

The  **ADVOCATE** JUNE 2011
ISSUE NO. 205 **Newsletter**

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS

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Professional Development: **What's Its Role?**

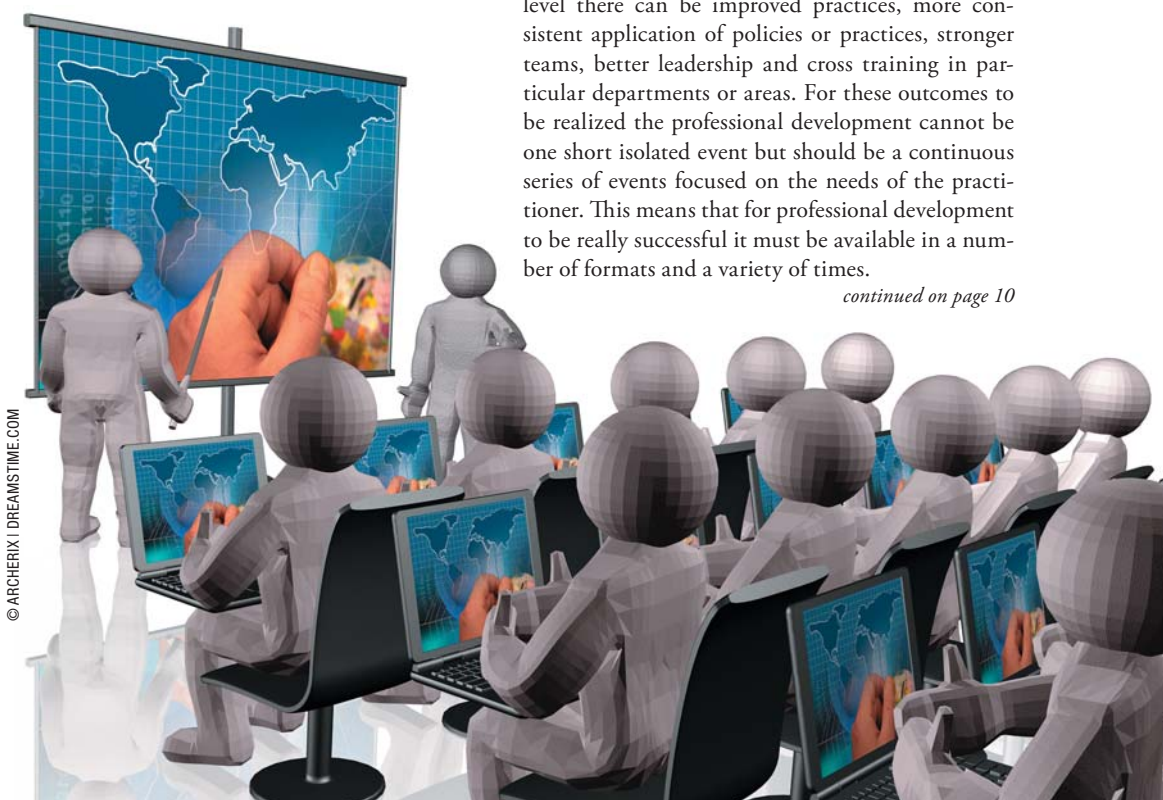
by Bill Blackie, OASBO Executive Director

It's eight thirty in the morning and I have just arrived for a workshop. The traffic into town was a mess. A trip which on a normal day (if that really exists) would have been forty-five or fifty minutes took almost two hours. I look around the packed hotel meeting room. People are busily working on their smart phones. Some of the tables have conversations going on about family and friends and others are talking about the new project at work or how their department has been asked to do even more and they can't even get the existing work done. Still others, exhausted from the trip into the city, search for coffee and a friendly face. As the workshop host goes over details about today's event I can feel my body finally start to relax. The speaker

is introduced and I wonder how anyone could get done all of the things in that resume. As the last few words of the introduction float out over the audience and I take one last look at the workshop flyer I wonder to myself, "Why am I here?" I'm certain that others must be asking the same question.

