



When he was speaking to the winners of the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence, Joel Westheimer, Education Columnist for the CBC, began with what he cited as the reasons we all chose to work in the field of education: *Fame, Power and Privilege*. The extraordinary Canadian educators sitting in the room were visibly perplexed and looked side to side at one another, as if to validate "did I just hear that?"

Obviously, Mr. Westheimer's words were spoken in *gest*; *fame, power and privilege* were surely not among the motivations that resulted in your commitment to education. The work of school boards is humbling, normally involving travelling many miles and spending cold winter evenings in school classrooms. It is at times frustrating and challenging, but it is also phenomenally inspiring, fulfilling and extremely important to the students who are the future of our country.

The Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) strives to support you in this important work by:

- advocating on a national, sometimes multi-disciplinary level for the issues that you consider of upmost importance.
- providing a forum for your leaders to join forces with other jurisdictions, providing each other with resources and information to support your work.
- promoting the value of the work you do, the public education system as a whole and the key role of school boards in the success of that system.

We hope that the report provided below will give you a glimpse into actions that are representative of those objectives.

## 2016-2017 Highlights

### **First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education**

We have advocated on behalf of First Nations, Métis and Inuit education by means of various communications with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), provincial Premiers and the Prime Minister in order to call for appropriate funding for this education sector. We have also lobbied for clarity as to plans that will affect education following the *Daniels vs. Canada* case. Furthermore, we have offered our full support to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and its initiatives in education and are pleased to be working closely with the AFN, including having representation at the CSBA board table from their organization.

We have been following up on valuable resources provided by our partners at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 2017 National Education Roundtable. In particular, we have continued to develop these resources and post them on the CSBA website. These include resources specific to FNMI education (treaty maps, the FNMI CMEC teacher tool kit, curriculum and resources) But the resources provided by the Canadian Geographic Society, Equitas, Teen Mental Health, WE.org, National Film Board, UNESCO, etc. are pertinent to so many areas, several of which may be of interest in your community.

"The greatness of the country and of our joint society is bound up in the possibility of raising a generation of First Nations who never have to recover from their childhoods, and a group of non-aboriginal children who never have to say they're sorry." ...Cindy Blackstock



We have appealed to the Department of Justice and the Prime Minister to repeal and replace Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada, established in 1892. The law allows “*teachers, parents or a person standing in place of a parent to use force as a means to correct behaviour.*” Though limitations were imposed in 2004, the CSBA believes that Section 43 no longer represents our society’s values with regard to discipline. Furthermore, most OECD countries have abandoned this law years ago. Calls to action in the TRC Report also call for the repeal of this law. It is our hope that in reviewing this law, a replacement will be found that eliminates any and all allowances for corporal punishment and that also provides a caveat which allows for the protection, safety and security of both teachers and children. In addition to our Cross-Country Portrait of School Board Structure completed in 2016 (a section of which is provided in this report) we have recently completed work on a Cross-Country Portrait of FNMI Representation on School Boards, including information on school board progress on the TRC Calls to Action and promising practices found throughout schools and boards today. The ability to benchmark the work that is being done in your jurisdiction, in addition to learning about successful models used elsewhere is invaluable. This report is accompanied by an executive summary and recommendations for the CSBA from our FNMI Education Committee.

Going forward, the committee will continue to monitor the framework that the federal ministries, INAC and FCSD are putting together on childcare; gather information on voluntary self-identification (staff, trustees and students); examine existing agreements between Indigenous communities and boards and look into permanency policy for Indigenous teachers. We are thrilled that the World Indigenous People’s Conference on Education (WIPCE) will be held this year in Canada and President Floyd Martens will attend on behalf of CSBA in Toronto July 24-29.

### **Student Health and Wellness**

This year, the CSBA adopted the Charter of Commitment to Student Health and Wellbeing on the recommendation of the Student Health and Wellness Committee. The subject area is vast and the charter will provide context and terms of reference as well as a clear path for the work that the national body needs to address. The related document is provided at the end of this report.

We are in discussions with intent to do a cross-country poll on best practices and references from all provinces with a view to linking them to existing well-being strategies in this charter and providing context to the information that we will be providing to trustees.

