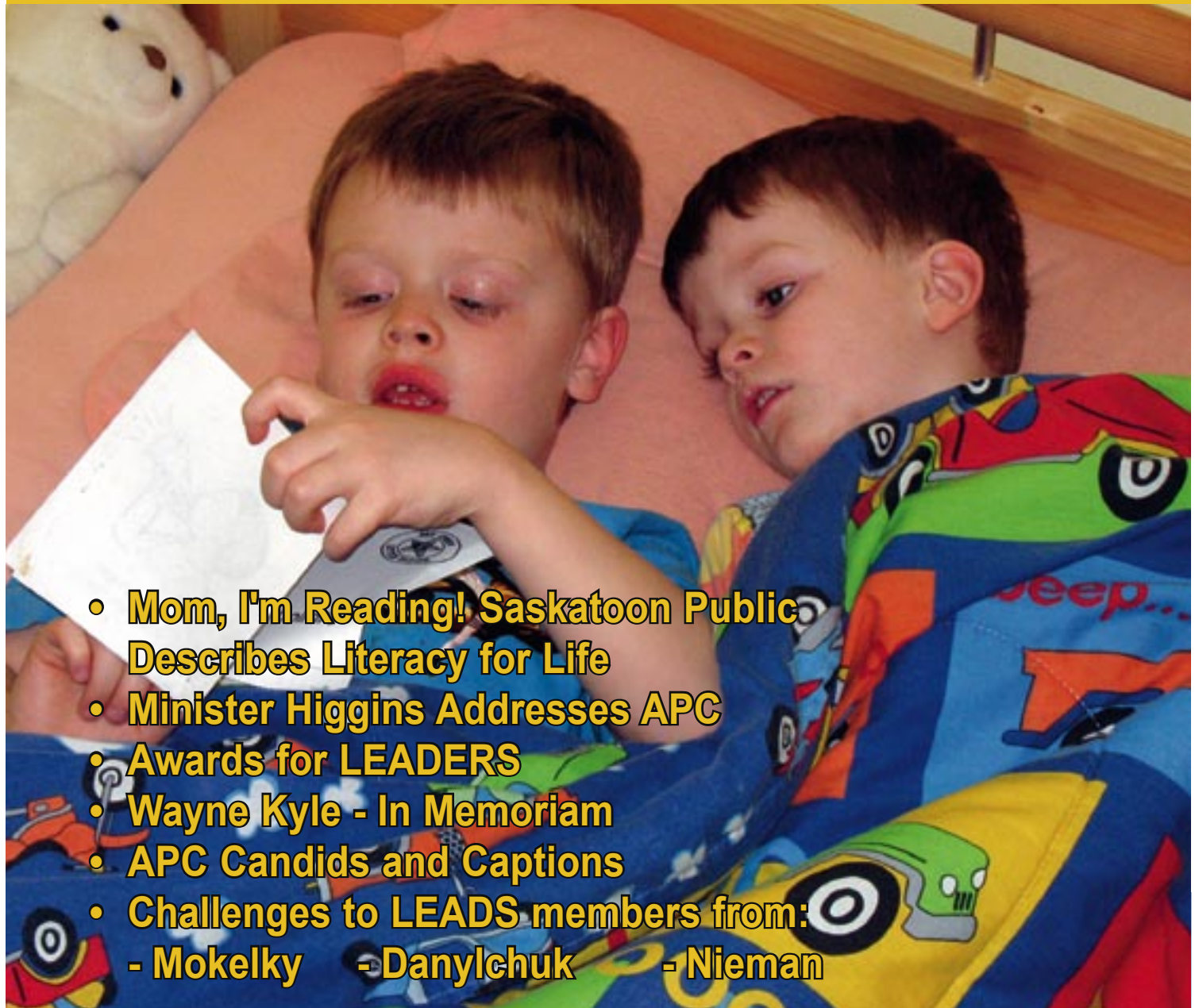




# *the* LEADER

2006 Spring Edition, Vol. 6



- **Mom, I'm Reading! Saskatoon Public Describes Literacy for Life**
- **Minister Higgins Addresses APC**
- **Awards for LEADERS**
- **Wayne Kyle - In Memoriam**
- **APC Candid and Captions**
- **Challenges to LEADS members from:**
  - Mokolky
  - Danylchuk
  - Nieman



# IDENTIFICATION OF UNIQUENESS IMPORTANT TO NEW DIVISIONS

Quite a few weeks ago the editor requested copies of the recently developed school division logo for each of the twelve newly amalgamated school divisions. Those who responded with their new brand will find their logo placed on the outline map below. In some cases it was still too early in the development of the new school division to have a logo. We thank those directors who sent us copies of the new identifiers and to those whose divisions are still working on the development of a distinctive new logo, who courteously let us know that they were still in development.



## EDITORIAL THOUGHTS

LEADS is at an organizational crossroad. Executive Director Dick Nieman, typically among the most upbeat of educators challenges the organization's membership to grapple with what the ongoing changes in organization of school divisions will really mean for the profession of educational administration in Saskatchewan. His introspective essay in this issue provides thoughtful questions for all members.

Throughout this edition of *the LEADER* magazine challenges and accomplishments fill the pages. Past President Dr. Vance Mokolky and new President Marc Danylchuk provide insights into what will advance the cause of public education in Saskatchewan and enhance the work of our profession. Our new Minister of Learning, Deb Higgins made a quick flight to Saskatoon in order to attend the opening session of the Annual Policy Conference. Her remarks are featured in this issue.

Two LEADS members are highlighted because of their recently announced awards. Congratulations to Dolores Wagner-Owens and Ben Grebinski for their significant achievements in reading education and information technology respectively.

Compiling and producing this little magazine has always been challenging. This issue seems to have been a bigger challenge than others. Why? Well, a friend in the business of communication sometimes refers to this editor as, Mr. Nag. That, as well as being an affectionate moniker, is closer to the truth than one might wish. Everyone is busy; all have deadlines. Some deadlines are more crucial than others and producing material for the editor of a magazine with a small circulation is easily relegated to a less than crucial shelf. That's where the nagging label is earned.

I have a theory that relates to this. This theory suggests that in our challenging and fruitful lives, we have become so efficient that we now quietly believe we can do everything, until we succumb to the pressures of fatigue and over-involvement. Or worse, we quietly, and perhaps desperately, believe that others think we can do everything. Take a look at any urban street in the morning hour before

businesses become humming automatons. Notice two images that were not present when the futurists were making big bucks telling us how the advent of technology was going to simplify our lives and provide more leisure time. What percentage of the people walking the streets on their way to work are about to suffer what occupational and physical therapists will surely soon describe as syndromes, Starbucks Elbow and Cell Phone Shoulder?



*Ernie Dawson*

Doesn't that sound silly? Imagine injuring ourselves with the morning coffee or the getting-at-it-early business call before the computer is even cranked up at the office. These are symptoms of what sociologists will describe soon as a system running amok. They are also indicators of what leaders in educational administration must consider when they contemplate what their real jobs are. We are in the people business. We are not in the machine business. Those can help us, but they can also hinder us, because they are so intrusive. Sometimes we chuckle or shrug when we hear of leaders urging their employees to leave telephone calls about business at the office, to stop using email after business hours, to jettison the Blackberry, or at the least to leave it in a vibrating heap somewhere out of sight after business hours.

Those leaders are on to something. They are recognizing that the human being must be reinserted into the business and the busyness of our lives. Hurrah for them.

Hurrah also for Karen Anderson and Dr. Jim Jutras for their wonderfully enthusiastic presentation on the Literacy for Life program in Saskatoon Public Schools. Did it ever occur to us that reading might just be the saving grace of a society zipping its way to a technologically enhanced precipice where nervous breakdowns, burnout and psychological fatigue characterize most endeavors and we just accept that as the norm?

Busyness is good; busyness fraught

with constant and unrealistic tension is not. We need to learn soon.

An editorial aside now. The tax revolt as it was characterized by the media has ended with the announcement of new money for the cash-strapped agricultural sector of this province. Thank goodness for the end of the withholding of property taxes from the legitimate recipients of those taxes, the school divisions. Some may see the announcement of specific financial support by Premier Calvert as good

news. But others will look beyond that and recognize that doing something illegal, such as withholding of someone else's money was wrong. Rewarding that kind of action by providing support for that sector carries with it a huge and potentially destructive concern. Simply put, if you don't like it, then do something wrong-headed that catches others in your web of concern and use them as pawns. If we go in that direction we are headed for big trouble. Let's continue to urge the fixing of the education funding concerns in a constructive way.

Finally, a last word to readers of this little magazine. It has been my joy to work with LEADS for over ten years as editor of publications. We began with a small eleven by seventeen single fold, moved to a larger format, changed to a tabloid style and then made a huge leap into a four color cover with black and white text magazine. Along the way LEADS members and Executive Directors have been stellar in their support and encouragement. To all readers, for all you have done and all you do, please accept my heartfelt appreciation. Now, have a good read.



