

The Leadership Times

May 2005



The newsletter of the Council
on School Administration of the
Alberta Teachers' Association

President's Message The Year in Review

Wayne Street

I recently read an issue of *Educational Leadership*, the journal of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), focusing on reflective practice. The issue contains many impressive articles about how teachers and others in the field of education use reflective practice to improve their teaching and the decisions they make about their roles in education. I do recognize the value of reflective practice, but I don't always find the time to engage in it. Now that my term as president of the Council on School Administration (CSA) is drawing to a close, I want to take time to reflect on the year, thank everybody and express my hopes for the future.

This school year began a little differently for the CSA. For the first time (at least since I've been with the CSA), the regional presidents were invited to attend the ATA's Summer Conference in Banff to meet with Provincial Executive Council (PEC) table officers and plan for the year. Alberta's Commission on Learning (ACOL 2003) had recently announced its Recommendation 78, which recommended the removal of administrators from the ATA and the establishment of a Council of Education Executives (CEE). Alberta Education subsequently appointed a committee to investigate whether a CEE structure would work in Alberta. In response, the ATA wanted to help the CSA develop plans, keep administrators informed and highlight the value of the CSA. Many of the regionals then began to develop their goals for the year, some of which were implemented with excellent results.

October found CSA members in Kananaskis for the 2004 Western Canadian Educational Administrators' Conference (WCEAC). What a great conference! Konni DeGoeij, Maureen Ferece and their committee organized a fabulous conference with the theme "Challenging the Leadership Within." Hosting in Kananaskis presents the additional challenge of providing more meals and entertainment for participants, but the organizers rose to the challenge and secured not only wonderful speakers and presenters but also great meals and entertainment. In fact, those who were hypnotized by

Inside ...

News from the Regionals.....	4
CAP Update	7
"Goal Power": Summary of Banff Leadership Seminar Session	10
Leadership in Changing Times.....	11

Wayne Lee at one of the evening entertainment sessions may still be standing up and loudly announcing, “I feel good!”

At the conference, Holly Godson, principal of Erle Rivers High School in Milk River, was presented with the Distinguished Leadership Award. She was selected from nominations received from all the regionals. This award is part of the leadership recognition program that the CSA has developed and sponsored for many years. The Distinguished Leadership Award and the Julius Buski Leadership Grant are presented annually to a deserving administrator and deserving school projects that improve student learning. I encourage all the CSA regionals to continue to promote these awards. Excellent administrators and exciting school projects deserve recognition.

For the first time ever, two Alberta principals were part of a cohort of principals who attended a four-day professional development activity in Toronto sponsored by The Learning Partnership (TLP) and the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP). Holly Godson, winner of the Distinguished Leadership Award, and Johanna Juergensen, CSA president-elect, were chosen to attend. The PD sessions were hosted at the Rotman School of Management, part of the University of Toronto. In all, 30 principals from across Canada were selected to represent all the provinces and territories. What a tremendous pool of talent, and what a great four days these participants had while learning and sharing with others from across the country! Watch for the details of this event again next year.

I spent time on my Easter break reading some impressive resumes. The resumes came from high school students applying for the scholarship program sponsored by Premier Agenda Company and coordinated by CAP. Alberta can select two winning students and one runner-up for this CAP Student Leadership Award—not an easy task! Thirty-eight students took the time to apply, and what a treat to read what these graduating students are doing with their lives! Their academic standings, the time they spend

volunteering, and the talents they possess and share with their churches and communities are just amazing. Congratulations to the three finalists, and thank you to all who applied for this worthwhile award.

The Banff Leadership Seminar in April was another great PD opportunity for school-based administrators. Anne Conzemius and Jan O’Neill (2002), authors of *The Handbook for SMART School Teams*, treated us to two days of excellent strategies for using the data in our schools to determine how much learning is taking place. The authors copresented the opening and closing sessions. For the rest of the time, participants could choose between a session on advanced strategies and a session on beginner strategies. I thank Konni DeGoeij, Maureen Ference, Kathleen Murphy-House and Eileen McClean for all their work on this seminar.

