



Vaccines and masks crucial to keeping schools safe

In the weeks before teachers returned to their classrooms, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation was advocating strongly for measures that would keep students, teachers and school staff safe as a fourth wave of COVID-19 was on the horizon.

"There was some hope that the worst was behind us, and this could be a relatively normal school year, but it became increasingly clear that wasn't where things were headed," said STF President Patrick Maze.

The Government of Saskatchewan left the plans up to individual school divisions, and most of their plans were released in the week prior to students returning. Many divisions made masking optional at the high school level, which created a significant cause for concern. Then just days into the school year, after immediately recording Delta variant cases in their schools, several divisions switched their policy on masking to being "mandatory" for all schools.

Maze says the Federation would have preferred to see these measures put into place from the start to reduce risk and exposure, however, he was glad to see revised plans.

"We appreciate the leadership many school divisions have shown in their initial plans and are relieved others have since increased masking provisions.

"Post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan and beyond are requiring vaccines and masks for all those on campus. We continue to urge the government to show leadership by implementing



Patrick Maze

mandatory masking and proof of vaccination for all schools in our province."

At a meeting of the STF Executive on August 16, a motion was passed to "...call on the provincial government to mandate vaccines for all eligible staff and students."

The STF is believed to be the first teachers' federation in Canada to take this position, although many others have since followed suit. Maze says this isn't a decision taken lightly but was made based on scientific evidence and calls from public health experts.

The Saskatchewan Medical Association and the Saskatchewan College of Family Physicians backed the STF's call for mandatory vaccines, masking and other measures. The Saskatchewan Health Authority's own planning guide for the school year underscores the importance of vaccinations and masking to help keep students and staff as safe as possible. A number of other organizations are now also requiring proof of vaccination, including many post-secondary institutions and every team in the Canadian Football League.

Consistent with the Executive's motion, the STF has put similar measures in place for all Federation staff and any visitors to STF facilities. "Leaders have a responsibility to put measures in place to keep people safe, whether that be through drinking and driving rules on our highways, or vaccination rules in an office or a school. Ensuring everyone who is eligible is fully vaccinated helps protect our youngest students and vulnerable adults. We all need to do our part to keep one another safe," Maze reiterated.

The STF will continue to monitor the situation, advocate and provide resources to members.

Updated guidance is available on the STF's website under Teaching in Saskatchewan. Members are also reminded to access the Member and Family Assistance Plan if needed for support in navigating what may be a stressful time for many. ■



Although this school year has many unknowns, both teachers and students are excited to be back in the classroom. These particular students enjoyed their first week back and are excited to spend time with their friends.

What is Orange Shirt Day?

By Theresa Walter, First Nations Specialist at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum

Orange Shirt Day—Every Child Matters began in 2013 when Phyllis Webstad told her story at the residential school commemoration event in Williams Lake, B.C. She was six years old in 1973 when she arrived at St. Joseph Mission school for her first day. She told of how proud she was to wear her new orange shirt that her grandma had bought her for this special occasion. When she arrived at school, the shirt was taken away and replaced with a uniform, never to be worn again.

Webstad only attended this school for one year but remembered the feelings of worthlessness and insignificance experienced from her first day onwards.

Forty years later, she organized the commemoration event in 2013 to bring awareness to the harm and intergenerational trauma that the survivors of residential schools have endured.

September 30 was chosen as the date of remembrance as this was the time of year that students were taken from their homes and sent to the residential schools.

As our children return to school in September, this day represents an opportunity for children to take part in anti-bullying and anti-racism campaigns that teachers will deliver throughout the coming school year.

September 30 is now also a federally recognized day of remembrance and will be known as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation commencing in September of 2021. A fundamental part of the reconciliation journey is the process of truth telling and listening to the voices of the survivors and their families. Once truth is accepted and



Knowledge Keeper Harold Lavalée (left) and Chris Ross, producer of *Keep Going My Daughter*, at the 2019 public film event. Lavalée and Ross, both wearing shirts from the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, led the question and answer session after the event.

past injustices recognized, then healing can begin.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the 94 Calls to Action are helping to shed light on one dark chapter of our Canadian history. It is important to understand the history of colonization, residential schools and the impact the schools still have on Indigenous peoples today.

Canada's residential schools operated between 1831 to 1996. Approximately 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis children were forced to attend church-run facilities with the stated goal of "taking the Indian out of the child." The students faced neglect and all manners of abuse in the schools and student testimonies were told at the Truth and Reconciliation hearings culminating in the final report released in 2015.

The Royal Saskatchewan Museum has orange shirts available for purchase in the RSM gift shop. All proceeds go directly to the Traditional Knowledge Keepers Program at the RSM and fund Orange Shirt Day events as well as our seasonal smudges,

Indigenous Storytelling Month and other activities.

RSM Orange Shirt Day commemorative events for 2021 will include a public evening presentation of the film *We Were Children* on September 29, to feature the residential school attendee perspective. Food and time for reflection and conversation will be available. One special classroom will be invited for the school presentation on September 30 that will also be livestreamed to include more classroom participation. This classroom will be gifted with RSM orange shirts.

On September 30, we will remember the First Nations, Inuit and Métis children who never made it home and we will remember the survivors who live today to tell their stories, stressing the motto that Every Child Matters. We will support the bravery and resiliency of the survivors by listening with open ears, learning and supporting them as we move towards a path of reconciliation.

For resources to help recognize and support Truth and Reconciliation, visit www.stf.sk.ca. ■



Former Saskatchewan Bulletin Editor Jens Nielsen [left] when Jay Wilson, Professor and Department Head of Curriculum Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, was conducting the interview during Nielsen's final days ahead of his retirement.

Roles are reversed for former *Bulletin* Editor as he becomes the interviewee

By Jay Wilson, Professor and Department Head of Curriculum Studies, University of Saskatchewan

Before we begin, this piece needs some context. I have been lucky to know Jens Nielsen through the many occasions he interviewed me. These meetings always went much longer than we had planned and included a range of subjects that we knew and loved, as well as others that raised our collective curiosity. A few years back, at the end of one of our meetings, I told Jens that I treasure the times we spend together and that if he ever retired (not when but if) that I would like to interview him. He laughed of course and said why not. So here we are, my interview with Jens.

You might be surprised to learn that for someone who has been a staple in the journalistic community, Jens claims to have never had formal instruction in writing. In fact, he told me that he is not even a fan of reading. Like many newcomers to Canada (immigrating to Canada from Denmark at age 6), he learned at an early age to listen and to understand what people were saying rather than focus on the mechanics of language. This unofficial training developed in him a skill that was perfect for his chosen profession. He possessed the ability to listen, comprehend and share stories. Evidence of this skillset comes from his initial writing job with the *North Battleford News-Optimist*. This baker's son from Wilkie was so skilled at capturing the essence of a story that in his first interview the editor hired him on the spot. This is also a fine example of his belief in himself. His early confidence led to sports writing at the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix* and eventually to top scribe at the *Saskatchewan Bulletin* where he has engaged so many of us with his talents. He said

he never considered doing anything else but writing and much like the amazing educators he reported on, his focus was to be the best at what he did.

