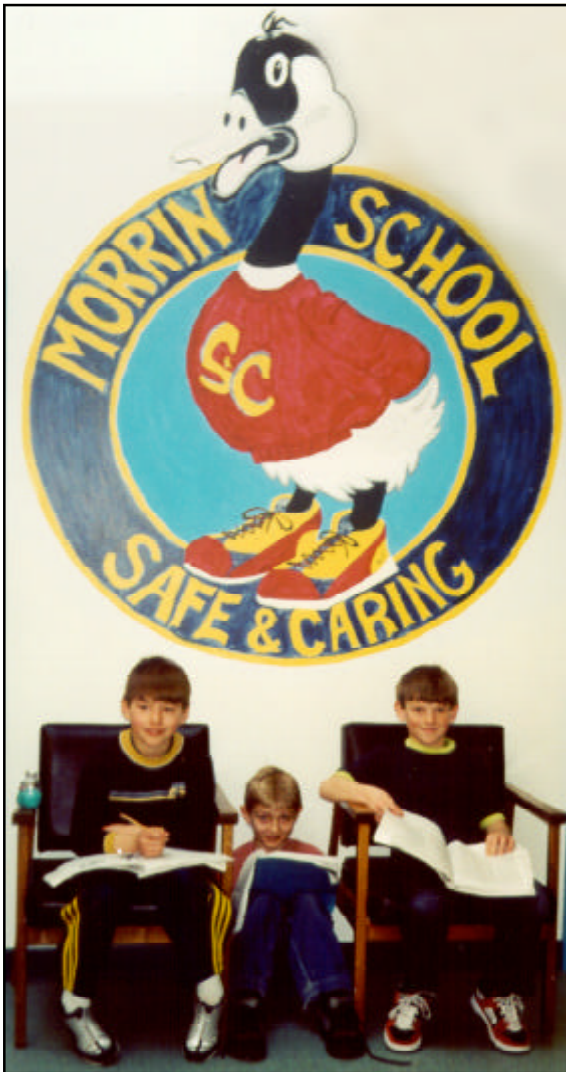




Prairie Land Builds Safe and Caring Schools



Kwade Bruce, Jesse Clark and Cody Gouin, stationed under Morrin School's painting of Niska, were engaged in silent reading when this picture was taken. The school is decorated with hand-painted pictures and designs. This is just one way principal Don Schielke and his staff create a safe and caring school climate at their school.

Action Research in Morrin and Delia

The SACS project is developing a model for implementing SACS resources in secondary schools. To develop the model, we are undertaking action research in several school locations throughout the province. Two schools in Prairie Land School Division—Morrin and Delia, have already begun the process. Principal Don Schielke of Morrin School, is an enthusiastic supporter. His school already uses SACS resources at the elementary level. He says "We need a program that will empower us to find our own solutions to bullying. That's why I like this approach. We look forward to extending the program to junior and senior high."

The schools have agreed to share information regarding how they use SACS resources to address bullying and harassment in their school and provide information about its effectiveness. The model will be based on research findings. It will be available on the SACS website in 2004.

This project is funded from grants from National Crime Prevention, Community Mobilization and Alberta Community Development's Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund.



Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum: A New Look at Character Education—Research by Wendy Holman

In 1996, Deb Schroeder and Wendy Holman were invited to develop the *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum (TSCC) ATA's Resources for Integration Kindergarten to Grade 6*. The TSCC resource offers a unique approach by infusing character-education/violence-prevention topics into the Alberta curriculum. For her master's project, Wendy conducted research to determine to what extent the SACS curriculum resources helped bridge character building to content acquisition. She asked, "Can the emotional, social, physical and academic needs of all students be addressed through this integrated approach?"

Wendy found that students in her class developed a strong sense of community. Anecdotal records documented an increased ability to cooperate, trust each other, collaborate and make democratic decisions. A greater sense of student autonomy was also identified as a positive outcome when implementing the TSSC resource. An increased opportunity to make independent choices, problem solve and build self-esteem fostered this autonomy.

Wendy's own classroom practice improved as a result of analyzing data. "Character education occurs all the time in my classroom and since I have become involved in the TSCC, it has influenced how and what I teach. Considering different perspectives, expressing opinions and demonstrating respect for ourselves and others permeates the school day."

Another teacher who implemented the TSCC resource said, "The whole classroom should be doing

interesting, motivating hands-on interactive kinds of activities and I think this curriculum allows everybody to do that." She noted that her own approach to dealing with bullying problems changed significantly. She stated that her pre-TSCC response would be to "lambaste students with a lecture." While implementing the curriculum resource, she learned the value of teaching strategies for dealing with anger and using fictitious characters as a risk-free method to share personal experiences and solve problems.

The same teacher concluded by saying, "I think it's wonderful that our education system is recognizing the importance of promoting not just academics but emotional well being and moral well being and citizenship. Mostly the right to be who we are and to expect respect."