I congratulate and thank Lorianne Tenove and Neil Fenske. Lorianne is the new president-elect, and Neil is returning for another two-year term as treasurer. I wish them the best in their upcoming terms. I know that they will both do a tremendous job for the province’s administrators and that they have dedicated and supportive executive members and regional presidents with whom to work. I also say farewell and thanks to Konni DeGoeij, who has left the principalship for a while to work as a staff officer with the ATA. Konni has done so much for the CSA in the short time she has been involved. She is a tremendously talented organizer and a tireless worker—two traits she will continue to use on our behalf out of Barnett House. I thank her for all that she has done for the CSA. I also say thanks and farewell to John McCloskey. John has been our PEC liaison for a number of years, and we have all come to appreciate and count on his wisdom, advice and knowledge of the CSA, the ATA and the current political arena. We will certainly miss John, but we know that he will keep busy after completing his term in June.

As I write this message, we are still waiting for the minister of education’s announcement regarding ACOL Recommendation 78.

Two reports have been written in response to this recommendation:

- The report of the committee (headed by Jimmy Clark) appointed by Alberta Education to investigate and make recommendations about how a CEE might work in Alberta
- The report of the ATA's Blue Ribbon Panel on the School Administrator (2005), which was established to review the role of the school administrator, examine the services the ATA currently provides to administrators and examine whether the ATA, with the support of the CSA, might be able to undertake the functions proposed for the CEE

The minister has access to both reports, and I'm sure he will carefully consider them and then make the decision he feels will most benefit Alberta's students. I hope that we administrators will remain in the ATA, because I think that building a collegial relationship with our staff is crucial to improving learning conditions for our students. I began my career in education as a teacher, and I am a teacher first. Whatever the decision, however, I think some changes will be made.

I have not had access to Mr. Clark's recommendations, but I have read the Blue Ribbon Panel's report. I remember ATA President Frank Bruseker saying to me, when we met in Banff, that if changes are needed to better serve the needs of Alberta's school-based administrators, the ATA will certainly make those changes. We have an

excellent opportunity to give the CSA a new image, and I wish I were going to be around to see what the new CSA will look like. What a golden opportunity to make changes suitable to education in 2005 and beyond!

To the CSA executive and the regional presidents, thank you for such a rewarding year; I have learned so much and have enjoyed it immensely. To Alberta's administrators, you have an excellent group of people working tirelessly for you on your specialist council. Join them, support them, give them input—they are there to work for you and to meet your needs. When the decision about Recommendation 78 has been made, get involved in shaping it into what it should be. I've heard it said that to have a good school, you've got to have a good principal, and I wholeheartedly believe that. Thank you, everyone, for a great year!

References

- Alberta's Commission on Learning (ACOL). 2003. *Every Child Learns. Every Child Succeeds*. Report and recommendations. Edmonton, Alta.: ACOL. Also available at www.education.gov.ab.ca/commission/PDF/CommissionReport.pdf (accessed May 5, 2005).
- Blue Ribbon Panel on the School Administrator, Alberta Teachers' Association. 2005. *Leading for Learning: Interim Report and Recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on the School Administrator*. Also available at www.teachers.ab.ca/NR/rdonlyres/E2C77F19-34BB-4A3A-ADDC-9FC05A43072D/0/BlueRibbonPanelReport.pdf (accessed May 5, 2005).
- Conzemius, A., and J. O'Neill. 2002. *The Handbook for SMART School Teams*. Bloomington, Ind.: National Educational Service.

News from the Regionals

Central East Regional

Maureen Ference

Executive

The 2004/05 Central East Regional executive was as follows:

- President—Maureen Ference (Maureen_Ference@sperd.ca)
- Vice-president—Terry Moghrabi (tmoghrabi@nlsd.ab.ca)
- Secretary-treasurer—Jim Hawkins (Jim_Hawkins@sperd.ca)
- Directors—Percy Malech (Percy_Malech@sperd.ca), Morris Holota (Morris_Holota@sperd.ca), Lorne Young (Lorne_Young@sperd.ca) and Ralph SoroChan (Ralph_SoroChan@sperd.ca)

Promotions

We e-mailed the eight school districts in the Central East Regional to introduce the CSA and to advertise upcoming workshops and conferences sponsored by the CSA and the Central East Regional. This letter was also forwarded to the districts' administrative staff and people participating in leadership training programs in the districts.

WCEAC 2004 Conference

I completed my role as program chair for the Western Canadian Educational Administrators' Conference (WCEAC) 2004 in Kananaskis.