# the LEADER

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

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

Phone: (306) 683-2266  
Fax: (306) 683-2243  
Email: leads@sasktel.net

Executive Director: Dick Nieman

President: Marc Danylchuk

Desktop Publishing: Elena Marin-Beke  
marinbeke@shaw.ca

Printing: The Printing Department,  
Saskatoon

Editor: Ernie Dawson  
Email: be.dawson@sasktel.net

## IN THIS ISSUE

- **Mom, I'm Reading: Turning the Pages of a Reading Initiative**
- **Mokelky Challenges LEADS members to REALLY Collaborate**
- **Marc Danylchuk's Presidential address**
- **Executive Director's Annual Report**
- **Major Awards to LEADS members**
- **Wayne Kyle: In Memoriam**
- **What is the Future for LEADS?**
- **Book Review**
- **Deb Higgins Becomes New Minister of Learning**
- **New Executive**
- **APC Candidates**
- **One Last Editorial Comment – Ernie Dawson**
- **Spring Time in Canada**

## MARK THESE DATES IN YOUR DAYTIMER

- **Saskatchewan Principals' Short Course Director - Dr. Sheila Carr Stewart**  
SELU in conjunction with the Department of Educational Administration  
July 3-7, 2006  
Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon
- **LEADS Summer Short Course**  
August 6 – 10, 2006  
Hawood Inn, Waskesiu
- **Drilling Deeper: A Summer Camp on Building Learning Community**  
Presenter/Facilitators - Larry Sackney, Keith Walker, Christine Boyczuk and Randy Wimmer  
August 15 and 16, 2006  
Saskatoon
- **Assessment for Learning Institute**  
Presenters - Rick Stiggins and Associates - feature presenters Wayne Hulley and David Bouchard  
October 11-13, 2006  
TCU Auditorium, Saskatoon
- **Supervision for the Enhancement of Teaching**  
Presenter - Patrick Renihan  
Dates - TBA  
Location - Regina
- **Principal Development: Leadership for School Community Councils**  
Presenters – Department of Educational Administration Faculty  
Dates - Fall 2006  
Location - TBA
- **Building Instructional Teams: Teachers as Team Leaders (A workshop for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in working effectively with Educational Assistants)**  
Presenters - SELU consultants  
Location - Regional workshops
- **Educational Assistant Inservice Program**  
Six modules design for Educational Assistant Development  
Presenter - SELU consultants  
Location - School division or Regional workshops

# Literacy for Life – Turning the Pages of a Reading Initiative

**Who among the readers of this little magazine could remain emotionally untouched by the thrill of a five year old proudly announcing to his mother, Paula, "...Mom, I'm reading!" For that reason we have selected the picture of Graham Kelly, a kindergarten student at Holliston School in Saskatoon reading to his four year old brother, William at bedtime for the cover theme picture of this edition. The image, taken by Graham's father, Christopher arrived coincidentally within a few hours of the editor hearing Karen Anderson and Dr. Jim Jutras describing the Literacy for Life program in Saskatoon Public Schools. Readers may remember Chris Kelly for another contribution to this magazine, a prize-winning cover picture of a sunset taken near a family cottage at Emma Lake.**

Thrust into the gap caused by the unavailability of a previously scheduled presenter at the opening session of the LEADS Annual Policy Conference Dr. Jim Jutras, Director of Education and Karen Anderson, Deputy Director must surely have proved the accuracy of the old adage, As goes the principal, so goes the school. In this case, it describes the enthusiasm and involvement of two key leaders of the Saskatoon Public School Division's Literacy for Life program.

Both would declare credit for success of the program resides elsewhere, but their unbridled enthusiasm for the system-wide reading program speaks volumes about what excellence in leadership can mean for innovations like this major reading program.

Readers are encouraged to visit the Saskatoon Public Schools website for the June 2005 progress report on the program, where more details and statistics, not included in this article are provided.

**"...Schools fundamental responsibility is to ensure that all students read proficiently."** Lyon and Chhabra, 2004.

Using that quotation as the basis of their report Jutras and Anderson explained to their audience why their division has expressed the goal of all students in K-12 being able to read at or above grade level. Most of us would anticipate somewhat lower ambitions for a reading program, but Jutras argues that their goal is simply to see all students gain as much as they possibly can and the goal must reflect that desire.

At a time when policy governance is forefront in many discussions about public education in this province Anderson and Jutras give credit to their board of education members who articulated two priorities for its system:

1. Early learning and literacy, and
2. Facilities for Learning

Not only that, but they credit the board for providing the requisite financing to support a three to six year commitment to the Literacy for Life program. That means money to support and sustain up to ten days of teacher professional development time this year and in following years. Consider the costs of such an investment across a school system and it is easily understood what they mean about the support they feel from their board of education.



*Dr. Jim Jutras and Karen Anderson*

In brief, the program has three main components: *Just Read*, the Early Years *Literacy Initiative*, and *Read to Succeed*.

## Just Read

*Just Read* is described as a partnership between schools and the wider community to increase students' out-of-school reading of fiction and non-fiction books. The program is intended to instill a love of reading, a clear link to educational research which suggests a strong link exists between reading and success in both school and life after school years.

Students are encouraged to choose individual reading goals and to contribute to their classroom, school and system-wide goals related to the number of books read outside school. It is clear how such a program encourages parents, staff and community members to spend time reading with children to model good habits and to help motivate students to increase their reading.

Celebration is a keystone of the program. Signs are prominent at city schools where the growing numbers indicate how many books students have read. Posters displaying local celebrities reading their favorite books, scheduled reading times throughout the school day and charts documenting progress toward goals are commonplace in schools.

Community partnerships cited in the presentation identified diversity in the range of businesses cooperating either through funding for book deposits, celebration venues or in-kind donations.

The report on the Literacy for Life program notes progress made in books read. *Our students (and their families) have made tremendous progress this year with respect to out-of-school reading. In March, 2005 we commemorated reaching the milestone of having read 500,000 books with a celebration at TCU Place. Our next goal was to read 750,000 books by the end of June. That goal was reached by the end of May. Schools received certificates celebrating this feat.*

*Over the course of this year (2004/05) our staff have learned the process of routinely collecting and using data. Reading has had a greater profile in our schools and our community. Our students have begun to make reading a habit.*

As an update to this report, as of March, 2006 the division reports that students have read 1.6 million books!

## Early Years Literacy Initiative

This initiative is intended to provide Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers with instructional approaches for the development of students' reading and writing skills. It is supported by intensive and sustained staff development and powerful instructional strategies including the Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM).

During the first year of the initiative the focus was with Grade 1 teachers; during the second year Kindergarten and Grade 2 teachers were involved; and Grade 3 teachers will come on board during the third year of implementation.

The progress report on the Grade 1 implementation of the reading program provides statistical data to indicate remarkable achievement of goals and changes in scores that have delighted the school division leadership. Readers are encouraged to visit the Saskatoon Public website to see those data.

Anderson and Jutras reflected on their impressions of the teachers' excellent implementation of the program and noted that the board's investment has provided results showing that more than 80 per cent of grade one teachers have successfully added the PWIM instructional strategy to their reper-



*Holliston School Kindergarten student Graham Kelly reads to his mother Paula Kelly.*

toires. In addition, parents of grade one students were invited to reflect on the program through a survey sent home with their children. Results indicate strong parental support with their children's progress.

The teachers, for the greatest part positive about the initiative, made observations such as the three quoted below.

*My weakest student in September, would almost be in tears attempting to read his new words. He is now confidently reading all of his PWIM words and sentences.... I am convinced that they believe they can read anything.*

*I was very leery at first but PWIM turned out to be a successful strategy for me and my students. I have found that it really works! The writing of all children is way above what I have seen at this grade level in my career.*

*I have learned a great deal and wish this [PWIM] had been around when I began teaching. I can hardly wait to apply what I've learned [next year].*

## Read To Succeed

*Read to Succeed* is a program element aimed at helping struggling readers develop their reading skills and experience success simultaneously, many of them for the first time. The program requires about ninety minutes a day beyond the regular Language Arts program for students

and their instructors.

Consider the phobias, excuses, concerns and attitudes about reading that plague many of our students and the problems of the students in this program will become very real. Most have experienced little success in academics, many resist instruction and many exhibit defensive behaviors developed to cover their weaknesses.

Over 800 students from grades two through twelve were included in this facet of the program in the 2004-2005 school year. The report indicates remarkable reading skills development. Anderson extrapolated from the data that students in the program probably experienced higher literacy gains than at any time in their previous schooling history.

Teachers have reported through a variety of indicators that between 85 and 90 per cent have successfully implemented the literacy approaches as designed for this part of the program.

Parents responded very positively about the initiative and its impact on their children. The following four comments elaborate this very well.

