

NEWSLETTER / BULLETIN

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The NEWSLETTER is a publication of the Canadian Mathematics Education Study Group

CMESG is a group of mathematicians and mathematics educators who meet annually to discuss mathematics education issues at all levels of learning. The aims of the Study Group are:

- 1) to study the theories and practices of the teaching of mathematics
- 2) to promote research in mathematics education
- 3) to exchange ideas and information about all aspects of mathematics education in Canada
- 4) to disseminate the results of its work.

Ce BULLETIN est une publication du Groupe canadien d'étude en didactique des mathématiques

Le GCEDM est composé de personnes oeuvrant en mathématiques et en didactique des mathématiques et qui se réunissent une fois par année pour étudier diverses questions relatives à l'enseignement des mathématiques à tous les niveaux. Les buts du Groupe sont les suivants:

- 1) susciter une réflexion critique sur la théorie et la pratique de l'enseignement des mathématiques
- 2) encourager la recherche en didactique des mathématiques
- 3) faciliter l'échange d'idées et d'information sur tous les aspects de l'éducation mathématique au Canada
- 4) faire connaître les résultats de ses travaux.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE DU PRÉSIDENT

Florence Glanfield

I hope each of you are having a good fall term. As I'm writing this we still haven't had a large amount of snow. When I see rabbits scurrying around campus I notice that they are white for the most part, except the tips of their ears and a brown stripe down their back. In some way, some aspects of nature seem to be telling me that it is winter, but the weather is still not winter-like. I'm left wondering, where did the last six months go?

Looking Back: Sherbrooke 2008

From May 23 to May 27 2008 we met at Sherbrooke. About 90 individuals participated in the 2008 meeting. Who can forget the trip to the Capelton Mines and the great dinner in North Hatley following, the walk to the restaurant by the river, and the dinner where we were all dancing? It was the first time that I'd visited Sherbrooke and I truly enjoyed the whole experience. Thanks to Laurent Theis and his team for their superb organizational work and for inviting us to experience Sherbrooke and area.

Looking Forward: York 2009

The executive is planning another exciting program for 2009. The meeting will be held June 5 – 9, 2009 at York University in Toronto. Walter Whiteley, Margaret Sinclair and their team are busy making arrangements for what promises to be a great meeting. We're planning for six working groups as we are expecting another large meeting. Our plenary speakers are Gerda de Vries (who researches mathematical biology; <http://www.math.ualberta.ca/~devries/>) and Marcelo Borba (co-author of *Humans-with-Media and the Reorganization of Mathematical Thinking*; <http://www.edu.uwo.ca/dmp/> for examples of Marcelo's work translated into English). The executive is planning a special event for the last morning – a visit with a special guest! We look forward to seeing YOU at York in June 2009!

News from the Executive

A new constitution was ratified at the 2008 Annual Meeting. Please visit the website, <http://publish.edu.uwo.ca/cmmsg/> to view a copy of the new constitution. We are awaiting news of whether or not we will be granted charitable status. All of the paper work has been submitted. If our organization receives the charitable status then we will be able to start exploring the way in which a fund could be established to support graduate student participation in the annual meeting. Finally, we continue to explore the feasibility of registering and paying via a website for our annual meetings. We've been exploring possibilities for making this happen. However, to this point, we've yet to find a way to set this up. We are continuing to explore possibilities and will keep you posted.

J'espère que le semestre d'automne vous traite bien. Tout en rédigeant mon texte, je remarque que la neige se fait rare et les lapins qui détalent sur le campus sont presque en totalité blancs sauf une rainure brune au dos et au bout des oreilles. La nature semble en quelque sorte me dire que l'hiver est arrivé alors que le climat démontre autre chose. Je me demande où sont allés les six derniers mois?

Coup d'oeil sur le passé: Sherbrooke 2008

Notre dernière rencontre regroupant environ quatre-vingt-dix personnes a eu lieu à Sherbrooke du 23 mai au 27 mai 2008. Qui voudrait oublier la balade à Capelton Mines suivie d'un festin à North Hatley, notre randonnée pédestre longeant la rivière ainsi que la soirée dansante après le repas? Ma première visite à Sherbrooke m'a énormément plu. Je tiens à remercier Laurent Theis et son comité organisateur pour leur boulot formidable en plus de nous accueillir à Sherbrooke et ses environs.

