

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Volume 8

A publication for Alberta's school administrators

Number 9



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Need help searching in our databases or accessing our web resources? Contact us at library@ata.ab.ca or give us a call at 780-447-9400 in Edmonton or 1-800-232-7208 from anywhere in Alberta. Our friendly library staff are here to help you.

A clay pot
sitting in
the sun will
always be
a clay pot.
It has to go
through the
white heat of
the furnace
to become
porcelain.

—Mildred White
Struven



Work–Life Balance

A ground-breaking study of Alberta teachers' work–life balance, or lack thereof, was the subject of a talk given by researcher Linda Duxbury to 150 teachers in Edmonton, on April 19.

The evening before, Duxbury had spoken to teachers in Calgary about the more than 3,000 teachers who had participated in an online survey that put real numbers behind what has been suspected for some time—teachers do not have work–life balance. While the full report will not be completed until this fall, Duxbury was astounded by what the preliminary data is showing.

Most teachers are clocking an additional 13.5 hours per week doing school-related work at home. That's on top of the already 41.8 hours they put in each week at school. That means 13.5 hours that teachers do not spend with their families and friends or by themselves, recharging their batteries. Thirteen-plus hours per week is the equivalent of two extra workdays per week. No other occupation in Canada expects its employees to donate an extra two days per week.

About 60 per cent of teachers who answered the survey reported dissatisfaction with their workload; 55 per cent were unhappy with the number of hours they work; 33 per cent reported dissatisfaction with their

developmental opportunities; and 26 per cent were unhappy with their ability to meet career goals and with their work schedule.

Study after study has shown that people who are dissatisfied in their perceived ability to control their own work life cost the employer in direct and indirect health costs. Teachers reported that due to work–life balance issues, they are more likely to reduce their work productivity, increase their use of benefits, reduce their work hours (when possible), be absent from work more often and turn down promotions.

Work–life balance challenges are especially difficult for teachers who continue to put others first. For example, more than 50 per cent of all teachers reported they felt as if they had no energy and that they had reduced their time spent in recreational or social activities. More than 45 per cent

reported that they don't get enough sleep and have no personal life. Teachers also reported that they are delaying having children or having fewer children because of their work lives.

Duxbury was adamant that the overuse of technology, including the fact that people read and respond to their e-mails while on vacation, will become a defining issue for employers and employees in the future. Just because we can stay connected does not mean we should. The stress caused by the expectation of being on call 24/7 will eventually lead to health problems that will overwhelm the health system. Already pharmacies are reporting an alarming increase in the number of prescriptions for antidepressants.

Duxbury concluded by saying that school boards must address issues associated with work–life balance and workloads if they wish to thrive in the

new millennium. It is not business as usual. Boards need to increase teachers' control of their own work, they need to change the culture and, most important, they need to address concerns associated with workload and use of e-mail.

Duxbury ended the evening with a quote from Woody Allen. "More than any time in history, mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness, the other to extinction. Let us pray that we have the wisdom to choose correctly."



Engaging Students in Social Justice Campaigns

Cindy Blackstock

Engaging students in social justice campaigns gives them an opportunity to enhance their understanding of community, generosity and kindness, and practise their problem-solving skills.

At age 15, Shannen Koostachin inspired the largest child-led social justice campaign in Canadian history. Read Shannen's story below, and discover how thousands of children and adults motivated by Shannen's dream are making a significant impact on the lives of First Nations children.