The subjects of his stories came through recommendations from others, finding out who was being recognized by peers, or plain old keeping his ear to the ground. In this way, he delivered a range of stories that not everyone might have discovered. His work was the human-interest stories about the local teacher or administrator or bus driver who contributed to the success of students. This approach led him to individuals who claimed that they had nothing important to say but were in reality "quote machines" providing inspiring stories and insights that impacted generations of teachers and administrators.

He admits that his approach was not observing instruction but rather talking with teachers after the work was done. Most often these interviews took place in a principal's office, which in many small schools was the only quiet place. He also felt comfortable in the gym, interviewing in an environment where he has spent many years. I believe that his home in a school would be a gym but for the past 20-plus years his professional home was the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Working with a "great team" to regularly publish the stories of education in Saskatchewan. Engaging in tasks with the humility and respect that is a hallmark of good journalism. Knowing when to say "no to a story that was BS" and when to do everything possible to capture the stories that mattered for the diverse and loyal readers of the *Bulletin*.

Never one to play the role of the shrinking violet, Jens' confidence was present each time he went after a story.

His skill in "finding the lead" and using his innate ability was foundational to the many stories about the amazing people of Saskatchewan. This high degree of confidence should not be mistaken for an inflated ego. He was connected but didn't use his connections for political purposes. Rather he used his "press pass" to access and engage in grounded honest conversations, be it with the Minister of Education or a teaching assistant in a rural school. It was also part of his approach to mentoring, work-ed students who shared time with him would know if they had a sense of story writing through his feedback. He delighted in those who shared a similar ability to see the story in the words.

Jens spoke fondly of the teachers in smaller communities. Being raised in a rural community he realized the impact of one person. His work highlighted individuals able to see possibilities and demonstrate a made-in-Saskatchewan approach to problem solving or creating a memorable experience for their students. When asked about his favourite stories he was unable and unwilling to pick one. Everyone he interviewed knew that their time together was precious, and their actions were treated as unique and important.

Interviews with Jens were conversations where the roles blurred. When asked about how many stories he had written over the years, he mentioned mapping the towns in Saskatchewan where he had visited. The total of 150 included repeat visits to many of the dots on the map, both large and small. He shared a love of travelling to the northern schools in the province. He spoke of the teacher who sent birthday cards to all of his students even well after his retirement. He shared his excitement about the impact of teachers nurturing students to be the next

EDITORIAL



Civil liberties: are you kidding me?

By Jens Nielsen, former *Bulletin* Editor

Let's get one thing straight. As much as the two don't in any way resemble each other, somehow it gives one cause to pause.

While we continue to have those who are living in a state of denial that COVID-19 is somehow a hoax or at worst some nefarious government-led boondoggle, half a world away we're witnessing the renewed atrocities of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

So consider for a moment, those non-vaccinator folks (and non-maskers for that matter) who are so vehement about their civil liberties not being recognized. Now look at the mayhem and violence in Afghanistan and I would suggest that is a much starker example of people's civil liberties not being respected.

If you are one of those who has any number of incomprehensible theories as to the perils of receiving a simple vaccine, you might want to reflect on what is somehow seen as acceptable in anyone's mind. Don't talk to me about podcasts because the next one I listen to will be the first.

Against this whole backdrop it seems pretty logical to me for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Executive to have passed a motion calling on the provincial government to mandate vaccinations for all eligible students and staff in public schools.

For anyone who doesn't grasp the obvious, it's about maintaining a safe workplace while at the same time protecting those under the age of 12 who are not eligible to be vaccinated at this time.

Yet, stubbornly, Premier Scott Moe is sticking to the party line of letting individual school divisions decide. While he is to be commended for virtually pleading for people to "stick it to COVID," it wouldn't be that much of a stretch to go along with a request to have some uniformity to this whole thing—that most assuredly is one thing that has been missing from the very start of what seems to be a never-ending situation.

Now we're hearing about the fourth wave coming—pretty safe to say it's already here, people, with the numbers again spiking in the province. Surprise, surprise, it has also been firmly established that the lion's share of those new case numbers are people who have not been vaccinated (or in some cases have only received one dose).

I understand there are those who have verifiable medical or religious-based reasons for not receiving the vaccine, but from this corner at least there is no great compassion for those who simply don't want to be told to do this.

This call by the STF is reasoned and could quite possibly be a major turning point in helping to curb the latest variant, of which it seems likely will be the new norm so to not address it is merely asking for continued rising numbers. We still have a choice here. Not everyone is so fortunate.

So let's do this—one small jab for man; one giant leap for mankind. ■

SASKATCHEWAN BULLETIN

The *Saskatchewan Bulletin* is published 10 times during the school year by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Contributions to the *Bulletin* are welcome and will be used when possible.

All material is subject to editing. Requests for coverage by *Bulletin* staff should be received at least three weeks before the event.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40064493
Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses To:

Editorial Office
2317 Arlington Avenue
Saskatoon SK S7J 2H8
Tel: 306-373-1660/1-800-667-7762
Fax: 306-374-1122
Email: bulletin@stf.sk.ca

©2021. For permission to reprint, please contact the editorial office. Indexed in the Canadian Education Index ISSN 0036-4886 Member of the Canadian Educational Press Association and the Educational Press Association of America. Return postage guaranteed.

generation of social justice leaders. Or of the principal who helped a younger teacher understand that being a coach was about developing, not winning. Every story was his favourite one.

He was able to transfer his ability to understand people to the only other area he claimed to have any natural talent, coaching soccer. Much like his success working with educators, he was able to draw out the best from his players. And they loved him for it. For his players, his approval often meant more than that of their parents. High praise indeed. He shared with me that despite the success he attained as a coach, he couldn't remember the number of provincial championships his

teams won, but he could tell you how many weddings he attended. This connection to people is further evidence of his talents and a great source of pride.

For someone who claims not to be a teacher, Jens Nielsen taught us all the importance of the individual and of celebrating success. He turned his gift of listening and understanding into a legacy of storytelling that captured the essence of Saskatchewan educators. This lasting gift will be treasured by those who were the subjects of his conversations and by the thousands of others who knew him through his writing. We are forever grateful for you, Jens. ■



Kirsten Cavanaugh [left] and Janet Okoko help support new residents to Canada overcome numerous barriers. Their shared passion ultimately led them to receiving a McDowell Foundation grant for their project, *Strengthening Schools to Support Syrian Refugees During the Pandemic*.

Supporting refugee children during pandemic challenging but doable, researchers say

By Jens Nielsen, former Bulletin editor

Even though they had been working on the project together since last fall, this drizzly morning on the patio of a Saskatoon coffee shop was actually the first time the two researchers had met face-to-face (er, make that mask-to-mask).

As Kirsten Cavanaugh and Janet Okoko shared their stories over their morning java, this tablemate couldn't help but be struck by how aligned they were, even though they come from quite different backgrounds and respective roles in the education landscape.

