

**Keynote Speaker** Saturday April 23 @ 10:15 am

David Irvine, the Leader's Navigator

## CULTIVATING COMPASSION AS SCHOOL COUNCIL LEADERS

### "Let's Make the Comeback Better than the Setback"



As we emerge from this pandemic and re-engage in different ways, new challenges and opportunities lie ahead. As we move forward together in promoting wellbeing in the school community to benefit student success, compassion and grace are required now above all else.

We all, at least to some degree, are emerging from these past two years exhausted, uncertain, strained, isolated, and divided. We are likely all a little more edgy and impatient.

The opportunity lies before us to re-enter, re-engage, and re-build the partnership with our school communities. How we take time to heal together and relate to each other will directly impact the new reality that we create together.

Based on David's best-selling book, *Caring Is Everything: Getting to the Heart of Humanity, Leadership and Life*, this session will kick off the day and set the

tone for working together with an inspiring, reflective, and **practical perspective on the importance of caring in your role as school council leaders.**

Through the power of caring and an open heart, let's ensure we make the comeback better than the setback.

- Be reminded of the importance of compassion and grace with ourselves and with those we serve.
- Learn how to build bridges of trust to ensure a stronger school community amid diversity.
- Leave with practical strategies for putting compassion to work - promote meaningful connections, facilitate problem-solving, foster reciprocal responsibility, and improve overall wellbeing.

**David Irvine** is a widely sought-after speaker, author, and trusted leadership advisor. His work has helped build accountable, authentic organizations across North America, making him one of the most respected voices on leadership and organizational culture.

He has advanced degrees in human development, science, and social work. With more than 35 years of experience as a family therapist, workshop facilitator, lecturer, and adviser to executives, he has developed a unique personal and practical approach to inspiring leaders and transforming lives.

David has worked with people in the public, private, not-for-profit, and entrepreneurial sectors across North America, but his background as a family therapist and advisor to schools makes him uniquely qualified to integrate an understanding of children with the leadership required to foster reciprocal responsibility and wellbeing in a school community.

David is a bestselling author of seven books, with over 300,000 copies sold worldwide. *The Other Everest: Navigating the Pathway to Authentic Leadership* is the most recent and brings together the learnings, teachings, and wisdom gleaned over a lifetime of meaningful work.

The popular *Caring Is Everything: Getting to the Heart of Humanity, Leadership and Life*, deals with the importance of caring in all aspects of our lives.

As a former nationally ranked distance runner, he also maintains an active lifestyle of yoga, boxing, and walking his dogs. David lives with his wife in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains near Cochrane, Alberta.



## Plenary Presentation Saturday April 23 @ 12:45 pm

Dana Fulwiler -Volk

### Bouncing Forward: Prioritizing Wellbeing in Education

There is often a focus on 'bouncing back' after a challenge or adversity, even though we only have one direction we can truly go - forward - equipped with new insights gained along the way.

This session will explore how lessons learned during the pandemic (and beyond) can enable us to grow and bounce **forward** with even greater perspective, compassion, coordination, and collective wellbeing.

After a brief overview of Alberta's Child and Youth Wellbeing Review, we will consider opportunities to intentionally prioritize the science and practice of wellbeing in our school communities.

**Dana Fulwiler-Volk** is an educator and consultant with expertise in wellbeing science and positive mental health. She has served in various roles in education including classroom teacher, system specialist in wellbeing and mental health, University Instructor, and researcher on infusing wellbeing into school communities.

Dana holds a Master of Applied Positive Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, where she learned from global leaders in individual and organizational wellbeing and serves as an Instructor.



## Closing Plenary Saturday April 23 @ 3:45 pm

Sandra Woitas

### "We all have the power to change the world"

As part of the City of Edmonton's 100th birthday celebrations, **Dr. Sandra Woitas** was honored as one of the 100 Edmontonians of the Century.

As a long time educator and tireless advocate for the needs of Edmonton's most disadvantaged children and families, Sandra continues to spread the word that poverty cannot be an excuse and by only working together, we, as an entire community, can raise the bar for all children and youth. She believes we can no longer make excuses for not meeting the needs of our marginalized children and youth and can only be part of the solution.

As a former Director of the *City Centre Education Project* with Edmonton Public Schools, she worked collaboratively with seven inner city schools to make sure the students had the resources and supports they needed to realize their full potential, academically and in life. The *City Centre Education Project* was recognized by *Today's Parent* magazine as one of the *Top Forty Schools in Canada* and by the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development for its collaborative practices. The project also received the *Alberta Premier's Award for Excellence*.

In 2003, she was recognized as a *Woman of Integrity* on behalf of the Riverview Rotary Club. She has received the *Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal* and the *Alberta Centennial Medal* for her work in the community and was featured as a Global Edmonton, *Woman of Vision*, in the late spring of 2006. In November 2006, she also received the ATA Early Childhood Education *Advocate of Young Children Award*. In November 2008, she was recognized with an *Honorary University of Alberta Alumni Award*. In June 2014, she was granted a Doctor of Laws Honorary Degree from the University of Alberta. In November 2014, she received the Lions Club International Foundation "Melvin Jones" Citizen of Distinction Award for Dedicated Humanitarian Services. In 2022 as part of the McEwan University 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Sandra was selected as one of the top 50 Community Leaders.

As of April 2015, Sandra started a private consulting practice and continues to be a serial volunteer. In addition to her current position as consultant with a variety of school boards across Alberta, she also serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education. Dr. Woitas is a sought after speaker on a variety of topics to a variety of audiences.

## **Conversation Exchange** Friday April 22 @ 3:45 pm

### **School Councils: Cultivating Compassion**

***How do school councils work to promote positive engagement and wellbeing in the school community to benefit student success? What does compassion look like in your school community?***

The "conversation exchange" utilizes breakout group exercises to generate ideas and input for sharing.

School Councils can and do influence practices and actions promoting positive engagement in their school communities with the purpose of supporting and enhancing student success. During this online conversation exchange, come prepared to share your ideas, experiences, successes, and challenges as representatives from school councils across Alberta learn from each other.