

Karen Casey Represents Canada at Global Conference

By Karen Casey

Education, according to the Canadian Constitution, is the responsibility of the provinces and territories. To that end, there is no federal department or federal minister. However, the framework that does exist includes a council of provincial ministers, known as the CMEC (Council of Ministers of Education Canada). The Council meets regularly to share concerns, best practices and solutions to common problems. Although each

province and territory may have circumstances specific to their own geography, the one common priority is quality education for our students.

Earlier this year (January 17-20), I was asked to represent CMEC and all the Ministers of Education from Canada at The Education World Forum in London, England. This was a global summit for Education Ministers, where 89 countries were represented, with over 500 participants. It was indeed an honor to be asked



Teachers teaching and students learning. (Submitted)

to represent Canada and I was proud to be the only delegate from Canada to attend.

In 2015, the United Nations adopted a goal with a focus on Education, and in particular the importance of literacy as a critical component, and as part of the foundation for progress in any society. Once literate, students are in a better position to understand and develop the skills they need to be successful in life and work.

The Education World Forum provided opportunities to share ideas, progress and plans on the world stage. It also provided opportunities to listen and learn. It became very evident that, regardless of country, the pressures in Education are similar. Those pressures and priorities include quality of programs, inclusion, basic math and literacy competencies, use of technology, teacher training and professional development, and of course, the safety and security for all adults and students in our schools. As I listened and participated, I was interested to note that these are priorities within our province and I am proud of the work that we are doing in Nova Scotia.

Of equal importance to me was to be asked to participate on a panel of 4 presenters and to speak to how Canada is responding to newcomers to our country. It was important to share with the world delegates the role that Nova Scotia has played as hundreds of immigrants, some of them your ancestors and mine, have chosen Canada as their new homeland. I noted the history of Pier 21, and the important role our schools and our communities play in that process.

It allows us to highlight and place emphasis on humanitarian services and the great work our teachers and students are doing. It is "cool" to be humanitarian. As educators we have a responsibility to produce global citizens...effective young people...who are aware of the problems and circumstances of others, and to know they can make a difference. As Nova Scotians and Canadians, we have shown that we are a compassionate and caring people.

As you might expect, I took the opportunity while in London to visit students and teachers in their classroom, and to engage with them on the curriculum. Children were respectful, engaged in learning and excited to share their learning with me. It was interesting and encouraging to see students being supported in their learning through both volunteer community engagement and private fund-

ing from corporate partners.

In addition, a "best practice" in the United Kingdom is to have universities and Teacher Training institutions linked with schools and teachers. This provides professional development and support for their teachers. One area of curriculum of particular interest was coding. Coding can be described as "writing the instructions for the computer to perform a specific task". Computer coding promotes problem solving, creativity, teamwork, critical thinking and technological fluency.

Our world is very much influenced by computing. In Nova Scotia, we have made a commitment to introduce our students to computing, and to bridge the gap between coding, logic and math. This type of technology is fundamental in our daily lives, and the roots of coding can be found in mathematics. Our students are now great "consumers of technology". They also need the opportunity to understand and create the many applications they now use. In the schools visited, children as young as four years old were engaged in computing. Here in Nova Scotia, we will begin with computer safety with our youngest learners. The activities and outcomes will progress as students



Staff from CMEC provided support during event. (Submitted)



Conversation prior to Panel Presentation with Justin van Fleet, Chief of Staff, United Nations Special Envoy on Global Education and Andreas Schleicher, Director of Education and Skills, OECD. (Submitted)

move through the higher grades. This progression will include using technology and using brain power in such areas as sorting, patterning and sequencing. This can only be built on a good foundation of math competencies.

The opportunity to represent Canada at a Global Conference, as well as the great learning experience during the school visits in

London was important. However, as in all school visits, it was the students who made the greatest impact. As a teacher, I never underestimate their potential and am always mindful of the fact that they are the future leaders in our country. Teachers are the ones who polish those diamonds.

Karen Casey, MLA, Colchester North is Minister of Education & Early Childhood Development



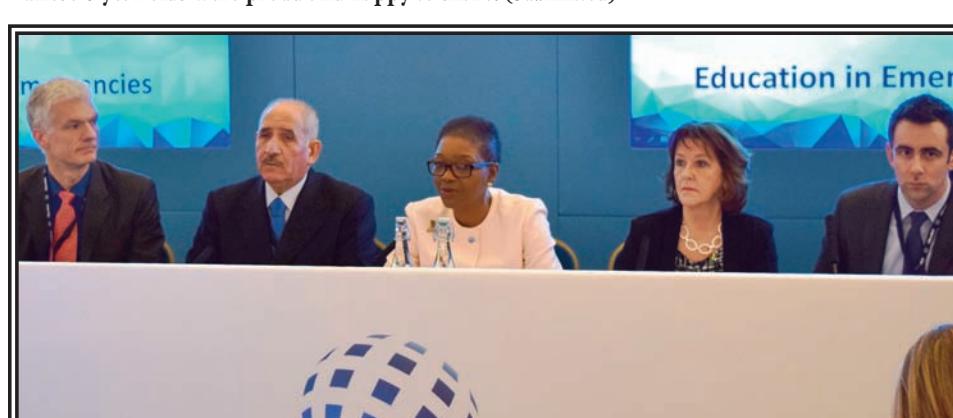
Students problem solving for a solution that will be programmed into their devices. (Submitted)



Critical thinking and exploring options. (Submitted)



These 6-year olds were proud and happy to share. (Submitted)



Panel Members from left to right - Andreas Schleicher, Director of Education and Skills, OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), Mohammed Thneibat, Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister of Jordan, Moderator Baroness Valerie Amos, Director, University of London, Karen Casey, Nova Scotia Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Justin van Fleet, Chief of Staff, United Nations Special Envoy on Global Education. (Submitted)

Welcoming home 50 years of experience.

One thing we never underestimate here at Patterson Law is the importance of having a strong sense of character. The true essence of a person, that when held up, displays unquestionable integrity.

David F. Curtis, Q.C., exemplifies that standard, and that is why after 50 years, we are thrilled he and his wife **Donna**, who is also David's paralegal partner, have chosen to return to Patterson Law's Truro office where David's career began.

Rejoining us at a time of incredible growth, David brings with him an enviable breadth of experience gained both here and in Toronto. His accomplished practice, focused on estate planning, residential transactions and large corporate and commercial projects, has earned him numerous legal accolades.

During his career, David has served as Honorary President of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, various Barrister Society committees, Vice-Chair of the Nova Scotia Legal Aid Commission, and on the Society's Professional Standards Committee, Discipline and Ethics Committees.

His commitment to community is as impressive as his professional accomplishments. David is Past President of the Truro District Chamber of Commerce, has served as President for the Children's Aid Society of Colchester County, the Colchester branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Truro & District United Way.

From all of us at Patterson Law, welcome home David and Donna.



David Curtis, Q.C.

Donna Curtis

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DETERMINATION

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