

# Exploring OUR FUTURE Together



Dr. Joel Westheimer



Dr. Dennis Shirley

Work-life issues are costing the organization money

Work and family issues have caused you to:

| Challenges caused you to:              | Often | Total Incurred |
|--|-------|----------------|
| Reduce your work productivity          | 17    | 43             |
| Increase your use of employee benefits | 16    | 32             |
| Reduce your work hours                 | 12    | 30             |
| Be absent more often from work         | 2     | 28             |
| Turn down a promotion                  |       | 11             |

Dr. Linda Duxbury

## The teaching profession's view on transforming education in Calgary Public Schools



# Leading OUR FUTURE Together

### 2010 Survey

Key Issues included:

- class size/composition satisfaction
- advocacy priorities for Local 38
- student assessment/reporting
- Local 38 services/supports
- overall teacher well-being
- demographic data

### Foreword

Dr. Dennis Shirley, Professor of Education, Boston College, and coauthor of The Fourth Way

**The professionalism of Alberta teachers and the work that they do impresses people worldwide**

### Great achievements in Calgary

- high degrees of teacher satisfaction in their relationships with the students they teach on a daily basis.
- teachers feel supported by colleagues within their buildings and by the parents and community members outside of them.
- the district values teacher professionalism.

In 2010, based on a comprehensive survey of the membership, Calgary teachers identified the following necessary conditions for shared leadership in Calgary Public Schools.

1221 members (55% of the sample) completed the survey.

Respondent population was 79% female, 21% male (highly representative of normal teacher gender demographics)

80% of respondents were classroom teachers; 15% administrative designation.

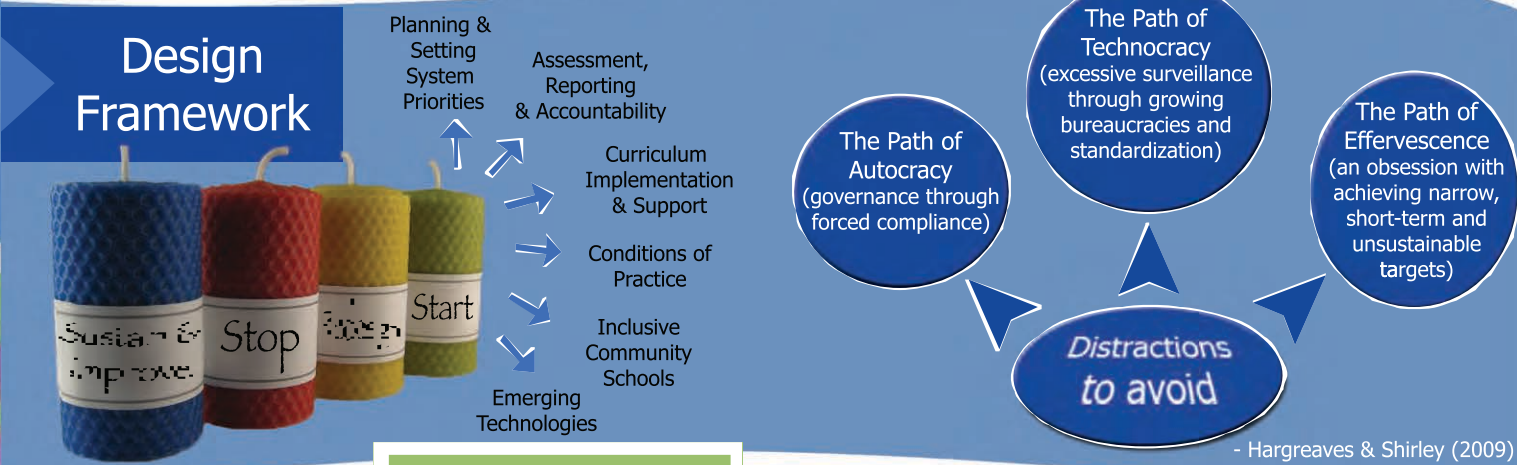
Half have taught less than 10 years; half have taught more.

