



THE ADVOCATE

February 29, 2024



WHAT'S INSIDE!

- President's Corner
- Upcoming Events
- Board Chair Message
- Programs, Grants and Bursaries
- Other News & Information
- Articles of Potential Interest

In this edition of *The Advocate*, you'll find the President's message, more upcoming events for 2024, a lineup of some of our guest speakers, a Board Chair message, information about the 2024 Special Recognition Awards, articles of potential interest, along with our regular features. Enjoy!

Next issue: March 29, 2024

ONLY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROVIDE PUBLIC EDUCATION®



Nurturing Minds, Shaping Futures: A Commitment to Mental Health in Alberta's Public Schools

Dennis MacNeil
PSBAA President

As we already finish up the second month of 2024, a year which seems to be moving at great speed, I am compelled to address a matter of paramount importance, which is the mental health of our students. Our commitment to fostering a safe and nurturing environment goes hand in hand with our dedication to promoting and protecting public education in Alberta.

In recent years, the conversation around mental health has gained significant traction, and rightfully so. As trustees in public education, it is our duty to ensure that the well-being of our students remain at the forefront of our discussions and goals. A healthy mind is the foundation upon which a successful academic journey is built. Recognizing this, PSBAA has had many discussions focused on this topic and have undertaken various initiatives aimed at mental health support within our schools.

I can confidently say that our member boards across the province have brought it on themselves to voice the great need for enough counselling services to provide timely and accessible support to students facing mental health challenges. Our goal is to create an inclusive atmosphere where students feel comfortable seeking help when needed, and ensuring those resources are readily available. We understand that a robust support system is essential in addressing the diverse needs of our student body.

Trusteeship plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness, accountability, and inclusivity of public education across the province. It is important to remember that trustees act as representatives of the community, advocating for the diverse needs of students. We can play a key role in helping schools, whether they be in rural or metro areas, obtain services and resources to help meet those complex needs. Trustees uphold the principles of equity and

fairness, constantly striving to ensure all students, regardless of their background or circumstances, have access to the high-quality education we value so dearly.

Moreover, it is important to consider diverse perspectives and experiences from various sources. Education is not confined to textbooks and classrooms; it extends to nurturing emotional intelligence and resilience in our students. By fostering open dialogue and understanding, we aim to create a culture that prioritizes mental health as a fundamental aspect of overall well-being.

In alignment with our commitment to public education in Alberta, PSBAA will continue advocating for increased funding for mental health resources. Public schools are often the place where mental health issues are first recognized and where the first steps in getting the right support can occur. Adequate financial support is crucial to maintaining and expanding the services that our students require. Through collaboration with local and provincial authorities, we aim to secure the necessary resources to fortify our schools' mental health programs.

As we continue to shine a light on this important topic, let us not forget the broader context within which our efforts are situated. Public education is a main pillar of a thriving society, and our responsibilities extend beyond the classroom walls. We must actively engage with policymakers, parents, and the community at large to safeguard and strengthen the public education system in Alberta.

Together, as a united front, I fully believe PSBAA can help shape a future where every student not only receives an excellent education, but also thrives mentally and emotionally. Let us continue to be the driving force behind positive change in the lives of our students.





St Albert PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Making Space for Success

Kim Armstrong, Board Chair
St. Albert Public Schools

As highlighted in our education plans, our focus at **St. Albert Public Schools** is on connection, growth, wellness and equity. These remain foundational and guide us in all our decision making.

As a result, our advocacy efforts are aimed at three main areas: space, funding and success for students. Our division is growing rapidly, and we are once again running out of space. We are working with our municipal and provincial governments to address this but as is the case with many school divisions, construction simply isn't keeping pace with the growth in our community.

Our division, and our board, continue to take steps to better understand decolonization and indigenization, dismantling oppression as we work towards a more inclusive environment. We know that this will benefit our students and ultimately our community, as we all learn together and work together to create a sense of belonging for all.

Innovation and improvement are key components of a successful school division. We see the excitement among our students and families when we provide new learning opportunities, whether it's introducing new initiatives like esports or expanding other opportunities like our career education programming and our athletic academy, which are both growing by leaps and bounds. We believe innovation is key to keeping our students engaged and preparing them for a joyful, adventurous and curious life.

The work done by the PSBAA and its members continues to inspire us. This impact cannot be understated, as we all work together for the betterment of Alberta's education system. The seeds have been planted, and it's up to all of us to nurture them so they thrive and grow.



