

CESI®

# Newsletter

Canadian Educational Standards Institute

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## CESI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On Wednesday December 5, 2001 the Canadian Educational Standards Institute held its Annual General Meeting at the Albany Club in Toronto. In addition to the presentation of major committee reports (see below), representatives of the Member Schools reviewed CESI's audited financial statements, approved the appointment of a new Chair of the Board of Directors and elected three new members to the Board.

**The Honourable Thomas Hockin** was appointed Chair of the Institute. Mr. Hockin, a former member of the federal cabinet under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, is currently the President and CEO of the Investment Funds Institute of Canada. He was Head of St. Andrews College from 1974 to 1981 and has served on the CESI Board for the past two years.

The three new Board members elected were: **Audrey Hadfield**, Executive Director of MacLachlan College in Oakville, Ontario; **Marilyn McCaig**, Chair of the Board of Governors of Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School in Okotoks, Alberta; and, **William Mitchell**, Head of Selwyn House School in Montreal.

The members of the Institute also recognized and thanked two retiring members of the Board. **Ms Darlene McCue** from Victoria, British Columbia is a former Chair of the Board of St. Michael's University School and has served on the Board for three years. **Mr. Keith Dalglish**, who also stepped down as Chair, has been a member of the Board since 1990. Although Ms McCue was unable to attend the meeting, the membership did have the opportunity to express its thanks to Mr. Dalglish for his outstanding contribution to the Institute and for his long and productive tenure as Chair of the Board of Directors.

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The Institute also received the following reports from its Standing Committees and the Executive Director:

## EVALUATION COUNCIL

Five schools were evaluated in 2001, and have received accreditation as Sustaining Members of CESI. These schools are listed below. All five are day schools. Three of the schools are co-ed and the other two are single gender (one boys' and one girls').

**Trafalgar School for Girls** (Montreal)

**The Toronto French School** (Toronto)

**MacLachlan College** (Oakville)

**Crescent School** (Toronto)

**Toronto Montessori Schools** (Richmond Hill)

In addition, two schools were evaluated and have received approval as Candidate Schools. They are **Hawthorn School for Girls**, a K-OAC girls' day school in Toronto, and **Pretty River Academy**, a Primary to Grade 10 co-ed day school in Collingwood.

As an integral part of the evaluation process, schools are required to respond, within eighteen months, to the CESI Board about actions they have taken with regard to Recommendations from the Visiting Committees. The Evaluation Council appreciates the promptness and thoroughness with which the schools have responded.

Responses to the Report of the Visiting Committee were received from five schools and were reviewed by the CESI Board to determine the extent to which the schools were able to implement the recommendations as required.

Areas covered by recommendations for the schools evaluated include the development of critical thinking skills, curriculum documentation, library organization and access, professional development for faculty, governance and

conflict of interest issues, information technology including hardware, software and training for faculty and staff, safety issues including unobserved access to buildings, safety equipment in science labs, second language instruction, physical facilities in art studios and music rooms, safety in gymnasiums, and safety during drop off and pick up of students.

The Evaluation Committee is very pleased with the efforts of all schools to respond positively and effectively to these Recommendations.

*Dr. Claude Lajeunesse, Chair*

## STANDARDS COUNCIL

The major focus of the year's meetings and discussions was the development of a comprehensive set of Standards for Supplementary Education Providers. These are currently being field tested in a series of pilot projects across the country.

Among the new guidelines developed this year were those in the following areas: Faculty Evaluation; Evaluation Guide for Independent School Administration; School Communications Planning and Audit Guide; and the completion of a comprehensive Guideline for Visiting Committees.

At the present time, the Standards Council is examining alternative assessment and accountability measures to provide member schools with concrete data for use in responding to the publication of narrowly focussed external measures such as the Report Cards issued by the Fraser Institute.

*Ms Patricia Parisi, Chair*

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The past year has witnessed continued growth and change within the Institute. Under the leadership of an active Board of Directors, CESI has expanded services to member schools including the development of resource materials for faculty and administrative evaluation, communications planning, and policy creation; support in Strategic Planning and Board development; and the provision of French-language services.