88% held continuing contracts

50% Grade 1-6  
18% Grade 7-9  
18% Grade 10-12

### Room for improvement

- significant numbers of Calgary Public teachers feel that their professional views are not taken into account when new policies and initiatives are established.
- while new technologies can be quite powerful, they can also be distracting and trivializing when it comes to grappling with the most serious educational challenges of the present.
- the professional voice of teachers must be a key component of the shared leadership needed to move the district forward.



### Design Framework Explained

Calgary Public Teachers continue to dialogue with stakeholders on many fronts to improve the quality of the education system.

**Shared leadership** means working together to achieve the best possible future for all parties involved.

Based on an analysis of the data obtained in this study, Leading Our Future Together presents a framework to assist education stakeholders in working together as they plan the future.

90 different strategies and actions were organized into four categories: Start, Stop, Redesign, and Sustain & Improve.

## Symposium 1

### Engaged Citizenship

May 18, 2011  
Dr. Joel Westheimer  
Professor of Education  
University of Ottawa

"What is it that is special about education in a democratic society and why should we preserve it?"

### Keynote Speaker

**Democratic Citizenship:** asking tough questions, the ability to critically analyze, and trying to find solutions for problems.

- Controversy can be a pedagogical tool to educate youth about different viewpoints, connecting what they learn in school to what is going on in their community and the world.

**Efficiency is being favored over critical thinking.**

Dr. Joel Westheimer

### Thawing the Climate of Testing

- Mandated testing and accountability measures have pushed the teaching of critical thinking to the margins of education.
- Make changes to help our students develop into compassionate, engaged, thoughtful adults, who are actively and effectively involved in their society.
- Creativity, imagination and critical thinking resist measurement by their very nature.

**The relentless focus on testing and 'achievement' means that time for in-depth critical analysis of ideas is diminished.**

Dr. Joel Westheimer

### Table Talk

### CURRICULUM

- A sense that inflexible curriculum interferes with developing engaged citizens.
- There is very little time for 'extras' with current specific outcomes.

### BARRIERS

- class size
- keeping professional distance
- interference of system priorities
- time required for activity design
- deprofessionalization of teachers



### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What excites kids to become engaged global citizens?
- Does personalization of learning promote citizenship?
- Can entrepreneurial spirit be taught or does it develop?
- Is social change in families impacting global citizenship?

### ASSESSMENT

- Can we change assessment to make room for citizenship?
- Is evaluating citizenship even necessary?

### Implications

**Let's measure what we care about instead of caring only about the things we measure.**

Dr. Joel Westheimer

| Reality  | vs | Ideal  |
|--|----|--|
| Teaching to the test   |    | Teaching students to think critically  |
| Critical thinking activities time-restricted and low-priority                                |    | Critical thinking activities prioritized as vital aspect of curriculum & instruction   |
| Accountability measures impeding real student learning                                       |    | Measuring what we care about rather than just caring about what we measure   |
| Belief that citizenship only means volunteering, obeying rules, and treating each other well |    | Citizenship: participate in a democratic society actively & effectively based on personal thoughts & insights gained through a comprehensive education |
| Students as receptacles of pedantic, prescribed curriculum                                   |    | Students as citizens able to grapple with societal policies in a thoughtful, analytical and effective manner   |

### Respondents

Alberta Education

- Reform involves curriculum change, some competency-based education, and potentially Locally Developed Courses.
- Alberta Education is engaging stakeholders, creating action agendas, and believes that all students should be inspired to achieve success and fulfillment as engaged thinkers and ethical citizens who display an entrepreneurial spirit.

**Students must "Focus less on 'me' and more on 'we'."**

Sophie Barry

- The successful leaders of tomorrow are people who know how to work as part of a team, who are open to others' perspectives, and understand how to have compassion.
- Anyone can be an engaged citizen. Citizenship education is a vital component of a quality education.