*Our son's reading skills have improved tremendously. He doesn't complain about reading any more.*

*We see with our daughter that she has more confidence with her school work. She always comes home with*

*excitement about what she's learning and understanding.*

*[The Read to Succeed program] has meant the world to both our daughter and us, mainly because it reinforced that the school (system, teachers, etc.) did care how well she could read and that they were willing to go that extra mile to help her. During this school year, largely due to the program, our daughter has made incredible progress.*

*Out of all the programs our daughter has been in, this seems to be the only one that worked.*

How did teachers react? One said, "I think that setting aside a block of time dedicated to older beginning students makes a loud and clear statement that band-aid approaches don't work and that literacy is crucial."

Another commented, "I was able to combine my new learnings with PWIM and Concept Attainment and further develop my own skills in teaching English."

their board's commitment to the program. That included hiring eight literacy teachers through the budget for the Literacy for Life program.

They are quick to point out that external expertise was necessary and valuable for the implementation of the program. Drs. Bruce Joyce and Emily Calhoun, authors and researchers in literacy and staff development were key to the program development.

As they concluded Anderson and Jutras noted that systemic change in a large school division is not easy. It requires passion of purpose, strong leadership, and collective action by many people. They cited their pride in the work and commitment of their staff colleagues and their willingness to make changes to their instructional programs, to take risks associated with doing things differently and to their openness in sharing their new learning with others.

Replacement speakers they may have been, but the audience at the Annual Policy Conference felt the enthusiasm of Karen Anderson and Dr. Jim Jutras

## A Message to the Skeptics

Enthusiasm for a program by senior administrators must surely act as a catalyst for building similar enthusiasm among those whose daily task it is to carry out the program. Think of the analogy of generals rallying the troops on to greater achievements. It is a laudable strategy and simply put good administrative behavior. That said, any critical audience would do well to consider what Fredrick Herzberg used to call the Halo Effect, a perception of success for a project by those closely involved with it, whether or not the supportive data were current and long-running enough to supply proof of success.

The audience that heard Karen Anderson and Dr. Jim Jutras quickly learned of their enthusiasm for the Literacy for Life project. Some might have questioned the validity of the early statistics, the accuracy of the total number of books read, or if the program is as well supported by teachers as Karen and Jim reported. Still others may have wondered if the removal of students from their regular programming for ninety additional minutes of reading instruction and practice daily is not depriving students with reading deficits the lifestyle and cultural types of programming that, it might be argued, would do them much good.

**The LEADER** magazine appreciates these concerns, but counters with the suggestion that the Literacy for Life program embodies in its essential philosophy a realistic concern that without capacity to read and understand functionally all the lifestyle programming in the world will not make up deficits that could handicap students who were not receiving this attention. The results of the next several years will prove the point.

## "I see great strides in how the students feel about themselves.

## They are so much more confident."

Still another said, "...what began as a reluctant group is now a great community of learners."

And finally a teacher said, "I see great strides in how the students feel about themselves. They are so much more confident."

Throughout their presentation Anderson and Jutras spoke fondly of

throughout their entire presentation. No doubt other parents will have pictures or images in their minds of their children reading, experiencing success and announcing, "Mom, I'm reading!"



### LEADS EXECUTIVE 2006/2007

*President*  
*President-Elect*  
*Past President*  
*Public Representative*  
*Region 1 Representative*  
*Region 2 Representative*  
*Region 3 Representative*

**Marc Danylchuk**  
**Ben Grebinski**  
**Vance Mokolky**  
**Patricia Roe**  
**Harold Laich**  
**Sandra Hill**  
**Brenda Edwards**  
**Bruce Baldwin**

*Region 4 Representative*  
*Region 5 Representative*  
*Region 6 Representative*  
*Northern Region Rep.*  
*Executive Director*

**Evelyn Novak**  
**Joanne Weninger**  
**Brent Castle**  
**Janine Otterson**  
**Ralph Pilz**  
**Dick Nieman**

*Sometimes in the haste to carry out our collective responsibilities too few of us learn of the significant achievements of colleagues. We are grateful to Executive Director Dick Nieman for alerting the LEADER magazine of the following award to one of our members, and to Del Wagner for submitting a press release, from which the material is taken. Congratulations Dolores.*



## **Dolores Wagner-Owens Receives Saskatchewan Reading Council's Administrator's Award**

**I**n January, 2006, Dolores Wagner-Owens of Holy Trinity Catholic School Division, was presented with the Saskatchewan Reading Council's Administrator's Award for her advocacy in the field of literacy. In all career roles - teacher, principal and currently superintendent of student services, Ms Wagner-Owens has become and continues to be a strong advocate of change and innovation in literacy instruction. She is a recognized leader in ensuring professional development for teachers, and most importantly, ensuring that struggling readers are provided with assistance needed to improve and grow confidence as learners. Throughout her career, Ms. Wagner-Owens' students have been recipients of her dedication and ongoing search for best practices in literacy education.

Ms Wagner-Owens describes her views on literacy. "Literacy is a social event and as such needs to be taught and learned in a social setting." She reminisced about her years as principal at St. Gregory School in Regina when the whole community became engaged in raising

the reading levels of struggling readers. That community of parents, staff and interested partners dedicated themselves to working together to bring out the enjoyment and excitement that comes with reading good books and sharing what they had read in a social setting that was designed to celebrate literacy in all its many forms. Reading, writing, speaking, listening and representing through drama and art became the focal points of the social context which Ms Wagner-Owens believes are the pillars of teaching and learning across all grade levels. Ms Wagner Owens remarked that her achievements as an educator wanting to promote literacy development among students would not have happened but for the enthusiasm of students, the support of parents, and the professionalism of staff. She said, "The process can only begin when you have confident, professional staff, who want to make a real difference and I continue to see many examples in my current work with the teachers and support staff."

---

## **Deb Higgins - Minister of Learning**



*Deb Higgins*

Deb Higgins was first elected to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly in 1999 representing Moose Jaw Wakamow. Premier Lorne Calvert appointed Deb as Minister of Labour on October 12, 2001 and added Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to her portfolio on March 26, 2002. From September 2003, to November 21, 2003 Deb was also responsible for Saskatchewan Government Insurance. On November 21, 2003 Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation was added to Deb's responsibilities.

Deb also served on the Public Sector Compensation Committee and is a member of the Treasury Board, Investment Board and is Vice-Chairperson of the Liquor and Gaming Authority, Minister Responsible for the Labour Relations Board, Minimum Wage Board, Worker's Advocate, Saskatchewan Worker's Compensation Board and Wakamow Valley Authority.

On February 3, 2006 Premier Lorne Calvert appointed Deb as Minister of Learning and added Minister Responsible for Literacy, Liquor and Gaming Authority and Saskatchewan Telecommunications. She continues to serve on Treasury Board, Investment Board and Wakamow Valley Authority and adds Saskatchewan Literacy Commission, Teachers' Superannuation Commission, Saskatchewan Communications Holding Corporation. She is now the Chairperson of Liquor and Gaming, member

of the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan, Vice-Chairperson for Saskatchewan Development Fund Corporation.

Deb and her husband Don have lived in the Moose Jaw Wakamow constituency all their lives, where they have raised two daughters, worked and enjoyed participating in many community activities.

# A Future For LEADS

It is becoming a cliché to say that we are in the midst of one of the most significant changes in educational governance since the 1940's. Change in governance is not necessarily noteworthy in itself, but it does become meaningful if we see it as a new way of "doing business". All of us in the education sector will need to ask ourselves how one change can and should affect other decisions we need to make.

As an organization LEADS is not immune from this same self-examination. Will changing governance in Saskatchewan education affect how we govern ourselves as an organization? Do we need to rethink our organization in terms of the services and support to members? What will our capacity be in light of reduced numbers of members? Will the larger amalgamated jurisdictions affect the need for member support, or will the need be met within the divisions? Are there emerging needs as a result of the new jurisdictions?

It is important to go back to our original purpose for establishing LEADS and incorporating it in an Act of the Legislature. LEADS is the only self-governing and registering body of senior educational administrators in Canada. Alberta superintendents are presently seeking such status and are hoping to model their legislation after ours.

So what does it mean to be a self-governing profession? A defining characteristic of a profession is its self-governing status. By virtue of that status, the professional body controls who may practice or enter the profession. This is significant because LEADS members are not self-employed as in other professions. Since nearly all LEADS members are employed by Boards of Education, the organization's requirements may override the wishes of the Board, a unique situation not to be taken lightly. It is a significant responsibility given to us by virtue of the LEADS Act.