This year has seen several new collaborations with partners working on providing an environment in which every student can thrive. The Pan-Canadian Joint Coalition for School Health (a group comprised mostly of ADMs from both the ministries of education and health working together with other education partners) now offers several excellent resources for boards, teachers and administrators. Everything you need to know about how to support your schools, staff and boards themselves is covered in either the Youth Engagement Toolkit (eBook), the Positive Mental Health Toolkit or a Healthy School Planner for schools (which includes a self-assessment tool).

One of the clearest and most obvious way of understanding and improving mental health in our schools is to address literacy and to that end, the links to Dr. Stanley Kutcher’s curriculum and webinars is invaluable. His perspective and the tools provided make it easier to adopt a positive perspective about knowing when and how to help our students and staff. His work on evaluating programs worldwide can also provide answers on programs that your board is considering.

“Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any country can have.”

...Sir Winston S. Churchill



Another partner resource is Respect Group, a Canadian on-line bullying, abuse, harassment and neglect prevention program for all school-based leaders, which in some provinces is offered to all adults working with children and funded by the ministry of health. We hope to support our partners in the group with a view to determining a national baseline about the training that all educational institutions should provide. We hope to have Sheldon Kennedy from this group address delegates one day. We also hope to help this group advocate nationally for sharing resources across disciplines (law enforcement, physicians, social workers, lawyers, teachers, parents) to lessen the trauma for children who need to tell their stories and also reduce misinformation/lack of information. This is the model that the group made a reality by building the Child Advocacy facility in Calgary: an extraordinary addition to any community looking to find a better way of working with abused children.

We continue to develop other resources to provide context, clarity and concrete steps to trustees so they can support our students and teachers. In our FACTS ON EDUCATION Series published in collaboration with the Canadian Education Association (CEA), two topics that were addressed this past year were directly related to this core issue, answering the questions: *How to support mental wellness in our schools*, as well as *How to best integrate new immigrant students*. Next up for the coming year will be presenting the research on *How physical activity and fine arts impact mental health and student achievement*.

We were invited to participate on the Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation and subsequent to the report and recommendations in education, CSBA endorses provincial or territorial cannabis education programs that are evidence-informed, relevant and respectful of the target audience. We intend to make the policies and programs presently under development at boards a part of our cross-country research. Going forward, we will also advocate that revenues from the legal use of cannabis be directed to support education campaigns. (Reference CAPHC – Canadian Association of Pediatric Health Centres, 2017)

### **Building Partnerships**

We have made great strides this past year in expanding our network and building on existing relationships with groups that share our values and objectives. In discussions with some, we are finding ways and subjects on which we are able to advocate as a united voice representing all partners in education on some issues (e.g. the calls to action for education from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) as well as strengthening our individual organizations by sharing resources with each other and with our respective members.

Some of those partners include:

- Canadian Teachers Federation
- Canadian Association School System Administrators
- National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation
- Pan-Canadian Joint Coalition for School Health
- Canadian Education Association
- Canadian Geographic Society
- National Film Board
- National School Boards Association (USA)
- Assembly of First Nations
- Equitas –International Center of Human Rights Education
- Respect in Schools
- WE
- UNESCO
- CMEC Copyright Consortium

“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.”

...Henry Ford



### Membership Growth and Inclusion

This year we have grown our capacity to include new member associations at CSBA. To ensure that the national voice of school boards is strong, fully representative and united when we advocate for Canadian school boards, we have developed a new framework for membership (including weighted votes for by-laws, budget and membership) and made it possible for provinces with more than one provincial association to join CSBA. In addition, we have opened the door to invite affiliates groups to the table so that boards who do not have the option to join a provincial association or who have a different structure than that of most provinces can potentially participate and have their students and governing bodies represented. An example of this would be the Director of Education from the Assembly of First Nations or some of the territory boards that are structured differently. This enables us to grow our capacity to provide context and valuable resources to all Canadian boards as well as provide a stable funding model.

As of print time, we have just officially learned of the decision of the Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec, representing 57 school boards to join CSBA. We are thrilled that for the first time in the 52 years of the history of the association, they will be with us at our table, sharing in the discussions, making each part of our organization stronger, more diverse and more representative of Canadian students. We will have a representative of the AFN joining us at our Board meeting in October and are looking forward to them having more permanent representation going following that meeting. We have also had very promising conversations with New Brunswick English District Education Councils as well as with OPSBA's colleagues in Ontario, the OCSTA and the French-language ACÉPO. Our plans for 2017-2018 include connecting with the territories to ensure their perspectives are included in the national portrait, their voices are added to the national collective and they are provided with the support afforded to all our members.

