



SACS hires new program manager

The next time you phone the Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) project, you'll hear a new voice at the end of the line.

Barbara Maheu, a social studies and drama teacher at Sturgeon Composite High School in Namao, has been seconded to the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) as SACS program manager. In her new role, she will plan and present professional development sessions, develop curriculum resources and analyze survey data.

"I am thrilled to become part of the SACS project. It is already clear that a tremendous amount of work has been done assisting teachers and community members to address issues relating to violence and conflict. I look forward to meeting the challenges involved in translating the goals of the project into action," she says.

Maheu brings to the position extensive experience in professional development. From 1990 to 1998, she served as a member of the ATA's instructor corps, delivering workshops to teachers across the province. She has also served as a practicum associate at the University of Alberta.

CTF endorses safe and caring schools

The following resolutions were passed unanimously at the 1999 Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) Annual Meeting, July 15, 1999, in Vancouver:

(Board of Directors)

We understand as teachers that schools help shape society as well as serve it and as an organization we seek to create a society that is free from violence and exploitation. In addition, teachers are entrusted with responsibilities for the safety and well-being of all students.

Resolutions:

1. THAT we, the teachers of Canada, call on all members of the community to ensure that safe and caring schools become a national priority.
2. THAT CTF provide leadership by calling for public policies
 - that promote the physical and psychosocial health of children and youth;
 - that support parents in their responsibilities;
 - that ensure that schools and communities can provide effective services to children, youth and parents in a timely manner;
 - that enable schools and communities to meet the many expectations they have been given for the welfare of children and youth;
 - that restrict the commercializing and glorifying of violence through entertainment media.
 - that foster international awareness of the many kinds of violence children endure.
3. THAT the Members of the Canadian Teachers' Federation continue to make safe and caring schools an organizational priority.

A vision of safe and caring communities

I'm always enthusiastic about fall. I suppose this comes from my years in the education business when fall means new students, new plans and new possibilities.

This fall, I am enthusiastic about our Toward a Safe and Caring Community project because I believe we are on the threshold of facilitating true change in our communities—moving toward safer and more caring environments for our children.

We now have community facilitators trained in nearly 50 communities around Alberta! Imagine 50 facilitators hosting a workshop series of 20 adults each. That's 1,000 people trying to live out the philosophy of safe and caring, modeling and reinforcing respectful and responsible behavior whenever possible. If we combine that with the 275 schools using *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum—ATA Resources for Integration: ECS*

to *Grade 6*, representing hundreds of teachers and students, I am sure that we will experience less bullying and violence around us.

Do you remember the story of the 100th monkey? It's a lovely fable about change. The 100th monkey is born changed because the 99 before him had worked to change themselves. I would like my grandchildren born into a community that has become more peaceful, so I suppose I need to be involved in making that happen.

I am going back to university this fall. A new community project manager will be in place in September to help you with workshop plans and orders.

Best wishes for a safe and caring fall.

Sara Coumatarakis

Task force to assist SACS project

Seven teachers from across Alberta have been appointed to the new Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) Junior and Senior High School Task Force.

Carol Fedoruk of Hines Creek, Marc Frey of Grimshaw, Karen Hobbs of Namao, Karen McDaniel of Calgary, Don Melnychuk of Edmonton, Brenda Sautner of Edmonton, Peter Smilanich of Edmonton and Holly Tibble of St. Albert will hold their first meeting October 2.

The task force was established over the summer to help the SACS project develop workshops and curriculum resources for junior and senior high school teachers. Members were selected for their expertise in professional development, knowledge of the curriculum and mastery of teaching and behavioral strategies.

SACS project director Vicki Mather was delighted with the calibre of people who applied to sit on the task force.

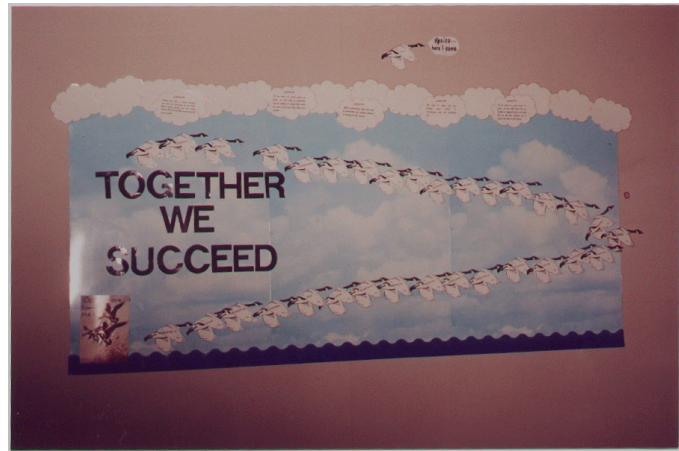
"It was difficult to select task force members from the many, very highly qualified individuals who applied. We attempted to ensure representation from the various subject areas and grade levels in our selection process," she said.

