

STUDENT SERVICES ADMINISTRATORS' ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA



SSAAM Focuses on Mental Health: Student Well-Being and Well-Becoming

There are a lot of uncertainties in education today, but one thing is certain: students need schools to be places that are inclusive, respectful of diversity, and places where the school staff, community and parents work together to create healthy, caring, learning environments for all students. These are the beliefs of SSAAM as developed by the membership in their Strategic Plan. To further these beliefs SSAAM will be providing membership with two professional development opportunities that focus on mental health and well-being.

SSAAM's first session will be November 28, 2019 with Dr. Patrick Carney. Dr. Carney will speak about his "Well Aware" model of well-being and well becoming with the purpose of providing students with supports and skills that build resilience. Many of Carney's concepts are aligned with what good schools and teachers in our province already do. The three tiers of help for students, a strengths-based focus, the need for whole-school/whole community approach, the importance of teaching pro-social skills to all students, self-regulation strategies, recognizing multiple intelligences and need for each student to have strong, caring relationships are all identified as key elements in his book, "Well Aware: Developing Resilient, Active and Flourishing Students".

Dr. Carney's work not only assists in building understanding of the realities of student mental health but also provides research based practices, practical tools, and classroom strategies that contribute to positive mental health for all students. Carney takes wellness one step further and exposes the reader to the idea that students need to be resilient to be happy and successful throughout their lives. The ability to deal with stress and adversity, problem solve, manage emotions and bounce back from failure and defeat are all part of being resilient. He states that developing and maintaining resilience is a lifelong process and developing these attitudes and skills as a youth are critical to future success and happiness. To register for this workshop, go to www.ssaam.mb.ca

In November of 2020 Dr. Michael Unger will continue the conversation about the importance of building resiliency skills in all students. Dr. Unger's work is in congruence with SSAAM's mission and beliefs. He is an advocate for

IMPORTANT DATES

SSAAM
Annual
Conference
2019

November 27,
28 & 29 in
Brandon

SSAAM AGM,
April 23 & 24,
2020 Portage la
Prairie

SSAAM
Annual
Conference
2020,

November
25,26,27 in
Brandon

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strength-based interventions that are inclusive and respectful of diversity in family, community and culture. At a time when there is concern about student stress, bullying, stereotyping and racism it is paramount that staff have the knowledge and skills to create an environment that maximizes each student's capacity for resilience. More information on this workshop will be available October 2020.

Connections to SSAAM Strategic Plan

Professional Development for members is a key role for SSAAM. As a professional organization for over 40 years SSAAM has always been on the leading edge of topics, issues, and resources that support appropriate educational programming for all students.

In the current Strategic Plan (2017-2022), SSAAM updated its mission, actions and beliefs, reaffirmed the focus on professional development, and is moving forward with actions to strengthen and renew our partnerships and put evidence-based/research proven practices, that will assist our students, school, parents and communities, at the forefront when making decisions about student programming.

This is particularly evident with our focus on mental health. Manitoba Government and agencies have put mental health at the center of many of their initiatives. The document "Improving Access and Coordination of Mental Health and Addictions Services: A Provincial Strategy for all Manitobans", March 31, 2018 is just one document that talks about treatment and prevention of mental health concerns for children and youth and the need for evidence-based interventions.

SSAAM partners like MASS, COSL (MTS) and MCEC are also focusing on Mental Health. MASS has released a discussion paper on "Student Well-Being and Well-Becoming" and lists mental health as one of their priority areas. COSL professional development in October 2019 presented Ivan Coyote speaking on "Working to Ensure a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment for all Students". MCEC will be hosting Dr. Unger at their February 2020 conference. These are just three examples of a collaborative focus on mental health.

Consistent with the opportunities for professional development and collaboration with partners is the need to know that what we are doing is making a difference for our students. Time and money are important and schools need evidence that the programs they implement make a difference. Schools need to know the programs they invest in are evidence-based/research proven. Both Dr. Carney and Dr. Ungar will delve into this aspect of mental health initiatives and programs. However, the need to know the effectiveness of the programs we implement transcends all aspects of student programming and SSAAM is working on providing its members with information on this topic as we move forward with our Strategic Plan.

New Members

If you are new to SSAAM please contact your regional rep to find out the dates, time and location of your regional meetings. Welcome to SSAAM!

Please check out our website at www.ssaam.mb.ca. It is best viewed in the Chrome browser. If you are a member and do not have your member login information, please go to https://ssaam.mb.ca/forgot_password.php and enter in your email address.



Message from the President

Throughout the fall of 2018, Student Services Administrators Association of Manitoba (SSAAM) members worked together to refresh our mission statement. This endeavor opened dialogue and brought clarity to us, as provincial student services leaders, to provide informed advocacy that supports appropriate educational programming for all students. SSAAM accomplishes this mission through the implementation and expansion of:

- Collaborative professional learning communities;
- The use of validated, evidence-based practices and
- On-going partnerships.

We are pleased to highlight that with the support of Lesley Eblie Trudel, PhD, SSAAM submitted a written report to the Manitoba Government K-12 Education Review. We provided input and recommendations on the suggested questions, to focus the broad dialogue in education regarding the following topics: Long-term vision, Student learning; Teaching; Accountability for student learning; Governance; and Funding. As an executive, under Lesley's guidance, we worked hard for our membership to keep our written response to focus on the diverse and unique gifts of our students. The many and various submissions to the Education Review offers the different perspectives, the challenges and the opportunities, as presented by parents, advocates, teachers, teachers' unions, and academics that the commissioners will consider as they work to shape the future of Manitoba's education system.

It is exciting that as a membership, we contribute not only to the on-going discussion about inclusive education taking place across Manitoba but we also continue to provide leadership and professional development in the area of inclusive education and student specific programming. Although we have grown and evolved as a provincial association over our four decades of existence, what has not changed is our focus on student success: we continue to be an integral part of a vibrant and inclusive public education system which offers opportunity and diverse programming for all students to succeed regardless of their background.

Louise Duncan
President, SSAAM

SSAAM Executive

2019-2020

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