



# Superintendent's Message

## May 2011

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### **Introduction/Update**

The end of another school year approaches ... with an opportunity to reflect upon the events which have brought us to this point and to look ahead in preparation for the coming September. This newsletter references some interests and activities of the APSEA community, with features about students, parents, staff and board. Of course, you are invited to contribute items for future editions.

### Strategic Plan

We are almost two-thirds through our first strategic plan. There have been significant changes over the past two years in our organizational structure and programs; those changes sought to ensure APSEA continues to meet the needs of the children and families we serve in the most effective and efficient manner possible. An interim report on the implementation of the strategic plan can be viewed on the APSEA website in the staff section. A focused review will take place during the 2011-12 school year; your ongoing engagement in the process will be critical as our course is further adjusted for the next three-year strategic plan.

### Contract Negotiations

Collective agreements with the NSTU, NSGEU and NBUPPE have expired. A new tentative agreement was reached with the NBUPPE on 13 May 2011. Talks with the other two Unions are expected to commence during the next school year.

### Calendar for 2011-12

The APSEA Calendar for 2011-12 was distributed in April via email, and may also be viewed on the APSEA website by clicking the "Main Page" button and then the "Calendar" button.

### APSEA Parents' Association

The 15-16 April weekend saw 45 parents come to APSEA for workshops on a wide range of topics to help families in dealing with children's hearing and vision loss. About half of the participants were "first-timers", showing promise for the future. The AGM/election of officers was also encouraging, with the following Executive resulting:

Allison Savoury, President  
Ross Lloyd, Vice-President (BVI)  
Kelly Hicks, Vice-President (DHH)  
Patricia Garlock, Secretary  
Michelle Grant, Treasurer

Congratulations to our new parent leaders! Special appreciation goes to Directors Lori Moore and Glenda Parsons and their team for organizing a most successful event.

### **Staffing Update**

The staffing process is typically a major thrust in the April - June period and the recent organizational changes make it even more so this year. Overall, we have been quite pleased with the quality and volume of candidates for the posted positions. The staffing update below notes staff who are new to APSEA and those who are changing location or position for the 2011-12 school year. (These changes are based on the transfer/interview process as of May 27.)

Elizabeth Lefler – O&M Consultant (St. John's, NL)

Dori Powell – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Halifax, NS)

Michelle Taylor – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Saint John, NB)

Frank Murphy – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Sydney, NS)

Annette Manuel – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Charlottetown, PEI)

Mary Jean Bray – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Halifax, NS)

Sarah (Callahan) Kilfoil – BVI Classroom Teacher (APSEA Centre)

Sheri Stevens – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Amherst, NS)

Sarah Eddy – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Halifax, NS)

Lisa Creighton – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Saint John, NB)

Donna Lagacy – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Saint John East, NB)

Cindy Millar – Augmentative Alternative Communication Specialist (APSEA Centre)

### Educational Interpreter Consultant

Amy Parsons has recently joined APSEA in the role of Educational Interpreter Consultant. Amy, a dedicated advocate who is bilingual in ASL and English, brings to her role excellent leadership, advocacy and resource development skills. We are delighted to welcome Amy to APSEA.

## **Supervisory Appointments**

I am pleased to announce the following appointments, effective August 2011:

### Supervisor of Assessment and Short Term Programs (BVI)

**Eva McFadden** has an M.Ed in Special Education and Curriculum, B.Ed in Special Education and a Bachelor of Child Studies. She has extensive experience in a variety of teaching and consultative roles in the public school systems in Newfoundland and Ontario and in the post-secondary system and APSEA in Nova Scotia. Eva has strong experience in professional development and in working with teams.

### Supervisor of Assistive Technology

**Lynn Seymour-Lalonde** has an M.Ed in Educational Psychology with a specialization in Blindness and Visual Impairment, M.Ed in Special Education with a minor in Educational Literacy and a B.Ed. She has 19 years experience working as an itinerant teacher for students who are blind or visually impaired with APSEA and during that time has gained a strong knowledge and skills in assistive technology. Lynn is currently the practicum supervisor for Master of Education students in the MSVU program. She has taught at the post-secondary level and presented at a number of conferences in Canada and the United States.

### Supervisor of Orientation and Mobility

**Joe MacDonell** has worked in the Orientation and Mobility field since 1992, including 6 years as an O&M Instructor with CNIB in Ontario and 13 years as the O&M Consultant for Nova Scotia. Joe has a Bachelor of Arts from St. Francis Xavier University and is a graduate of the O&M Instructor Program from Mohawk College. He also has extensive experience in leadership roles and committees both within APSEA and the community.