Cavanaugh, an English as an additional language teacher in the Saskatoon Public Schools division, had teamed up with Okoko, associate professor in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan.

Their shared passion in helping new residents to Canada overcome numerous barriers led to them gaining a McDowell Foundation grant for their project *Strengthening Schools to Support Syrian Refugees During the Pandemic*.

Even under so-called normal circumstances, the challenges of learning a new language and culture while also finding their way as members of a family unit thrust into quite unfamiliar surroundings would be challenging enough. Throw in a global pandemic and the situation is magnified.

Okoko, a native of Kenya who came to Saskatoon via the University of Calgary where she received her PhD in educational leadership, has been doing research work with integrating newcomers to Canada, including the overall family unit.

"It is key for the whole family to participate. It's very important for our school divisions to support parents because learning as a family is key. It is very important," she said, citing particularly the large influx of Syrian refugees that have arrived in Saskatchewan in recent years.

Okoko is a board member with the Saskatoon-based non-profit centre, the Global Gathering Place, which provides settlement assistance for newcomers to the country.

Cavanaugh echoed her research colleague's words, noting that "strong relationships between families and schools must take place to support our

learners. Never have these cooperative relations been more important as they are during COVID.

"Recently arrived refugee children face many challenges when adapting to their new country, along with parents who are maybe looking for work, attempting to learn English and adapting to different cultural norms.

"Without strong in-school supports, these children are at risk of failing socially or academically," Cavanaugh observed.

According to Cavanaugh, in her interviews with families they cited the difficulty with language in terms of how it's connected to their children's school; particularly with the online delivery model which could prove frustrating if there was a lack of communication clarity, including realities such as the teacher perhaps talking too fast, thereby compromising clarification.

"We can make this doable, and having the strong partnerships is the next step so that we can sit together and map out what we can offer to achieve the learning outcomes. Parents very much want to engage."

Janet Okoko

Cavanaugh stressed the importance of making the family connections so that there would not be a feeling of helplessness, and sometimes the meaning is lost so there is a strong need to acquire a degree of proficiency in English.

"It's the partnership piece that enhances the proficiency levels. As a division we need to benchmark those kids in terms of outcomes and staying in touch. That's what the research showed," Cavanaugh added.

Okoko pointed out that it needs to be remembered that "parents very much want to help their kids, but they are not trained teachers. So we need to be able to help them acquire basic skills to equip them better. That's

why schools need to be able to provide that support, and everyone will benefit. That parental engagement is really important."

Meanwhile, Okoko stressed that these newcomers to the country have skills in certain areas that should be taken into account.

"It's not a blank slate, but our educators need to get to know them and what they have to offer as well as the challenges. The parents have pride, and we need to try and help them to gain the skills that enable them to get a job so they can provide a safe environment for their families. It can be very emotional for the parents because they want the best for their children and they are, in many cases, learning together," Okoko said.

Another major factor can be the issue of systemic racism for those who are visibly different in appearance.

Okoko, who has experienced racism herself, said it is important for children to find their identity and fit into their new reality.

She acknowledged that she can be a role model, although it wasn't a natural fit at first.

"I had to realize this quite quickly, but I'm not normally an outspoken person. But I realized I can't just sit and say nothing in some cases."

Cavanaugh and Okoko both praised the 100 percent resilience they have experienced, reiterating the level of commitment families have shown to make a new life in Canada.

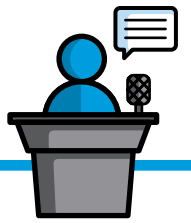
"We have seen how very grateful the families are and they are genuinely happy to be here in this country.

When we're able to provide the basic supports to help them they are really happy," Okoko noted. "We can make this doable, and having the strong partnerships is the next step so that we can sit together and map out what we can offer to achieve the learning outcomes. Parents very much want to engage."

Cavanaugh concurred, pointing specifically to the Cheer Crates campaign orchestrated by the Saskatoon Public Schools Foundation as an example of the partnerships that can be the key.

"The families are ready and willing to engage and to offer what they can in terms of helping achieve a strong education for their children. We need to work together to make this happen." ■

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP



Leadership lessons from the editor: thanks Jens

By Jane Macleod, Senior Manager, Research and Records

Sometimes we learn as much, or more, from the people around us as we do from the blogs, articles or texts of prominent educational leaders around the world. Our colleagues can be a source of influence and inspiration and the practice of reflecting upon the contributions of others enables us to add to, and personalize, our own leadership repertoire.

Saskatchewan Bulletin Editor Jens Nielsen retired last month, and it is timely to reflect upon Jens' approach and work ethic and consider what school leaders across the province might learn from a colleague who has spent over 20 years working with educators in Saskatchewan.

1. Be honest. Any who have worked with or interviewed with Jens know that he is not one to hold back. His editorials were candid and his expression was unpretentious and unreserved, even when addressing a thorny issue. Writing guides tell us to write for our audience and in a school setting, whether writing newsletters for the community or updates for staff, successful communication ensures that important points are professional, forthright and not clouded in education jargon. Your audience will appreciate the conciseness and the clarity.
 2. Be credible. Editors tell writers to do their research and to take time to dig a little deeper to get the whole story. Journalists work hard to get their copy to press quickly, however, they know that the absence of critical facts or worse, the misrepresentation of facts, can have career-limiting consequences. Similarly, school leaders know the value of getting to the bottom of the story. Today, where nuanced scoops are spread and amplified via Instagram, Facebook posts, memes or cartoons, exercising patience and taking time to learn the full story is critical. Integrity always matters.
 3. Be yourself. A 1984 article by William Safire in the *New York Times* defines principle as something you stand for in life, something that is absolute and unyielding. Those who know Jens agree that he is principle-driven. His editorial observations and commentary were characterized by his steadfast commitment to the principles of equity and transparency. Experiences from established school leaders tell us that when preparing to communicate, be it via a text, an update, a presentation or a traditional newsletter, they work hard to ensure that the style, the tone, the vocabulary and the message are unvarnished. Their words and expressions are neither patronizing or condescending; rather they are consistent with their professional beliefs and principles. Not only do successful principals and vice-principals walk the talk, they also own the message—even the difficult ones.
 4. Be practical. Too much information can be overwhelming, and one might argue that the theme of many posts, blogs, reports and journal articles is interesting. However, the question must be asked, is the information useful? As editor, Jens had an eye for articles that were both interesting and useful to Saskatchewan educators. Such attention to interest and usefulness is equally applicable and appropriate to school leaders' communication. Information and communication today can be relentless and ensuring that each message conveys information that is interesting, relevant and useful is a good habit to acquire.
 5. Be attentive. As *Bulletin* editor, Jens was a solid colleague of both the communications team and the wider Federation staff. We benefited from his wit, his sometimes-acerbic observations and his uncanny ability to always be in the right place at the right time. Conversations with teacher colleagues suggest that such attributes characterize most memorable school leaders. Given today's relentless demands on principals and vice-principals, finding time to relax and connect with staff not only refreshes one's thinking, but it also strengthens relationships.
- Regardless of our education or experience, often it's the people we meet and work with that have a profound influence on our leadership attitudes and actions.
- Looking back, we've learned a lot from Jens over the years. His work has left a powerful impact on educators and education across Saskatchewan. Thanks, Jens.
- One last lesson:
6. Be unpredictable and always wear funky shoes! ■

Four leaders in Canadian education excellence recognized at CTF/FCE AGM

Ottawa—The Canadian Teachers' Federation celebrated the accomplishments of four outstanding educators during its Annual General Meeting and a Saskatchewan educator was among those who were honoured. Gladys Wapass-Greyeyes, a member of the Thunderchild First Nation in Treaty 6 territory, was recognized for her work as an Indigenous Elder. After taking university classes in teaching methodology, Wapass-Greyeyes became a language instructor, teaching Cree (Nehiyaw) in First Nations schools such as Thunderchild and Muskeg Lake.