Among the five schools accredited during the last twelve months, two received Sustaining Member status for the first time. In addition, two new schools were added as Candidate Members, one in Toronto and one in Collingwood, bringing our total membership to a record high of forty-six schools in seven provinces. CESI continues to expand outside of Ontario, and is committed to broadening its national base so as to be representative of excellence in all regions of the country. To this end, CESI appointed its first Director from the Maritimes this year, and has translated all of its key materials and documents into French to support the provision of services to Francophone schools both in Quebec and in the rest of Canada. In this regard the Institute would like to especially acknowledge the groundbreaking work of Dr. Monique MacKinnon who has been instrumental in our efforts to make CESI a truly national organization serving schools in both of our official languages.

The Standards Council has been particularly active this year and the result has been the expansion of the guidelines and support materials for use in our schools. Member schools have been highly supportive in this process both in allowing Visiting Committees to field test guidelines, and through valuable feedback from individual Heads commenting upon the revised structure and approach. In addition, the Standards Council has developed a new set of guidelines and Standards for the review of Supplementary Education Providers and the Board is currently investigating the creation of a separate division for that pur-

pose.

At the suggestion of NAIS, the Evaluation Council now not only reviews the reports on schools (seven this year - five for Sustaining Membership and two for Candidate Membership), but also prepares a full summary report for the entire Board to support them in their deliberations on accreditation.

This year the Canadian Educational Standards Institute received recognition and accreditation from two external assessment organizations. The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) has confirmed its approval and recognition of CESI's Evaluation and Accreditation Procedures. In their report recognizing CESI as the only approved accrediting agency for independent schools in Canada they state: "*NAIS [congratulates] the CESI Board of Directors, the Standards Council, and the Evaluation Council on the excellent processes and publications you have developed to guide schools in their self-study and to assist visiting committees in their work....The entire independent school community benefits from your participation.*"

In addition, the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) in the United States, which is the governing body for all of the regional accrediting agencies (New England, Middle States, etc.), has officially recognized CESI as the approved accrediting body for independent schools in Canada. CITA currently accredits over 30,000 schools worldwide.

CESI continues to play an active role as a source of resources and support to member schools. The professional library is rapidly growing and is actively used, and our series of resource guides remain in great demand.

This year has seen some significant changes in the ways in which CESI communicates to its members and to the community at large. Our regular newsletter has expanded in size to include a greater opportunity for the discussion of current issues. The Institute has received a great

deal of positive feedback with respect to both the resources reviewed and the ideas and comments presented. Secondly, in order to more effectively build Visiting Committees, and to keep current with our members, we have developed a comprehensive database which now allows us to scan for particular skills and experience from among hundreds of recommended educators both inside and outside of our schools. Finally, a major initiative this year was the launching of our new website ([www.cesi.edu](http://www.cesi.edu)). It was a popular “target” almost immediately, and our recent revisions to the site have made it even more accessible to parents and educators.

*Dr. James R. Christopher, Executive Director*

### **School Review**

Thank you to the following individuals for their participation in the recent Visiting Committee review of:

#### **Toronto French School Crescent School**

Jim Officer, Chair Muir Meredith, Chair  
Fiona Clay John Boyko  
Marie Crozier Terry Gorrie  
Marisa DeLuca Stephan Grasmuck  
Ellen Grant Linda Lloyd  
Claude Hackett Janet Mackinnon  
Sara MacKay John Marinelli  
Kathy Nikidis Chris Miedema  
Margaret Rojas Roberta Murray-Hirst  
Danielle Rougeau John Stone  
Suzana Symanski Monique MacKinnon  
Monique MacKinnon

### **Upcoming Evaluations**

#### **Pickering College,**

Newmarket, April 21<sup>st</sup> to April 24<sup>th</sup>  
chaired by Tam Matthews, Principal of Ashbury College in Ottawa.

#### **Bishop’s College,**

Lennoxville, April 28<sup>th</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup>  
chaired by Claire Sumerlus, Head of Balmoral Hall School in Winnipeg.

## **CESI PARENT SURVEY**

Recently there has been much discussion as to how to respond to school “ratings” such as those published by the Fraser Institute. One suggestion, raised at the CAIS conference in October, was for schools to collectively generate their own hard data to attempt to quantify the excellent programmes and services being provided in independent schools right across Canada.

The recent Ontario Government Parent survey has provided a vehicle to initiate such a process. In early December, households across that province received school satisfaction surveys. Parents were encouraged to complete the questionnaire and to submit it to Queen’s Park by the end of January. The survey focused upon such issues as: reporting and communication; quality of instruction; breadth of services; range of extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities; safety and security; and general satisfaction. The next week, a modified version of the survey was sent by CESI to all member schools in Ontario. It was suggested that our schools distribute the same survey to their parents. One possibility would be that the information gleaned could then be used in comparative positioning by individual schools (i.e. “here is how our parents see us compared to the local public schools”). More importantly, it is our request that schools submit their findings to our office to be compiled into a province-wide report. The statistics for individual schools will not be cited. Instead, we will prepare a global summary of how parents see our schools.