"Individual commitment to a group effort; that is what makes a team work, a society work, a civilization work."

....Vince Lombardi

### Copyright

Today, the interpretation of *Fair Dealing* established as guidelines for the education sector in 2012 is before the courts. As the government begins the 2017 mandatory review of the *Copyright Act* this year, CSBA is urging Parliament to uphold the agreement in spite of the positions taken by educational publishers, writers and Access Copyright, that are conducting a coordinated lobby to reverse the Supreme Court and Copyright Board decisions on fair dealing in the 2017 review of the *Copyright Act*.

\*Fair dealing allows educational institutions to share small amounts of works with students without paying the copyright holder. This makes it easier for students to be exposed to a variety of texts and other works from multiple sources. When the Government of Canada updated the Copyright Act in 2012, the result reflected nearly a decade of Supreme Court of Canada rulings in support of fair dealing.

We will continue to monitor the 2017 federal review of copyright regulations and ready to defend "fair dealing" on a national scale. As a member of the CMEC Copyright Consortium, CSBA has already joined with several other national partners (CTF, CHSF, etc.) as well as individual provinces, to lobby on behalf of educators who would be significantly impacted if the proposed changes were to be made to the 2012 agreement. For more information, you can visit the CSBA website.



## National Resource Library

CSBA has been working hard to develop a library of resources that can be shared among school boards across Canada and the US.

**1) Professional Development Modules:** We have established a library of courses that have been developed in several provinces and which provide a strong foundation for trustees. Some topics addressed include: policy making, the role of a trustee, conflict management, media training, what makes good governance, running effective meetings, board finance, governing ethically, social media, staff evaluations, etc. Some modules can be explored by means of the text provided. Some are offered as webcasts. Many have quizzes added at the end so you can test your knowledge. Saskatchewan professional development modules have even been evaluated for accreditation by universities and governance partners.

Links to all of this information are now on our website under [Professional Development](#). Take some time and peruse some of the following modules to brush up on your skills:

1. [http://cge.ontarioschooltrustees.org/files/en\\_good-governance\\_web.pdf](http://cge.ontarioschooltrustees.org/files/en_good-governance_web.pdf)
2. <http://modules.ontarioschooltrustees.org/en/>
3. <http://ssbagovernancehandbook.ca>
4. [https://dsweb.bcsta.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-7473/Good\\_Governance\\_for\\_Boards\\_of\\_Education-Module\\_01.pdf](https://dsweb.bcsta.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-7473/Good_Governance_for_Boards_of_Education-Module_01.pdf)
5. <http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/divDispatches.php>

“The great aim of education is not knowledge, but action.”

....Herbert Spencer

**2) Accountability, audits and board self-evaluation:** The most successful, effective boards make self-evaluations part of regular policy and recognize accountability as a positive thing. If we as board members hold ourselves to a higher standard, there would be no need for concern when we are asked to account for our work. You will find tools to help you through an audit, including a self-evaluation process that sets up a model for accountability that will ensure your board is performing at its best for the community it serves.

**3) The Cross Country Check-In:** That is quite popular at our annual conference is now being provided on a monthly basis through our website. There are provincial eNewsletters; several magazines published by board associations and recent media articles that can provide you with a glimpse at major issues being managed at other boards across the country and which may impact your jurisdiction one day. These publications can be found on the CSBA website under [“Cross Country Snap Shot.”](#)

**4)** Our education network now includes a partnership at [National School Boards Association in the United States](#). Tom Gentzel, the Executive Director at NSBA gave a presentation to the Board of Directors on the benefits our board members now enjoy, including opportunities for sharing resources, mutual international support on issues, as well as cross promotion. In addition, there are financial benefits extended to the Canadian leadership when they are involved in NSBA activities.



One of the most significant benefits to being a member of the American organization for school boards consists of the quality resources they provide. Your provincial association Executive Director has access to the leadership and discussions on every topic, which provides invaluable perspective and experience. The National School Board Association (NSBA) is a new partner. Tom Gentzel, the Executive Director at NSBA gave a presentation to the Board of Directors on the benefits our board members can now enjoy, including opportunities for sharing resources, mutual international support on issues, as well as mutual promotion.