She continues to be invited by teachers, school divisions, the Ministry of Education and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner to speak and share her teachings, helping educators introduce, promote and maintain the history of Indigenous people in the province and use that knowledge as a foundation

for strong relationships. As a community Elder in Thunderchild and Elder invited to many non-First Nation communities in Saskatchewan, Wapass-Greyeyes is a well-respected teacher and counsellor.

In recent years, she developed and delivered historical and cultural resources to Saskatchewan schools for Saskatchewan's Office of the Treaty Commissioner. This work includes going into schools as part of the Treaties in the Classroom project.

The STF Executive nominated Wapass-Greyeyes in recognition of her substantial contributions and dedication to language and its role in the transmission and preservation of culture, as well as treaty education as a critical component of Saskatchewan students' learning.

Special Recognition Award

Paul Taillefer, nominated by l'Association des enseignants

et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO).

This award is presented to individuals for meritorious service to education and the teaching profession at the provincial and national levels.

A former AEFO and CTF/FCE President, Taillefer completed his studies at Laurentian and Western Universities before teaching at Thériault, a French high school in Timmins, Ontario.

Thereafter, he became involved in the AEFO, first in his local unit where he held several positions, including Chair of the Negotiating Committee.

Taillefer, who is the husband of STF Executive Director Bobbi Taillefer, has over 30 years of experience in the teaching profession. He served as the full-time President of AEFO's North-East Catholic Unit in northern Ontario from 2001 to 2004. A member of the AEFO Board of Directors since 1998, he served on the provincial Executive Committee for nine years.

In 2004, he was elected President of the provincial AEFO, a position he held until 2008. In 2010, he represented the AEFO on the Board of the Ontario Teachers' Federation. He was also Vice-President of the CTF/FCE for which he chaired the advisory committee on French as a first language.

He was President of the CTF/FCE from 2011 to 2013. At the 2010 AEFO convention, he was awarded the title of Life Member. Only 15 other AEFO members have received this honour since the founding of AEFO. Internationally, he actively participated in the Comité syndical francophone de l'éducation et de la formation (Francophone Labour Committee for Education and Training) and in the activities of Education International.

Public Education Advocacy Award

Dr. Carol Campbell, nominated by the

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association.

This award recognizes dedicated, long-standing service, as well as major contributions to benefit publicly funded public education.

Dr. Carol Campbell has dedicated her career to research, policy and practice in support of high-quality publicly funded education.

Recognition of an Outstanding Indigenous Educator

Patricia Joe, nominated by the Yukon Teachers' Association.

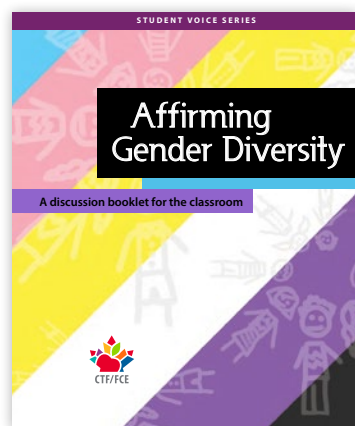
This recognition pays tribute to a teacher who has demonstrated leadership in Indigenous education and excellence in teaching that reflects Indigenous culture.

Joe is a First Nations woman from the Tagish Nation, the Dak'laweide Clan (Killer Whale and Wolf Crest) and is a proud citizen of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation. ■

New booklet in the student voice series: Affirming Gender Diversity

The Canadian Teachers' Federation is proud to release *Affirming Gender Diversity: A Discussion Booklet for the Classroom*, the fifth booklet in the CTF/FCE Student Voice Series, designed for educators to support discussions about complex societal issues using the authentic voices of students.

As a valuable resource, the booklet helps explore the stigma and misconceptions about the diversity of gender identities and gender expressions; assists in fostering the development of empathy and understanding about how cisnormativity, cissexism and transphobia affect the lives of all individuals, be they cis, trans or non-binary; and serves to create a dialogue of understanding to build a



community of acceptance, compassion and inclusion. *Affirming Gender Diversity* is now available on the CTF/FCE website at www.ctf-fce.ca.

Want to learn more? Read all about it in our latest Perspectives blog at www.ctf-fce.ca/blog-perspectives/affirming-gender-diversity. ■

Cheer Crate campaign continues

By Jens Nielsen, former Bulletin editor

More than 700 families were provided with food, games and personal care items through the delivery of Cheer Crates from the Saskatoon Public Schools Foundation following the latest event held during the summer months.

The Cheer Crate campaign was created to support Saskatoon Public Schools' families in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 2,900 Cheer Crates filled with food, learning materials and necessities were delivered to families last year during distribution days in May, June, September and December.

"Schools are the heart of our community and a place where students receive nutrition, education and emotional support," said SPSF Executive Director Zeba Ahmad. "Because of the response from the community and the need identified within SPS families, Saskatoon Public Schools Foundation hopes to continue delivering Cheer

Crates in June and December each year so that families have some much-needed extras during extended school breaks."

Cheer Crates are valued at approximately \$100 each and include food items such as dairy products, eggs, bread, fruits and vegetables, cereal and canned goods as well as books, hygiene items and fun activities for the family. Community school coordinators and staff in Saskatoon Public Schools helped identify families that would benefit from the support provided by Cheer Crates.

A wide coalition of businesses and community organizations donated money, food, supplies and volunteer time to support the Cheer Crate project including the Saskatoon Downtown Canadian Progress Club, Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Center, Nutrien and Saskatchewan Egg Producers. Approximately 60 volunteers are part of the packing and delivery process, along with teachers and staff who deliver Cheer Crates to families.

The Saskatoon Public Schools Foundation is an independent charity dedicated to enhancing learning opportunities for students at Saskatoon Public Schools. SPSF partners with committed businesses, organizations and individuals to bring school communities together and support programs that go above and beyond government funded educational services.