Coup d'oeil vers le futur: York 2009

Le comité exécutif est à préparer une autre activité du tonnerre en 2009. La rencontre annuelle se tiendra du 5 au 9 juin 2009 à l'université York de Toronto. Walter Whiteley, Margaret Sinclair et leur équipe planifient une rencontre qui promet. Six groupes de travail sont prévus vu le grand nombre de personnes qui voudront s'y rendre. Les conférenciers aux plénières seront Gerda de Vries (chercheuse en biologie mathématique; <http://math.ualberta.ca/~devries/>) et Marcelo Borba (co-auteur de *Humans-with-Media and the Reorganization of Mathematical Thinking*; voir <http://www.edu.uwo.ca/dmp/> pour quelques publications de Marcelo en anglais). L'exécutif prépare aussi une rencontre lors de la dernière matinée en compagnie d'une personne de marque! Au grand plaisir de VOUS rencontrer à l'université York en juin 2009.

Rubrique de l'exécutif

Une nouvelle charte a été ratifiée lors de la rencontre annuelle de 2008. Elle est disponible en visitant le site <http://publish.edu.uwo.ca/cmmsg/>. Nous avons complété tous les documents nécessaires pour accéder à un statut d'institution caritative; nous sommes toujours en attente. Ce statut nous permettra d'explorer la possibilité d'établir un fonds qui fournirait un soutien financier aux diplômés qui voudraient se rendre à la rencontre annuelle. En dernier lieu, nous examinons toujours la possibilité de payer les frais d'inscription via un site web quelconque, mais on n'y arrive pas de façon satisfaisante. Nous sommes constamment à l'affût et on vous informera.

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES / ACTIVITES DES MEMBRES

THE CANADIAN MATHEMATICS EDUCATION FORUM (CMEF)

Progress Report Nov 10 2008

Fourth Meeting: April 30 to May 3, 2009

Simon Fraser University Harbour Front Campus

Plenary sessions at Fletcher Challenge Theatre, Room 1900

The Canadian Mathematics Education Forum (CMEF) has met three times: in 1995 (Quebec City), in 2003 (Montreal, cosponsored by CMS and CRM), and in 2005 (Toronto, cosponsored by CMS and Fields). During the 2005 forum, the question arose whether we should continue with these meetings. Since we have the semi-annual CMS Education sessions and the annual CMESG meeting, what is the purpose of the CMEF? After extended discussions and a close look at the successes and recommendations of the three CMEFs, it was proposed that the Forum should continue, but that it should move to a 4-year cycle, and that it should have two characteristics that in some way set it apart from the other meetings mentioned above: first that it should centre around the work of ongoing working groups, and secondly that its activities should feature significant encounters and collaboration between school teachers and university/college mathematicians and math educators. From the beginning, such collaboration has been at the heart of the CMEF purpose and activities.

The first Forum with this new mandate will be held in Vancouver, April 30 to May 3, 2009 and is being co-organized by Malgorzata Dubiel (SFU), Viktor Freiman (Moncton) and Peter Taylor (Queen's). Its theme will be "curriculum and assessment," and it is being cosponsored by CMS and PIMS. It expects about 220 participation from members of many constituencies, schools, colleges and universities, Ministries of Education, parent groups and business and industry. Thirteen working groups (constructed from 40 applications), made up of teachers, grad students and university faculty from different parts of Canada, have been in operation for a year now and will assemble at the meeting to discuss and share their work with other groups, and to bring their work to a point at which some "product" (concrete resources) can be exhibited and disseminated. We will have three keynote speakers, Rina Zazkis a professor of Mathematics Education at SFU (joint speaker with the *Changing the Culture* conference), Steve Rasmussen of Key Curriculum Press and Hugh Burkhardt of the Shell Centre in Nottingham. Following each of the latter two talks, a Reaction Panel of teachers and researchers will provide their own point of view on the issues discussed by the speakers. In addition we will have a panel in which 8 teachers from across Canada, 4 elementary and 4 senior, will debate and discuss the questions: "What did I need then? What do I need now?" We predict that a fairly clear conclusion will emerge from these activities and an important objective of the Forum will be for the university and college teachers, and the coordinators and ministry folks to come together to provide the resources and support signaled by the keynotes and the panels.

We have applied for a SSHRC conference grant, and if successful we will have money to offer full or partial support to all teacher participants. We will also assist them in applying for travel money from their school boards and ministries. We imagine that the main way teachers and students will come to know about the Forum is through contact with researchers.

