

Getting Schooled

Welcome to ***Getting Schooled***, a new contribution to *Psymposium* penned by members of the PAA School Psychology Committee. ***Getting Schooled*** will be a regular feature that will discuss issues, concerns, research and practice as it relates to school psychology.

How did the School Psychology Committee come about? In June of 2009, four PAA board members attended the Education Minister's symposium on the *Setting the Direction* initiative. Following this meeting, the members in attendance recommended to the PAA board that our Association become involved in this initiative as the impact on the well-being of children and the role of school psychologists was unclear. The PAA board struck a School Psychology Task Force and directed it to respond proactively to the *Setting the Direction* initiative through a position paper. The resulting position paper, "*The Pivotal Role of Alberta School Psychology Services: A Response to Alberta Education's Setting the Direction*" was based on recent school psychology literature and input from provincial focus groups. The position paper was approved by the PAA board in November of 2010 and was subsequently sent to the Minister of Education, PAA members, and 26 key stakeholder groups across the province. Feedback from the various audiences has been very positive. This paper is available for public viewing at http://www.psychologistsassociation.ab.ca/site/reports_and_submissions. Our sincere thanks and appreciation to the members of the School Psychology Task Force: Dr. Brent Macdonald, Dr. Shawn Crawford, Dr. David Peat, Mr. Roger Moses, Dr. Charlene Barva, Mr. Pierre Berube, Dr. R. Coranne Johnson and PAA members who contributed to the position paper through their participation in provincial focus groups.

With the completion of the position paper the task force had fulfilled its mandate. However, the task force members recommended to the PAA board that a standing committee be formed to continue to advocate for the practice of school psychology. The PAA board agreed and the School Psychology Committee was formed this past spring with representative membership from various school psychologists' practice perspectives (e.g. university, school divisions, private practice). The committee members are Dr. David Piercey, Dr. Michael Zwiers, Dr. Kelly Schwartz, Dr. Shawn Crawford, Dr. Charlene Barva, Ms. Michele Pentyluk, Dr. Brent Macdonald, Mr. Pierre Berube, and Dr. R. Coranne Johnson (Chair). We look forward to working with PAA membership to enhance the practice of school psychology in the province of Alberta.

The Work of the Committee. The committee has developed a work plan for the 2011-12 school year that will target the dissemination of the information articulated in the position paper. The committee is pursuing opportunities to present and discuss the position paper with parents, educators, school board

leaders, government representatives and school psychologists through meetings, conferences, and publications. Included in the work plan is the development of informational materials (e.g. brochures, PAA website). As this work unfolds, the committee is hoping for the volunteer support of members in sub-committees and convention booths. PAA members are encouraged to contact us with their input at schoolpsychology@psychologistsassociation.ab.ca. This e-mail address will be responded to on a weekly basis. The committee is looking forward to reciprocal communication with our colleagues and is eagerly anticipating the upcoming year.

On behalf of the School Psychology Committee,
Have a terrific 2011-12 school year,

Coranne