Best practices

Crawford Plains School, Edmonton

In the fall of 1998, Crawford Plains School began implementing the elementary Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) project with the *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum—ATA Resources for Integration: ECS to Grade 6 (TSCC)* inservice for teachers.

Vice-principal Pat Doherty prepared a bulletin board display for staff entitled “Together We Succeed.” The display depicted Canada geese, each with a staff member’s name written on it, flying in formation. The goose bearing the name of one teacher who was moving to Mexico was positioned to fly off in a different direction. Doherty said the teachers had a lot of fun with the display over the year, changing the order of the geese and, at Christmas, arranging them in a tree formation.



Crawford Plains’ school climate committee, with assistance from parent volunteers, oversaw the implementation of the SACS project. As teachers worked through *TSCC*, the committee developed a series of hallway bulletin board displays for each of the key concepts in the *TSCC* topics. The climate committee also created parent bulletins for the concepts to show parents what their children were learning and to suggest skill-related activities for students to practise at home. Individual teachers were assigned as experts on each of the key concepts. The “expert” would review the key concept through all grade levels, provide advice to colleagues on the concept and identify content for inclusion in the parent bulletin. Doherty believes that students are quicker to apply the skills they learn in the *TSCC* program when parents use the same language to reinforce the skills at home. The bulletins help promote this consistency between school and home.

A recognition program that identified safe and caring behavior among students and staff was created by the school climate committee. Individuals were recognized by the principal over the intercom and invited to the office where they received an “I’m Safe & Caring” button and had their photograph taken. A gallery of photographs of safe and caring students was set up in the foyer of the school. By the end of the school year, every student’s photograph had appeared in the gallery.

If your school has a SACS “best practice” to share with other schools, please submit an article and photograph, if possible, to Koni Macdonald, Safe and Caring Schools Project, The Alberta Teachers’ Association, 11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta, T5N 2R1, e-mail: <kmacdonald@teachers.ab.ca>.

Anger management pilot reinforces SACS

The results of an anger management pilot program developed by the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society reinforce the Safe and Caring Schools project.

Anger—Directing the Fire emphasizes two significant points:

1. Anger management skills need to be integrated and reinforced daily in school activities to make any significant impact. These skills should not be seen as part of a “program” brought into the school by an outside agency. Scheduling difficulties and priorities are also affected when the program is brought into the schools.
2. Parents need the same information as the students and need to take an active role at home in reinforcing the skills taught. Therefore, parent education evenings should be part of the program.

Submitted by Celia Osenton and Gaye Bonnett, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, 3rd Floor, 120 17 Avenue SW, Calgary, T2S 2T2, tel: (403) 290-5757, fax: (403) 262-2033.

Notices and Events

Safe Communities: Let’s Make It Happen!, November 4-5, 1999, Medicine Hat. A special two-day conference tailored for anyone who wants to make communities safe places to live, learn, work and play. Registration fee: \$250 (no GST). Contact: Safe Community Coalition of Medicine Hat & Area, 398 Aberdeen Street SE, Medicine Hat, tel: (403) 527-6386, fax: (403) 527-6574, e-mail: <safecom@memlane.com>.

Making Connections. A school-based family support program in Lethbridge. Contact: Bev Merkley, Making Connections, 1801 8 A Avenue N, Lethbridge, T1H 1C5, tel: (403) 320-9768, fax: (403) 327-1975, e-mail: <bevmmerkley@lethsd.ab.ca>.

Price increase

The sale price for *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum—ATA*

Resources for Integration:

ECS to Grade 6 will increase as of November 15, 1999, from \$39 to \$49 per grade.

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Niska News is a monthly newsletter produced by the ATA’s Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) project for school and community members. The goal of the SACS project is to encourage practices that model and reinforce socially responsible and respectful behaviors so that learning and teaching can take place in a safe and caring environment. Achieving this goal requires the involvement not just of parents and teachers but of all the important adults in a young person’s life. This newsletter is designed to provide timely, up-to-date information about the project. For more information, contact the SACS office by phoning 447-9487 (Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (elsewhere in Alberta). Copying and distributing *Niska News* is permitted.