Further information, as it becomes available, can be had from the Forum website at <http://www.cms.math.ca/Events/CMEF2009/>. There is a link to a working group page with a description of these groups. We expect (and hope) to have a registration page set up by beginning of December. Fees will be \$220 for researchers and teachers, \$100 for students. It will be possible for teachers to register conditionally (without commitment) without paying fees until we know more about support. Teachers will be guaranteed at least \$200 in travel funds from us, more if the SSHRC application succeeds. We will know this at the end of January.

MEGA CONFERENCE, 2008

submitted by Irene Meglis, University of Alberta

The Math Education Grad-Students' Association (MEGA) held our first annual conference on the weekend of November 15-16 at the University of Alberta. Our theme was 'Exploring Graduate Student Experiences in Mathematics Education', and our primary goal was building a sense of community. Ten doctoral students from the Universities of Calgary and Alberta shared our research and ideas, engaged in large and small conversations, held a roundtable discussion, and had a fabulous pot luck turkey dinner. Tom Kieren and David Pimm, our Keynote and Closing speakers, shared thoughts, experiences, and memories from their days *as* grad students and their days working *with* grad students. On the program:

- *Greg Belostotski* spoke about student questioning as it relates to student communication, relationship, and teaching practice. His entry to the question is through the richness of his simultaneous experiences as a high school teacher and a graduate student in mathematics.
- *Rui Feng's* research is in patterning in discourse. His talk summarised the more intuitive mathematical lingo that students with a Chinese language background have, compared with students with an alphabetic language background (e.g. the Chinese term for 'hyperbola' translates as 'paired, curved lines').
- *Jim Fuite* presented his research, in which all courses in Alberta's education system from K-16 are considered linked to each other based on their status as prerequisites, and the resulting network is visualized and evaluated.
- *H. Miranda Kayoo's* research explores the ways in which students make meaning of mathematics (specifically, algebra) and how researchers can work closely with teachers to develop innovative ways of helping students gain a deeper understanding of mathematics.
- *Julie Long's* recent PhD, "Caring for students and caring for mathematical ideas in an elementary classroom", examines complexities of care as they relate to and are shaped by the subject matter of school mathematics. In this case study of a teacher and her Grade 6 students, three mathematical sites of care (indifference, mistakes, and conjecturing) are explored and illustrated with classroom episodes.
- *Janelle McFeetors*, co-investigator on a longitudinal study, "Trajectories of Student Learning in High School Mathematics and Science", showed how movement toward narrative inquiry could fulfill interpretive intentions to develop illuminative examples of students' negotiation of complex pathways and notice a range of differences in their orientations toward learning.
- *Irene Meglis* shared from her auto-ethnographic/narrative research: "Learning to Focus My Mathematical Eyes". Her work explores the interrelationship *between* and changes *in* her Mathematical identity and experiences on the path through school undergrad & advanced mathematics learning, and professional career in science.
- *Elizabeth Mowat* discussed network theory as a useful perspective from which to examine mathematical understanding. After describing her analysis of connections among mathematical concepts, she focused on their embodied nature and reliance on metaphor. She used different conceptualizations of exponentiation to illustrate how mathematical understanding might be made more robust.
- *Julie Peschke* spoke on "Re-conceptualizing educational practice: Mathematics Education Online".
- *Tina Rapke* presented the key concepts of her interdisciplinary dissertation that involves original research in both mathematics and education. The work draws on duo-ethnography and complexity theory, and takes the form of a fictionalized conversation between two characters—a graduate student mathematician and her supervisor.

The conference was a great success, thanks in part to generous support from the U of A Centre for Math, Science and Technology Education (CMASTE). University of Calgary students will host next year's meeting at the U of C, and we are hoping to include Master's students in Math Ed, practicing teachers interested in graduate research, and members of the Mathematics grad student community who have an interest in Mathematics learning. We invite students from other Alberta and western Canadian schools to join us next year. For more information regarding our 2009 conference, contact Tina Rapke (tkrapke@ucalgary.ca).

**A CONTEXT FOR DISCUSSION IN OTTAWA:
A MEETING OF THE FIELDS INSTITUTE MATHEMATICS EDUCATION FORUM**
submitted by Chris Suurtamm, Richard Barwell

What is the value of context in teaching mathematics? What contexts might be valuable? These questions were the focus of a recent Fields Institute Mathematics Education Forum meeting, held at the University of Ottawa in October. The Mathematics Education Forum meets regularly, usually in Toronto, to discuss issues in mathematics education with a view to enhancing mathematics education in Ontario and Canada.