Two interesting resources that CSBA and our members have already begun to use as models are the Up With Public School promotion as well as Key Work for School Boards. Updates on legal matters and the defence of school board work are familiar and provide valuable information that prevent us from “reinventing the wheel”. We are now part of a network where all 50 states share information and inquiries with one another using a National Connection Hub where the Executive Director of each provincial association can ask questions of our American colleagues. Tom Gentzel will also be giving a brief presentation at the CSBA congress and we will get some first-hand information about developments in the US, especially since last year’s election and the nomination of a Secretary of Education who espouses different views from her predecessors.

“Facts or stubborn things: and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts or evidence.”

...John Adams

### CEA Facts on Education Series

Each year we collaborate with the CEA and a Canadian university and choose topics that are relevant to education today, find the best research pertaining to the topic and produce fact sheets with an executive summary on everything that has been collected: This year the five topics covered were:

- What is the best way to indigenize teaching practices?
- How can we best support student mental well-being?
- What is the best way to integrate newcomer students into schools and classrooms?
- What factors are involved in developing a successful community school model?
- How equitable is Canada’s education system?

McGill University and the team of Lynn Butler-Kisber in Montreal will be the researchers for the coming school year and we are currently in discussion with them to determine topics for the next series. Part of the process involves allowing the university to make sure there is ample research available on the topics. At the moment, the questions being considered are:

1. What is the impact on student performance of schools offering accommodation for religious or cultural traditions?
2. What are the effects of students’ social media use on their mental health/well-being?
3. What is the impact of fine arts and physical education on students’ well-being and academic success?
4. Is the rate of teachers leaving the profession higher now than in the past? If yes, what are the contributing factors?
5. Student summer learning loss: myth or reality?
6. What are the most significant factors that influence parental school choice?
7. What is the impact on student performance when a child is required to change schools?
8. What is involved in providing Makerspaces and do they contribute to heightening student engagement?
9. Does initiative fatigue impact educators?



## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

### OECD Results 2016 - Canada's Education System in a Global Perspective

While standardized testing is itself a topic for evaluation and meant to be approached with caution, it is presently one of the only benchmarks, which can be used to situate Canada's education system vis-à-vis other countries. The results published by the OECD in December 2016 are another significant reason to defend that democratic system and to be proud to be a Canadian Trustee because when it comes to academic and equitable education standards, we stand among the most successful countries in the world.

*The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015 PISA is an international standardized evaluation of the skills and knowledge of 15-year old students in science, mathematics and reading and is conducted by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 72 countries. In Canada, approximately 20,000 students from 900 schools in all 10 provinces participate.*

Some items to note from the CMEC summary:

1. According to the results of PISA 2015, Canada remains one of the top-performing countries in science. Overall, students achieved a mean score of 528 overall, 35 points above the OECD average, surpassed by students from only three countries.
2. Canada also achieved a strong performance in mathematics scoring well above the OECD average and outperformed by only six countries.
3. Canada continues to perform well internationally in reading, scoring well above the OECD average and outperformed by only one country.

#### Equity in education:

As a measure of equity in educational outcomes, PISA considers the difference between the average score of students at the 90th percentile and those at the 10th percentile. In all three domains, the gap between high and low achievers was smaller in Canada than in OECD countries (indicating greater equity).

Results from PISA 2015 provide an opportunity to confirm the success of our world-class education systems from a global perspective. Canada remains in the group of top-performing countries and achieves its standing with relatively equitable outcomes. It is important to both celebrate the successes and address the challenges highlighted in this report. For more information, including provincial breakdowns/comparisons within Canada and the rest of the world, go to [http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/365/Book\\_PISA2015\\_EN\\_Dec5.pdf](http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/365/Book_PISA2015_EN_Dec5.pdf)

### Provincial Legislation with Potential Impact

We hope to bring you updates on the following and other legal issues over the coming year:

1. British Columbia: Supreme Court ruling (<http://www.bcsta.org/TheLeader/index.php/2017/01/30/bc->
2. Saskatchewan: Theodore case (GSSD v. CTTS)
3. Taxation on Employee Health Benefits (<https://www.mercer.ca/en/our-thinking/mercere-response-to-benefits-taxation.html>)
4. Manitoba: Funding for First Nations students (<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/no-details-on-fate-of-two-thirds-of-first-nations-schools-413557953.html>)



### **In Defence of School Boards**

Education is one of the largest files in terms of budget and scope for any government. This means a high priority is consistently accorded to education, and that ministers of education must always be examining new approaches and strategies. However, while it is clear to all of us that “poor priorities make for poor governance” (true of any board or elected official), school boards have historically been easy targets. There has been, some negative press circulating over the past months and unfortunately, we are well aware that when one board behaves badly, we are often painted with the same brush. As you well know, this can move to a whole new level in election time.

