck supper. This was also the last official annual meeting of Christ the King RCSSD #87.

At each of these celebrations Board members and central office administrators from the other two communities attended, their intent being to come to know their new partners better. Tours of the schools enabled everyone to see, not just hear, about the facilities. This helped give local staff members the sense that Board members would be making educated



Helen Horsman

and well-informed decisions about their new school division.

Throughout the amalgamation process a steering committee comprised of Board members and administrators acted as an umbrella group that provided the framework for processes that led to amalgamation. This group received advice, input and direction from two main subcommittees, which dealt respectively with educational planning and finances. Clearly their work obliged reviews of all existing programs, budgets, facilities, mill rates, reserves and so on. With their advice the steering committee was able to make final decisions. The steering committee's input and attention to the concerns and ideas of each group was a key factor in determining how the new division would operate.

About the same time teacher groups began to meet to form a new Local Teachers' Association, and impressively were able to create a new constitution ready to be signed by the time Holy Trinity became a legal entity.

Today, despite its geographic challenges the new school division uses face to face meetings as well as state-of-the-art technology to enable all stakeholders to meet, communicate, problem solve, and celebrate on a regular basis.

*Dr. Helen Horsman is Director of Education of St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division in Saskatoon. She was Director of Education in the Moose Jaw Catholic Separate School Division at the time of amalgamation and creation of Holy Trinity Catholic School Division.*

# Corporate Rebranding

As surely as you are reading this they will deny it, this organizational freneticism that seems to be part of the corporate culture of Canada. They? Corporate leadership, that often faceless group of mercantile champions who want us to know they are constantly making changes for the better. So, if they're faceless, how do I know they are constantly desirous of our being aware of their changes? Simple. Look at the names of companies and organizations. Recognize some of them? Well, kind of I guess, you may think. This store used to be called ABC Appliances. Now it seems to employ the same people and sell exactly the same stuff, but they call it Atractune, or Wizex. That's it! You've got it!

Something is sweeping, not just Canada, but the nations of the developed world, something has obliged normally level-headed corporate leaders and boards of directors to fall into the trap of rebranding. Why? Have we reached the point where nothing old is good enough? Have we reached the point where nothing is good enough unless it has a name that has been specially created by a team of rebranding experts?

Are you aware that organizations exist whose sole purpose is to create company names? Got that? These folks hire people who make up names and charge a whole lot of money for doing it. I'm told that hundreds of thousands of dollars, perhaps even a million or more has been spent by some companies in their quest for a new name. Guess who pays for the cost of the new name? Yes, you and I do. Doesn't that just tickle?

Years ago, a very profitable organization developed in the petroleum industry. It was called Standard Oil. They refined crude, among other things, and they retailed the prod-

ucts through service stations that they called Standard Oil outlets. Then, someone got the bright idea that S.O. could really be the short form of Standard Oil and they called their outlets S.O. gasoline and service stations. That led to the clever and familiar ESSO stations that dot the landscape of this country. This country? What about Standard Oil outlets in the rest of North America? Well, a long time ago, when I was still in school I recall reading that the leaders of that enormous organization had hired a company to create a new name, one that really didn't mean anything, but which could be tied to, and ultimately recognized as, the retail branch of Standard Oil. They called it EXXON. That is why you see all those signs on street corners in continental USA. Exxon really means nothing. It is a manufactured word, but it has come to mean place where you stop for gasoline, buy a soft drink, use the toilet and wash the windows before you drive on.

It works. Try this quiz. What does the following word mean? Sympatico.

If you guessed it means a computer related internet service provider you would have described what it does, but this name was also manufactured, one can assume at some expense. Because I know a gal who worked at Sympatico when it went into business I learned that they wanted a name that conveyed the sense of simplicity for the users, many of whom were new to computer use, let alone internet and web browsing. Notice what else it has? It sounds a little bit foreign, maybe Spanish, right? That is deliberate. If a product has a touch of internationality then surely it must be of higher value than some simple, home-made local brand. Well, in the minds of some people that is the case.



*Ernie Dawson has been editor of the LEADER for longer than most people care to remember. "Corporate Rebranding" is one of a hundred essays contained in his forthcoming book, At Last I Tried – At Least I Tried.*

For kicks, really for research purposes, I recently went on line to see what I could find about rebranding. One of the first names I found was a place in Washington, D.C. that recently celebrated its new name, CentroNia. How do you like the sounds of that? Guess what it sells? Guess what goes on behind its doors? First, it sells nothing. Can't you tell from the new name what it does? The name is a blend, we are told, of Spanish, Swahili and Esperanto. The former name? Calvary Bilingual Multicultural Learning Center. Which one does the job for you? Thought so.

In this province there has been a spate of new names recently. I drove into Regina not long ago and noticed that the venerable Sherwood Credit Union is no longer. The building remains, the staff remains in the building, but the new moniker is Connexus or Concentrix, or something that sounds like that. Wow! That tells me a whole bunch. I can't tell from that if they sell circles or cement or Kool-Aid crystals.