Wendy states that her involvement in the project has influenced her own teaching. Her study concludes by stating that a character-education program should help students develop into principled and caring members of a community. "I hope that the *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum* helps others like me create a bridge between character building and content acquisition so that the emotional, social, physical and academic needs of all students can be addressed."

To read Wendy Holman's study, go to www.teachers.ab.ca/safe/index.html and click on Best Practices.



Wendy Holman



Elementary Resources

Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum—ATA Resources for Integration: Kindergarten to Grade 6

Binders

These grade-specific binders contain strategies and lessons that integrate violence prevention into every subject area in the elementary curriculum. Each binder contains a compilation of hundreds of learning activities for each grade level.

Student masters are available in English and French!



Secondary Resources

Toward a Safe and Caring Secondary Curriculum—Resources for Integration

Website

www.teachers.ab.ca/safe/index.html

Go to: Secondary Lesson Plans and Strategies

The unit and lesson plans on this site can

- be downloaded and used directly to teach specific curriculum outcomes or
- be used as models for the development of similar units and lessons.

Teachers, earn \$150! Submit your safe and caring lesson online. The submissions will be approved and edited by the program manager prior to payment.

Guidance Council Conference 2003-Charting New Waters

November 20–22, 2003 at Banff Park Lodge

For more information go to www.guidancecouncil.ca/

Safe Schools—Safe Communities “Catch the Wave” National Conference

Vicki Mather, Barb Maheu and Sue Sheffield attended “Catch the Wave” in Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 8–10, 2003, at St Mary’s University. Approximately 350 delegates from across Canada attended the conference, of which 150 attended the pre-conference sessions.

Vicki and Barb, with assistance from Sue, presented “Approaches to Integrating Bullying and Violence Prevention into Curriculum and Teaching Practice” at the pre-conference on Thursday. On Friday, they presented “Building a Nonviolent Culture for Learning” and Saturday Barb presented “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) Issues in Schools: Building Awareness and Taking Action”. Sue presented a poster session Friday. The elementary and secondary booklet series sold out quickly. There were numerous inquiries regarding the workshops and resource sharing. All our sessions were well attended and warmly received.

On Saturday, Vicki chaired the Safe and Caring Schools and Communities of Canada national meeting.

New Websites

www.cyberbullying.ca

“Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites, and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others”

—Bill Belsey

www.bullying.org unveiled the world’s first-of-its-kind website devoted entirely to the issue of cyberbullying.

www.kidsafet.net

- Keep young patrons safe inside your library system
- Get full Web security without filtering or monitoring
- Link Web resources to library holdings

KidLib Library Portal Service is a WebSearcher program, a secure portal browser, and a well organized best-of-the-Web curriculum library—a working solution for your library Internet services.

www.conexuspress.com/catalog/golden_rule_poster.htm

The Golden Rules Poster and the new *Guidelines for Creating and Facilitating a Workshop on the Golden Rule Across the World’s Religions*, created by Paul McKenna and Scarboro Mission.

Sacred writings and scriptures of many of the world’s religious and spiritual traditions offer statements equivalent to what is known in the Christian tradition as the Golden Rule: “Do Unto Others. . . .” With striking color and graphics, the poster displays 13 expressions of this ancient precept in an attractive and meaningful format.

Correction Notice

Please note, the correct URL for the RESOLVE School-based Violence Prevention Resource Manual website advertised in the September 2002 issue of *Niska News* is www.ucalgary.ca/resolve/violenceprevention/

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Resource Gets National Approval

The c.a.r.e. Kit, an educational resource that helps teachers and other professionals safeguard children aged 5–9 from sexual abuse, has received Curriculum Services of Canada’s seal of approval.

RespectED: Violence & Abuse Prevention, the Canadian Red Cross service that delivers prevention education, received the favorable review and recommendation for this Kindergarten–grade 3 program launched in spring 2002.

For more information on c.a.r.e. visit www.redcross.ca and follow the RespectED links. To learn about Curriculum Services Canada, go to www.curriculum.org.

Youth Crime—Study Released

Parkland Institute released a new study “Youth Crime and Justice in Alberta: Rhetoric and Reality,” by Tim Hartnagel. This report takes a detailed look at some of the political rhetoric and public opinion on the issue, and measures how accurately the evidence regarding trends in youth crime.

Hartnagel says, “In the 1990’s the number of youth charged by the police dropped 35 percent. In Alberta, the rate of youths aged 12 to 17 charged with criminal offences declined by a further 1.4 percent in 2001.” To read more about this study visit www.ualberta.ca/~parkland/Newsite/research/studies/ES&PR/ESyouth.html

A New Partnership

Family Channel partners with Bullying.org Canada to raise awareness about bullying.