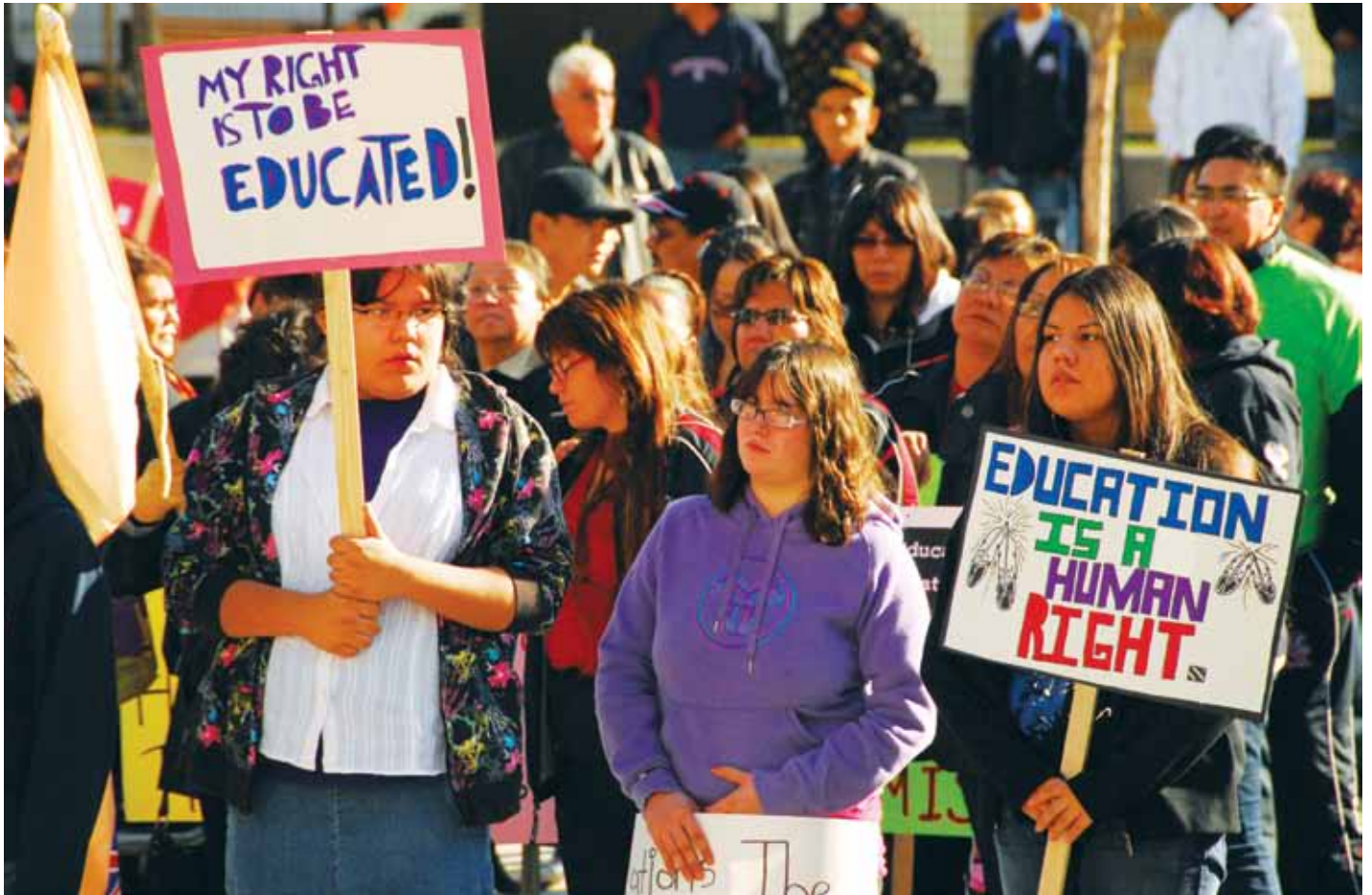
Shannen's Dream

First Nations children deserve the same chance as all children to grow up safely at home, get a good education, be healthy and be proud of their cultures. This was clear to Shannen Koostachin.

Shannen started kindergarten in the year 2000, at the Attawapiskat First

Nation. She was an excited little girl, like any kindergarten child, and wanted to go to school. But the only school in her community was closed because it sat on top of 30,000 gallons of diesel fuel. Over the next eight years, three ministers of Indian Affairs in two political parties promised Shannen and her friends a school and didn't deliver. Instead, Shannen and her friends went to portable trailers set beside the toxic waste dump and separated from it by only a chain-link fence. The trailers deteriorated so much that often there wasn't heat in the portables, and mice would eat the students' sandwiches.

In Grade 8, Shannen organized First Nations and non-Aboriginal children to send letters to ministers, members of



parliament and the prime minister, to tell the Government of Canada to end the inequity for First Nations education. Shannen did everything she could to fight for better education for First Nations children, including travelling to Ottawa and meeting with the minister of Indian Affairs to ask for a new school. The minister at that time told her that the government could not afford a new school. Shannen went on to speak to anyone who would listen. She was one of 45 children in the world to be nominated for an International Children's Peace Prize.

Sadly, not too long after her 15th birthday, living hundreds of miles away from her family so she could get the quality of education that other Canadian children receive, Shannen died in a car accident. Shannen would have graduated this year.

Shortly after Shannen died so tragically, her friends created a Facebook page called Shannen's Dream (shannensdream.ca). That page not only memorialized Shannen in the minds of her friends and family, but created a means to continue her legacy. Shannen's dream for safe schools has helped students become engaged in social justice campaigns in Ottawa and across the country.

