



NISKA NEWS

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Safe and Caring Schools Project Continues

In the spring of 2002, Alberta Learning discontinued core funding for the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project. Although most of our print resources continue to be available through the Learning Resource Centre, there is still a critical need to sustain professional development, revise and update resources, and provide consultative support. With the generous assistance of grants from National Crime Prevention—Community Mobilization; Canadian Heritage; and Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism we are continuing to provide these services.

Commission on Learning

Alberta Learning is conducting hearings concerning the state of education in the province. A nine-member panel will examine the issues and the opportunities ahead and provide recommendations. For information and updates see <www.learning.gov.ab.ca>.

The ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project will be making a submission to the Commission. If you have comments or suggestions relating to our initiative and would like them included in our submission, please email <sacs@teachers.ab.ca>.

SACS Trust

The SACS Project is in the process of applying for charitable status. If approved, the SACS Trust would operate at arm's length from each stakeholder organization, and the Project would no longer be administered by the ATA. A Board of Trustees was appointed by the Steering Committee at the last meeting.



Community Partnerships in the County of Vermilion

Congratulations to Pat Calyniuk, team leader of the Family Liaison Program in Vermilion. Last spring, Pat hosted a facilitator training session for the *Toward a Safe and Caring Communities* workshop series. The event was co-sponsored by the County of Vermilion River FCSS, Minburn-Mannville FCSS, Vermilion FCSS, Vermilion Credit Union and Vermilion Subway. The 32 workshop participants included members of school councils, family liaison workers and members of community agencies.

Demonstrating strong community spirit and commitment, the Vermilion, Dewbury and Blackfoot Lions Clubs purchased the SACS workshop resources. These resources will be available to any facilitator who is presenting a workshop. This generous contribution reduced registration costs by decreasing the need for participants to purchase all of the resources individually. Calyniuk is continuing to promote the workshop series and looks forward to implementing them throughout the area this fall.



Niska—A Big Hit!

The Safe and Caring Schools Project mascot attended the July Klondike Days pre-parade in Edmonton. Niska entertained audiences while they waited for the parade to start. Jennifer Vogninetz did a splendid job bringing Niska to life.

If you would like to borrow Niska, please call the Safe and Caring Schools office at (780) 447-9487, 1-800-232-7208 ext 487 or email <sacs@teachers.ab.ca>.

Niska News Flies into Cyberspace

Send us your email address to receive NN online.

In an effort to reduce mailing costs, future issues of *Niska News* will be sent electronically. The newsletter will no longer be distributed through school mailings.

Websites

Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse (RESOLVE) recently published *School-based Violence Prevention Programs: A Resource Manual Preventing Violence Against Girls and Young Women* <www.maijagraham.com/resolve/>.

Social Justice Workshops— Field-Testing Input Required

A new series of professional development workshops titled “*Building Safe and Caring Classrooms, Schools, and Communities for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Students*” have been developed with support from the ATA Educational Trust Grant and the ATA’s Safe and Caring Schools Project. Prior to formal publication, the workshops require field-testing by Alberta teachers, counsellors, administrators and district office personnel.

Please consider offering these field-test workshops at your local’s upcoming PD institutes, conferences or other events. The workshops will be led by two professionally trained facilitators and all participants receive current Alberta-based resources. All honoraria, travel and per diem expenses will be waived if a venue is provided. We prefer a one-day time period but will explore other options.

The revised workshops will be included in the ATA’s Professional Development Services department.

To inquire about booking this series of workshops please contact Kris Wells (780) 458-0596 <kwells@ualberta.ca>.

Samples of workshop material may be viewed at the ATA’s Diversity, Equity and Human Rights web page <http://www.teachers.ab.ca/diversity/Sexual_Orientation/Index.htm>.

CONFERENCE NOTICE!

“**Safe Schools—Safe Communities—Catch the Wave**” is the theme for the next conference being held in Halifax on May 8, 9, 10 at St. Mary’s University. For further information please contact Jim MacPherson at <jamesbmacpherson@hotmail.com>.

PD Opportunity for Junior and Senior High Schools—Take Action to Stop Bullying in Your School

The ATA’s Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) Project is developing a model to help secondary schools address violence and bullying. We are seeking both junior and senior high school sites to conduct this school-based research. An action-research process will be used in each school to identify specific issues, implement strategies to deal with problems and evaluate the outcomes.

The staff will be provided with:

- FREE SACS workshops delivered by trained facilitators
- FREE resources (lesson plans, booklets and websites)
- FREE consultation services provided by the SACS staff and a research assistant

Collectively, these school-based studies will result in a model that will provide a process for addressing similar issues in any school. Anonymity will be ensured.

To inquire about participating in this important study, please contact Barb Maheu at <bmaheu@teachers.ab.ca> or call 1-800-232-7208 or 447-9484 (in Edmonton).

This project is funded by National Crime Prevention—Community Mobilization.

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. This newsletter is designed to provide timely, up-to-date information about the project. For more information, contact the SACS office by phoning 780-447-9487 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (from elsewhere in Alberta). Copying and distributing *Niska News* are permitted as long as the source is credited. The newsletter is available online through the SACS Project website at <www.teachers.ab.ca/safe/index.html>. Editor: Sue Sheffield.