Banff Leadership Seminar 2005

I accepted the role of handling registration for the 2005 Banff Leadership Seminar.

Workshops

"A Fireside Chat" with Michael Fullan was held January 27 in Cold Lake. The evening's discussion took the form of questions and answers on change and

sustainability. Approximately 60 people attended, representing St. Paul Education Regional Division, Northern Lights School Division, Lakeland Catholic School District, Aspen View Regional Division, Buffalo Trail Regional Division and a cohort group from the Royal Roads University's master's program. I thank Terry Moghrabi, Central East Regional vice-president, for helping to promote and facilitate the evening.

Distinguished Leadership Award

The Central East Regional received one nomination for the Distinguished Leadership Award: Jason Whaley, assistant principal of Grand Centre High School in the Northern Lights School Division. The nomination was forwarded to the CSA secretary on March 4.

Greater Edmonton Regional

James Fraser

The Greater Edmonton Regional represents 16 school divisions in the Edmonton area and includes representatives from Alberta Education and the University of Alberta's Department of Educational Policy Studies. We currently have 21 executive officers and jurisdiction representatives on the executive.

Our newly assigned executive member from Alberta Education is Karen Richardson. We welcome representation for the first time from Westaskiwin Regional Public Schools, with Paul Mason of the division office joining our executive. Also joining is a representative from Grande Yellowhead Regional Division—Cory Gray of Pine Grove School in Edson.

The executive has met four times this year. Our most recent meeting took place on April 19 at Barnett House.

We have had two successful PD sessions this year, in the form of dinner and a speaker at Barnett House. Our October session was with Robert Starratt of Boston College, and in March we hosted our most successful event ever, with 135 administrators attending an evening session with Minister of Education Gene Zwozdesky. Zwozdesky spoke candidly

about issues such as class size, daily physical activity and Grade 4 achievement testing.

We gained 33 new members at this event, bringing new registrations in the Greater Edmonton Regional this year to over 90. One of our goals for this year was to increase membership by 20 per cent. To date, we have increased membership by almost 30 per cent since September 2004.

On January 27 in Spruce Grove, we sponsored an evening with ATA staff advisor Susan Fraser and ATA President Frank Bruseker for administrators in the Parkland School Division and the Evergreen Catholic Separate Regional Division. We had a fruitful discussion about PEC's current process of information gathering on administrators' issues. We hope to have a debriefing session after the minister has responded to the Blue Ribbon Panel's findings and Jimmy Clark's report.

I prepared an information bulletin on these issues, forwarded it to Susan Fraser for approval and then forwarded it to the regional's 14 jurisdictional representatives. We aimed to have jurisdictional representatives attend meetings of our ATA locals to raise awareness of the CSA's position on administrators in the ATA and to present the CSA's topical issues. I presented at the Parkland Local's meeting on January 5. Three other jurisdictional representatives have done the same thing so far. We are asking all ATA locals to support the CSA as the body most able to support administrators and to encourage all their administrators to join the CSA and all their teachers to join an appropriate ATA specialist council. This local contact was also a goal for this year's regional executive. I would characterize it as having been moderately successful thus far.

Agenda Template for the Greater Edmonton Regional Presentation to Locals

1. Introduce yourself and the CSA's current role
 - i. Introduce yourself and state that you represent your jurisdiction on the

CSA's Greater Edmonton Regional executive. There are 14 member jurisdictions in the regional, reaching to Wetaskiwin to the south, Aspen View to the east, Northern Gateway to the north and Grande Yellowhead to the west. The regional also includes both Edmonton school divisions. It is the largest CSA regional, boasting a membership of more than 325 members of the more than 1,050 members of CSA provincewide.

- ii. We exist to plan PD for administrators on two or three evening occasions, as well as sponsor administrators to attend the three yearly provincial PD events: the WCEAC in November, the Banff Leadership Seminar in April and the Summer Leadership Academy in July.
 - iii. Our topics for PD for evening presentations over the past couple of years have been on such subjects as leadership as moral action, technology integration models, peer supervision, high school completion issues and presentations from PEC or the minister of education. We are planning a session in March at Barnett House, either with the new minister of education or on the current studies in Alberta on the role of administrators today.
2. Summarize current ATA-sponsored studies on the role of the administrator. A number of initiatives you should be aware of are under way. The following studies are looking at the changing role of the school administrator and how that may affect the future of education in our province.
 - i. ATA Blue Ribbon Panel on the School Administrator
Headed by Paul Stevenson, a retired professor from the University of Lethbridge, the panel is made up of administrators and teachers who are gathering data from the studies done over the last year by the ATA. The panel will report to PEC this spring.

