

## MARCH 2013

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### The President's Message

The Canadian Association of Principals is involved with a number of National and International organizations. As an organization that represents many educational leaders and more importantly represents the leaders of a country that has one of the premier public educational systems in the world, we are given a place of privilege at many tables.

On February 28 to March 2 the CAP President Elect, Mr. Jameel Aziz and myself were invited to attend the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) National Convention in Washington, DC. This is a reciprocal agreement that ensures that CAP and NASSP have open dialogue and communication on educational issues that affect our members. The NASSP President, Denise Greene-Wilkinson will be attending our CAP National Conference in Banff, this coming April.

The Ignite 13 Conference was well planned and was again focused on issues that are complex and challenging to us on both sides of the border. The sessions focused in on technology and the challenges and opportunities it presents to the 21<sup>st</sup> century leader. There were sessions on student motivation and parent engagement, preparing our students for the future and many other pertinent topics that challenge us as global leaders. I found the Thursday evening session especially interesting when the White House Secretary for Education Arne Duncan, spoke about the American challenge for public U.S education and educational leadership. Secretary Duncan's acknowledgment that federal and many state government's have done a poor job training school leaders and left this important role to chance was the talk of many in the room. What myself and Mr. Aziz found very powerful was Secretary Duncan's statement that government will be investing seriously in school leader training. We will follow closely the discussion around the investment he promised to make and that he will be working with NASSP to see that happen. We are hopeful that governments in all jurisdictions will see the importance of such an investment for school success.

Where is the parallel governmental leadership needed to talk about school leader training in Canada? Why is the lack of investment and/or training that exists here continuing? Without a Canadian National Office of Education, it is even more important for CAP to be the public voice of school leaders, principals and vice principals. The Canadian Ministers of Education Council (CMEC) meet regularly to strategize on how they want education to unfold in our country. Is there any coincidence that New Brunswick, parts of Alberta and Newfoundland are not allowed to travel outside their respective provinces for professional development? Where is the investment in future education school leaders? Now we are hearing rumblings

## Contact Us:

CAP National Office

300 Earl Grey Drive, Suite 220

Kanata, ON K2T 1C1

Tel: 613-839-0768

Email: [info@cdnprincipals.org](mailto:info@cdnprincipals.org)

Website:

[www.cdnprincipals.org](http://www.cdnprincipals.org)

from other provinces that this trend is starting to suddenly appear in their jurisdictions.

The CAP Board is concerned with this trend, controlling and coordination of education is not only the prevue of government but is also the soul of public education, the soul that is reflected in the sanctity and commitment of parents and school teams that strive for excellence in education for their children. Dictatorial leadership, one that does not allow for all voices to be heard, that stymies educational leaders from discussing and exploring what is making Canadian public education so vibrant and so successful, must be pushed back!

I hope that all School Leaders in Canada join us at our CAP National Conference in Banff, Alberta <http://www.cap2013.com/>"[www.cap2013.ca](http://www.cap2013.ca) on April 21 – 24, to further the discussion and to give the message that as School Leaders we have something to say and will continue to have impact on OUR Public Education system.

William (Bill) J. Tucker  
CAP, President



Bill Tucker, CAP President with NASSP President, Denise Greene-Wilkinson

## Connectivity and Learning

As you saw above Bill Tucker and I were able to attend the NASSP conference recently and connect with school leaders from the US, Canada and parts worldwide. The conference used a new format with opportunities to liase with colleagues build in more connection time between sessions. It was also set up to ensure active uses of technology.

As school leaders our “learning communities” are getting ever wider through the use of technology and we can exchange ideas over wide and varied distances as well as multiple time zones. Although the context of our work is often different the knowledge that can be gained via these communities has exponential potential for not only our growth, but those we work with locally.

The world of professional development is changing and although the preferred format is meeting face to face, those initial meetings can and do grow much richer and intensive with the constant communication and cultivating of new information.

I would encourage all of you to expand your learning network into areas that you have not ventured into before. Whether that is Twitter, joining a webcast, accessing new information from online sites or attending a meeting/conference that you may not have otherwise, you will reap the benefits many times over and more importantly so will those we work with.

Have a great spring and keep on learning!

Jameel Aziz  
CAP, President-Elect

## **Language is Culture**

By Margaret Aisicovich B.A., B.Ed. P.B.D.E., M.Ed

Educators today celebrate the differences in their students and enjoy planning differentiated instruction, using multimedia and engaging their students to share their own excitement for learning. In Manitoba, as a province we have come a long way in the area of ESL. We now have a framework to guide our teaching and assessment, IEP's and AEP's to support student learning, as well as newcomer receptionists and assessment tools to ascertain ESL students' incoming level of literacy and numeracy. Most teachers will be aware that an ESL student will require more attention with their second language acquisition, direction as to school rules, and perhaps a buddy to help them find their way around the school for a time. But we still have a long way to go to ensure that we are truly providing equal and appropriate education for ESL students in a culturally sensitive and supportive environment.