Professions evolve for many reasons including recognition that certain callings require specialized skills and knowledge, which only those who have received certain training should exercise. Members were asked to

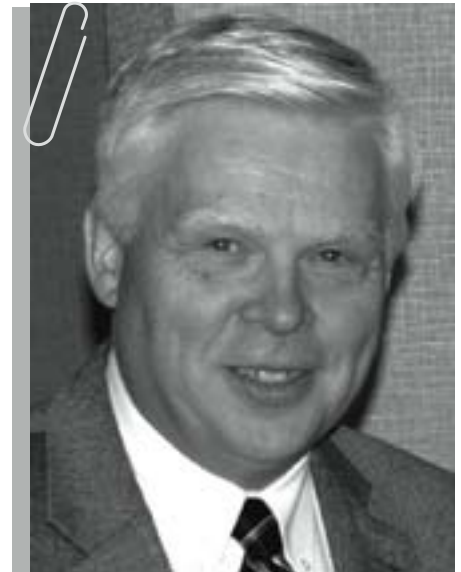
approve the minimum educational requirements for LEADS at this year's APC. Professions establish standards for professional competence and conduct. There is also a perceived need to protect the public from unqualified or unscrupulous practitioners. Professions have a public representative appointed by the province to represent the public interest on the Executive.

When the legislature recognizes a profession, it creates a monopoly for its members. This is valuable. In return, the legislature expects the profession will regulate its members in a manner consistent with the public interest. If the professional body fails in its public responsibility, then the Legislature may be pressured to revoke the self-governing status or place restrictions on the body. A professional group such as LEADS sets the qualifications, standards and rules by which it admits members and regulates their conduct. In the latter case, it is the discipline process which is used to monitor its members. You will find that our organization's bylaws set out how that happens to ensure fair and due process.

That is one side of who we are as an organization. We cannot abrogate that responsibility, so that will continue to be the case regardless of what happens in the future.

Another very important part of who we are as a professional organization is our need to develop and provide ongoing professional development for members. As we look at the future it will be important for us to determine those needs and develop appropriate professional development programs. It is recognized that there will be greater internal capacity to meet some of those needs within the school divisions. Members do need to be mindful that they have a professional responsibility to develop a personal professional growth plan in much the same way we expect employees we supervise.

This year the Educational Leadership Committee is reviewing our responsibility regarding professional competence and how LEADS would deal with complaints related to competence. It is expected that the committee will make recommendations regarding participation in professional development



Dick Nieman

activities. As we move forward, this area will continue to be extremely important to us.

At the present time LEADS is represented on a wide range of committees mostly by invitation by Saskatchewan Learning and from our educational partners. Since most of our representation can best be described as, an ability to influence the direction of educational policy, we will continue to examine our capacity to provide that representation. We need to examine how we seek input from members on various issues. At present we expect LEADS representatives on committees to provide a LEADS perspective since we do not develop positions on many issues.

In the past we have relied on Saskatchewan Learning's Regional office structure to provide information and to seek feedback from members. My experience as a LEADS member suggests that at best it has had limited success due to heavy agendas, time constraints and the fact that not all LEADS members attend all regional meetings. It may be time to create a structure for dialogue of LEADS members outside of the regional structure which may change as well. Do we want to find the time in our already busy lives to meet and discuss educational issues with fellow LEADS members? If we are open to doing that, I believe we will create a stronger organization with a greater capacity to

influence educational policy in the province. This big assumption, of course, is to try to get LEADS members to agree. Past experience suggests we are pretty diverse in our thinking, something that is not necessarily bad.

Another area to examine includes the publications. LEADS publishes its professional journal twice a year. **The LEADER** magazine has evolved into a professional journal which is respected both by members and our educational

partners. The Executive is committed to continuing to publication of **the LEADER** magazine. We may need to think about doing more electronically as we move towards a paperless organization. The same applies to the Pictorial Directory and Superannuates' Tribute Booklet. To date **the LEADER** magazine has been free of paid advertising. Do we want to examine issues associated with advertising in a professional journal?

As important as it is to examine

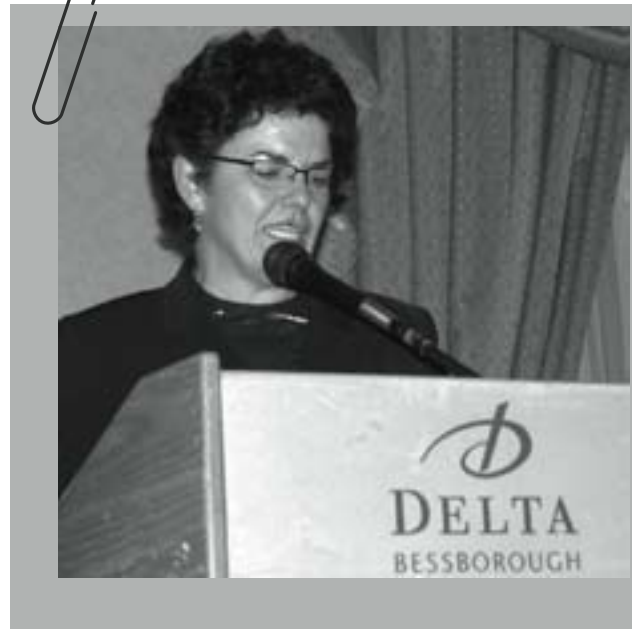
many of the things internal to our organization, the much more significant question is what members expect from their organization and how best does the organization live up to its mission, its purpose and espoused values of, working together for excellence in education and of being advocates for the children and youth we serve.



## Minister Higgins Speaks at APC Opening Session

**Newly appointed Minister of Learning Deb Higgins spoke at the opening session of the APC, despite a crushingly busy schedule. Edited and abbreviated excerpts of her remarks are provided below.**

- I look forward to advancing the work of the department, along with partners such as LEADS.
- Education is the spring board for the social, economic, and personal well-being of the people in our province.
- The new department is comprised of areas related to early learning and child care, the K-12 system, literacy and provincial libraries. These changes reflect the importance of early childhood experiences in the learning development of young people before they begin school. We will be able to continue strengthening links between the education system and the community through literacy and libraries.
- Changes to finance and governance models are grounded in the belief that the education system must be equitable and accessible to all Saskatchewan students.
- Our efforts will ensure that Saskatchewan students have access to a system that is sustainable and provides the highest-quality programs and services.
- LEADS members have been integral to the important process of restructuring school divisions. Your professionalism and expertise has been vital for the Education Equity Initiative that will strengthen our capacity for a sustainable, equitable education system.
- One initiative is determining how the province funds the system. Our objectives were greater equity, simplicity, and transparency, and increasing the provincial portion of education funding.
- Restructured school divisions have provided an opportunity to start over with a renewed formula for funding education.
- The grant formula will be more equitable among divisions and provide increased management flexibility for boards to respond to local needs. Work to redevelop the funding system is underway. A



- less complex grant formula is expected for 2006-07. Enhanced transparency and simplicity will help us improve confidence in the education funding system. Remaining aspects of the formula will be reviewed the following year.
- We are proposing August 31 as the fiscal year-end of school divisions to improve accountability and ease administrative burdens on school divisions and department officials.
- Changes to the education system position us to renew relationships between the province and school divisions, to reconnect with ratepayers and parents in new ways and provide us with tools to be proactive in response to change.

- School Community Councils will facilitate connections between schools and communities, encourage increased involvement of parents in the system so their children benefit from our programs. Strong community engagement, at the heart of SchoolPLUS, is paramount to student success and strong school-community relationships.
- The Continuous Improvement Framework supports these goals. The framework will be used by all school divisions and will serve as a foundation for focusing on shared objectives and outcomes.
- Thanks to LEADS members, Evelyn Novak, Ralph Pilz, and Ben Grebinski for their valuable input as members of the working group. The Continuous Improvement Framework Guide will be distributed shortly and implemented in the 2006-07 school year.
- The framework advances SchoolPLUS by serving as a guide for school divisions and Saskatchewan Learning. The framework will help us be more responsive to the changing needs and conditions of the education system, students, and the province.
- Premier Calvert recognizes the difficult time farm families are facing today on a number of fronts such as net farm income, and the pressure they feel with respect to property tax.
- The provincial/local ratio of school funding on an average basis province wide will be 60/40 on agricultural land. The purpose of this program is to provide relief to agricultural land owners who are

experiencing low income levels. Clearly, addressing education property taxes on other property classes will require more effort and our work on the broader questions of funding our children's education will continue.

- We will continue to work with stakeholders to develop a long term sustainable education funding solution around the provincial school operating grant and with respect of a fair equalization deal from the federal government for all ratepayers.
- We recognize the tax relief program (announced by Premier Calvert) will not be a sustainable model for increasing funding long term. However, it is a first step and sends a strong signal of our ongoing commitment to increase the provincial share of education funding.
- I emphasize the common goal we share to ensure Saskatchewan youth are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed throughout their lifetime.
- We have strong traditions to build on, not the least of which is the dedication and commitment of Saskatchewan's LEADS members. The role of LEADS is valued and essential for the province's education system. Your work is an investment in the future. It is an investment in our people, in our children, and our communities. It is an investment that will ensure for our generation and those that follow, Saskatchewan is the best place to live, work and raise a family in Canada. I look forward to our work together.