Last fall, SPSF launched its \$20 million Early Learning Equal Start campaign to support early childhood education. The campaign goal is to ensure all children are reading at grade level by Grade 3, a key indicator of future success in school. SPSF will fund full-day prekindergarten at 13 schools and full-day kindergarten at 14 schools as well as summer reading camp and an expanded literacy tutor program through the 2021-26 school years. To learn more about its work, visit www.spsfoundation.ca. ■



Volunteers are shown packaging the Cheer Crates to distribute to families from Saskatoon Public Schools in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost 3,000 Cheer Crates have been delivered over the past year to support families in need with items such as food, personal hygiene items and fun activities for the family.



McDowell funding announcement 2021-22

By Ellen Whiteman, Manager, McDowell Foundation

The McDowell Foundation funding announcements are out for another year with work in treaty education, anti-racism and social media, and impacts of COVID-19 on fine arts programs leading the way. The funding allotment for this year was slightly smaller because of a decision to fund a Directed Call on COVID-19 implications last fall, but over \$60,000 was awarded to Saskatchewan teachers for professional research.

This year's successful projects include:

The Effect of a Community of Teachers Doing the Unsettling Work of Treaty Education in Rural Saskatchewan Classrooms by Raquel Oberkirsch and Michael Graham.

Social Media as Anti-Racist Teacher Education: Implications and Possibilities by Carmen Gillies and Mel Sysing.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Band Teacher Practices in Saskatchewan by Katlyn Redding and Kristen Myers.

Nurturing Emergent Literacy in Play-Based Outdoor Education: An Exploration of the Learning Journey of a Kindergarten/Grade 1 Class in Forest School by Denise Heppner and Tirzah Reilkoff.

The Foundation is pleased to support these projects. We look forward to supporting the work in the next year and sharing the findings as they become available over the next 18 months.

We received a number of strong applications this year and would like to thank all who applied. ■

Jaunzems-Fernuk aspires to foster calm classrooms for teachers, students

By Meagan Hinther

Judy Jaunzems-Fernuk is on a mission to foster calm classrooms where teachers and students thrive.

The University of Saskatchewan graduate recently earned her doctorate degree from the College of Education in the cross-departmental PhD program. Her dissertation combined educational psychology and curriculum studies to explore what attributes contribute to early career teacher success.

“I taught K-12 for close to 20 years and I noticed that during that time the classroom changed from being a relatively homogenous group of students to students who were all over the map with their learning needs, behaviours and mental health diagnoses,” said Jaunzems-Fernuk. “In Saskatchewan, we’re trained as general educators, but I found in the classroom I was doing special education all the time.”

After receiving her master of education in 2015, investigating youth at risk of school failure, Jaunzems-Fernuk considered continuing on with a doctoral thesis. She also began pursuing coursework and designation as a registered master therapeutic counsellor. During this time she was teaching at the Nutana Youth Resource Centre, a hybrid program between the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Saskatoon school divisions.

“I really found myself drawn to supporting behaviour challenges and mental health challenges, and seeing that, though all of this stuff can get in the way of learning, there are people that really want to succeed,” Jaunzems-Fernuk said.

She began considering what she was observing among her colleagues and reading in the literature: not only were students and their families struggling, but so were teachers. Thirty to 50 percent of North American teachers leave the profession in the first five years, and Jaunzems-Fernuk pointed to a 2019 study by the NDP that found 40 percent of teachers in Saskatchewan said they had seriously considered leaving the profession at some point in their careers.

“You hear, ‘it’s so hard; it’s stressful; we’re so burnt out,’” said Jaunzems-Fernuk. “I was loving my career even though I was working with challenging situations, so I thought that I should look to teachers in their early careers who are thriving. What is it that helps them to thrive despite being in a difficult situation?”

Jaunzems-Fernuk worked qualitatively over the course of several months with four teachers who self-identified as thriving and who were working in various school settings and teaching areas.

“What I saw when I observed them teaching and talked to them was that they were dealing with really tough stuff. They were in schools where they were trying to support students where there had been suicide, or bullying or major mental health issues,” shared Jaunzems-Fernuk. “These teachers were self-



identified as thriving but they were challenged.”

What Jaunzems-Fernuk found in the qualitative data she gathered and analyzed were four major themes that contributed to early-career teacher success: these teachers were resilient, they were resourceful, they sought out and built relationships, and they had well-established routines.

“Those four things were the anchor for their success,” said Jaunzems-Fernuk. “Were they struggling? Were there challenges? Were they dealing with stress? Yes, but they weren’t burning out. They were describing themselves as surviving and thriving.”

Jaunzems-Fernuk said the next step with her PhD research was to look into what information needs to be taught to students in professional teacher education programs to help arm them with the tools and knowledge to be successful.

“Personally I feel really strongly that to bring strong, effective educators to our youth, they need to understand the content area that they are going to teach, but that’s only half of it,” said Jaunzems-Fernuk. “I think we need content-area curriculum and a human curriculum in education. A human curriculum is all about understanding who we are as human beings, and then we can hopefully be more effective educators.”

From the thriving educators she studied, Jaunzems-Fernuk noted five skills were common. They had a sense of meaning and purpose in their careers; they had a mindset that helped them compartmentalize emotions and shift gears as necessary; they had awareness about their own mental health and how to support it; they had great mentors and they had the confidence and competence to mentor others; and they had good classroom-management skills and emotional self-regulation.

“Bringing a managed self into the classroom helps manage those chaotic students that may come into the room. That is what classroom management is: it’s relating to people and being there for people. It’s not a program or a reward system,” Jaunzems-Fernuk explained.

Jaunzems-Fernuk has been bringing these concepts into her College of Education undergraduate classes. She’s been an instructor since 2017, and in her most recent undergraduate courses had

teacher candidates develop inquiry-led projects that explored one of the five aforementioned skills, such as meaning or mentorship.

“It’s been a phenomenal experience to see the self-growth and the joy in these students as they grow as teachers,” Jaunzems-Fernuk said.

Jaunzems-Fernuk’s supervisor in the Department of Curriculum Studies, Dr. Brenda Kalyn, shared that her research fills a crucial need in teacher education.

“Teacher candidates today have an unprecedented concern for their own mental health and that of their students,” said Kalyn. “Judy has the key messages that are needed and she’s continuously exploring new ideas and reshaping her context to support classrooms, teachers and learning communities.”

In addition to the support of Kalyn, Jaunzems-Fernuk credits her husband Darren Fernuk and sons Braden, Jericho and Tristan with helping her on the long journey of completing her PhD. During the latter part of her program, she also tragically lost both of her parents to autoimmune diseases.

“My husband and kids are 50 percent of this dissertation. Cooking the meals, letting me close my door and work for 17 hours a day at times trying to get through this. It takes a whole team, nobody does this alone,” she said. “My son Braden also edited my dissertation for me and he was amazing. I was blown away.”

Jaunzems-Fernuk looks forward to continuing her work with the College of Education as an instructor in addition to running her private counselling business, Prairie Sky Education. As always, her focus remains on supporting teachers to build calm classrooms.

“We come into this profession with hopes and dreams about helping people and teaching kids and I always thought, how could that lead to burnout so fast? It’s because it’s so tough but it doesn’t have to be,” said Jaunzems-Fernuk. “Teachers don’t have to go from passion to burnout. They can go from passion to bumps and passion again. There are things we can do to help with the long journey and the difficult times. It’s about mental health.”