Moving to Canada and starting a new life in a foreign country, with a foreign language and foreign customs requires a psychological shift on the part of an ESL student. Not only are these students moving from one continent to another, they are undertaking a far lengthier journey, from one culture to another. Whether they are immigrants or refugees, ESL children rarely have much of a voice in the

decision to move to Canada. Despite their best intentions, teachers need to appreciate the arduous experience that acculturation to Canada presents for ESL students; and that becoming Canadian is not as simple as learning to sing Oh Canada, or memorizing the map of Canada. Culture transcends food, clothing, and procedure; it is at its core language. But I will come back to this.

Starting school in Canada does not end for ESL students with orienting themselves in a new physical environment, but they must also undergo a psychological shift; one where they let go of all they knew, and of who they were and to move towards a future which is not only uncharted but also alien in every possible way. This process is not unlike experiencing the death of a loved one (Brown, 2008); in this case the death of who they were.

While speaking their first language at home, ESL students arriving far from locals will learn a lot in their first Canadian classroom too. They will add new words to their vocabulary such as: toques, scarves, mittens, snowball, and frost bite. Conversely, there are words and concepts in the students' L1 that cannot be translated into English, which these students will share with their teachers and classmates as part of the learning process. These students will also have many new experiences which will make them smile with joy and discovery: the first snowfall, and meeting Canadian students and students from around the world. If their teacher is trained in ESL theory, these students will have their culture and language validated and will have their learning supported by individualized and appropriate, incremental programming (Vygotsky, 1978). Most ESL students will adjust to living and learning in Canada and will build bonds as they work through their personal dissonance and move towards building a new 'Canadian' L2 identity of themselves (Aisicovich, 2012). They will use prior knowledge, and their previous schooling experiences as a springboard for adjusting to school in Canada. It is a fallacy not many teachers are aware of that a student cannot learn two or more languages at the same time (Kouritzin, 2000). Speaking one's first language has no bearing on learning a second or even a third language (Chomsky, 1965). The one constant which ties ESL students to everything they know and hold dear is their L1.

This brings me back to my point which is that culture IS language, and ESL students' first language (L1) roots them to who they are at their core and where they come from. It ties them to their heritage and their family. Whatever else they may give up or negotiate away in favor of becoming more Canadian, their L1 is who they are; it is the original medium by which they made meaning of the world around them. They may choose to cut their hair, and forego wearing a turban at school. They may choose to wear jeans instead of a sari, but they will always be rooted at their point of origin, by their first language, be they Philippine, Indian, Israeli, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Chinese, African etc. Teachers who pass such students in the hall, or see them congregating in the lunch room,

speaking their L1 language, should stop and think before asking these students to “speak English”; because in doing so, those teachers are asking ESL students to give up the last of their identity (Durham, 1980).

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## Region Updates

### Alberta CSL Professional Development Opportunities

#### CAP 2013 – The Summit of Educational Leadership

- Keynote Leaders:
  - Bernajean Porter – Harnessing the Power of Technology: Seeking Higher Ground for Visions and Results
  - William Rankin – Facets: Creating and Leveraging Diverse Learning Environments
  - Sir Ken Robinson, Ph.D.
  - Simon Breakspear (*Learning and Innovation Strategist*) – Leading the Future of Learning
  - Richard Gerver – Tomorrow Belongs to Those Who Prepare for it!
  - Innovative School and District Leaders Panel – to be announced
- Location: Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel
- Present Registration: 600 with a goal of 700 – 750

## International Partnerships

- **Internationalization of School Leadership Project**
  - Building Relations and Collaboration through Research
    - Supporting Student / Teacher / School Leadership Exchanges
  - International Education Exchange Programs
    - Short Term Exchanges (Professional Learning and its potential for collaboration).
    - 1-2 week exchanges for Administrators to South Australia, Germany and Denmark that coordinate breaks.
- **Australian Principals Study Tour to Canada**
  - 20 Principals from the Victorian Principal Association
  - Touring across Canada
    - Toronto – April 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013
    - Calgary – April 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013
    - Vancouver – April 14<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013

## Upcoming Regional Conferences

MAY 2013 School Administrators Conference in St. John's NL. SAC 2013

<http://www.sac2013.ca/> All welcome!