



CSBA *InfoPicks*

September 21, 2009

CSBA Board meeting in Toronto

The elected Board of CSBA and the Executive Directors of member associations (who sit as *ex-officio* members) will meet for two days of key organizational and strategic planning meetings in Toronto later this month. Look for a full report on those deliberations from President Nada Borden in October.

Message from CSBA President Nada Borden

Greetings!

“CSBA InfoPicks” was created to update, in a summary fashion, the provincial member associations and their Board of Director Members on events happening across our country. I am pleased to present a brief President’s message in the current edition.

Congress 2009, hosted by NSSBA in Halifax, July 9 – 11, provided delegates with superb professional development opportunities and a wonderful introduction to summer. We all know,

however, the relaxed summer days come to an end for trustees with the re-opening of school. All provinces and districts are facing the possibility of an H1N1 flu pandemic and are tasked with



CSBA President Nada Borden

implementing plans and strategies to avert an outbreak in our schools. Many school districts are also feeling the brunt of

economic pressures and budget cuts as a result of the world recession we have been experiencing. Your school board trustees (commissioners in Quebec, of course) face many challenges and must make difficult decisions. CSBA stands ready to support your provincial body in this important work despite the seriousness of these individual challenges.

CSBA exists to foster and support the development of school board governance for public education in our country. You will recall from previous reports that our National Board of Directors is reflecting on

the mandate of CSBA in order to ensure that the organization is best aligned to carry out its objectives. The Board will be holding its fall session on September 28 & 29 in Toronto. The impetus of this planning session is to review our current goals and the effectiveness of

the Board and our organization with the intent of strengthening our national organization and providing a clear focus and direction as we move forward. During my term as President, I hope to be in contact with you personally when I visit your region. Together,

your provincial association and CSBA can strengthen and secure the excellence of our public education system throughout Canada. To accomplish this, however, we must ensure that we share a mutual understanding of our priorities and challenges.

Thank you, NSSBA for a great CSBA Annual conference!



A few facts and testimonials from an excellent CSBA Congress 2009 in Halifax last July: Feedback on the over-all program: 85 per cent “very good or excellent”, 92 per cent with the same rating for over-all hospitality. “Thank you for hosting such an excellent conference,” noted one delegate. “It was well organized with excellent presentations. I have been a trustee for over 20 years and have attended several CSBA conferences. In my opinion, this one has been the best.”

“This was my first visit to a CSBA conference,” noted another. It was definitely worth the time I spent here. All of the workshops I attended had relevance to me, both as a parent and a trustee.”

(left) CSBA congress delegates enjoy Halifax Harbour cruise

BCSTA: Full-day K funding, mid-year cuts top good news/bad news

BCSTA continues its forceful advocacy campaign on funding at both the local and provincial levels in the face of lost funding grants and other financial challenges to BC's boards of education and the students they serve.

To illustrate the long-term instability resulting from these sudden, mid-year cuts, BCSTA President Connie Denesiuk advises all boards to continue sharing direct examples of these significant impacts. She cites Victoria trustees, who have taken their local MLAs on a tour of

schools to graphically demonstrate the effects. Connie also notes that “the Vancouver Board of Education has waged a very strong campaign that has resulted in the Ministry granting it permission to use funds held in reserve from an earlier property sale.

“From boilers, to roofing, to moldy classrooms, to support staff layoffs – the government and the public is being made very aware of the many and significant challenges that your districts are facing”. On the positive side, British Columbia will

be gradually implementing funding for full-day Kindergarten.

NLSBA: Canada’s “youngest and coolest province” prepares for CSBA Congress 2010



Come to the place affectionately known as “The Rock”. Friendly faces await you. Come discover the oldest City in North America, the City of Legends; Climb Signal Hill, the site of Marconi’s first wireless message; Visit the Cape Spear Lighthouse, the most easterly point in North America; View whales and icebergs from spectacular vantage points. NLSBA and CSBA are far-advanced in planning next summer’s annual CSBA Congress, July 7-9, 2010 in St. John’s. Among the featured speakers already lined up: General R.J. Hillier, (Ret’d), Chancellor of

Memorial University; Dr. TA Loeffler, Memorial University professor and mountaineer, named one of Canada’s top teachers. She is best known in Newfoundland for her adventures and attempts to climb the highest peaks of each continent. Keep watching for updated news, at www.schoolboardsnl.ca.