It is our intent to issue a press release with our statistics to coincide with the report issued by the provincial government and/or the Fraser Institute. As this initiative will be more effective if we have the participation of as many schools as possible, we have encouraged all member schools in Ontario to take part. If other schools would like to pursue a similar course of action, please feel free to contact our office at [execdir@cesi.edu](mailto:execdir@cesi.edu).

## RESPONDING TO CRISIS

The events of the past fall have put all of us back on alert with respect to being prepared for the worst. While most schools have a crisis intervention plan in the files, many have not been taken out and dusted off since they were created. NAIS recently published a quick checklist to make certain that your plan contains all that it needs to. Some of the questions that they posed include:

- How does your school communicate information to teachers and staff in the event of an emergency?
- How many adults in your school are trained in first aid? Is it time for a refresher course?
- Do teachers know where to go and what to do if a crisis situation requires immediate evacuation of the school? Is there a procedure for “locking down” the campus?
- Do you keep a copy of contact information and copies of medical release forms for students, faculty and staff in a secure, remote (off-campus) location?
- Do you have access to mental health professionals who can help your community cope with a crisis?
- Do you have a crisis communication plan in place for dealing with parents, Board members and the media?

Crises can take all forms. While most B.C. schools are prepared with “earthquake kits” and procedures, how many Quebec and eastern Ontario schools were prepared for the Ice Storm of 1998? What plans do you have in place for dealing with the sudden illness, injury or death of a member of the school community?

At St. Clement’s School, in Toronto, the administration, faculty, staff and students are subjected to a “surprise” crisis simulation each year. Orchestrated by outside professionals, the school finds itself presented with a crisis with which to deal at the beginning of a regular school day. There is no prior notice or scheduling of the event (just like in the real world) and the members of the school

community are expected to respond in exactly the way in which they would in the case of a real crisis.

After the fact, there is a debriefing and assessment of the success to which the school handled the incident. An annual exercise like that can keep procedures fresh and ensures that new students and staff members are made aware of the steps to take in case of an emergency.

Schools that are interested in exploring the area of crisis planning might be interested in visiting the website of the National Association of School Psychologists at [www.teachersfirst.com/crisis](http://www.teachersfirst.com/crisis).

Another useful tool in developing a Crisis intervention plan is to develop a Crisis Response Team. The Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) has developed a video reference tool that will assist any organization in implementing such a team. The video covers areas such as:

- Why a team approach is the preferred way of dealing with a crisis
- How to select your Crisis Response Team members
- How to select a team leader
- The team leader’s responsibilities

If you would like to borrow this video, which is accompanied by a workbook, please contact Sheri Little at CESI.

### Feedback on Board Performance

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In an era of accountability, Boards of Governors must take active responsibility for their own effectiveness. Board members are trustees for the “ownership” of the school. Therefore they bear responsibility for the integrity of the governance process including:

- Their own growth and development
- Their own job design
- Their own discipline
- Their own performance

Many Boards tend to depend upon the Head to keep them current and on task, but sound Board practice will help to lessen "hi-jacking" of the Board's agenda through individual negativism or digressing into unrelated topics. In addition, it is also important to effectively monitor not only process, but time on task.

An effective Board usually does not intrude into day-to-day operation or short-term management issues. The added value that they bring to the school is as a watchdog to ensure that stated Board ends are met in support of the Vision and Mission of the school.

However, from time to time, every Board drifts a bit off course into areas that are more appropriately the purview of the Head and Administrative team. The characteristics of this drift tend to be:

- Too much time on the trivial
- Short-term bias (organizational myopia) dealing with the near term or even the past
- Reactive discussions in response to staff initiatives rather than acting proactively
- Too much time spent reviewing, rehashing, and redoing
- Unclear accountability

To counteract this tendency to drift, effective Boards regularly ask: "Where are we headed? How are we spending our time? Do we need to make any changes?"

The process can be simple. During a discussion, for example, the Chair might check the focus of the meeting by asking: "What is the policy question we are trying to answer?" or "How does this line of discussion relate to the issue we were asked to contemplate?" Gently posed, such inquiries can help to keep the Board focused.