# Diversity and Assessment

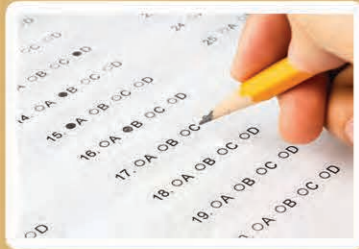
October 17, 2011  
Dr. Dennis Shirley  
Professor of Education  
Boston College

How can we create schools where parents, teachers and students are engaged in meaningful learning and assessment?

## Keynote Speaker

**Paper and pencil tests ... are a part of our reality, they are not our reality.**

*Dr. Dennis Shirley*



- We need to nurture the important relationships between students, parents, and teachers in order to form the backbone of meaningful learning and assessment.
- We must think about assessment in terms of the learning environment.

- Peer relationships help students to understand their emerging multicultural, multiracial and multilingual world.
- Relationships with parents and with teachers are essential in providing students with the skills to succeed as lifelong learners.

**Students want to learn from human beings.**

*Dr. Dennis Shirley*

**Parents are part of the kid's world and they need to understand the intimacy that teachers establish with their kids.**

*Dr. Dennis Shirley*

## Table Talk



Lived curriculum vs. planned curriculum...  
Learned curriculum vs. assessed curriculum

Students need to understand the real world connection between curriculum and life.

Assessment is not always informative to the student or parent.

All that is done in schools should aim to help students develop meaningful relevant skills to enable them to become a life-long learner.

The question of "What is best for the child?" is most important.

How does what is being taught and assessed in schools relate to the life of the student and the intention of the lesson?

We cannot forget that each student is unique and the development of a rapport with the teacher is essential to effective learning.

Assessment should serve a greater purpose than just to assess. It is meant to inform and encourage learning for the student, the teacher and the parent.



## Implications

### Critical Requirements...

Ensure that new technologies in classrooms are optimally calibrated for student learning and not cynically distractive.

Provide the system with the capacity and responsiveness to make strategic adjustments in the light of new research. Research has proven that technology is not the be all and end all of education. Students want to learn from human beings.

### ...for Success in Education

Provide professionals with the opportunity and support to drive innovation and improvement at the school site level. Create learning communities within the school.

Ensure assessment practices reflect the cultural dynamism and individuality of Alberta students to create lifelong learners who are excited about learning.

## Respondents

**Eryn Kelly**  
Past Co-President of the Calgary Association of Parents and School Councils



- Parents cannot understand assessment unless conversations occur helping to clarify how the assessment system was arrived at.
- Parents want teachers to observe child behaviour and to engage students.
- Ensure assessment is only a part of education, not the purpose of education.

- Much attention has been paid to planning curriculum
- The missing piece is finding out about the curriculum "as lived"
- There is a difference between what is planned, what is assessed and how we adapt and make adjustments
- Personalizing learning means thinking about each child's educational needs
- Dialogue about assessment is needed between teachers, students, & parents.

**Dr. Dennis Sumara**  
Dean - Faculty of Education  
University of Calgary



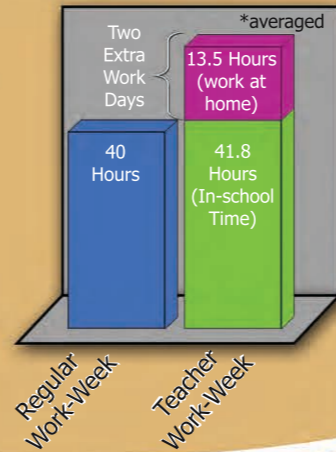
# Working Our Future Together

April 18, 2012  
Dr. Linda Duxbury  
Sprott School of Business  
Carleton University

In this ever-increasing culture of putting work ahead of many other aspects of our lives, Calgary teachers find themselves leading the country in terms of stress due to overload in their work environment.

## Workload

- 82% of teachers report high levels of overload.
- Single staff members are expected to do more with students because they are perceived to have fewer family obligations.