- ii. ATA-contracted study on the roles of administrators
This ATA-contracted research-based study by Charles Hyman is looking further into the roles of administrators in the school setting. Reporting will be done this year.
 - iii. University of Alberta study
José da Costa, of the University of Alberta's Educational Policy Studies, is currently compiling the results of this study. The ATA has provided grant funds for its completion.
3. The former minister of learning seconded Jim Clark to study the issue of administrators remaining in the ATA. A committee gathered to consult on the issue and will report to the new minister by the end of March.
 4. We encourage all administrators to contact their Greater Edmonton Regional CSA jurisdictional representatives to find out how they can network to discuss PD and professional issues for administrators at the local and regional levels. The Greater Edmonton Regional president is open to meeting with local or jurisdictional administrators and will carry their messages back to ATA staff advisor Susan Fraser.
 5. We encourage all administrators to join the CSA. Members will receive *The Leadership Times* (the newsletter of the CSA) and biannual issues of the *CAP Journal* from the Canadian Association of Principals.
 6. Please watch for the bulletin on administrative issues sent out every other month in the ATA mailing to site-based administrators. Susan Fraser and the ATA's Member Services saw the need for this special bulletin summarizing the many roles and issues facing administrators today.
 7. If you attend a Greater Edmonton Regional session, we will take care of your CSA membership as part of the registration for the event.

Fort McMurray Regional

Eileen McClean

On August 25, 2004, the Fort McMurray Regional hosted the Jack Corless, Cotter MacGillivray and Oliver Pruden Memorial Golf Tournament, which is celebrated in memory of former administrators who died of cancer. There were 30 participants. We will donate the proceeds to the Canadian Cancer Society.

On Institute Day, Catherine Moir of the ATA spoke to administrators about building a culture of learning. There were 24 participants.

The regional paid for one registration to WCEAC, which two administrators from the Catholic district shared.

The regional's first executive meeting was held in November. Pam MacGillivray retired as secretary, and Anthony Warren took on the position.

On January 28, Sister Mary Phillips School and St. Paul's School had a full-day workshop on professional learning communities with Catherine Moir.

We planned to have Catherine do an afternoon/evening supper workshop in April or May.

The regional will pay for one registration to the Banff Leadership Seminar. This can be shared between public school administrators, because several are planning to attend.

Administrators are using the Call Sooner program more. The Call Sooner campaign encourages school administrators to call the ATA for assistance and advice on a proactive basis.

Peace Area Regional

Rodney Lee

The Peace Area Regional comprises the following school districts: Peace River School Division, Peace Wapiti Regional Division, High Prairie School Division, Fort Vermilion School Division, Holy Family Catholic Regional Division, Grande Prairie Public School District,

Grande Prairie Roman Catholic Separate School District, Northwest Francophone Education Region, the northwestern part of Northern Gateway Regional Division and Northland School Division.

More than 80 administrators attended the regional's fall conference in Grande Prairie on September 23 and 24, 2004. Evening supper and entertainment provided by Wayne Lee gave participants the opportunity to network with colleagues from throughout the region. Friday's program consisted of speakers Dave Jeary ("Administrator Growth, Supervision and Evaluation"), Dennis Theobald ("Advocacy and You") and John Waterhouse (who led a discussion on the roles of the ATA, the CSA and individual administrators in regard to the proposed CEE).

To improve communication in the region, in keeping with the goals established by the CSA at the ATA's Summer Conference, a contact has been identified in each jurisdiction represented by the Peace Area Regional. These contacts will facilitate the dissemination of information to all administrators in their jurisdictions.

On March 10, the Peace Area Regional executive meeting coincided with the Mighty Peace Teachers' Convention. Planning for PARCSA 2005, to be held September 22 and 23 in Grande Prairie, is well under way. Carol Boothroyd will be the featured speaker on Thursday evening and Friday morning. The Friday-afternoon sessions have yet to be determined.