At CSBA we have been working to dispel some of the misrepresentations that has been circulating over the past year. We rallied to support both Québec and then Saskatchewan against their government’s proposed legislation to abolish elected school boards. We have provided evidence-based research that speaks to the positive impact that good school board governance can have on student achievement. We have also identified the attributes required for a board to be efficient and effective (see the study: *School Boards Matter*). Finally , we have also called in colleagues from the US and from different outside disciplines/interest groups to speak for us to underline the importance of role of school boards and we are providing resources to all so that accountability is part of regular policy and conversations at all boards.

We are presently conducting research on both trustee profiles and trustee pay, which in all jurisdictions to date, have clearly demonstrated that the portrayal of boards offered in the media is sometimes not indicative of the committed, professional and hardworking individuals that are carrying out that very work. This will demonstrate the minimal public cost for this governing body as well as the level of professionalism, experience, knowledge and diversity that trustees represent at their board tables.

In the meantime, CSBA will also continue promoting the good work that goes on at our school boards across the country, with a view to inciting a more positive public dialogue about what is going “right” in Canadian education.

Going forward, we will be collaborating on strategies that involve providing o provide to you the considerable research on the benefits of publicly-elected governors in education.

Finally, it is important to note that the work we do to promote school boards is not in defence of our work...but a celebration of good work, the results it can produce in the system and for the benefits to students, who, at the end of the day...are the most important consideration.

“Your actions speak so loudly, I cannot hear what you are saying.”

....Ralph Waldo Emerson





Finally, in spite of efforts by provincial governments to lessen the role of and splinter school boards, we must all acknowledge that accountability has never been a negative factor, and should be welcomed and embraced by every board. We know that the most efficient and effective boards self-evaluate and work with accountability models to check and enhance their performance and effectiveness. In making sure policy such as this is adhered to, your board demonstrates that students remain at the centre of every decision you make and every action taken and that trustees represent the best of the democratic system and public schools.

### **CSBA Representation at National Events**

*Whenever possible the CSBA attends events hosted by our partners and our members in order to network, confirm jurisdictional issues and report on our activities. This year, Floyd Martens (President) Goronwy Price, (Vice President) and Valerie McLeod (Executive Director) were able to participate at the following events:*

NSBA Executive Directors Institute (VM, August 2016)  
SSBA fall conference and AGM (FM, November 2016)  
ASBA fall conference (FM - November 2016)  
MSBA AGM (FM, March 2017)  
National Congress on Rural Education (FM March 2017)  
NSBA Annual Conference (GP – April 2017)  
BCSTA AGM (FM April 2017)  
Prime Ministers Awards (May 2017)  
NB DEC Symposium (FM- Mar, 2017)  
Quebec English Boards Spring Conference (FM, May 2017)  
NSSBA AGM (VM, May 2017)  
OPSBA AGM (FM, VM, June 2017)  
WIPCE (July 2017)  
CMEC Anniversary Event (VM, July 2017)

### CSBA Board of Directors Meetings (all)

October 23-24, 2016 (Montreal)  
January 29-30, 2017 (Halifax)  
April 30, May 1, 2017 (Ottawa)  
CSBA AGM July 2017 (Whistler, BC)

## CONCLUSION

Among the benefits of being at a CSBA Board of Directors meeting or attending the annual congress, the most significant is the perspective it brings. While we tend to work in our silos, when given the opportunity to pan out and consider the issues that are going on across the country, it is clear that we share far more than what makes us different and that we are a large, strong and capable group of dedicated individuals that fully benefit from sharing our stories. Rest assured in the knowledge that you are not pushing a boulder uphill alone, that you are part of a group of people who endeavour to do good and important work and who sincerely put the needs of students and their communities first. We hope you that you see that CSBA is clearly behind you in that role and are honoured to support and serve you on the national stage with your work as a school board trustee (commissioner).