### Supervisor of Residential, Summer and Weekend Programs

**Sheila Jamieson** holds an M.Ed in Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, M.Ed in Teaching Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired, B.Ed, and a Bachelor of Child Study. She is currently working on a Master of Educational Administration and Leadership. Sheila has been a residence counselor and teacher at APSEA for a number of years and is currently in a term position as itinerant teacher for students who are blind or visually impaired in Nova Scotia. She is the Coordinator for the MSVU Masters Program and has done a number of presentations over the years.

These individuals bring a wealth of training, experience and dedication to the children and families served by APSEA. We very much look forward to working with them in their new positions.

### Retirees

During the upcoming inservice, several staff members will be honoured at the Retirement Banquet on 23 June. As there was not a Retirement Banquet in the fall of 2010, the list below includes those who retired during the 2009-10 school year and those retiring at the end of this current school year.

Joey Baird  
Jane Brown  
Stephen Cripps  
Carol DeYoung

Christy Everett  
Denis Groleau  
Barry Imber  
Vicki Jeans

Suzanne Martin  
Karen Umphrey  
Genevieve Wales

## Autism Project

Since 2006, several reports have recommended APSEA could play a valuable role in the coordination and delivery of programs and services related to autism across Atlantic Canada. A CAMET-commissioned study concurred with the advantages of collaboration among the Atlantic Provinces, but recommended it "should take the form of indirect, rather than direct services" (Bryson, 2009, 19). Following further review and consultation, the APSEA Board of Directors approved the Autism Action Plan on 19 October 2010. It specified direct service delivery will remain within each province; the focus of APSEA's role will be on "indirect services" benefitting the school-aged population. The Autism project will thus provide support to province-based services and facilitate the sharing of expertise among stakeholders.

The areas of indirect service include:

- Research to clarify and articulate standards of practice (policy review and development)
- Professional development and training
- Support for parents/families
- A web-based library/resource centre

APSEA will oversee the process through an ASD advisory committee, consisting of the four Directors of Student Services and a representative autism consultant from each of the provinces, chaired by the APSEA Superintendent. This committee will report to the Board of Directors, as per other standing committees, on a regular basis. The action plan called for the appointment of an Autism Project Coordinator, with the responsibility of providing "on the ground" leadership to the process. The Coordinator will work with the ASD advisory committee and liaise with provincial partners to facilitate the actioning and ongoing management of the project. The goal of the partnership is to address issues related to programs and services for school-aged children and youth with ASD. A detailed work plan will be determined by the Coordinator in collaboration with the Provincial Departments of Education, the "taking stock" of current needs in the identified areas (preliminary areas attached) and potential opportunities for collaboration, including complex cases. In a very real sense, the precise nature of the role and the project will evolve in relation to the needs of the provinces.

The potential benefits of this project are immense. Interprovincial collaboration is expected to result in increased effectiveness; the sharing of best practice, professional development/training, and resources will help ensure each province operates at the highest, leading edge standard. Furthermore, the economies of scale currently touted to accrue from the APSEA model for children with vision and hearing loss should be extended to this joint initiative in autism.

The role of the Coordinator is pivotal to the project and we are delighted with the recruitment of Shelia Bulmer to the position. Previously the Provincial Autism Consultant for the New Brunswick Department of Education, Ms. Bulmer's extensive training and experience with autism services across several provinces should bode well for the new Atlantic Canadian partnership (as per the biography below). Her appointment has been extended through 30 June 2012.

### Biography - Shelia Bulmer

After completing her graduate work in Ontario, Shelia began her career in Manitoba as a school psychologist, before moving to Calgary, where she lived for eight years. Her knowledge and scope in the field of psychology were honed through her work at an adolescent residential treatment facility. As the Coordinator of the Language and Behavior Program at the Alberta Children's Hospital, Shelia's career passion for the field of Autism was born.

Shelia returned to New Brunswick in 1987 with her family of three young children to be closer to her roots and extended family. In the past eleven years, Shelia worked at the Department level designing and developing provincial programs in the areas of attachment, community engagement and more recently autism. This assignment gave her considerable field experience in the early years of inclusion, during which she worked with children and families across a broad range of exceptionalities and backgrounds. Shelia was the lead in the development of the current intensive early intervention program for preschool children with autism and the accompanying training program through the UNB College of Extended Learning.