CAP Update

President's Monthly Message

David Miles, CAP President

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The month of March was certainly dominated for me personally by my trip to Cork, Ireland, to attend the ICP (International Confederation of Principals) conference.

I was accompanied by Marny Beale, CAP's past president, and our objective was twofold. First, we wanted to move along the process of CAP's development of a position paper on school health for the World Health Organization. Our discussions in Cork indicated that an ICP editorial board has completed its work. This, in turn, will enable the CAP board to examine the paper in Halifax prior to its presentation at the ICP conference in Cape Town, South Africa, this summer.

Our second objective was to initiate some dialogue with ICP about the membership fee structure in ICP and the issues CAP has with it. We had a candid conversation with the ICP executive, and the dialogue will continue in Halifax, as an ICP representative will be in attendance. CAP is one of the founding members of the ICP, and our support and membership is very important to the organization.

The Outstanding Principals Award program initiated this year in partnership with CAP and The Learning Partnership was a great success. Discussions for the planning for next year's event have already begun. Although the program was a success this year, we do recognize that we need to fine-tune somewhat for the future. This process of refinement is under way. Check out www.thelearningpartnership.ca for photos and details regarding this year's winners.

The planning for our board meeting in Halifax is almost completed. It will be a full agenda. We are looking forward to a second

presentation from the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. We are actively examining ways in which CAP can become a more active partner in the presentation and delivery of the program. We believe that this could be of great importance to school administrators and thousands of Canadian students.

As we all know, the CAP 2005 conference is ready to go in Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 20–22. There are over 500 delegates registered from all across this country of ours. The planning committee has done an exceptional job of organizing a conference that we will all long remember. There is a great list of speakers on a variety of topics, along with a healthy dose of the Maritime sense of fun and hospitality. I want to congratulate the planning committee for their energy and commitment. I am looking forward to it. See you there.

CAP News

Marie Schutt, CAP Executive Assistant

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CAP held its second board of directors meeting for this school year on February 24–26, 2005, in Toronto, Ontario.

Special guest Jane Bertrand, of the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development in the Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), spoke to the CAP board of directors on Friday, February 25. Jane provided the context for the Early Child Development Council concept and spoke on the learning/economic potential of early and focused interventions on the long-term growth of our society.

As further follow-up with the issue of early learning, CAP central vice-president Ted Whiteland is scheduled to attend a one-day symposium entitled “What Do We Know About Early Learning and What Are We

Doing About It?” This event will take place on May 18, 2005, at the Delta Meadowvale in Mississauga, in the greater Toronto area.

Diana Wickham, executive officer, development, and Andrew Parkin, director of the Millennium Research Program from the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, made a presentation to the board on the second day of our meetings.

Both Diana and Andrew will meet again with the board of directors at our meeting in April in Halifax to discuss ways that collaboration between CAP and the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation can occur.

Other highlights from the meeting included the following:

- President-elect Jim Hibbs brought forth a “CAP Extended Family Proposal” for consideration by the CAP board of directors. This proposal will utilize past CAP directors according to their interest and expertise. An ad hoc committee (Jim Hibbs, Bob Lindsay and Janet Cameron) has been formed to bring this proposal to reality.
- A breakfast meeting was held with Stephanie Boyles of the RCMP National Youth Strategy and CAP president David Miles, CAP president-elect Jim Hibbs and CAP director from the British Columbia Principals’ and Vice-Principals’ Association (BCPVPA) Tom Hierck. One aspect of the RCMP National Youth Strategy is to have a dedicated police officer in each school. CAP has indicated support for this initiative and has agreed to be at their table for discussions.
- Jim Hibbs reported on our continued involvement with the Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance (CSLP) regarding the literacy software ABRACADABRA. Janet Cameron, CAP director from Prince Edward Island, has been appointed to the ABRACADABRA steering committee and will serve as a liaison between the CSLP and the CAP board. Janet has already participated in conference calls and e-mails and has

reported that major changes to the program are taking place. A full report should be available at our April meeting.

- CAP finalized their partnership with the NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals). CAP will be mailing to its members a letter announcing this new partnership in May. This partnership allows CAP members to pay a reduced membership fee to NASSP. As many of our members are also members of NASSP, we are sure they will appreciate the savings!
- CAP's Aboriginal Education Belief Statement continues to be vetted, with the intention that this statement will be released at our annual general meeting in April.