Hinther is manager of communications and external relations at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. ■

Education professor enhances virtual campus

By Meagan Hinther

For Paula MacDowell, choosing her favourite avatar identity and meeting students in a virtual campus is often just part of a typical day teaching online courses.

An assistant professor in the University of Saskatchewan’s College of Education, MacDowell joined the Department of Curriculum Studies’ Educational Technology and Design (ETAD) program in 2019. Her passion and purpose lie in empowering youth through education and technology and designing learning experiences for pro-social and pro-environmental change.

She studies immersive learning design to understand how spatial environments like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) can enhance student learning experiences. While VR replaces a user’s reality completely with a digital environment, AR overlays digital content onto the world (think apps like Pokémon Go). Extended reality (XR), another common term, encompasses all immersive technologies.

“Immersive technologies have the power to put learners in places that they will never forget,” said MacDowell. “Students learn by being part of the story and they retain this information as a memory as opposed to simply reading information from a textbook.”

MacDowell uses XR in her courses and research programs to empower students as knowledge creators and inspired communicators while also providing educators with the tools to develop engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences.

This past summer, she taught an ETAD graduate course entirely through VR—possibly the first course ever to do so at the U of S. When her research plans were cancelled due to the pandemic, MacDowell pivoted to offer a leading-edge course elective in immersive technologies and world-building for K-12 education.

“The students in the class were teachers, teacher candidates and instructional designers, and few had experience with world building,” said MacDowell. “If a student didn’t have a headset, I lent them one. We met as avatars in three virtual platforms: AltspaceVR, Virbela and Engage VR, which each host live events and other VR worlds.”

“Because of COVID, I was able to be a little more experimental and it ended up being really successful,” she added.

Students in the XR course created a wide variety of immersive environments that met learning goals outlined in the Saskatchewan K-12 curriculum. One virtual world designed by the students focused on learning about the boreal forest and Indigenous knowledge. The immersive experience takes users through northern Saskatchewan trails and incorporates interpretive



Paula MacDowell

videos of Myrtle O’Brien, a traditional Cree herbalist, crafter and educator. Along the way, she provides teachings related to Indigenous plants, traditions and language.

For ETAD master’s student Janelle Lavoie, VR technology allows learning to come to life in a powerful way.

“Dr. MacDowell empowered us to really take creative risks,” said Lavoie. “Through collaboration and persistence, we were able to tackle the design challenges of VR and create a meaningful and engaging learning environment.”

MacDowell explains how virtual field trips are not meant to be better than the real experience, but those real-world field trips aren’t always available and can be expensive.

“With XR tools, there are so many opportunities for immersive storytelling, for authentic student assignments and active learning experiences that may not otherwise be possible,” MacDowell said.

She challenges students to create AR in her courses, as it does not require special technology beyond a computer or phone and most have access to it with a reliable internet connection, making it more inclusive for K-12 environments.

“Educators have a responsibility for designing equitable and inclusive learning spaces. Instructors who want to break away from sitting in front of webcams for online classes can integrate virtual-social environments like Frame VR or Mozilla Hubs. Students can access these customizable 3D spaces simply using their internet browser,” MacDowell said.

She explained how these low-barrier, multi-user immersive spaces support learners to collaborate and creatively express their ideas. Teachers can set up virtual break-out rooms that stimulate playful interaction and intellectual engagement. Spatialized audio allows students to have small group conversations, which increases the sense of embodied cognition, presence and connection that many feel are lacking in online interactions.

“There really is a sense of teamwork and of community that can happen in immersive experiences,” said MacDowell. “There becomes this collective where everyone is responsible for learning and responsible for each other. It’s really exciting to observe as an educator.” ■

RESOURCE CONNECTIONS



Teaching and learning during the pandemic

By Joan Elliott, Librarian/Manager

An August 2021 policy research briefing report by the Royal Society of Canada entitled *Children and Schools During COVID-19 and Beyond: Engagement and Connection* concluded that there are noteworthy threats to the well-being, educational success and healthy development of Canadian children and youth. The disruption caused by the pandemic has led to disengagement, attendance problems, increased disparities in learning achievement, decreased credit attainment and deterioration in mental health for many students.

To address some of these challenges, this year school divisions and some First Nations education authorities in Saskatchewan will be focused on three priorities that are outlined in Saskatchewan's Interim Provincial Education Plan. They include a focus on literacy in Grades 1 to 5, additional opportunities for high school students to obtain credits, and mental health supports for students and staff.

Here is a sampling of the many resources available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre that can assist educators working in these areas.

Principles of Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades K-5, edited by Seth A. Parsons and Margaret Vaughn, provides a wealth of evidence-based strategies on setting up an equitable print and text-rich classroom environment and on effective approaches to instruction, assessment, interventions, differentiation and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Better Reading Now: 50 Ready-to-Use Teaching Strategies to Engage Students, Deepen Comprehension, and Nurture a Love of Reading, by Larry Swartz, features practical reading, thinking, writing, talking and inquiry strategies for elementary and middle years teachers to use with a wide variety of mentor texts.

Restorative Literature: Creating a Community of Care in Schools, by Deborah L. Wolter, which is based on the principles of restorative justice, describes approaches that are focused on repairing harm, restoring relationships and fostering equity and inclusion for disengaged students through the language of stories and by compassionate listening.

In *Teaching Vulnerable Learners: Strategies for Students Who are Bored, Distracted, Discouraged, or Likely to Drop Out*, Suzy Pepper Rollins emphasizes the positive impact of educators whose ways of teaching and connections forged "have the amazing power to transform imperiled students to successful adults." Strengths-based strategies for working with English language learners, students with ADHD, struggling readers and gifted students are fully detailed.

Trauma-Sensitive Instruction: Creating a Safe and Predictable Classroom Environment, by John F. Eller and Tom Hierck, is designed to assist K-12 teachers and administrators in understanding the impact of trauma and stresses the importance of attitudes and mindsets in working with trauma. Trauma-sensitive classroom structures and procedures aimed at strengthening student resilience are discussed, as are several suggestions for building positive relationships with students and for enhancing parent and family engagement.

A recent book which is centred on enhancing positivity and hope in schools is Frederika Roberts' *For Flourishing's Sake: Using Positive Education to Support Character Development and Well-Being*. Based on the Positive Education movement which started in Australia, the author describes a whole-school approach that teaches students skills for academic success and also embeds strategies for well-being and happiness in the curriculum. Considerations for cultural context, leadership, intervention and engagement with the community are also outlined.

Another valuable perspective is provided by Douglas Reeves in his book *Fearless Schools: Building Trust and Resilience for Learning, Teaching and Leading*. In the preface he states that "the most important lesson of the pandemic is that relationships matter." He argues that safer, better, fearless schools for all students can be created through focusing on psychological safety and by building trust and physical, emotional and organizational resilience.