2024 SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS NOMINATIONS

It is that time of year again! Time to shine a spotlight on the hardworking public education advocates in your community who deserve to be recognized for their efforts. Do you know someone who has made a special contribution to public education this year? Advanced business initiatives in your association? Or has just been an all around great mentor and supporter? Please check your email for the special recognition awards package that has been distributed! This package includes the nomination forms and the qualifications for each award. The nomination forms are also available on the member resources section of the PSBAA website. **Nomination deadline is March 31.**

Nominations forms are located in the
Member Portal of the PSBAA Website

[**CLICK HERE TO LOGIN**](#)





Mark Your Calendars for the 2024 April PSBC

• **April 11-12, 2024**

Our April PSBC line up for the Thursday professional development day will showcase an array of topics. Starting with Jason Daniels who is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Concordia University. He will be speaking on the topic of *'The Push and Pull of Technology: Understanding the Impact of the Internet, Social Media, AI and Other Digital Media on our Children.'* We also look forward to hearing from Clarice Anderson and Shelia Williams from the Edmonton Public School board, who together will focus on *'Strengthening Indigenous Relationships.'* In the afternoon we will have the pleasure of hearing from Tim Stensland who will be discussing *'Being Coherent with your Priorities: From Formulation to Implementation.'* Followed by Annalee Nutter, Superintendent for Fort McMurray Public Schools and Malcom Setter, Trustee for Fort McMurray Public Schools who will be discussing *'Powerful Connections.'*

We are pleased to announce April's PSBC Dinner Speaker is Chris Scheetz. He is a five-time CCMA Major Market Personality of the Year and has been the CISN Country Morning Co-Host for 35 years. He will be discussing his experiences attending public school in rural Alberta and the life lessons he has learned that have gotten him to where he is today.

For more information or to register please [CLICK HERE!](#)



REMINDER PSBAA WEBINAR

**Choice in Alberta Education:
Challenges and Opportunities
for Public Schools**

• **Friday, March 1, 2024**

Join us this Friday, March 1st for the presentation of the latest PSBAA research paper, Choice in Alberta Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Public Schools. This zoom session is free for all members.

Online registration is still open, and required! Please register asap! The zoom session takes place on March 1st from 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

[CLICK HERE to REGISTER](#)

**2024
Conference**

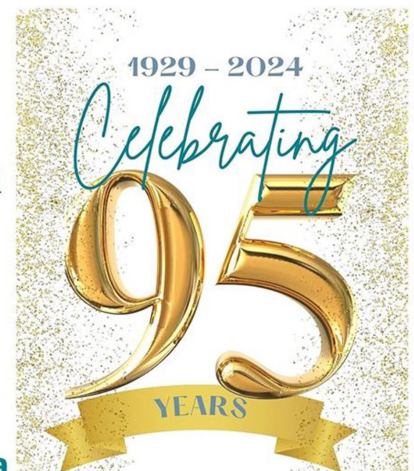
**Annual General
Meeting**

**Delta Marriott
Edmonton South**

26 27 28 APRIL



**Alberta
School Councils' Association**
Promoting parent engagement in public education



UPCOMING EVENTS



2024 April Professional Development

Tim Stensland Ed.D



Tim Stensland Ed.D. - Former Deputy Superintendent for Northland School Division

'Being Coherent with your Priorities: From Formulation to Implementation.'

Jason Daniels Ph.D. - Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Concordia University of Edmonton

'The Push and Pull of technology: Understanding the Impact of the Internet, Social Media, AI and other Digital Media on our Children.'



Jason Daniels Ph.D.

Clarice Anderson

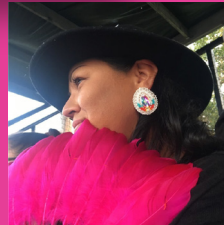


Clarice Anderson - Indigenous Relations Edmonton Public School Board

'Strengthening Relationships'

Sheila Williams - Inuit Consultant Edmonton Public School Board

'Strengthening Relationships'



Sheila Williams

Annalee Nutter



Annalee Nutter - Superintendent Fort McMurray Public Schools

'Powerful Connections'

Malcolm Setter - Trustee Fort McMurray Public Schools

'Powerful Connections'



Malcolm Setter

Chris Scheetz



Chris Scheetz - CISN Country Co-host | Five Time CCMA Major Market Personality of the Year

Thursday Dinner Guest Speaker April 11

GUEST SPEAKERS

[CLICK HERE for more Information!](#)

Mark Your Calendars for the 2024 Spring General Assembly

• **May 30 - June 1, 2024**

We are looking forward to welcoming you all to the Westin Downtown Calgary on May 30th -June 1st.

The SGA will kick off on Thursday evening with the Presidents reception and dinner to follow. Our Keynote dinner speaker will be Jennifer Turner, Director of the Centre for Wellbeing in Education.