## Mokelky Challenges Educational Partnerships to Really Collaborate

*Dr. Vance Mokelky used the opportunity of his final presidential address to LEADS members to challenge some common ideas regarding progress and collaboration. His speech has been abridged and edited for this edition of the LEADER magazine.*

**R**estructuring is far from complete in Saskatchewan. I think the public is aware the number of school divisions has been reduced and the names of the remaining entities have changed. However, I would guess the majority of our parents, students and the taxpayers have no understanding of the magnitude of the changes that have occurred or the incredible efforts required to actualize the mandated plan for restructuring. It would be of little value to recount the specifics of those efforts because you are the people guiding the restructuring process. In the same way, little is to be gained from lamenting the tremendous workload now placed upon all in leadership positions. Instead, I have chosen to focus my comments on the benefits that can be derived if we are able to maximize the potential



of restructuring. I also take the liberty of making a few personal observations regarding opportunities that could be lost if we cling to current modes of operation rather than adjusting to the changing reality.

The most obvious benefit to be derived from restructuring is the potential for larger school divisions to utilize the expertise of personnel in a more effective manner. Reflection upon current and past practice is imperative if we are to maximize this potential. I believe reconsideration of our practice and current service delivery mechanisms is critical for all school divisions. Many assumed restructuring would impact only those school divisions that have experienced a physical change in boundaries, but that has proven to be highly erroneous.

Obviously restructured school divisions have been compelled to address significant issues personnel in unchanged school divisions would not be required to consider. I have a partial understanding of the time commitment that administration in restructured school divisions have faced in many areas, including: locating the school division office, hiring senior administrative personnel, aligning administrative procedures across school divisions that formerly employed significantly different governance structures, coordinating and involving personnel in meetings with colleagues dispersed over large geographic areas and creating a new identity or culture within the larger jurisdiction, to name a few.

Restructuring has provided the impetus for senior administration and boards to reflect upon current practices and reconsider staff deployment to ensure that expertise is utilized to a maximum, and this in turn has provided impetus for similar action in all school divisions. Everyone has been forced, in the most positive sense of the word, to examine past practice and determine whether or not there are better means of providing enhanced learning opportunities for students.

We have also observed efforts on the part of both the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and Saskatchewan Learning to adjust their modes of operation. Both organizations are to be commended for those efforts. By way of example, reorganization of the regional meeting process to enact a North/South meeting structure affords the opportunity for individuals working in similar roles to meet and discuss relevant issues. However, bringing people with similar responsibilities together, without revising the structure for those gatherings, will likely achieve little in the way of the improved practice desired. Similarly, efforts by the School Boards Association to provide support for Boards transitioning to a policy governance orientation have been well received. Providing support to help Boards and administrative personnel develop a common understanding regarding policy governance has definitely been timely.

Nevertheless, I question the value of providing ongoing networking and sharing meetings. Given the creation of larger school divisions, and the need within those divisions to develop

enhanced communication networks that work efficiently over distance, it is likely new forms of networking will evolve quickly, through necessity. The need for face to face networking meetings to share information, discuss issues and plan cooperatively may well be diminished though better use of technology.

I suggest that Saskatchewan Learning and the School Boards Association should take a lead in modeling efficiencies through the use of technology, as a means to enhance communications, rather than expending significant effort coordinating networking meetings. Perhaps the monitoring process being proposed as a key component of The Continuous Improvement Framework could be accomplished in a more cost efficient manner through video conferencing. And by extension, might it not be plausible that technology could be utilized for initiatives to be jointly undertaken by The School Boards Association, Sask. Learning and school boards with similar interests? Rather than assuming Department personnel will meet directly with administrative personnel from each school division to discuss developments and then plan for some means of disseminating the information regarding best practice, might it not be feasible to actively engage partners with similar needs and interests, through the use of interactive technology?

We frequently applaud the collaborative efforts of the educational partners in Saskatchewan. But I have concern the potential for redundancy of effort and duplication of services is highly probable, as we all struggle to define our new roles in the restructured educational system, unless we actually focus on working collaboratively rather than simply espousing collaboration. In my opinion, joint work as defined by Judith Warren Little is prerequisite to advancement of the restructuring agenda. I suggest the educational partners must discuss needs jointly, agree upon priorities requiring the most immediate attention and jointly determine which organization or organizations have the resources and expertise to fulfill the agreed plans of action.

It is my sincere hope as we move forward with efforts to advance accountability in our school divisions, by identifying desired learning outcomes and means to measure our success in

advancing student learning, collaborative efforts will be held to the same standard of accountability. I trust as we are being reminded outcomes are more important than inputs, leadership in the partner organizations will move forward with the same understanding. The number of meetings and frequency with which issues are discussed must not be mistaken for collaborative work. As leaders of our respective organizations we must be accountable for the joint work, **accomplished**, if we are actually working collaboratively rather than simply meeting.

I don't lay blame on others; I have been one of those in a leadership role, having served three terms on the LEADS executive. But if I were to consider the real accomplishments in terms of joint work that have been achieved during my tenure I would be forced to question the value of the espoused collaborative efforts. I raise this issue to be constructively critical. I raise the issue because there are real benefits to be derived through collaborative action where progress is monitored using a Continuous Improvement Model. I believe in using data to inform decisions. I believe that continuous improvement is a goal to which we should all strive. I believe as educators we should do everything in our power to advance student learning opportunities. And I firmly believe in the value of collaborative effort. Last and most important I believe in the value of modeling the desired action. As we move forward with restructuring in Saskatchewan I think that one of the most likely predictors of our success will be the degree to which our expectations for our own actions match those that we have for others.

We will be successful in advancing the vision for restructured educational programming in Saskatchewan. My most significant concern is that a tremendous amount of work lies ahead and we must do everything possible to ensure that we work in concert to advance that vision. The potential for a great deal of redundant effort exists if we endeavor to press ahead too quickly without a clear understanding of the intended, measurable outcomes at each stage through which we progress. We all have a responsibility to ensure the collaborative orientation we espouse in Saskatchewan actually reflects the joint work necessary to enhance educational opportunities for Saskatchewan youth.



# President's Address to LEADS APC

*The closing sessions of the Annual Policy Conference provide opportunities for farewells, and welcome, two poles on the continuum of service to the LEADS organization. In this excerpt from his inaugural speech Marc Danylchuk expresses his hopes for the coming year as he welcomes challenges to the executive and through it to all LEADS members.*

One year ago, I respectfully and humbly requested your support. How quickly that time has flown. Allow me to begin by stressing to you that I remain quite humble and deeply respectful. In fact, given the many opportunities that restructuring has sent our way, I am even more so! And here I stand asking for your support again.

The new dawn for education has arrived and it has certainly brought with it a wealth of opportunities. Many would likely choose to view them as more than just a little daunting. Nonetheless, the challenge for us is to bring to light a new and brighter future for education in our fair province.

Our LEADS Action Plan for 2005-2007 set out the following priorities:

1. Support the implementation of the Continuous Improvement Framework.
2. Support the sharing of best practices in:
  - a) Data-driven decision making.
  - b) Aboriginal Education.
  - c) Accountability Reporting.
  - d) School Community Councils.
  - e) Student Engagement.
3. Provide and facilitate support to members in their specific areas of responsibility.
4. Encourage interaction with aboriginal leaders.
5. Continue on-going dialogue with organizational partners.

To move each of these priorities forward, we would do well to keep in focus the foundational agreements we share with those educational partners:

1. Child and youth advocacy remains at the very core of why any of our organization exists.
2. We believe in the inherent value of our provincial partnership; therefore, frequent and effective dialogue between those partners is crucial.
3. Leadership on issues is essential; we must step up and be heard.
4. We must espouse examples of best practices and as partners we must hold ourselves accountable to bring to the table the best examples of models that are known to work well.
5. We need to continue to pay close attention to the related issues of inclusion and equity and finally,
6. We must find ways to work together to find the best possible solutions.



Time and again I have experienced the tangible benefits of our provincial partnerships. Yet I am reminded of the following quote attributed to Peter Marshall, a chaplain who prayed:

"Lord, where we are wrong, make us willing to change,  
and where we are right, make us easy to live with."

Sage advice for all the partners.

We also need to be more innovative, use more imagination and creativity and insight for the building of education futures that will best serve students and society. One of the partnerships we need to develop more is with students.

In this fast-changing world of technological innovation driving us toward futures we can't fully comprehend, we need to invite students to help map out preferred futures. In my experience it is most often the case that we underestimate what our students can do.

We need to engage students in creating learning communities, promoting safe environments, and developing educational pathways that can lead them to the futures where they can not only follow, but actually invent future careers. We need students to see themselves as mentors for one another and for younger students. We need to hear their voices, give them places in our planning systems, and show them that society needs them and wants them. We also have to tell them the truth – that they need to take responsibility for the development of their talents and abilities and that we are here to support them, to help them, to advise them, even to train them. But they are the carriers of the gifts our society needs and they must do the work of developing themselves and their abilities.