I'm here to get some new information about expanding the use of video conferencing but this is just another part of my ongoing professional development. With a broader view of that question, we can look at the role that professional development plays in both a personal and a corporate environment. At a personal level there can be improved performance, the acquisition of new skills, improved leadership skills and personal satisfaction. At the corporate level there can be improved practices, more consistent application of policies or practices, stronger teams, better leadership and cross training in particular departments or areas. For these outcomes to be realized the professional development cannot be one short isolated event but should be a continuous series of events focused on the needs of the practitioner. This means that for professional development to be really successful it must be available in a number of formats and a variety of times.

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The Ontario Association of
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144 Main Street North, Suite 207
Markham, ON L3P 5T3
Tel.: 905-209-9704
Fax: 905-209-9705
E-mail: office@oasbo.org
Website: www.oasbo.org

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Congratulations to Russ Coles!

2011 McCordic Award Winner

The McCordic Award, the highest award offered by the Association, is presented annually at the banquet of the Annual Conference of the Ontario Association of School Business Officials. It recognizes an individual's outstanding contribution to the service of school business. This contribution will probably have taken place over a number of years and may have been through the Association, through service with a board, the Ministry of Education, a college or university or through an organization devoted to education in Ontario.

This Award was established in 1980 to honour a former executive secretary of the Association, W.J. McCordic, who made exceptional contributions in the field of school business administration. As an outstanding educational leader in the province of Ontario, Bill's aim was to "keep the child front and centre." Bill's exemplary leadership has touched countless individuals in public education. The award is bestowed upon an individual who best exemplifies the attributes of Bill McCordic.

*Russ is a huge believer
in the power of
collaboration.*

We are pleased to add **Russ Coles** to the list of worthy recipients. Russ is currently the Senior Manager of Enterprise Applications for the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) where he has been an employee for twenty-one years. As well as being part of the IT leadership team, Russ has been very active in equity work, co-chairing an equity committee and being a member of the YRDSB Race Relations Advisory Committee for almost 15 years. He has demonstrated and championed collaboration in a variety of ways and in a variety of settings. As a twelve-year member of OASBO, he has been involved in a number of leadership roles. These include chairing the Information and Communication



Technology committee (ICT), chairing the ICT workshop committee, sitting as a member of the Rep Team and assisting with the communication sub-committee and the OASBO website renovation. Russ is currently completing his term as a member of the OASBO Board of Directors.

Russ is very generous with his time, skills and talents. He took on a significant leadership role in the Privacy and Information Management (PIM) taskforce. He played an integral role in PIM's initial development and its ongoing activities. This taskforce created a toolkit for use by all Ontario school boards to evaluate and mitigate privacy issues. He is a strong advocate for the building of a privacy and information management culture in school districts. With this focus he has been a presenter on this topic to the Council of Directors of Education (CODE), OASBO and regional MISA PNCs.

Russ is a huge believer in the power of collaboration. He is the co-founder of *Compass for Success*, a collaboration of school boards working together to build capacity to allow the use of data to inform practices that will improve student achievement. Teachers, principals, superintendents, directors and business officials are now able to see and use data in ways that help to improve student achievement across the province.

Outside of his work life, Russ and his wife Jennie run an adolescent treatment foster home in conjunction with York Region Children's Aid Society. ■



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Ruhi Tuzlak
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Superintendent of Facility Services
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Upper Grand DSB

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Manager, Human Resource Services
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Paul De Cock
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Northwestern Ontario Student Services Consortium

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Jerry Stoangi
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Lori Barnes
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Team Manager, Upper Grand DSB

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Lambton Kent DSB

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Durham DSB

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London District Catholic SB

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Superintendent of Finance,
Upper Grand DSB

Shirley Yourkevich,
Manager, Application Development & Support
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Frances Boomhouwer
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OMC Committee meets with Ministry Representatives

by Mark Galonski, Controller of Facilities Services
Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB

The OMC Committee meets regularly across the province and tries to organize a professional development session at each meeting. On occasion, staff from the ministry uses these meeting venues to share information on coming initiatives or to clarify process or funding. Spending time and getting to know the ministry staff has proven to be valuable to committee members and there continues to be a need to meet with ministry staff, given the complexity and volume of programs being introduced in public education.

