



PD E-News

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“Education is what’s left after you have forgotten what you needed for the test.”

—Albert Einstein

“Finding Your Niche—Developing the Role of the School-Based PD Committee”: What You Told Us

School-based professional development is the norm in a growing number of school jurisdictions, particularly in those that have embraced the notion of professional learning communities (PLCs). School-based professional development means individual school staffs plan and implement a program for their school staff. This may be in addition to or instead of participating in a systemwide professional development activity.

Delegates who attended the session titled, “Finding Your Niche—Developing the Role of the School-Based PD Committee” at the Fall Professional Development Area Conference (PDAC) generated many ideas and strategies for Local PD chairs to add to their repertoire of ways to assist school-based PD committees. Six general categories provided stimulus for suggestions and comments:



Serious moments for Barb Gregory and Jacquie Skytt.

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1. Help Teachers to Remember the Principles of Effective PD

Provide experiences and research information to ensure that PD planning is based on the most effective practices.

2. Needs Assessments

Provide information and samples of ways to determine teachers' professional needs.

3. Data Collection

Provide ways to help school committees answer these questions—what is current research and what is learned?

4. Information and Resources

Consider better ways to communicate and share relevant information to develop effective school PD plans.

5. Building Leadership Capacity

Generate ideas to help teachers provide leadership within their schools.

6. Funding/Budgeting

Provide information about practical aspects, such as funding, distribution of funds and ways to work toward better PD clauses in collective agreements.

7. Action Planning and Implementation

Educate school-based PD committees about the process and value of comprehensive PD planning.

8. Assessment/Evaluation

Ascertain whether or not the PD activity or event made an impact on teachers' professional practice and student learning.

[Read more comments from delegates who provided examples for meeting the above conditions.](#)

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in Grasslands

Janet Rommens and Cam Brown, school administrators at Brooks Junior High School in Grasslands Regional Division have worked with their staff to address concerns that typically affect middle school students. In the first year, the staff developed goals and later “smart goals” to build in character education, common assessment tools and a pyramid

of interventions for students who were not learning. They implemented practical strategies to restructure the way Grade 7 classes came in contact with the two higher grades, and they instituted homeroom teachers to instruct Grade 7 classes in the core subjects. Discipline problems decreased (school suspensions have halved), students felt less intimidated and parents were pleased. The success of this PLC initiative is due to strong and determined leadership and the willingness of staff to work together to improve the learning environment in the school.

—Adapted from *Medicine Hat News*, December 13, 2005

News from Alberta Education



Welcome Charmaine Brooks

The Alberta Teachers' Association welcomes Charmaine Brooks to the position of Coordinator, Curriculum and Resource Implementation, School Improvement Branch, Alberta Education. Charmaine replaces

Gina Vivone-Vernon, long-time friend and supporter of collaborative professional development in the province. Charmaine holds a MEd degree from the University of Lethbridge and will work closely with regional consortia directors and district curriculum coordinators in all six zones in the province to support the development of implementation plans and activities. Charmaine has a passion for professional development and has served as a member of the Alberta Education Interdivisional Professional Development Committee.

In 2004, Charmaine joined Alberta Education in the Stakeholder Technology Branch as a Learning and Technology Consultant. In this role, her work focused on supporting K–12 stakeholders with the integration of ICT across the curricula.

Charmaine has taught for 10 years at the high school level, primarily teaching Career and Technology Studies. Between 1999 and 2002, she began exploring technology integration in various educational settings (online, blended and traditional classrooms) with the Calgary Board of Education and Medicine Hat College. Charmaine has also served as the Curriculum Consultant–Technology for the



Medicine Hat School District and worked closely with teachers in the classroom to develop pedagogical practices that focused on inquiry and collaboration. Throughout her many roles and experiences, she has had a focus on effective curriculum implementation and professional development.

Connection: Information for Teachers

Alberta Education has just published another edition of *Connection: Information for Teachers* at <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/connection>. The January edition features subject-area curriculum and resource updates; information on the diploma examinations program, pilot forms of Knowledge and Employability achievement tests, and national and international studies of achievement; details regarding career development resources and professional development opportunities and more. Be sure to check out the Learning Resources Centre Update for information on the Early Order Discount and the Other News section for information on the Artists and Education Grant Program.



Trek Across Alberta Teacher's Guide

The *Trek Across Alberta Teacher's Guide* supports Alberta's

Centennial Project. The guide encourages Grade 6 teachers and students to explore the province through 30 sites that reflect a variety of flora, fauna, cultures and environments. Each day, using pedometers to count their steps, students will advance through a virtual tour of Alberta. Each site has a link to a relevant Alberta Community Development webpage that challenges students with grade-specific activities linked to various curricular outcomes. This resource is now available on the Alberta Education website.