Toronto, May 15, 2003 — Family Channel has partnered with Bullying.org Canada Incorporated, a non-profit organization that maintains www.bullying.org—a Canadian website where kids can safely share their bullying experiences online—to raise awareness about bullying and developing anti-bullying initiatives for children.

Starting in June, Family Channel will begin airing on-air spots that encourage viewers to e-mail their bullying experiences to www.family.ca. These stories will then be posted online at www.family.ca and www.bullying.org.

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.

New Workshops!

Preventing and Dealing with Bullying in Alberta Schools for Lead Teachers

This one-day training workshop is designed so that principals and/or lead teachers can initiate a multifaceted and comprehensive approach to deal with bullying and harassment in their own school. This training workshop provides information about the nature of bullying, practical strategies to engage students, an action-planning process and resources to assist in implementation.

Note: Look for ads about upcoming training workshops or contact the SACS office if you require more information (e-mail sacs@teachers.ab.ca).

Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum—Three Approaches to Integration

Research indicates that a successful school violence-prevention program integrates safe and caring principles throughout the students' entire school experience and promotes the integration of these principles in the students' homes and community experiences. This one-day workshop reviews the ways teachers can integrate safe and caring principles into teaching practice.

National Crime Prevention, Community Mobilization and Alberta Community Development's Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund sponsored the development of this workshop.

Building Safe, Caring and Inclusive Classrooms, Schools and Communities for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Students

This workshop series is designed to inform teachers about the unique needs of students who are LGBT or labeled as such. The workshops involve participants in critical discussions, case-study analysis and action planning.

Workshop 1 - Building Awareness of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Issues in Schools

Workshop 2 - Examining LGBT Issues: Exploring Diversity and Difference in our Schools

Workshop 3 - Creating Safe and Caring Learning Environments for LGBT Students

Collaboration Results in New Resources

Respecting Diversity Guides for Teachers

The publication of new guides for teachers to help them implement strategies and actions to promote diversity schools are available by contacting the SACS office. Each easy-to-read booklet focuses on the unique needs of students who are at greater risk of being victims of bullying and harassment. The guides provide relevant information, practical suggestions and easy-to-implement actions to establish safe, caring and inclusive classrooms. These guides are available online at www.teachers.ab.ca/safe/index.html.

A special thanks goes to the authors and their organizations for developing the Respecting Diversity guides for teachers:

- *Safe and Caring Schools for Students of All Faith*, Avaú Fast, Jim Logan and Rosaleen Zdunich, The Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action
- *Safe and Caring Schools for Students of All Races*, Charlene Hay, Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations and Sylvia Krogh, Edmonton Public Schools
- *Safe and Caring Schools for Lesbian and Gay Youth*, Aline Brault, Jacqueline Dumas, Gloria Filax and Dianne Oberg, The Orlando Book Collective
- *Safe and Caring Schools for Newcomer Students*, Yvonne Chiu and Linda Lam of the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative and Caridad Bernardino and Christina Nsaliwa of the Edmonton Immigrant Services Association

Coming soon

- *Safe and Caring Schools for Aboriginal Students*, Johnel Tailfeathers and her class of ED3700: Curriculum and Instruction for Non-majors of Native Studies Education at the University of Lethbridge. Antelope Woman, Blackfeet/Blood (Kainai) also contributed.
- *Safe and Caring Schools for Islamic Students*, Nora Abou-Absi, The Canadian Arab Friendship Association.

Developed through grants from National Crime Prevention, Community Mobilization; Department of Canadian Heritage, Multiculturalism Program; Alberta Community Development's Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund; and the ATA's Educational Trust Fund.

New!

Learning to Care Through Kindness to Animals—A Guide for Teachers

Tim Battle of the Alberta SPCA collaborated with the SACS project to produce a guide for teachers to help them recognize the seriousness of animal cruelty. It explains how students who engage in or witness acts of animal abuse can be adversely affected. This guide provides information to address a student's disclosure of animal abuse and identifies humane education curriculum connections. The booklet includes a listing of print, video, Web and community resources.

* National Crime Prevention Strategy's Community Mobilization Program cosponsored this project.

Toward a Safe and Caring Catholic Curriculum: A Guide for Teachers

The Religious Education Network: Lea Foy, Louis Kloster, Dawn Kirvan, Karen Doyle, Kathy English, Lucille Lewans-Rezac, Charlie Weekend, Leona Heuver and Russ Snoble, collaborated in developing a resource designed to be used by teachers in Catholic school jurisdictions to help them integrate SACS resources in ways that enhance the teaching of Catholic values and beliefs. Lessons from "Fostering Peacemakers" written by Gabrielle Byrne are included in the resource.

Grande Prairie Roman Catholic School District cosponsored this project

These resources are available through the SACS office, 11010 142 Street, Edmonton Alberta, T5N 2R1. Telephone (780) 447-9487. Outside Edmonton 1-800-232-7208 ext 487, fax (780) 455-6481 or e-mail sacs@teachers.ab.ca.