Shown above is one such instance where Amy Olmstead (Manager in the Capital Programs Branch at the ministry) attended the OMC meeting in Kingston. Following a very comprehensive discussion on using biomass as an energy source, Amy brought the attendees up to date on the roll out of the new building assessment program. Committee members left with a good understanding of the schedule and process required when the consultants (Stantec) for their project arrive at their board. ■

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This year Johnson Controls is launching a new program for the K-12 sector that is designed to help school divisions direct facility renewal funding toward achievement of their educational goals. This comprehensive mission-relevant business model aggregates (a) facility backlog demands and (b) efficiency needs with (c) learning environment quality requirements, into a clear set of investment priorities. Since each of these three essential elements can now be measured and tracked, the full value of facility renewal investments can be clearly demonstrated in terms of advances in school climate and student outcomes.

This new business model not only elevates the strategic value that the facilities team adds to educational outcomes, but for the first time ever, it provides educators with clarity on how facility conditions impact student outcomes. The new program includes a comprehensive blueprint, along with powerful new tools and techniques, which will allow school divisions to boost school climate through well-planned facility renewal projects.

While implementation of this program does not change the current need for increased facility renewal capital, it does add badly-needed transparency to the question about where, and how much, facility renewal investment is needed to support student outcomes.

We invite you to call one of our Ontario K-12 Learning Environment Specialists to discuss: Jeff Clarke, 416-524-9382, or Lisa Bugler, 416-803-9592.



Johnson Controls ranked #1 in *Corporate Responsibility Magazine's* 12th annual "100 Best Corporate Citizens List"

By Steve Mills, Manager of Purchasing Services, York Catholic District School Board and Michael Burjaw, Senior Purchasing Officer, Halton District School Board, on behalf of the members of OASBO's Supply Chain Management Committee

The Ministry of Finance (MOF) established the Broader Public Sector Supply Chain Secretariat (BPS-SCS) in 2005 to administer the OntarioBuys program. The mandate of OntarioBuys is to facilitate and co-ordinate the adoption of leading supply chain practices across the Ontario BPS to realize greater operational efficiencies and accountability (available at www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/bpssupplychain/ontariobuys).

Recently, the Ontario government passed the “Broader Public Sector Accountability Act 2010” (Bill 122). The purpose of the Act is to increase the financial accountability of organizations in the BPS. The Act provides the authority for the Management Board of Cabinet to issue directives governing the procurement of goods and services by Ontario School Boards (Note: municipal agencies are not included). Section 12 of the Act (available at www.ontla.on.ca/bills) refers to the requirements of school boards. The guideline was

- provide consistent procurement practices for BPS organizations;
- ensure that publicly funded goods and services are acquired through a process that is open, fair and transparent;
- ensure accountability and responsibilities through each stage of the procurement process; and
- maximize the value that BPS organizations receive from the use of public funds.

(available at www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/BPS Supply Chain Secretariat/BPS Procurement Directive)

- competitive acquisition of consulting services regardless of dollar value;
- the approval authority framework related to consulting services; and
- the effective management of BPS contracts.

The Directive recognizes that the Ontario government has signed two interprovincial trade agreements covering procurement: the



“Trade & Co-operation Agreement between Ontario & Quebec,” and the “Agreement on Internal Trade” (AIT). These agreements require that contracts valued at \$100,000 or more for goods, services and construction are properly advertised (www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/English/procurement.html).