NSSBA: School administrators receive H1N1 toolkit

Like all jurisdictions, school districts in Nova Scotia are preparing for the possibility of an impending H1N1 flu pandemic. NSSBA is helping circulate a comprehensive tool kit for school administrators, addressing guidelines for managing absences, health and teaching tips, communications protocols and school closure contingency plans. The kit also answers tough questions on such issues as whether protective masks should be worn (over-all

response from the Public Health Agency of Canada: No).



On a happier subject, NSSBA continues to bask in the glow of what trustees from across the country acknowledge was a superior CSBA Congress last July (*see above*). Congratulations to the entire NSSBA team of staff, Board members and volunteers.

QESBA: Staying in school remains Job

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QESBA President Debbie Horrocks welcomed the announcement earlier this month by Quebec Education Minister Michelle Courchesne of a 13-point action plan to improve Quebec's worrisome record on high school graduation rates. While the province's nine English school boards post graduation rates in the 80-per-cent range, the Quebec average is almost 10 points lower.

"QESBA had told Minister Courchesne that it would be looking, basically, for three key pillars in today's announcement," noted Horrocks in a statement, "first, government support for locally tailored and flexible school success

strategies developed by our individual school boards; second, a real focus on individual intervention for at-risk students; and third, additional resources targeted to help our teachers and professionals better address the drop-out problem. On each of those fronts, QESBA reacts positively to today's announced plan."

Horrocks saluted the work of L. Jacques Ménard, CEO of BMO Nesbitt Burns, who chaired the task force that largely set the table for this major government initiative. Ménard later attended a QESBA Board meeting to share ideas on staying in school.

ASBA: "Honey, I shrunk the blog!"

ASBA, in addition to its vast range of on-going activities, is helping its member boards better understand and implement new communications technology. Its regular *Communications Now* publication, September edition, features a how-to primer on Twitter – what is it, how does it work and...should schools tweet. ASBA's advice: "Don't start tweeting about your schools tomorrow because it seems like the 'in' thing to do right now. Be strategic. Use Twitter if it would be an effective way for you to reach your target audience." How about 'retweeting'? We'll leave that for the next edition!

OPSBA: Continued leadership on copyright

OPSBA continues to provide leadership and analysis on the complex question of copyright tariffs and responsibilities. The association has served as the lead province on this subject for all of CSBA, as well as its own member boards. OPSBA has analysed the recent ruling of the Copyright Board regarding invoices for Access Copyright. These invoices outline the amount due in retroactive payments by each board. The immediate and pressing concern, for Ontario boards but likely other jurisdictions as well is identifying funding to pay for this retroactive fee. OPSBA is seeking assurances that its provincial Education Ministry will cover these costs.

Your CSBA Board of Directors:

(left-right)Debbie Horrocks (QC) Heather Wellwood(AB) David Birnbaum (QC) Gail Anderson (ON) Stephen Hansen (BC) Connie Denesiuk (BC)Brian Shortall (NL) Ruth Ann Furgula (MAN)Don Brown (NL) Nada Borden (NL) Colleen Schenk (ON) Ron Marks (NS) Sandi Urban-Hall (SK) Ken Meech (NS) Ernie Cychmistruk (SK) David Anderson (AB). Missing: Carolyn Duhamel (MB).



SSBA: A province-wide discussion on student achievement

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association is putting its resources and networks behind a provincial Panel on Student Achievement established by the Minister of Education. The panel will report its recommendations at the end of 2009. It has set parameters for a dialogue that will ensure the input goes beyond just marks and evaluation. As SSBA notes,

“Many types of student achievement are not measurable and are best described through professional or even public commentary. For example, many schools and community organizations recognize the achievements of students for community service, dedication, diligence, spirit or exemplary character.”

CMEC publishes international indicators

The Council of Ministers of Education – Canada has recently published “Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective”. It examines such measures as levels of investment in education, graduation rates, economic benefits of education and expenditures. For a look at the full study, here is the link:

<http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/212/education-indicators-canada-international-perspective-2009.pdf>