To borrow these or other resources, please call 1-800-668-7762 or email stf@stf.sk.ca. ■

All good news for teachers regarding their pension plan

The most recent updates published by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Retirement Plan make for pleasant reading for teachers in the province.

Earlier this year the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation filed a funding valuation as at July 1, 2020. A funding valuation provides a point-in-time snapshot of the long-term health of the STRP. As required by law, a valuation must be filed with federal and provincial pension authorities at least every three years.

The Plan is in good financial health and the funded status has improved since the last valuation as at July 1, 2019. The Plan is 99.6 percent funded as of July 1, 2020, compared to 98.7 percent the previous year.

This improvement in funding status was due, in part, to the strong investment gains the pension fund experienced over the 2019-20 fiscal year. The market value of net assets grew to \$6.3 billion, up \$0.4 billion from 2019. This significant growth in assets is expected to continue.

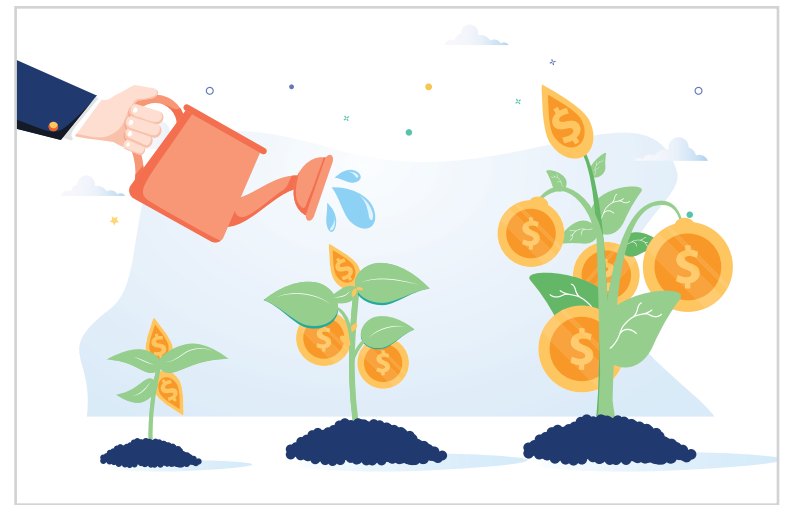
The Federation continues to closely monitor the financial health of the Plan in order to maintain its long-term sustainability.

In other pension-related news, this spring, after extensive lobbying efforts by the STF, the provincial government passed amendments to *The Pension Benefits Regulations, 1993* that updated the regulatory framework under which the STRP operates. These are welcome changes that provide more flexibility in managing the long-term sustainability of the Plan.

The amended regulations do two key things:

1. Remove the requirement for the Plan to have a solvency ratio of 90 percent before providing benefit improvements.

With the removal of this rule, the Federation is now



more easily able to provide members with benefit improvements whenever the finances of the Plan allow. The Pension and Benefits Board of Directors is currently undertaking an analysis to determine when this may be possible under the amended regulations.

2. Allow the Federation to have more time to pay back any future funding deficits as the amortization period was extended from 10 to 15 years.

Under pension law, pension plans like the STRP are required to file valuations at least every three years with the provincial regulator. If the Plan's liabilities outweigh the assets, the Plan is in deficit and must fund the deficit within a set time period called the amortization period.

An increase in the amortization period from 10 to 15 years gives the Plan more time to pay off future deficits. With a longer period to fund a deficit, the Plan is under less pressure to alter benefits or contribution levels to fund the deficit.

Meanwhile, a recent change to pension standards has resulted in a higher number of retirees receiving excess contribution payouts at the time of retirement.

Under pension law in Saskatchewan, your total contributions* (plus interest) cannot be more than 50 percent of the commuted

value of your pension at the time you receive your benefit. The commuted value of your pension is the lump-sum value of the pension benefit you've earned at the time you leave the Plan. So, when you retire, terminate plan membership or pass away, the Federation will compare the commuted value of your pension to your total contributions (plus interest) throughout your career. If your total contributions are more than half of the commuted value of your pension, you will receive those excess contributions as a lump-sum payment.

In December, the Canadian standards for calculating commuted values were changed and resulted in an overall reduction to commuted value amounts. In turn, this led to a drop in the threshold for what constitutes excess contributions, leading to an increased number of payouts to retiring members.

It's important to note that not every member will have excess contributions on the date they leave the Plan. Given the variables involved with this calculation, excess contributions can only be determined at your actual retirement date.

* Contributions and interest are adjusted for any teacher contributions and interest unmatched by government before the excess test is performed. ■

Things I wish I would have known as a new teacher

By Troy Milnthorp
Senior Managing Director,
Corporate Fund Services

As a teacher in Saskatchewan, you have access to a comprehensive suite of benefits to help you through the various stages of your life. But learning the ins and outs of your benefits can be quite overwhelming. Here are five key tips based on what retiring teachers wish they would have known at the start of their careers.

1. Save a little extra on the side.

You have a good pension plan, but everyone wishes they had a little more flexibility in retirement. Saving \$100 a month may seem like a lot of money right now, but over a 30-year career it adds up to a lot. Don't believe us? Google "compound interest." One option to save a little extra is to use voluntary contributions (see below).

2. STF Optional Life Insurance (Portaplan) is a cost-effective alternative to mortgage insurance.

For example, a 30-year-old couple would pay less than

50 percent of the cost of mortgage insurance from a bank. Plus, the amount of coverage you have stays the same as your mortgage goes down over time.

3. Buy back your maternity/parental leave as soon as you can.

You do not contribute or earn service in the pension plan while on leave. This affects how much you receive in retirement and also when you can retire; however, you can buy back that service when you return to work. The cost to buy the service may seem prohibitive, but it actually gets more expensive the older you get. For example, \$6,500 for one year of service at age 30 would be closer to \$25,000 at age 55. You can use RRSPs or voluntary contributions to buy back service. Saving before you go can help.

4. Voluntary contributions are an easy way to save.

You have the option to make additional contributions to the pension plan to supplement your retirement. These contributions grow tax free

at the same rate of return as the pension plan, and you pay less fees than you would with RRSPs. Voluntary contributions are not matched by the government, but you can use them (and the interest earned) to buy back service if needed.

5. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Starting a new job is a big transition and can be stressful. If you need some help, the STF offers a Member and Family Assistance Plan that is completely confidential and available 24/7/365. You can access support from a counsellor in your area. MFAP can even find someone to help you with budgeting or hiring movers, so do not hesitate to call.