Some other key areas in the Directive include: a Procurement Approval Authority Schedule (AAS) for consulting services; and Competitive Procurement Thresholds for Goods, Non-Consulting Services and Construction. The Ministry of Finance, in full co-operation with the Ministry of Education, has developed a full suite of templates, webinars, meetings and tools for practitioners.

The BPS Procurement Directive Implementation Guidebook was released in April 2011. The Guidebook serves as a companion document to the BPS Procurement Directive and provides additional detail and direction for each of the 25 mandatory requirements.

The OASBO Supply Chain Management (SCM) and Operations, Maintenance & Construction (OMC) Committees held a joint workshop in February 2011 for the purpose of familiarizing staff

with the requirements of the Directive. The 2011/12 Master Transfer Payment Agreements will be updated to reflect Bill 122 and the new Directives. A memo will be released to the sector detailing the compliance strategy.

The Ministry will be providing funding to develop a sector-driven strategy to ensure compliance. The funds will be added to COSBO’s (Council of Senior Business Officials) Efficiency & Effectiveness funding but will be “earmarked” so as to only be applicable to support school board staff to adopt and implement the new Directive. Working committees will be struck to examine Board policies and procedures, suggest change/compliance strategies and look at system wide implementation, as well as suggest other tools in addition to those from MOF and MOE.

All school boards need to review the new Procurement Directive, benchmark the mandatory requirements against current procurement policies and procedures, identify gaps, and begin discussions about steps that need to be taken to ensure compliance with the Directive. ■

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OASBO has as one of its strategic directions the provision of high quality professional development at all opportunities. To do this, the various committees have monthly or near monthly meetings at which information on new and emerging practices is presented. In addition, several of the OASBO committees and the association as a whole present workshops and conferences that provide more focused professional development activities. These meetings also provide an environment that allows the building of personal networks with others who have similar job functions. In addition to these activities OASBO has partnered with the University of Guelph Department of Open Learning to provide some focused opportunities for professional development.

The University of Guelph partnership has allowed OASBO to develop certificates in Human Resources Management, Payroll Management, Information & Communication Technology Management, Pupil Transportation Management, Freedom of Information and Records Information Management, Disability and Attendance Management and Facilities Management. Each of these programs is delivered in four one-week classroom segments. These courses are designed to highlight best practices and, whenever possible, linked to certification by professional groups.

Recently, OASBO moved into the online learning environment with the University of Guelph by offering a diploma in School Board Administration. There are six courses in the online environment. Each course runs for ten weeks and is presented at a post-graduate level. To be awarded the diploma, a candidate must complete the six online courses and four courses in the existing certificate programs. Fall 2010 saw the first set of graduates from the diploma courses. In many ways this could be

seen as the first step toward voluntary certification for business officials. In addition, the programs help develop a highly skilled mid-level management group. There seems to be a drive toward more certification in the business aspects of education. The Association for School Business Officials International (ASBO) has recently set out the standards for a certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations (SFO). The SFO certification is a mark of professional accomplishment, indicating the achievement and maintenance of knowledge and skills in school business management. This mark of distinction demonstrates commitment to professional development, and will be recognized anywhere in North America.

In addition to the opportunities through OASBO, ASBO and other professional groups, school boards are providing professional development events for their staff. As you look at the list of opportunities, it is clear that professional development is filling a major need. Done well, it ensures that school boards have highly skilled business officials that are able to work well independently or as part of a team. These offerings make it possible to build a personalized program that meets your needs for ongoing professional development. A professional development plan is successful because it is available in a number of formats and at a variety of times.

As the applause for the speaker begins to fade, I feel energized by all the ideas presented today. So today's professional development venture allowed me to gain a new set of skills that will make my work easier, I met a few new people who are doing jobs similar to mine so I have a expanded network and I can use my time here at the workshop to meet the professional development requirements of my professional designation. All in all this has been a very successful day. ■



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