



NISKA NEWS

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Community training at SACS Conference— Double or nothing!

Barb Maheu

Support for implementing the *Toward a Safe and Caring Community Workshop (TSSCC)* series was overwhelming. Eighty-seven delegates participated in the one-day, pre-conference, facilitator training session on November 25. This training session doubled the number of facilitators now prepared to deliver the five-part series in their local communities!

Trainees from across Alberta learned about the program goals, philosophy and themes while they participated in activities designed to increase their understanding of adult learning theory and to improve and allow them to practise their facilitation skills. Evaluations of the session suggest that this new cadre is willing and eager to put their facilitation skills to the test.

We will be updating our list of trained facilitators for each of Alberta's regional zones before the

new year. This list will provide contact names and numbers for all of the trained facilitators in each zone.



Call the SACS office to get an updated list of facilitators for your zone. An appropriate list will be faxed to you.

Community overview

Conference delegates were also provided an opportunity to gain general knowledge of TSSCC in the community overview session held on the afternoon of November 26. Information was provided regarding the program itself, and a brainstorming session resulted in practical suggestions for implementing and

launching the series in

local communities. This information will be compiled into an action handbook that will be

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SACSC Conference a landmark experience

Over 1,100 participants from across Canada gathered at Edmonton's Ramada Inn November 25 to 27 to share strategies, resources and best practices for safe and caring schools and communities.

The exciting three-day program featured more than 90 speakers from a wide variety of backgrounds. Speakers included Reverend Dale Lang, father of Jason Lang; Dr Debra Peplar, Canada's renowned researcher on bullying; and Dr Larry Brendtro, an expert in the area of reclaiming youth at risk.

Topics covered in the keynote addresses, workshops and planning sessions included violence prevention, bullying, suspensions and expulsions, and human rights. Delegates affirmed the value in addressing the issues surrounding societal violence by implementing preventative, holistic and integrated programs and approaches. In addition, delegates agreed with the important role all adults play in reinforcing safe and caring attitudes and behaviors.



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available in the near future. The handbook will provide suggestions for organizing action committees, soliciting sponsorship, promoting awareness and encouraging community participation in the program. I welcome your suggestions regarding any of these aspects of program implementation. If your community has already successfully launched the workshop series, please give me a call. I would be interested in knowing about your experience so that I can assist other groups in implementing the series.

Barb Maheu can be reached at 447-9484 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (from elsewhere in Alberta).

The four *A*s of Safe and Caring Schools

Attachment: The creation of positive social bonds helps encourage prosocial behavior.

Achievement: High standards and refusal to accept failure encourage students to achieve.

Autonomy: Demanding responsibility instead of obedience helps students create and put into action their own ethical code.

Altruism: Young people gain a sense of self-worth from helping others.

—Adapted from the work of Larry Brendtro and Nicolas Long

Update on elementary curriculum resource

Topic 3 of *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum—ATA Resources for Integration: ECS to Grade 6*, Respecting Diversity and Preventing Prejudice, will be shipped in December to schools that have ordered the program. It is scheduled to arrive in time for implementation in January and February. Topic 4, Managing Anger and Dealing with Bullying, is at the editing stage and will be printed and distributed in time for implementation in March and April. The writers are working on Topic 5, Working It Out. Topic 5 will be distributed to participating schools in time for implementation in May and June. If your school is implementing this program, please communicate the above to all staff involved in the program.

Attention school councils!

The ATA's SACS project is working with the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association to develop a resource that will share school councils' best SACS practices. Please write and tell us about activities or projects you have undertaken to make your school or community safer and more caring.



Update on secondary program

The following workshops have been developed for secondary schools. They include

- SACS—and Overview
- Building SACS Behavioral Strategies for Secondary Teachers
- Toward a SAC Curriculum—Approaches to Integration
- Planning for a SACS.

Workshop facilitators will be trained to deliver these workshops to their colleagues. We will be asking potential facilitators to apply for training in teams of two, as the workshops are designed to be delivered by a pair of presenters. The facilitator training will take place in early spring. Please watch *Niska News* for further information. In the meantime, these workshops are available by contacting the ATA's SACS office.

The curriculum resource for secondary teachers will consist of teachers' best SACS practices, catalogued by subject and grade. Information about the approaches to integration will accompany a call for teachers' best practices in the next school mailing.

Under contract with the minister of learning, Calgary Board of Education is developing a resource that will help students develop and implement SACS action plans. Students around the province will be trained to take a lead in their schools, getting students involved in making their schools safer and more caring.

The SACS booklet series

The ATA's SACS project reviews research on topics related to violence prevention and summarizes its findings in quick, easy-to-read booklets. Check the order form for available titles. New booklets include the junior and senior high level bullying booklets and *Safe and Caring Schools: Havens for the Mind*, a booklet that reviews the link between SACS, brain development and learning. The series of bullying prevention booklets are now complete with the exception of the preschool booklet. The series includes booklets for teachers, students and parents: nine in total, two at each division level and one at the preschool level. The preschool booklet on bullying is being field tested and will be published soon. In addition to updating adults on research and practice, many of these booklets can be used as in-class resources

Notices

The **Calgary Catholic Immigration Society** is offering parent education workshops and longer parenting courses anywhere within the city. Programs are tailored to fit the needs of the local school, church or community in terms of content, timing and cost. Short programs (2-3 hours) include Encouraging Respect, Responsibility & Resiliency; Playground Politics (Bullies & Victims); and Working with Children's Temperament (K-Grade 3). Long programs (3-8 weeks) include Understanding Your Teen (11-16 years), Head Start Parenting (0-7 years) and How to Talk so Kids Will Listen (3-11 years). For more information, contact Celia Osenton, Facilitator, Family Education Program, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Community & Education Services Division, 3rd Floor 120 17 Avenue SW, Calgary, T2S 2T2, tel: (403) 290-5757, fax: (403) 262-2033.

I really want

I really want a world
without prejudice,
Because there would be
tolerance.

I really want a world
without racism,
Because there would be
equality.

I really want a world
without humiliation,
Because there would be
kindness.

I really want a world where people would just
be themselves,

Because there would be diversity.

I really want a world where people would be
understood.



—*Felicia Wile, Grade 5 — Ecole Queen Street School.*
First published in Word Works: An Anthology of
Parkland School Division Student Writing, June 1999.

The **Search Institute** is an independent, nonprofit organization committed to contributing to the knowledge base about youth development and to translating high-quality research on children and youth into practical ideas, tools, services and resources for families, neighborhoods, schools, organizations and communities. Check out its website at <www.search-institute.org> for a wealth of helpful information on such topics as communities, families and schools.

Niska News is a 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 of not just parents and teachers but also 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 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (from elsewhere in Alberta). Copying and distributing Niska News is permitted as long as the source is credited.