Continued on page 22

I also understand that similar organizations, given their recent or upcoming mergers are changing their names to meaningless sounding manufactured names. Now, I can understand some of this. Where it becomes obvious that an organization's name is limiting the understanding of its purposes and who can do business with it, a name change is a natural, but for goodness sakes why not make the new name descriptive of what goes on there?

I have some concerns about what may be coming down the road after the amalgamations of fifty-nine of Saskatchewan's rural school divisions into twelve. The newly elected boards, (read that boards of directors), will be obliged to create new names for their divisions. Can you imagine some of the nonsense we could be party to? As homely as the names of schools in New York City

sound, at least they identify the school. They are numbered like P.S. 45 and so on. That stands for Public School 45. School divisions that span enough geography to be larger than several European countries are coming to this province soon. Here's some advice for those soon to be new school board members. Don't let the name makers loose. Find a name that is descriptive of your part of this province and tack on the term school division behind it.

Is it too much to hope that the new boards will do as I wish? Perhaps. Not too long ago the Saskatchewan Department of Education changed its name to Saskatchewan Learning. Huh? That could just as easily be a store that sells math games.

Imagine what would happen if Mike's Meat Market got a new name, or Sally's Hair Salon. Oh, my gosh

I've hit a raw nerve. Those hair salons have been into this for a long time. Have you seen salons with names like Hair We Are, or Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow? Open your eyes and look up. You'll see them.

I have also discovered a cheaper way of creating new corporate names. Go to the home row of keys on your computer. Move your fingers on one hand one key over from their normal resting place. Type something. Now, with just a little bit of effort you can find buried in that garble some created names. The secret is finding something that can be sold, after you attach the clever sounding rationale for what it means, and why it will sell your widgets better than the old name, Moose Jaw Widget Factory and Sales Outlet.

Ernie Dawson

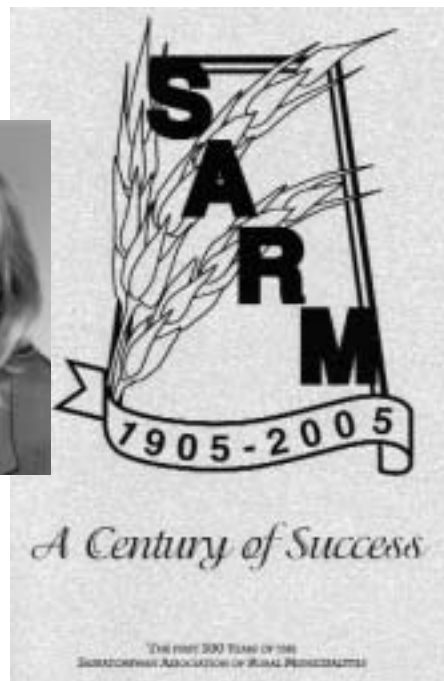


## SNIPPETS

*The first ever woman elected as a Director of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Debbie Gronning, who farms with her husband near Alsask has given the editor a copy of the book, A Century of Progress, which she has produced to provide historical details and amazing photographs from the one hundred years of that organization. Debbie, a school board member in Kindersley School Division, has drawn our attention to the concerns of SARM members about the high costs of operating schools. Resolutions as far back as 1948 indicate concerns similar to those we hear about on a regular basis these days. Property taxes are too high! Is change in the wind?*



Debbie Gronning





***Jack MacKenzie School Umoja Drum Group***

*Under the dynamic leadership of teacher Marlene Hinz with assistance from teachers Cheryl Mantei and Joanne Patron the Jack MacKenzie Elementary School Umoja Drum Group thrilled banquet attendees with their amazing skills and percussive musical abilities.*

*Editor's note: To achieve this image we combined two photographs. While size may not be consistent we believe every participant in the concert is pictured.*



***Banquet audience clapping***

*Nothing will animate an audience of educators faster than a spectacular performance by a student group. Here audience members at the Superannuates' Banquet clap out a complicated rhythm led by the children of Jack MacKenzie Elementary School's Umoja Drum Group.*



**Treso Team Wins 2005 LEADS Bonspiel**

*Perennial bonspiel champion skip, John Treso with his colleagues (all exceptional athletes) Thom Koroluk, Darryl Bangsund and Len Bode. Organizer Norm Dray and sponsor, SaskTel's Anita McLennan are at the left of the picture.*

## What if they held a budget speech and nobody came?

**W**ould somebody please explain why the Provincial Budget Speech is such a big deal? With the exception of the social interaction, which must be nice for some folks, and perhaps the caterers and the people who provide the lapel flowers and the great whack of fresh petals for the rotunda of the legislature, what good does it do?

Isn't it really a formula-driven event, kind of like a dance class? One, two, three – one, two, three and repeat. A dance class would be more fun than the charade that accompanies the annual announcement by the Minister of Finance. At the moment it is Harry Van Mulligan's turn in the spotlight, or should that be the hot seat? A few years from now Van Mulligan will be gone from the portfolio, perhaps from politics, and somebody else will take his place. But, the dance will continue.

The same can be said for whoever represents the Taxpayers' Federation, or the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, or the Saskatchewan School Boards' Association and every other organization that lines up its press savvy people and their handlers to speak their speeches that have been prepared ahead of time, but which look like they're off the cuff when the

current batch of ever-so-inquisitive press and media people ask with just the right amount of severity, "What was in the budget for your group?"