Shelia at the 2010 Olympics in BC.

Shelia refers to her new position as Autism Project Coordinator at APSEA as the pinnacle in her career. She is energized by the vision of a highly competent and collaborative Atlantic workforce in the education of children with autism. Recognizing the accomplishments that the Provinces have already made in this area, Shelia sees this vision as highly plausible with the support, work and commitment of the Deputy Ministers and the Interprovincial Advisory Committee, supported by the APSEA infrastructure.

### **Student Leadership Training Module, 28-30 April 2011**

A "great crew" of four BVI and seventeen DHH students attended APSEA's first Student Leadership Training Module.

The program started with a discussion of what *Leadership* is, why it happens, what someone needs to be a good leader, and why these students wanted to attend. *Communication* was explored; how it happens and what can prevent effective communication from taking place. *Counseling* was examined, including examples of 'Do's' and 'Don'ts' and key phrases for encouraging other people to talk. *Leadership styles* and responsibilities of a good leader were reviewed.

*Teamwork* was a focus when small groups planned assigned functions (e.g., birthday party, fundraiser, after-school program, and a peer activity night). This exercise required them to identify available resources, design a poster, invitations, etc., and present their plan to the group.

On Thursday evening, Karen Bassett of Neptune Theatre led the group in an energetic Improvisation. As cooperation and teamwork is integral to successful improvement (Make Offers, and say, “Yes!”), this experience yielded insightful comments by students the following morning. It allowed them to assess and evaluate what worked and didn't work for them as a group, and what they might do to make things even better “the next time”.

*Role models* were explored, first by asking each student to identify someone in their life who was their role model and why that person was important to them. They were also given a list of well-known leaders who are deaf/ hard-of-hearing and/or blind/visually impaired, and asked to do some on-line research to find out what made them leaders. On the last day, students were asked to identify a person to whom they were a role model. While not all the students were comfortable doing this, the examples given were considered and, in a few cases, quite touching.

We appreciate the amazing amount of support from APSEA staff for this jam-packed program. Janet MacVicar and Sally Austin, the two teachers who developed and delivered the module, did a wonderful job of creating a well-paced and exciting program which kept the students engaged throughout. Centre staff, particularly Mary Jean Bray, Rachel Perrier, Fraser Morrison, and Reg Dunphy ensured the group had everything they needed. The interpreters hustled to cover group activities and were quite heroic at the Improvisation. Residence staff went above and beyond in ensuring the students' well being after school hours. The Cafeteria staff cheerfully found food, even when the teachers (Sally and Janet) arrived at the tail-end of dinner. Itinerant teachers sent a wonderful group of students. Nichola Jackson-Davie and Susan McIntosh stepped in at the last minute to provide back-up.

Everyone was there to support this great group of future leaders. After the success of this module we are looking forward to the development of a follow up module in the winter or spring of 2012.

## 2011 National Inclusive Education Award



(L-R) Jody Carr, Minister of Education; **Susan Silliker**, Marlene Munn, the Hon. Graydon Nicholas

In February at the NB Association of Community Living 2011 National Inclusive Education Award Ceremony, Susan Silliker (Oral Interpreter) was presented with a National Recognition Award. This was presented to Susan by Jody Carr, Minister of Education, for her exemplary efforts in supporting inclusive practices. Susan was nominated for this award by the principal and other staff at Geary Elementary School. Congratulations Susan!

## Looking Ahead

While the elusive warmer temperatures will eventually arrive, APSEA staff will remain busy over the summer months. Summer camps are scheduled for 3-8 July at APSEA for BVI and DHH students (Visual and Performing Arts); and the APSEA/Elks Deaf Camp will be held in Harvey, NB from 31 July - 6 August.

The two MSVU cohorts (BVI and DHH) have courses scheduled for 4-22 July, which will be held at MSVU.

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual Sign Language Immersion Program is scheduled for 25-29 July at APSEA (information is available on the website).

APSEA will host, for the first time, the Clarke Mainstream Services Educational Oral Transliteration training program for interpreting staff on 2-5 August, and the annual Interpreter Workshop will follow on 22-24 August.

Our year-end inservice takes place on 22-24 June in Halifax ... I will see many of you there.

Have a wonderful summer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bertram Tulk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "B".

Bertram Tulk, EdD  
Superintendent