Our Professional learning session will be kicked off by speaker, Olympian, and Amazing Race Contestant Sarah Wells. Her motivational topics will include overcoming obstacles and striving for excellence in leadership. We will hear from the Minister of Education Demetrios Nicolaides just before lunch, which will bring us to our afternoon half day session with Brian Woodland who as a retired Director of Communications and Community Relations for the Peel District School Board, has 32 years of experience in public education.

On Saturday morning we will hear from Tom Thompson for a half-day session and then from Medicine Hat Public School Division and Golden Hills Public Schools in the afternoon.

More information on speakers and topics, as well as student performances to be announced shortly.

**Registration Early Bird Deadline
March 28, 2024**

**Westin Hotel Room Block Deadline
March 17, 2024**

**For more information or to register
[CLICK HERE!](#)**

SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY GUEST SPEAKER FEATURE



Sarah Wells - Speaker/Olympian/ Amazing Race Contestant

Obstacles don't scare Sarah Wells. As a 400m hurdler, this Olympian's reputation was forged through overcoming challenges and achieving the incredible. Take her debut at the London Olympics in 2012, which came despite an injury that had her sidelined for months just the year before. Outside of competitive sports, this athlete is coaching people to pursue excellence through the Believe Initiative, an organization founded on—fittingly—a message of resilience. You may even remember seeing Sarah pushing her limits on a past season of The Amazing Race Canada. Evidently someone who understands the importance of building resilience and self-belief, along with the power of purpose, you'll want to listen-up when this Olympic semi-finalist and Pan Am Games silver medalist takes the stage.



BRING THE EXCITEMENT OF
THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT TO
THE CLASSROOM



NEW RESOURCES



As the nation prepares to turn its gaze to Team Canada's performance at the 2024 Olympic Games, the Canadian Olympic School Program and the French National Olympic and Sport Committee are thrilled to provide a new educational series, Destination Paris 2024! A resource created for educators to celebrate the Olympic Games.

Explore this five-week educational series that will introduce and capture the spirit of the Olympic Games as well as explore the themes of cultural education, representation, sustainability, and nutrition.

Download the resources for free here: [Destination Paris-Team Canada-Official Olympic Team Website](#)



GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

PROGRAMS AND GRANTS



Board Development Program - Building Strong Teams & Effective Relationships

- **April 11-12, 2024**

Join us for this highly interactive webinar where you and your fellow participants will deal with a specific board situation, address the root causes, and create solutions. We will provide additional, relevant information that will help you understand why these situations arise, how to deal with them, and ideas for addressing the root causes before they happen.

[CLICK HERE for more Information!](#)

Basic Facilitation Skills

- **Session 1 - Tuesday, March 12, 2024 (1:30 - 3:00pm)**
- **Session 2 - Thursday, March 14, 2024 (1:30 - 3:00pm)**
- **Session 3 - Tuesday, March 19, 2024 (1:30 - 3:30pm)**
- **Session 4 - Thursday, March 21, 2024 (1:30 - 3:30pm)**

Dive into the dynamic world of facilitation with our Basic Facilitation Skills webinar series! Learn how to guide discussions, manage diverse group dynamics, and drive meetings to meaningful conclusions. Whether you are a beginner or just seeking a refresher, these sessions are tailored to empower you with actionable skills in your non-profit organization. From the key responsibilities of a facilitator to delivering impactful sessions, we've got you covered!

[CLICK HERE for more Information!](#)

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Bursary

- **Deadline June 1, 2024**

The First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) bursary program provides funding for Indigenous students in the form of a non-repayable bursary if you agree to live and work in northern Alberta for one year of full-time employment in return for each year of bursary support received. Employment must be in your field of studies for which the bursary was provided.

The goal of this bursary is to assist FNMI students to obtain the skills and knowledge to enter or re-enter the workforce in northern Alberta.

[CLICK HERE for more Information!](#)

ARTICLES OF POTENTIAL INTEREST

Click on the links below

- [Alberta Transgender Policy \(youtube.com\)](#)
- [Alberta E-sports Championship to take over Agri-food Hub and Trade Centre in Lethbridge](#)
- [Edmonton Schools are facing a space crunch as student numbers continue to grow](#)
- [Northern Lights Public Schools: Board ratifies ATA agreement and approves new Terms of Employment for support staff](#)



PSBAA RIDDLE

This month's Riddle: What do you throw out when you want to use it, but take in when you don't want to use it?

Every month PSBAA will add a new word puzzle to the Advocate. The first person who correctly answers the riddle and sends their answer to communications@public-schools.ab.ca will receive a PSBAA branded stainless steel water bottle (as shown), which is awarded exclusively to our prize winners! (Those who have won a prize in this contest during the past six months are not eligible.)