For more information about the benefits you receive from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, visit our website at www.stf.sk.ca. Questions or concerns about any of your benefit plans can be directed to the Federation by calling 306-373-1660 or toll-free at 1-800-667-7762. ■



UPCOMING EVENTS

September 23, September 30, October 7, October 14, October 21, October 28 – Online

Tell Me More About Student Wellness Series

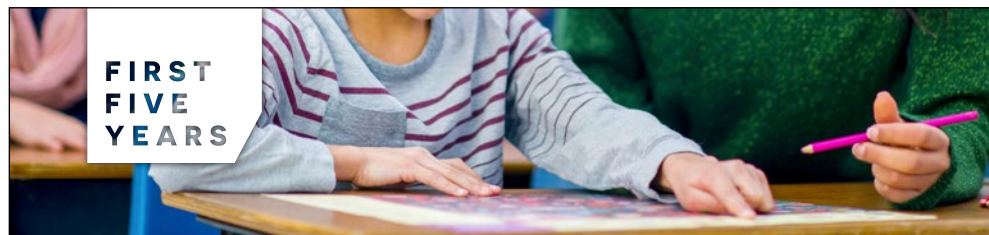
Learn strategies to support and promote the mental health of students within the framework of a caring, respectful and safe learning environment.

October 7, October 14, October 21, October 28 – Online

Foundations of Teaching Series: Responsive and Equitable Instruction and Assessment to Support All Learners Online

This series will address how to support accessible and responsive learning for all students considering the role of various factors including the student voice and choice, building relationships and the development of a safe learning community.

For more information about these sessions or to register, visit www.stf.sk.ca.



WELCOME TO THE FEDERATION

Beginning your teaching career is an exciting milestone!

Did you know there is information on the Federation website for teachers just like you?

Visit Teachers in Their First Five Years at www.stf.sk.ca to learn about member support, what's happening with collective bargaining, your pension and benefits, and more.

Your MySTF login credentials have been mailed and provides you with access to exclusive, members-only information on the STF website.



LEARNING OPPORTUNITY: STF LIBRARY AND DIGITAL RESOURCES WEBINAR

Join Lynda Lee (STF, Emma Stewart Resources Centre), Danielle Raymond (STF, Pathways to Learning) and Regan Gunningham (Provincial Library and Literacy Office) for an informative webinar on library services and resources available to Saskatchewan teachers. This webinar is designed for new teachers but everyone is welcome to attend.

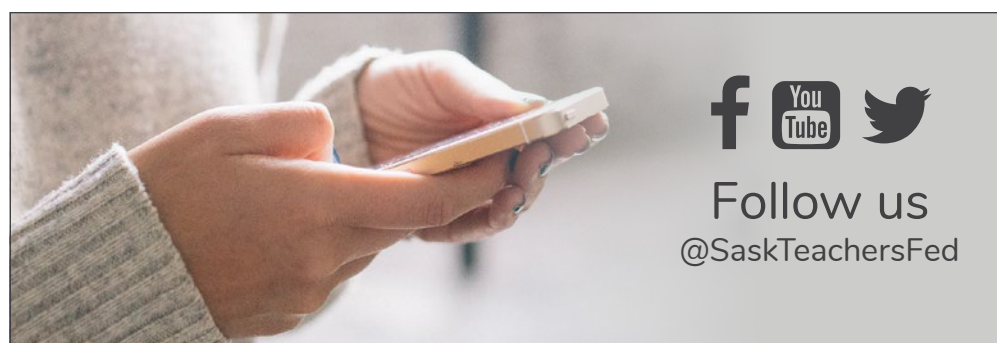
Lynda and Danielle will share how the Emma Stewart Resources Centre is able to meet your classroom, research and professional development needs. Regan will provide an overview of digital resources in the Saskatchewan Electronic Resources Partnership (SERP) and Ministry of Education collections available to both teachers and students.

To attend the webinar please complete a brief registration form using the link below. If you are unable to attend but you would like to view a recording of the webinar, please register for the event.

Date: September 29, 2021

Time: 3:45 – 4:30 p.m.

Register for this event: <https://mlb.libwizard.com/ff/STF>



24th Annual see your future
EDUCATION & CAREER FAIR

<p>SASKATOON NOVEMBER 1st, 2021 TCU Place 9:45am – 3:00pm</p>	<p>REGINA NOVEMBER 2nd, 2021 Evraz Place 9:45am – 3:00pm</p>
--	---

Visit seeyourfuture.ca to register your school today!

For more information, visit our website or email traceykowalchuk@seeyourfuture.ca

JOIN A PROFESSIONAL GROWTH NETWORK – JOIN A COMMUNITY

- Contribute to your professional growth and lifelong learning.
- Connect with teachers across Saskatchewan.
- Choose an area of interest to you.

Interested in joining a professional growth network?

Choose your PGN by September 30. Visit www.stf.sk.ca or email stf@stf.sk.ca to learn more.



The assistance of teachers is requested to select this year's recipient for the Arbos for Contributions to Education and the Teaching Profession.

The Arbos award is the highest honour that the Saskatchewan teaching profession can bestow. Each Arbos recipient receives an honorary life membership in the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and is presented with a figure of the Arbos at the banquet of the Annual Meeting of Council. Through the Arbos awards, the STF draws the attention of its members and the public to individuals who have distinguished themselves through the scope, impact and significance of their educational contributions.

The Arbos for Contributions to Education and the Teaching Profession honours teachers who have made outstanding contributions to education and the teaching profession that are broad and significant in their scope and impact.

Nomination information is posted on the Federation's website at www.stf.sk.ca/professional-resources/awards-grants-scholarships.

Please consider nominating a teacher from your area who has made an outstanding contribution to education and the teaching profession.

The deadline for nominations is **November 15**.



Come Join the Saskatchewan Science Teachers' Society



Guiding Principles

1. Making science accessible by helping educators understand SK science curricula.
2. Providing opportunities for SK educators to connect, network and collaborate with one another focusing on best practices in STEM.
3. Supporting educators in recognizing the interconnectedness of Indigenous and western science.
4. Supporting educators in connecting curricula to real Saskatchewan examples.

Benefits with your membership:

- access to virtual PD throughout the year focussing on best practices in STEM
- collaboration events with educators and speakers
- discount on conferences
- access to grants
- access to our newsletter with great hands-on activities



More info at www.ssts.ca

PENSION

SASKATCHEWAN
TEACHERS'
FEDERATION

EXPLORE YOUR NEW STF PENSION E-GUIDE

AN INTERACTIVE AND EASY WAY FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND AND LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR PENSION.

Visit www.stf.sk.ca/your-stf-pension-e-guide.



PLANNING FOR RETIREMENT SEMINARS

THINKING ABOUT RETIREMENT?

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation offers Planning for Retirement seminars for members who are thinking of retiring in the next three years. These online seminars provide key information about the retirement process and the benefits available through the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan.

Members must register for a seminar using the online Events Calendar at www.stf.sk.ca.

2021 SEMINAR DATES:

Tuesday, October 19
Monday, October 25
Thursday, November 4
Tuesday, November 9 – "Ask the Experts" Q&A Session

Seminars run from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Note: Personal pension estimates are not provided at the seminars. You can generate an estimate by using the online Pension Estimator by signing into your MySTF account.

Additional information on the pension plan is available on the STF website at www.stf.sk.ca/pension-benefits/life-events/planning-retirement.



SASKATCHEWAN
TEACHERS'
FEDERATION

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Check out the STF Events Calendar for Professional Growth Opportunities.