Walking our talk together is the way to the next challenge. We must be content with the fact that doing a good job is not measured by solving the problem. For no great problem is ever solved. But if one does the job well, the quality of the problems that are presented are better. We all want better problems to work on. It always feels good to be working on good problems.

Theodore Roosevelt said, "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

Without a doubt ours is work worth doing. Let's work together and make that work our best yet.



# Report of the Executive Director to 2006 Annual Policy Conference

I am pleased to present my fourth Report to the 2006 Annual Policy Conference.

My remarks focus on the past year's highlights with references to the Restructuring Coordinating Committee, the FOG Reference Committee, the work of the Educational Leadership Committee, and progress of the Information Technology Consortium.

The past year has been busy and productive. You can ascribe the same descriptor to your own work. Restructuring and work with individual members occupied a great deal of time as we strove to assure a smooth transition to the new Boards, including fair and reasonable treatment of members.

The new salary review summary will be available shortly to you.

The work of the Restructuring Coordinating Committee is for the most part complete. It was decided that the committee would remain in place until June 2007 and would only meet on as needed basis. I want to commend the Department personnel for their diligence in addressing issues and for their timely decisions. We must recognize the vast complexity of what we undertook with restructuring of education in Saskatchewan. We will continue to work together as educational partners on those areas still outstanding.

It was always contemplated that equity for students and tax-payers would only be achieved through both restructuring and changes to the funding in education.

If we were to ask ourselves, "...are we there yet?" the answer would be no.

Is progress being made? I believe the answer would be yes.

The changes proposed to the Foundation Operating Grant will assist in removing some inequities. It does not and probably cannot address the issue sufficiently.



*Dick Nieman presenting the Executive Director's Report.*

When changes are made there is always the risk of having unintended outcomes. I am cautiously optimistic that the detailed analysis of the proposed changes will not create unintended situations. LEADS strongly supports the principles of accountability, equity, transparency and simplicity. We recognize that not all changes could be achieved in one year but there is assurance from the Department that significant changes will occur over the next few months. I thank Department officials for their dedication and commitment to this task.

Over the course of the past year your Executive has provided input and direction on a number of major initiatives including the Continuous Improvement Framework, the recommendations of the Local Accountability and Partnership Panel and changes to the fiscal year end of school divisions.

I am pleased with the progress made by the Educational Technology Consortium. Substantial financial resources were allocated to the Navision project, one that will assist all Boards in managing the financial and human resources and student services needs of school divisions in a cost-effective manner. On the educational side, the Consortium will continue to develop responses to the need for on-line learning. Thanks to LEADS members who serve on a number of Consortium committees.

The strength of the Saskatchewan education system is our collective ability to work together for the students we serve. The recent symposium regarding Good Practices and Dispute Resolution was a collective demonstration of the desire to work together. That commitment will serve our students into the future.

The Educational Leadership Committee is exploring issues around professional competency. Its work is on-going and we anticipated it will provide recommendations to assist members. It is also contemplated that a tool box of suggestions and supports will be made available. You can expect more information before the end of June, 2006.

LEADS values its partnerships with the Department of Learning, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, our two universities faculties of education, SIAST, SASBO and the Saskatchewan Association of School Councils. We meet at least annually to explore ways to work together and improve the system.

As our planning document states, **The Purpose of LEADS** is to promote leadership for excellence in education and to provide services and support to its members. We seek to be advocates for children and youth. We do that through our partnerships, providing leadership on issues, promoting best practices and committing to inclusion and equity.

Your Executive, and your president, dedicate themselves to those tasks. Thank you to all LEADS members who served on committees.



# Education Loses a Beloved LEADER

In June, 1984 Wayne Kyle stopped the show when he sang, Ol' Man River as Joe in a Saskatoon musical theatre production of Showboat. People still talk about that performance today. Sadly, their talk is also tinged with the sorrow of having lost a wonderful friend of education and a superb human being. His towering six feet six inch frame and his enormous skills and leadership are now memories, part of the legacy he left behind.



Wayne Kyle was a graduate of Moose Jaw Normal School and the University of Saskatchewan. He served as teacher and principal in several parts of Saskatchewan and for more than a decade was a senior administrator in Saskatoon (East) School Division. He was president of the Canadian Association of School Administrators and was a board member of Mendel Art Gallery and the Saskatchewan Arts Board.

Colleagues and former students remember his booming bass voice, his gift for story-telling, leading choral speaking and encouraging student musical productions. What most people did not know was how this giant of

a man worked quietly in support of struggling students, teachers and parents with vast amounts of encouragement, hugs and a capacity for work that was unflagging. He was successful according to one former colleague because, "...his heart was in the job."

Wayne Kyle maintained a caring demeanor, advocated fiercely for children and young people and used his commanding presence effectively in meetings to emphasize a point or win an argument on behalf of excellence in public education. His influence will continue, as the song he sang long ago said, "...it just keeps rolling along."

Wayne Kyle died in early January of this year. Current and former LEADS members who knew him attended his funeral with large numbers of friends and family members. They heard him described as a loving father, grandfather, son, brother and husband. To his family LEADS offers sympathy and condolences. The rest of us are owners of magnificent memories of a man who made a difference. His life's work was well done.

## Wynne Young Appointed Deputy Minister Saskatchewan Learning

**W**ynne Young was appointed Deputy Minister of Saskatchewan Learning on April 7, 2006. She had previously been the Deputy Minister of Community Resources and Employment since August, 2004, and the Chair of the Saskatchewan Public Service Commission from 1997 to 2004. Wynne has been with the Government of Saskatchewan for twenty-two years and has held a number of policy and management positions in the Departments of Health and Finance. She was also a Senior Policy Advisor in the Policy and Planning Unit of Executive Council.

Ms. Young is the National Vice-President of IPAC (Institute of Public Administration of Canada) and Chair of the International Committee. She is also Vice-President of the Regina YMCA and a past provincial representative on the Public Sector Service Delivery Council.

Ms. Young holds a Masters of Education (Administration), University of Regina, 1988, Bachelor of Arts, University of Manitoba, 1975 and a Diploma in Dental Hygiene, University of Manitoba, 1977.

LEADS members welcome Ms. Young to her new position as Deputy Minister and wish her well in her challenging work.



*Wynne Young - Deputy Minister of Saskatchewan Learning.*

# APC Candids



**Ken McDonough**

*With the advent of policy governance as a norm in Saskatchewan school divisions the importance of monitoring, evaluating and reporting has taken on new importance. Ken McDonough has written and presented widely on the topics of board policy governance during the past several years and is the author of several Saskatchewan School Boards Association materials related to effectiveness in monitoring and board policy development.*

*President Marc Danylchuk makes a presentation of framed covers of the LEADER magazine to departing editor, Ernie Dawson.*



**Lance Bean**

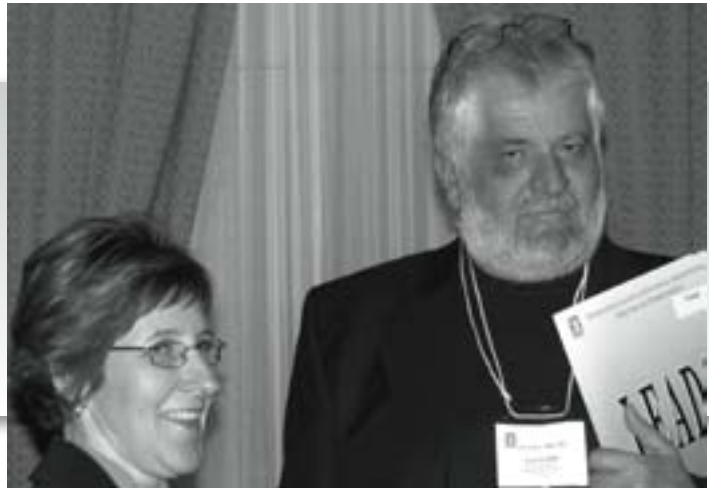
*Lance Bean, president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association expressed his appreciation for the excellence of topic choices at the APC. His pleasure stemmed from the overwhelming domination of restructuring and amalgamation themes that has characterized so many professional gatherings in this province over the past eighteen months.*

**Ted Frances**

*Ted Frances – Manitoba Association of School Superintendents brought greetings and spoke of current issues in his province, including property tax levies, special education needs, student assessment and aboriginal education. MASS is currently engaged in issues related to pension capitation and its relationship with CASA as a national organization.*



**Heather Vermeersch and Lyle Vinish, president and General Secretary of the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation participated fully in sessions of the APC.**



**Mary Lynne Campbell – First Vice President of the College of Alberta School Superintendents noted that her organization is seeking professional status in our neighboring province. She spoke of the three pillars of education being accountability, funding and flexibility.**



**Darrell Fox and Rena Kary represented the Terry Fox Foundation. Darrell, National Director and younger brother of Terry asked for a place on the agenda to express his organization's gratitude for the support of the Terry Fox Run by schools and divisions in Saskatchewan. The per capita involvement here is far greater than in any other province. Rena Kary is the Coordinator of School programs for the Foundation in Saskatchewan.**