CAP continues to be busy with our involvement with other national organizations on our members' behalf. We were represented at the following:

- The Canadian Education Association National Forum "Beyond the Ivory Tower: Systems Integration in Early Childhood Education and Care" on December 2 and 3, 2004, in Ottawa, Ontario
- The national meeting with the Canadian Initiative for the Prevention of Bullying on December 3, 2004, in Ottawa, Ontario
- Youth Public and Professional Education Stakeholder Meeting in Ottawa on December 16, 2004
- A meeting with the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse in January 2005
- Attendance at the Council of School Leaders of the Manitoba Teachers' Society annual general meeting in Winnipeg, February 8–11, 2005
- Participation in the International Confederation of Principals meeting in Cork, Ireland, March 8–11, 2005

For further information on any of our activities, please don't hesitate to contact our national office at (613) 259-5005 or cap@bellnet.ca.

During our meetings in Toronto, the inaugural celebration of Canada's Outstanding Principals Awards was also being held. It was a pleasure to see how the partnership

between The Learning Partnership and CAP brought forward these fine, outstanding principals for recognition for the unique and crucial contribution that principals of publicly funded schools make to the community and to ensuring quality education for Canada's young people.

CAP was proud to be present at the gala dinner to honour these very deserving principals from across Canada. For a listing of the winners, complete with pictures, visit www.cdnprincipals.org. Congratulations to all winners!

CAP 2005!

**April 20–22, 2005
Halifax, Nova Scotia**

Keynote speakers include the following:

- Justin Trudeau
- Dr. Crystal Kuykendall
- Jim Grant, Char Forsten and Betty Hollas
- Dr. Frank Peters
- Murray Banks

Visit www.cap2005.ca for more details.



Planning Ahead?

CAP 2006, the 24th annual conference of CAP, "The Heart of Leadership—Courage, Artistry, Passion," is scheduled for May 11–13, 2006, in Quebec City, Quebec, hosted by the Association of Administrators of English Schools of Quebec.

CAP Meeting Dates for 2005

Spring Meeting—Halifax

Sunday, April 17—Executive meeting

Monday and Tuesday, April 18 and 19—Board meeting

Wednesday to Friday, April 20–22—CAP 2005

CAP makes every effort to respond to the needs and concerns of the colleagues we represent from across this nation, and we encourage members to contact our office or members of the board and executive. (See www.cdnprincipals.org/contact_us.htm for contact information.)

Kudos!

We have a published author in our midst! Tom Hierck, CAP director and president of the BCPVPA, recently published the book *What Do You Make?* Congratulations, Tom! Contact Tom via e-mail at thierck@bcvpa.bc.ca.

Ted Whiteland, CAP central vice-president, received a lifetime membership with the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) as past president of OPC at their Odyssey conference in November. Congratulations, Ted!



“Goal Power”: Summary of Banff Leadership Seminar Session

James Fraser

At the Banff Leadership Seminar in April, Jan O'Neill, coauthor with Anne Conzemius of *The Handbook for SMART School Teams*, presented “Goal Power.” She began her dynamic presentation with a story about her family. She and her husband had entered an open-adoption process. They couldn't have gone through many years of infertility and the adoption process without a goal in mind. Similarly, schools do not grow or change in any real ways without a goal-oriented culture.

Jan emphasized that goals without method are meaningless. “Goals remain the

most underscrutinized means of improving in education today,” she stated. Success in schools does not come about from all-star teachers working in their classrooms by themselves. It takes a cohesive team working together to develop and constantly revisit agreed-upon, achievable goals.

The impact on student achievement is heightened when students are allowed to actively participate in the learning process and to reassess their own learning goals. The culture of setting goals should be one that is held jointly by staff and students.

SMART (Strategic and Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-based, Time-bound) goals focus on the results of an ongoing process that cycles the components of the PDSA learning cycle: Plan, Do, Study, Act. Then, SMART goals produce SMART schools.