Jordan's Principle

Jordan River Anderson, of Norway House Cree Nation, was ready to go home from hospital when he was two years old, but he went on to spend more than two years in hospital unnecessarily because the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada could not agree on who should pay for his at-home care. Tragically, Jordan passed away at the age of five, never having spent a day in a family

home, while governments continued to argue.

Jordan's Principle is a child-first approach to providing government services to First Nations children. Instead of waiting for services while governments argue, this principle requires that services be immediately accessible, initially paid for by the government of first contact. The government that pays for the services can later appeal for reimbursement from other levels of government as required. A motion in support of Jordan's Principle, applicable to all governmental services, was unanimously passed in the House of Commons in 2007. Unfortunately, the federal government has since tried to narrow the scope of Jordan's Principle. Maurina Beadle and her son Jeremy, of Pictou Landing First Nation, are taking the Government of Canada to court for failing to implement Jordan's Principle. To read more, go to jordansprinciple.ca.

I Am a Witness: Have-a-Heart Day

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations filed a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission in 2007. The complaint alleged that the Government of Canada is discriminating against First Nations by underfunding child welfare services on reserves. The Auditor General of Canada, in 2008 and again in 2011, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer, in 2009, found that these same inequalities echo across child welfare.

On February 14, 2012, hundreds of students of all ages gathered at the Federal Court to witness part of the

case referenced above. The students were not asked to take sides, but simply watch the case. You might wonder how much the younger children really understood while inside the courtroom. In their innocence, children understand the case quite well. They asked questions such as, "Why aren't the lawyers talking about the children?" and "Why isn't the government answering all of the judge's questions?" Children understand that basic human rights must be accessible to everyone, including First Nations children. You can read more about the case, and see photos and videos of the students from the I Am a Witness campaign at fnwitness.ca.

As part of the same campaign, students across Canada were celebrating Have-a-Heart Day. Thousands of students and supporters from across the country sent Valentine's Day cards to the prime minister and their members of parliament, telling them to have a heart for First Nations children by providing equitable funding for child welfare services and education. Hundreds of students walked to Parliament Hill to deliver their letters, while those who could not attend in person were able to participate by sending Valentines without incurring any costs or needing to fundraise. The atmosphere at Parliament Hill was powerful. There was no cloud of guilt overshadowing the demonstration. People were smiling. They were proud to be there, promoting their values and beliefs. The students were dedicated to the cause, sharing their thoughts and the wisdom of their innocence. To the children, the concept was not complicated, as many adults tend to describe the inequity that First Nations children experience.

The message was quite simple—First Nations children deserve the chance to grow up safely in their homes, be healthy, get a good education and be proud of their cultures.

Only a few days after Have-a-Heart Day, a motion to implement Shannen's dream was passed in the House of Commons. It was clear that the students were heard that day on Parliament Hill.

Get Involved Now: Our Dreams Matter Too Walk, June 11, 2012

A message of equity is echoed in the Our Dreams Matter Too walk (www.fncaringsociety.com/our-dreams-matter-too) for culturally based equity for First Nations children. On June 11, 2012, four years after the prime minister apologized for the Government of Canada's involvement in the residential school system, children and

supporters from across the country will gather in their communities to write and deliver letters (no postage required) to their members of parliament and the prime minister. They will ask for culturally based equity for First Nations children. The inequitable funding of First Nations child welfare services has led to more children being taken into child welfare care than during the height of the residential school period. Children understand that the prime minister's apology means little while there is still so much work to be done to keep First Nations children safely in their homes with their families.

Social Justice in Action

Shannen's dream has inspired children across Canada. Students at Pierre Elliott Trudeau School in Ottawa took it upon themselves to spread the word about the social movement (watch their video,

Shannen's Dream is Our Dream, Too, at shannensdream.ca). These students have taken the initiative to present to other students, teachers and principals in Ottawa to encourage them to get involved. The goal of these campaigns is to promote critical thinking and active citizenship—to recognize when something unjust is happening in society and show children that their voice matters. Student citizenship and social action in support of the Shannen's Dream, I Am a Witness, and Jordan's Principle campaigns have all been successfully integrated into the current curriculum requirements in Ontario.

For more information on cost-free ways that teachers and students can get take action, visit www.fncaringsociety.com.

Cindy Blackstock is executive director of First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada and an associate professor in the Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta.



Q & A
GORDON THOMAS
Executive Secretary

Q: What could happen if teachers do not follow the achievement/diploma examination guidelines and directives?

A: Teachers are required to administer the achievement/diploma tests in accordance with the directives issued by the director of the Student Evaluation Branch. The directives are outlined in the *General Information Bulletin* and set out test security requirements, administration procedures and reporting practices.