**For the first time in recent memory John Tresco, the perennial curling champion is missing from the picture of the APC bonspiel. Winners this year were from left to right Ian Kelln, Boris Okrainetz, Larry Bedel and Darrell Paproski, all from Horizon School Division.**



**Newly installed President Marc Danylchuk presents the Hicks Award to Past President Vance Mokolky with thanks for a year of strong effort at a time when LEADS required sound, thoughtful and insightful leadership.**



**It is customary for the new president to receive the presidential gavel. Here Marc Danylchuk is given the symbol of office from Vance Mokolky.**

### **Greg Deren**

**Greg Deren, Employee Relations Consultant with the School Boards Association presented his insights into the massive jobs now confronting some Superintendents of H.R. in the amalgamated school divisions as they blend, massage and alter contract documents and procedures.**



### **Al Boutin**

**Al Boutin, Superintendent of Education – Human Resource Services in St. Paul's RCSSD lent his practical experiences and advice to the topic, Perspectives on Human Resources Management. He spoke convincingly of the role of leaders in helping employees achieve well in their work throughout school divisions and alluded to the Good Practices and Disputes Resolution document as an excellent source of ideas.**

**Louise Humbert and Cathie Kryzanowski presented the frightening notion that, "Saskatchewan holds the Gold Medal position for inactivity...", among its children. They told delegates that we may now be raising the first generation of children who will have shorter life spans than their parents because of sociological phenomena such as the portion distortion in our eating and drinking habits. Consider the impact of the quotation from a grade four student, "I like to play indoors better because that's where all the electrical outlets are."**





## Presentation at LEADS Summer Short Course Making an Impact on Holy Trinity School Division

**Delmer Wagner - Director of Education - Holy Trinity School Division**

Dr. Leroy Sloan, keynote speaker at the 2005 LEADS summer short course recommended several books. One that certainly deserve the attention of School Boards and senior administrators is ***Now, Discover Your Strengths*** by Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton

The book has implications for Boards of Education, especially those that are just now coming together under the umbrellas of their newly amalgamated school divisions. ***Now, Discover Your Strengths***, provides a wonderful opportunity for trustees and Central Office personnel to reflect on the strengths that exist within the individual members of their organization. As well, and perhaps more importantly, this books allows for group reflection on the collective strengths that are derived when the talents of all come together to create a new synergy, and in the case of new school divisions, a new identity which is founded on the unique gifts and talents of its members. For Catholic School divisions, an alternate Gallup resource titled ***Living Your Strengths*** applies the same theory from a spiritual perspective.

The theory is simple. According to its authors, the idea that every person's greatest room for improvement is in the area of his/her greatest weakness sets us up for a life of "crushing frustration." The same holds true for organizations. A recent Gallup poll asked a cross-section of workers around the world, "Which do you think will help you to improve the most: knowing your strengths or knowing your weaknesses?" In each country polled, fewer than half believed that their strengths were the key to improvement. "We are a truly remedial world", Buckingham asserts, "...the most productive thing we can do in organizations is to help people discover their strengths."

***"Discovering strengths"*** has become a major goal for the Holy Trinity Board of Education, which is comprised of members from three communities Moose Jaw, Swift Current and Shaunavon. Using the Gallup Strengths Finder which is based on 35 years of Gallup research with the world's most successful organizations, all members of the Holy Trinity Board and Central Office have been given their own Gallup book and have gone online using the registration code (found under the jacket of all Gallup books). With the purchase of any Gallup resource, readers are allowed a one time only Strengths Finder Profile Analysis which takes about forty minutes to complete. Once completed, a listing and synopsis of each person's top five talents/strengths are identified out of a possible thirty-four. The possible signature talents are as follows:

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| Achiever     | Discipline |
| Activator    | Empathy    |
| Adaptability | Fairness   |
| Analytical   | Focus      |

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Arranger       | Futuristic        |
| Belief         | Harmony           |
| Command        | Ideation          |
| Communication  | Inclusiveness     |
| Competition    | Individualization |
| Connectedness  | Input             |
| Contest        | Intellection      |
| Deliberative   | Leaner            |
| Developer      | Maximizer         |
| Positivity     | Self-assurance    |
| Relator        | Significance      |
| Responsibility | Strategic         |
| Restorative    |                   |

The Strengths Finder Profile is apparently so accurate that statistically there is only a one in thirty-three million chance that anyone who takes the Profile will match exactly the same configuration of talents/strengths. The philosophy advocated by Gallup is that all members of the organization should discover their own profiles for the purpose of sharing their talents/strengths, and understanding and appreciating the talents/strengths of others. When we know that, then we can use our talents/strengths (where we may have thought none existed) and we can lean on the talents/strengths of others in areas where we may lack. This strengths-based approach is based on the premise that organizations succeed more when they develop their strengths as opposed to focusing on "fixing" their weaknesses. Both are important, but if one is to apply the ***Pareto Principle*** (advocated by Dr. Sloan) the former deserves 80% of an organization's time and resources, while the latter deserves 20%.

The book, ***Now Discover Your Strengths*** develops both the inward and outward understanding of strengths within the organization and advocates that when members share, understand, and celebrate the wide diversity of individual talents/strengths within that organization, synergy is achieved and success is the outcome. Also, the fact that many universities are utilizing this and other Gallup resources as prescribed reading for their leadership courses is a strong indicator of why this material is not to be found in the "self-help" section of any bookstore. It is always found in the section called "leadership."

To learn more about Gallup's approach to strengths-based leadership and management, do a Google search using ***"Clifton Strengths Finder."*** Holy Trinity School Division has found this approach very useful.. In Holy Trinity, knowing and sharing our strengths profiles has created many opportunities for learning, conversation, team-building and having fun. It is a great way for new Board members and senior administrators to get to know each other and for building synergy within the organizations that we serve.

# Ben Grebinski Wins Information Technology Leadership Award

*Another member of LEADS, President-Elect Ben Grebinski was honored with the Information Technology Leadership Award recently. The following descriptions, borrowed freely from Computing Canada magazine and University of Regina publicity items indicate the kind of contributions that have earned him such plaudits. We congratulate Ben on his honors.*

Winners of **Computing Canada's** IT Leadership Awards have endured many heated moments throughout their careers, but they have all managed to walk through the fire and come out the other side, as did Ben Grebinski, CC's IT Executive of the Year. When he took over as Superintendent of Technology for the Regina Catholic Schools, he inherited disparate systems that made it difficult for students to experience the power of technology. Grebinski assembled a team and proceeded with an extreme makeover of the district's technology infrastructure. The result – a state-of-the-art environment with standardized hardware and software, tiered help-desks, secure remote access and a new student information system.

For almost three decades Ben Grebinski's professional pursuit has

been educational excellence. The massive undertaking of upgrading and integrating the technological requirements of 11,000 users within the school division earned him the IT Leadership Award, the first time an educator has been chosen.

"I believe schools see a wider range of diversity within the student population now," he says. "To facilitate the learning opportunities for all students, schools must become more flexible, yet at the same time ensure that the standards are not compromised. I have a passionate belief that all children can be successful in school regardless of the resources they bring to the classroom."

An educator with a vision for the future, Ben shares his enthusiasm for student learning with a wide audience. The past several years, he has spoken at conferences and lectured to school districts, administrative groups, school



trustees and government agencies. Ben is a firm believer in giving back to his alma mater. He has served as a lecturer in the University of Regina's Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, from which organization he has received a Distinguished Alumnus Award in the Professional/Business category.

## EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST – Editor of *the LEADER* Magazine

Commencing with the 2006 Autumn edition, LEADS requires an editor for its magazine, *the LEADER*. Because circulation is small and the organization has never sold advertising to defray the costs of publication, LEADS has relied upon the generosity of its contributors for all articles and photographs contained in the magazine. In short, there is no money budgeted for purchase of articles.

The editor plans, designs, edits submitted articles, writes original articles, conducts research and fact checking, nags, beseeches and browbeats contributors, handles layout and publication details of the magazine with the assistance of a capable desk top publisher and a high quality, small volume print house, both located in Saskatoon. Although there is no obligation to continue using either or both of these skilled services, interested candidates should be aware of the excellent and loyal service both have provided to LEADS over the past ten years.

The editor is provided with a small honorarium and recovery of expenses incurred in publication of the magazine.

Members of LEADS are invited to indicate their interest in becoming the editor of *the LEADER* magazine by contacting Executive Director Dick Nieman at the LEADS office.

Departing editor, Ernie Dawson has indicated his willingness to support the new editor through consultation and mentoring as required or desired.