Goal Setting Using the Tree Diagram

The tree diagram is a graphic organizer that depicts the goal, indicators, measures and targets for school improvement in an easily readable, easily referenced form. Jan stressed that we must use multiple measures and suggested that, in addition to provincial achievement tests and satisfaction surveys, there should be at least one qualitative measure that identifies ongoing learning in the classroom. This qualitative measure may well be linked to the development of assessments that help teachers make sense of what they are teaching when they are teaching it, not just summative final results. Finally, Jan cautioned us to be mindful of the Pareto principle (which states that, for many phenomena, 80 per cent of the consequences stem from 20 per cent of the causes) and focus our energies on a few areas vital to achieving the greatest gains.

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Conzemius, A., and J. O'Neill. 2002. *The Handbook for SMART School Teams*. Bloomington, Ind.: National Educational Service.

Leadership in Changing Times

Brent Galloway, Central Alberta Regional Communication Officer

Stephen Covey (1989) said it best: “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” With this in mind, I sought answers to my questions about Alberta’s Commission on Learning’s (ACOL 2003) controversial Recommendation 78—the removal of administrators from the ATA. When I first heard the recommendation, I was adamantly opposed to it. However, I felt it necessary to explore all sides before reaching a conclusion. As a new member of the Central Alberta Regional executive, I have been able to attend three of our regional’s activities this year, which have provided me with information on this issue. All three speakers provided a wealth of information and varying opinions based on their extensive and varied backgrounds.

Our year began with a special presentation from David King, former minister of education and now president of the Public School Boards’ Association of Alberta (PSBAA). David spoke of the value of community and the importance of elected school board members who actually represent the people who elected them, instead of merely acting as messengers of Alberta Education. More important, he spoke of the difficulty for administrators of assuming the role of “managers of the government” in maintaining a sense of community in schools. In seeking to understand, I thought, *How will administrators develop that culture of community if they are no longer part of the school community, which is greatly defined as being part of the ATA?* I left this session with many unanswered questions.

Our fall question-and-answer session with Susan Fraser, ATA staff advisor, provided me with more information. Susan spoke on the importance of administrators remaining in the ATA. She expressed her concerns about

the government-appointed and -directed committee whose mandate was to find the conditions necessary to remove administrators from the ATA and set up a new council of education executives. She pointed out that this committee was directed by a person already strongly in favour of Recommendation 78. Will the committee’s report, therefore, be biased? Susan encouraged us to examine the ATA’s research on the question, which is now available in the Blue Ribbon Panel’s (2005) interim report. We questioned Susan about the ATA’s effectiveness in meeting the needs of administrators, particularly when dealing with a teacher matter. Can the ATA fairly represent both teachers and administrators? Once again, I left with more questions and thoughts.

Our most recent regional event was open only to the executive—dinner with Jimmy Clark (former Central Alberta Regional member and now chair of the government-appointed committee examining Recommendation 78) and committee member Carol Grant-Watt. On that snowy January evening, the roads prevented some of our executive members from attending, but the setting was right for a casual, intimate meeting of minds. I kept telling myself, *Remember, seek first to understand.*

Jimmy, a most charismatic man, was undoubtedly passionate about the idea of administrators forming a new council. I certainly had to appreciate him for that. And he had done his homework. Jimmy provided information based on his committee’s visits to Ontario, British Columbia and California. They had found that Ontario principals were happier with their new independent structure and that they felt that their needs were being better met. I asked myself, *But do we live in Ontario? And are the structures the same? Ontario, after all, has at least seven teachers’ unions.* Jimmy spoke of the value of having an “admin-driven” association in which resources and professional development are more extensive and tailor-made to suit administrators’ needs. He provided statistics stating that 75 per cent of administrators in

Canada are not currently part of a teachers' union and that none have ever returned to a teachers' union. Are these statistics to be believed? Perhaps this is propaganda. After all, we have all heard administrators from neighbouring British Columbia speak less than enthusiastically about that province's split between teachers and administrators. My mind was swimming with all the information. The reports of Jimmy's committee were to be presented to our new minister of education in March. Knowing this, I realized that there was limited time for us administrators to explore the issues and seek resolution.

Knowledge is power. We are well aware of the many opinions on this important issue. What is important is that we all do our homework and find the information that has been well researched. Read the Blue Ribbon Panel's (2005) report, read the report of Jimmy Clark's committee (if it is made available to administrators), talk to fellow

administrators (in and out of the province), attend the Banff Leadership Seminar—but most important, seek to understand and question, question, question. Determine which direction will be best for administrators and for those most valued members of our school communities—our students.

References

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