Another strategy is to have the members of the Board rate the effectiveness of each meeting before they leave. It can be as simple as having them mark on a file card. (An example is provided at the end of this article).

In addition there could be space for an open ended question or place for feedback into what Board mem-

bers would like to see changed. Simply, in keeping with the basic duties of the Board, you might ask the basic question: "What was the most valuable contribution we made to the life of the school today?"

The responses of Board members could be collated and shared initially with the Chair and the Head. This steady stream of feedback will provide early warning signals that should allow the Head and the Chair to detect and correct any undue inclinations to meddle in management to the neglect of policy development and the support of the Vision and Mission. At the next meeting the results could be shared with the entire Board to help to set the tone for the day's discussions.

Every year or so a more elaborate process could be used through a review of the minutes and a more formal survey of Board members in order to identify and analyze the issues that most occupied the Board's time and attention over the past year. Were they matters of Vision and Mission? Policy Development? Long range goal setting? Or was the Board preoccupied with the nuts and bolts of regular operations.

In the midst of all of this navel gazing, don't forget, it is also important that the Board reach out to its constituent groups to receive feedback. Sometimes a little distance can be a valuable resource to provide the perspective needed.

<b>CESI School: <u>Board</u> Meeting Date: _____</b>					
<i>The issues covered today were:</i>					
<b>Trivial</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 Essential</b>
<b>1. The materials and information provided were:</b>					
<b>Worthless</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 Indispensable</b>
<b>2. Today's discussion concerned primarily:</b>					
<b>Operations</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 Policy and Strategy</b>
<b>Comments:</b>					

## CURRENT RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

### New from ASCD

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in Virginia has long been an excellent source for cutting edge and highly usable publications. Two recent books have practical applications for both teachers and administrators.

**Using the Internet to Strengthen Curriculum (2001)** is not a book for "techies". It is a book about teaching and learning. Well-written and easy to follow, the author takes the reader step by step through the process of increasing the effectiveness of internet use for students. Using the strategies outlined in the book, teachers can help their students to use search engines more effectively, conduct sound research, and construct web-based presentations on what they have learned. Sequentially organized, the book could easily be used as the basis for a curriculum guide to teaching appropriate and efficient internet use. It is well worth a look.

Larry Lewin, *Using the Internet to Strengthen Curriculum* (Alexandria: ASCD, 2001)

How many of us have taken part in a weekend "Kepner-Tregoe" workshop? These gurus of decision-making were all the rage in the 1980s. Twenty years later, there is still much of value in their work. **Analytic Processes for School Leaders (2001)** is co-written by Benjamin Tregoe with Cynthia Richetti. The book outlines four basic "rational" thinking processes: Decision Analysis (to help make choices); Potential Problem Analysis (to help implement changes or plans); Problem Analysis (to help to figure out 'what went wrong!'); and Situation Appraisal (to help to better understand and plan for resolution of a complex issue.) Directly aimed at educators and school-related issues, the processes described in the book may be equally applied in a staff discussion; Board meeting; or senior History class

room. The section on Situation Appraisal is of particular interest to school administrators.

Cynthia T. Richetti & Benjamin B. Tregoe, *Analytical Processes for School Leaders* (Alexandria: ASCD, 2001)

### Occupational Health and Safety

The Peel District School Board has put together an excellent "how to" CDROM to guide school heads in the exercise of their responsibilities for occupational health and safety. Entitled "**The Principal Problem**", the programme is a training course which is designed to provide school administrators with the awareness and tools to meet all legal responsibilities for OH&S. As the law requires that a supervisor exercise "due diligence" at all times and therefore to take "every reasonable precaution" to prevent a foreseeable accident, it is essential that all school leaders are aware of their responsibilities. The CD includes a pre-test, case studies, reference materials, and a "final exam" to determine how effectively you have mastered the materials.

It is well-worth a review by Principals and any administrators or supervisors who are responsible for Plant and Maintenance issues at the school.

Peel District School Board, *Occupational Health and Safety: The Principal Problem* (Mississauga: Innovations Media, 1999)

**CESI LENDING LIBRARY - NEW TITLES**

**Title   Author   Publisher**

**Analytic Proceses for School Leaders   Richetti/Tregoe   ASCD**

**Using the Internet to Strengthen Curriculum   Larry Lewin   ASCD**

**The Principal Problem   Peel District School Board   Innovations   Media  
Developing An Effective Crisis Response   Crisis Prevention Institute Inc.   CPI  
Team**



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