# SPRING TIME IN CANADA – Ernie Dawson

*A light broke in upon my soul –  
It was the carol of a bird;  
It ceased – and then it came again  
The sweetest song ear ever heard.  
- Byron*

Meteorologists often get the blame over coffee. Only occasionally when we're in particularly expansive moods do we give them credit for good weather. Think about it. How can we tell that it's springtime in Canada? It is definitely not by the calendar and it's not by watching the weather channel on television. Ask anyone who recently peered out from the inside of an inverted and nearly buried automobile in a snowy ditch beside an icy road somewhere near you. We had spring-like weather in January and part of February, not in March. But, now it's spring!

Over the past month I've observed the sky shaded with Bohemian Waxwings, hundreds, if not thousands of them and I realized then that spring was here. The birds know. They're telling us. Spring isn't weather; spring is an attitude. Consider it. Spring. The word itself has energy, spurt, and spunk. Consider another season, Fall. What does that convey? No comparison at all, right?

I really think the birds know. Robins will be bobbing around the back yard in just a few days from now. They'll poke through any areas where snow still exists. They'll seek out the melted areas beneath the big tree trunks. They'll puff themselves up to double their normal size in the barren grey stick branches and best of all, they will sing. So too will the meadowlarks, harbingers of spring, caroling their presence and mapping out their territory. The rites of spring are announced by our birds. Fling open your windows and listen. Change your attitudes about the weather. The birds know it's spring and they are letting us know how they feel. Rejoice with them!

I feel better just seeing them, but when through the thickness of a house wall or window I can hear them singing I know why I feel spring-like. They're inviting me to rejoice and celebrate spring with them. These days I can't look out my window without seeing strings of geese wedging their way back north. I can't drive across one of our bridges without seeing mated pairs of Canada Geese floating on the air currents back toward the open water. The crows are back, crackling out their cacophonous chants of springtime. And the gulls, gone somewhere for the long months of winter are back to clean up our messes as best they are able.

Where did all these Bohemian Waxwings come from? I actually saw so many on the neighbors' Mountain Ash trees that the branches bent with their weight. Talk about a community celebrating spring's arrival. These little critters don't care about the calendar. They know. Their attitudes, their zippy flight patterns tell us all to grab this moment and that and the next one. Seize the day. Celebrate the season, they are telling us.



I've always loved birds. As I tap the keyboard I recall the caged canary that used to welcome us with little hops and lovely songs. He used to sing his little heart out in the kitchen, beside the family computer. It was his way of saying how good it was to be here in the springtime, I think. The weather may still get a little cold, from time to time. Late snows may hover over the dormant grey grass, but so what? This is spring in Saskatchewan!

If the birds signal the season with their song and their flight so too do the flowers that will be poking their little shoots up through the remnant snow against our houses soon. We smile in April when the Cancer Society brings along its B.C. daffodils to the supermarkets. That is certainly a sign of spring. But the prairie cousins, the tulip and the narcissus are just as surely declaring the end of their long dormancy. This is their season too.

It's time to be outside. It's time to reacquaint ourselves with the neighbors, those house-cocooned or parka-wrapped, waddling wonders who survived another winter in the North Temperate Zone. Soon they will be raking their grass patches and digging their flower beds and kibitzing with this person and that about the joys that attend this season.

We're survivors in this country. And we're even more survivors in this part of this country. Why do we stay? If there are close to a million of us probably there are close to a million reasons why we stay. But when springtime comes to Canada we know in our hearts. It's a revitalizing time. It's like, well, it's like a spring tonic.

See you out for a walk.



# Grebinski Becomes President-Elect



Think of the stereotype – a little kid walking down a dusty road to a one room, grades one to eight schoolhouse, moving to a larger school of more than 300 students for upper elementary grades, to a comprehensive school with more than 1,500 students and then on to university for undergraduate and graduate school training, moving back into schools as a teacher, principal, division office superintendent and university lecturer. Isn't that just the stuff of the making of a president? Well, it is happening. At the LEADS APC Ben Grebinski, Superintendent of School Administrative Services, School Operations and Technology was unopposed in his bid to become LEADS President-Elect.

In his acceptance speech, Grebinski talked about the huge influence of colleagues and the value of the mentoring and support he has received from LEADS members. Grebinski has been a member of the LEADS executive and will work closely with president Marc Danylchuk during the 2006-2007 year.

## ON MOTTOS, VISIONS, MISSIONS AND GOALS

We are living in interesting times, we educators. A large number of small school divisions has become a small number of large school divisions. Position titles have changed; some personnel have left for other places; other personnel have arrived from other places. Some board members remain, but large numbers of former board members have had to become used to the moniker former board member.

School divisions, those that were created officially on January 1, 2006 and whose board members were elected on June 15, 2005 have been the focal point of enormous effort as the selections and succession processes got underway. Many of these board members have worked extremely hard to gain an understanding of the enormity of their jurisdictions and the enormity of their responsibilities. Small wonder then that the process of establishing strategic plans, developing concepts of teamwork, writing goals and stating their visions and missions has consumed so much of their time. For that they, those board members and their staff, deserve accolades for their dedicated efforts.

Those efforts have challenged them. Many of the new boards now own new vision statements, new mission statements and some even have created mottos. None of this effort should be demeaned. It is hugely important, because what we say we are, what we tell others we are must be internalized and lived each day. So it is with the schools that are noted in the balance of this piece. The principals of each of these schools talk about the impact of a motto that is more than a catchy phrase. It has, for many of them become a way of life. Consider some of the following and challenge the schools in your jurisdictions to do the same, if they do not have their own motto...yet.

***The Key is Me – Saturn Elementary School, Cocoa, Florida***

***A-E-I-O-U Academic Excellence is our Ultimate Goal – East Bernard (Texas) Elementary School***

***Learning with Love and Laughter – Rennie's River Elementary School, St. John's, NL***

***As I Enter These Doors I Am Prepared To Learn – Fair Plain Renaissance Middle School, Benton Harbor, Michigan***

***It Takes a World of Differences To Make a Different World – Oakridge Elementary School, Arlington, Virginia***

***Every Child Every Day – Whatever It Takes – Hayden R. Lawrence Middle School, Deville, Louisiana***

***Where Children Come First – Caldwell Parish Preschool, Columbia, Louisiana***

***Anchored in Excellence – Sarah Smith Elementary School, Atlanta, Georgia***

# ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING INSTITUTE 2006

## October 11-13, TCU Place, Saskatoon

*Featuring*  
**Rick Stiggins and Associates**

*Assessment for Learning Institutes offers a platform of keynote speakers and break-out sessions designed to stimulate thinking and conversation about the importance of clearly identified curricular outcomes and the use of meaningful assessment to help us measure student achievement at all points of the learning experience.*

*Session offerings - Specific and practical strategies to further explore the use of high quality assessment and the development of a culture for learning. Key areas include:*

- *developing a balanced assessment system and why it is important*
- *understanding the importance of formative/summative assessments as valid measures of student improvement*
- *understanding the power of student involvement in the process*
- *strategies and tools to support team learning for assessment literacy*
- *learning effective classroom assessment design*
- *investigate practices in communicating assessment results*
- *understanding the keys to accurate and effective assessment design*

### **Breakout Sessions Topics:**

- **Ready Fire Aim**
- **Partnering with Students**
- **TEAM: Common Assessments**
- **Performance Assessment**
- **B + isn't enough**
- **Portfolios**
- **Leading change in Assessment Practices**



*Richard Stiggins is one of the foremost leaders in North America in advancing effective assessment practices. Dr. Stiggins has authored and co-authored numerous books and videos on a variety of assessment topics. He is currently the Director of the Centre for Classroom Assessment at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon.*

### **Cost:**

#### **Early bird (before May 30th, 2006)**

LEADS member	\$215
Non-LEADS individual	\$270
Non-LEADS (group 5+)	\$260
Non-LEADS (group 20+)	\$250

#### **Registration after May 30th, 2006**

LEADS member	\$230
Non Leads member	\$285

### **Sponsored by:**

**Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit  
Solution Tree and the  
League of Educational Administrators,  
Directors and Superintendents**

**For more information contact SELU,  
Phone: (306) 966-7634; Fax: (306) 966-7916  
E-mail - [selu.info@usask.ca](mailto:selu.info@usask.ca)**

# School PLUS

# Congress II

## NOVEMBER 1 - 3, 2006

## Regina Inn



### NEW LANDSCAPES NEW PARTNERS

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

[sidru@uregina.ca](mailto:sidru@uregina.ca)

[www.schoolpluscongress.ca](http://www.schoolpluscongress.ca)



UNIVERSITY OF  
REGINA

### SPEAKERS

- ▶ Madam Beverley McLachlin, P.C.  
Chief Justice of Canada
- ▶ Charles S. Coffey, O.C.  
Executive Vice-President  
Royal Bank
- ▶ Fraser Mustard  
Companion of the Order of Canada  
Founding President and Fellow,  
The Canadian Institute for Advanced  
Research
- ▶ Courtney Milne, LLD  
(honoris causa)  
Internationally renowned Saskatchewan  
photographer