Should there be a breach in the administration of the tests, the regulatory violation may be reported and the Student Evaluation Branch has advised the Association that a reported violation will be investigated. It is also likely that the employer will conduct its own investigation and may take disciplinary action against the teacher or administrator in breach of the regulation. Subsequently, a request for an ATA investigation of unprofessional conduct may ensue. In a recent case, the Professional Conduct Committee found a teacher guilty of breaching the achievement test security regulations and, as a result, the teacher was given a letter of severe reprimand and a fine of \$1,000.

To find archived issues of *Leadership Update*, go to www.teachers.ab.ca and click on Other Publications (under Publications), then go to School Administrators.

Feedback is welcome. Please contact Konni deGoeij, associate coordinator, administrator assistance, Member Services, at konni.degoeij@ata.ab.ca.



2012 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

presents

Getting to “Got It”: Helping Students Learn How to Learn

with

Dr Betty Garner

Dr Betty Garner challenges educators to take a fresh look at learning as a creative act of the learner. She is known for her ability to help students learn how to learn. Students experiencing difficulty with reading, math, or remembering or following directions, or who are lacking in motivation, attention and participation, need to be equipped with the basic cognitive structures to process information for meaning. They need to develop their “metability,” the dynamic process of learning, creating and changing, to learn how to learn for life.

**Banff Park Lodge, Banff, Alberta
July 9–13, 2012**

- A program for those who hold or aspire to leadership positions in schools

Who should attend?

- Principals and assistant/vice-principals
- School-based leaders in all fields
- Department heads
- Central office personnel
- Consultants
- Counsellors
- Teachers aspiring to educational leadership





2012 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Program overview

Sessions will focus on practical suggestions for using Dr Garner's approach in planning and implementing daily lessons to stimulate cognitive engagement and on how administrators can improve the instructional practices of their teachers with the goal of enhancing student achievement. Specific topics will include the following:

- Offering early intervention and coaching for students who don't "get it," even after modifications and alternative methods have been used
- Preventing learning problems by equipping students with cognitive tools for gathering, processing and using information presented in class
- Helping students become more aware of their own cognitive processing when they encounter unfamiliar information or have to deal with change
- Using effective questioning to stimulate self-reflection, lesson analysis and collaboration between teachers and students
- How learning and behaviour are affected by the relationship between cognitive processing and emotional influences

What is the format?

The Academy is an intensive, five-day, in-residence program that requires the direct and sustained involvement of all participants to achieve the greatest benefit. Sessions run daily from 9:00 AM to 8:30 PM (with a two-hour dinner break) and participants are asked to commit to full participation in all sessions.

Is university credit available for this Academy?

Participants must make arrangements, in advance, directly with their respective Alberta university.

Registration details

The registration fee is

- \$1,150 (includes GST) for members of the ATA holding the highest level of membership available to them and
- \$2,300 (includes GST) for non-members of the ATA, or for those who do not hold the highest level of ATA membership available to them.

The fee includes tuition, a resource book, five nights' accommodation (shared room) (July 8–12) and breakfast and lunch each day. Single occupancy accommodation is available for an additional fee of \$550 (including GST).

Space is limited; early registration is recommended.

Register online at <https://event-wizard.com/events/ELA>.

Cancellation policy

- Up to two weeks prior to the start of the Academy, \$100 of the registration fee is nonrefundable.
- No refunds will be issued for cancellations received within two weeks of the start of the Academy.

For additional information contact **Leslie Kaun** at **780-447-9410 (Edmonton)** or **1-800-232-7208 (elsewhere in Alberta)**; e-mail: ELA@ata.ab.ca.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Educational Leadership Academy is to improve the quality of learning through effective leadership, to promote the professional growth of educational leaders and to build successful relationships.

MS-43-3 2011 12



OUR DREAMS MATTER TOO

Walk for culturally based equity for First Nations children

Give First Nations children the same

chance that all other Canadians enjoy:

to grow up safely at home, get a good education, be healthy, and be proud of their cultures.

Encourage children, youth, families, schools and organizations in your area to write letters to your MP and the Prime Minister supporting culturally based equity for First Nations children and organize a walk to a mail box in your community!

Postage is free for letters to the Prime Minister and Members of Parliament

Walk date: June 11, 2012

Location: Throughout Canada



www.fncaringociety.com/our-dreams-matter-too



www.fnwitness.ca
Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Hearing



www.shannensdream.ca
safe and comfy schools - equitable education



www.JordansPrinciple.ca



students voting for equality!