The *Trek Across Alberta Teacher's Guide* is now available online and can be accessed by using the link below:

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/physed/default.asp

Pedometers Available at the Learning Resources Centre

To promote healthy, active lifestyles and support daily physical activity, schools can purchase pedometers from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC) at <http://www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca>

Upcoming Conferences

Leadership in Learning Conference

March 6–7, 2006
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton Alberta

Plan to attend and/or present at the Association-sponsored Leadership in Learning Conference. The conference theme, “Embracing the Future: Leadership for School Renewal” will feature a wide range of exciting programs that promote learning in schools and classrooms—programs initiated by teacher leaders from across the province.

Three speakers are scheduled to present: Joseph Murphy, professor of education and associate dean at Peabody College of Education at Vanderbilt University; Stephen Kaagan, professor of education, Michigan State University; and David Bouchard, presenter, educator and author.

Participants will explore the many dimensions of teacher leadership in school renewal and reflect on the role of the teacher/administrator in providing leadership across the curriculum. Innovative teacher-led classroom, school and district literacy projects and initiatives will be presented by Alberta educators.

Registration and conference information is posted on the Association's website at www.teachers.ab.ca under News. The registration fee is \$100 for each ATA member and \$450 for associate members or nonmembers.



The ATA and The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities Present:

Becoming the Change We Want to See

The conference keynote and sessions will reflect the four pillars of learning as identified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): *Learning to be, Learning to know, Learning to do and Learning to live together.*

June 1–2, 2006, Barnett House, Edmonton

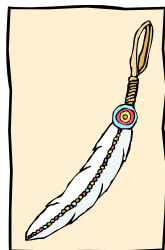
Uniting youth leaders, educators and community members, this conference will outline resources, strategies and programs relating to

- Safe and Caring Programming,
- Global Education and International Development,
- Current Research,
- Diversity Issues,
- Bullying and Violence Prevention,
- The Role of NGOs in Education, and
- Healthy Interactions: Conflict Resolution.

For more information or to download a registration form, please visit www.sacsc.ca/Conference_05.htm. Contact: Tracy Lyons at (780) 447-9484 or Jacqueline Skytt at (780) 447-9469.

Learning Together for Success Conference

Learning Together for Success is an annual conference devoted to First Nations, Métis and Inuit education in Alberta. This year's conference, "Aboriginal Literacy: Sharing Our Stories", will be held March 22–24, 2006, in Grande Prairie, Alberta. The conference features concurrent sessions on topics in Aboriginal literacy including strategies from author David Bouchard's books *The Gift of Reading* and *For the Love of Reading*. Keynote presentations are by award-winning Canadian author, speaker and educator David Bouchard and well-known stage, television and film actor Lorne Cardinal from the Sucker Creek First Nation in Alberta and current star of *Corner Gas*.



To view the 2006 conference brochure or to register online, go to the Northwest Regional Learning Consortium website under March programs <http://www.nrlc.net/updates.php#March>. Book accommodations early because of limited availability.

For more information, contact Trish Randolph-Beaver, Education Manager, Aboriginal Services Branch at (780) 415-9300. To be connected toll free within Alberta, dial 310-0000 first.

Eye on Region E—Common Needs Assessment



One special initiative being pursued in Region E is the development of a common PD needs assessment. March 11, 2006, has been set (M F Podlosky) as a date to share program needs among PD leaders—PD chairs, convention leaders, specialist councils and provincial consortia. At this meeting, participants will draft a needs assessment document to facilitate more consistent collection and sharing of data.

PD Survey on Its Way

Just in time for Valentine's Day, everyone's favourite spring activity will arrive on your doorstep. The annual ATA PD Survey will continue to track funding and resources committed to professional development in Alberta schools.



Thanks to the hard work of the 54 PD committee chairs across Alberta, the Association has developed one of the most comprehensive databases of professional development in North America.

Your diligence in completing the annual survey is crucial in helping both locals and the provincial Association to advocate for effective professional development opportunities for Alberta teachers.

This year's survey will arrive by the second week of February with the early-bird deadline being **April 28**. Deadline for completion is **May 19**.



Third Cycle of AISI?

Alberta school jurisdictions continue to be optimistic in awaiting the formal announcement from the Minister of Education with respect to a third cycle of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (2006–08).

AISI has been a success story across the province, providing much needed resources targeted to local priorities in school jurisdictions.

With the upcoming AISI conference, The Journey Continues, February 13–14, 2006, there is hope for an early announcement that AISI will be continued. An early announcement would go a long way in enabling school jurisdictions to develop comprehensive AISI proposals through a collaborative process involving school–community stakeholders. In anticipation of the continuation of AISI, many school authorities are proceeding with developing AISI proposals. It is critically important that professional development leaders in ATA locals contribute to the development of these proposals.

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