It's kind of a phony war. That's the best kind. Nobody gets really hurt when it's a phony war. Except, perhaps the gullible public that watches and listens and actually believes the rhetoric of the day. This is all for show, folks.

What would happen if these people didn't show up? Who would be less informed than they are now? Press lockup? Mock up? Enough information is divulged ahead of time that there are few surprises for anyone after the Finance Minister has had his ten minutes (or was that closer to an hour?) in the spotlight.

Attending a function like the Budget Day ceremony is actually demeaning. Nobody ever gets enough. Somebody always feels shafted. Most of the speeches were rehearsed years ago and simply updated to deal with the arc of the political pendulum or the economic barometer of the day. Why bother?

Some have said it's good to be there so their group can be seen. Piffle! Who cares? What would it matter if LEADS or the School Boards' Association or SARM instead decided to have a tea party at some pleasant restaurant, or better still stayed away from Regina in

large numbers and did some real work in their offices?

Nothing would change. The Finance Minister would still speak, the opposition finance critic would pop up, read prepared remarks and would begin the ritual of lambasting the government for this or that or for several more of those, the opposition leader would begin the post-budget chicken dance and squawk about matters that will be forgotten before the ink dries on the next edition of the Leader Post or the Star Phoenix.

Actually, there is something that would change. The newsletters, magazine articles, web sites and press releases that are suddenly made available to the public through the various media on budget day would be hand delivered or sent electronically, rather than being distributed immediately after the budget speech.

And lest it be forgotten, the business economy of Regina would take a hit. Hotels, restaurants, gas stations, airlines, and the usual list of beneficiaries of the rituals like the annual budget would have some complaining to do. Does anyone care? Nope! It's like tilting at windmills. The blades of government just keep turning.

– Ernie Dawson

1000000  
**TERRY  
FOX  
RUN**

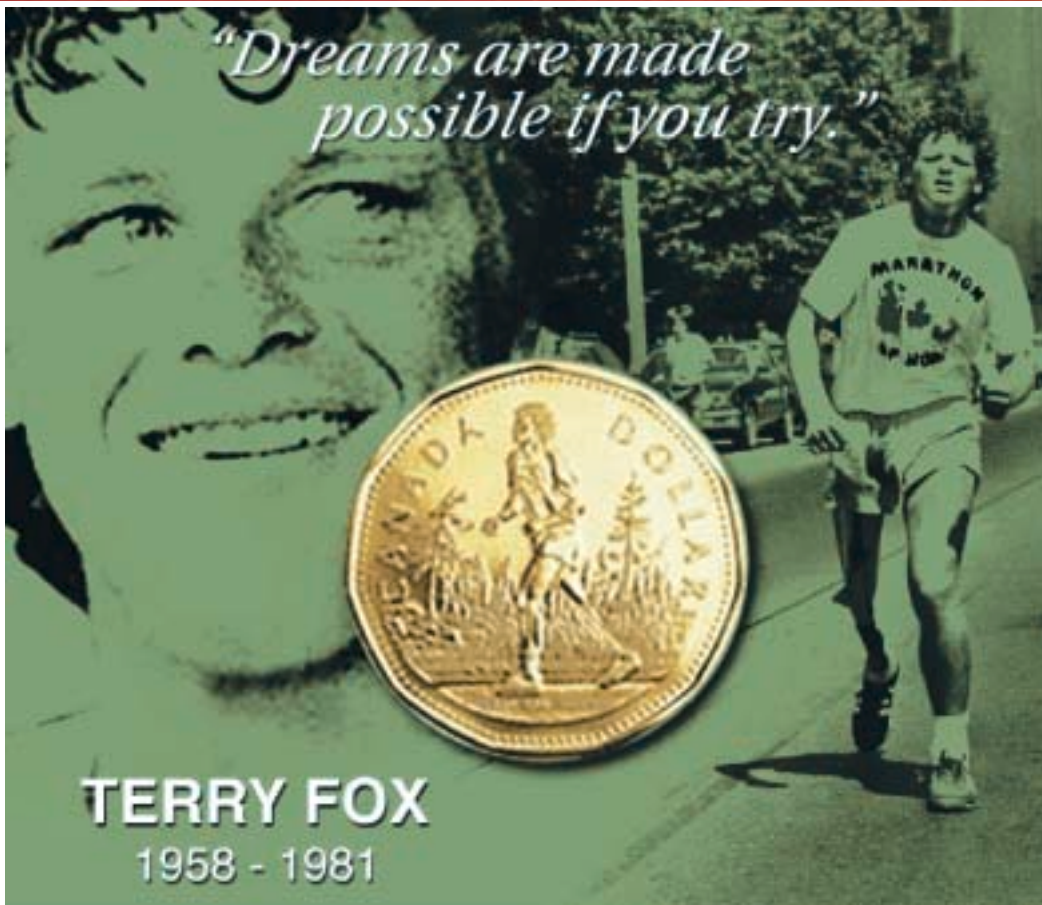
# **The Terry Fox** **National School Run Day**

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