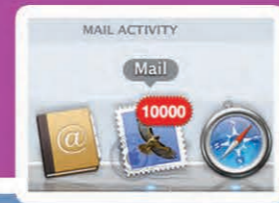
**School boards must address issues associated with work-life balance and workloads if they wish to thrive in the new millennium.**

*Dr. Linda Duxbury*

- Before new initiatives are added, present practices should be reviewed.
- Outdated practices should be removed, especially when these practices take teachers away from the core work of teaching.

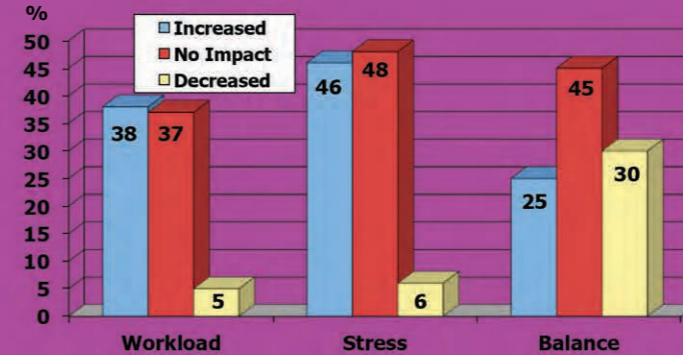
## Use of Technology

- At least one symposium participant reported staying up until 2 A.M. waiting to input information into an overloaded computer system.



- Teachers are spending two hours per day on work-related email; some of this is done at home.
- Technology increases stress levels and teachers' workload levels.

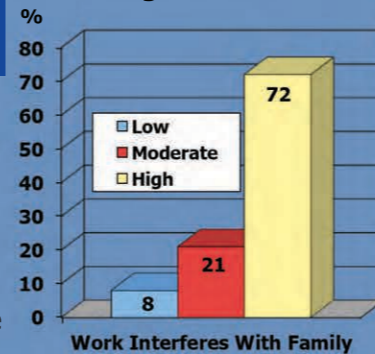
### Technology's Impact on Calgary Teachers...



## Work/Life Conflict

- Teachers are not able to fulfill family obligations due to inflexible hours.
- There is a financial disincentive to using personal leave days due to cost.

### Work/Life Conflict is a significant issue



**Wouldn't it be better to spend the money we're [currently] spending on prescription drugs on more staff [instead]?**

*Dr. Linda Duxbury*

## Employer Costs

**A reduction of stress and a better balance between work and life will increase productivity, decrease absenteeism, and diminish benefit costs.**

### Family Matters

- 40% of teachers report having no children, and will often work longer hours.
- 65% of teachers report having to care for aging family members while 25% report having family members (i.e. child or spouse) with a disability.
- 35% are the 'Sandwich Generation' and have to balance both aging family members and their own children.

### Remedies?

- Increase teachers' flexibility without adding stress to their colleagues, such as losing non-instructional time due to internal coverage.
- There should be a culture change where the demands of work are not placed above the demands of family and personal health & well-being.



# Next Steps in Leading Our Future Together

## ENGAGE

## Communicate Together

- Trustees
- Parent Groups
- Senior Administration
- School Representatives

**The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer.**

*Henry David Thoreau*



**It's important to build relationships in order to work together effectively.**

## Assessment

- Reporting student progress in a way that enhances the relationships among students, teachers, and parents.
- Consider teachers' professional judgement as the primary and most valid component of assessing and reporting student progress.
- Instead of measuring what is easy to assess, educators measure what society deeply values.
- Transformative curriculum redesign and professional development can help teachers develop more effective assessment practices.



## Organizational Health

**What can we learn from schools that demonstrate high levels of teacher efficacy?**

### Focus on better implementation plans for new system initiatives & processes

- workload impact assessments
- clear, meaningful communication and implementation strategies to ease system transitions



## Supporting Inclusion

- Provide teachers with the professional development to create and use innovative instructional approaches and assistive technologies effectively.
- Provide the funding, wraparound supports and services necessary to meet the unique learning needs of all students.