The meeting began with a guest speaker, Joany Fransman, from Northwest University in South Africa, who discussed the use of context in a mathematics literacy training program for teachers in South Africa. This opening talk was followed by a panel discussion on the use of context in teaching mathematics. The panelists were: Carolyn Kieran, UQAM; Miroslav Lovric, McMaster; Rob McLeish, Ottawa Carleton District School Board; Geoff Roulet, Queen's; and Peter Taylor, Queen's.

A range of interesting contexts were discussed and problematized, such as:

- Teaching calculus for biology students through biological models, such as rates of metabolism for alcohol consumption
- Teaching Grade 11 students about mortgages as an application of compound interest and geometric series
- Is Bob Dylan better than Tiger Woods?

Issues that emerged from the stimulating discussion included:

- Whether and how do contexts add to or detract from mathematical meaning?
- Which contexts engage students and how do they do this?
- Does context represent the mathematical idea or is the mathematics a model of the context?
- What is the difference between a context and a representation?
- What is the relationship between abstracting and contextualizing?

The meeting attracted around 30 participants from eastern Ontario and western Quebec, as well as from Toronto and further afield. We hope to welcome the Mathematics Education Forum to Ottawa again in the future.

COLLABORATING TO IMPROVE TEACHER EDUCATION IN CHINA

Doug McDougall , University of Toronto, OISE

Doug McDougall, Associate Professor of Mathematics Education, OISE, University of Toronto has been working with professors in China to improve teacher education in elementary mathematics. In June 2008, he went to Beijing Normal University to conduct workshops on mathematics education, using the Ten Dimensions framework to assist professors and graduate students to design courses in elementary mathematics, particularly for rural schools. He was also appointed as a part-time professor at the UNESCO Centre for Rural Education at Beijing Normal University.

In September, 2008, Dr. McDougall was invited to speak at a conference on Teacher education at Northeast Normal University in Changchun, China. While there, he was the keynote speaker for a conference held at the largest primary school in China, which is attached to Northeast Normal University. The 800 attending teachers heard about improving mathematics education, again with a focus on the Ten Dimensions of Mathematics Education. During this visit to China, Doug also conducted workshops at East China Normal University in Shanghai on elementary school mathematics in Canada.

There are many opportunities for collaboration with Chinese universities. Northeast Normal University, for example, is looking for opportunities for faculty to visit Canadian universities, to have student exchange programs and to foster research collaborations with Canadian universities. These interactions blend well with Dr. McDougall's SSHRC research on improving elementary school teaching and learning.

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS / RECONTRES À VENIR

COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE POUR L'ÉTUDE ET L'AMÉLIORATION DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT DES MATHÉMATIQUES

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT OF MATHEMATICS EDUCATION

Laurent Theis, Université de Sherbrooke

La 61^e rencontre de la Commission Internationale pour l'Étude et l'Amélioration de l'Enseignement des Mathématiques (CIEAEM) aura lieu du 26 au 31 juillet 2009, à l'Université de Montréal. Le thème de la rencontre sera « l'activité mathématique dans la pratique de la classe et comme objet de recherche en didactique : deux activités complémentaires ». Les groupes de travail s'intéresseront à 5 sous-thèmes : (1) L'activité mathématique dans la classe du 21^e siècle (2) La résolution de problèmes et l'institutionnalisation des connaissances (3) La créativité et l'activité mathématique (4) La promotion des projets et la conception d'activités mathématiques et (5) La recherche portant sur l'activité mathématique : La collaboration entre enseignants et chercheurs. La conférence est bilingue (français et anglais). La première annonce de la rencontre se trouve à l'adresse suivante : www.cieaem.net. Vos propositions de communications sont attendues pour le 15 janvier 2009. Pour toute question, veuillez vous adresser à l'adresse suivante : cieaem61@yahoo.ca

The 61st meeting of the International Commission for the Study and Improvement of Mathematics Education will be held at Université de Montréal, from July 26 to July 31, 2009. The conference theme is this: mathematical activity in classroom practice and as research object in didactics. Different working groups will gather around the following sub-themes: (1) Mathematical activity in the 21st century classroom, (2) Problem solving and the institutionalization of knowledge, (3) Creativity in mathematical activities, (4) The promotion of projects and educational design on mathematical activity, (5) Research on mathematical activity: Collaboration between teachers and researchers. The conference is bilingual (French and English). You can find the first announcement of the conference at the following address: www.cieaem.net. The deadline for communication proposals is January 15, 2009. For further information, you can e-mail to cieaem61@yahoo.ca.

THE 3RD MATHEMATICS AND ITS CONNECTIONS TO THE ARTS AND SCIENCES (MACAS3) SYMPOSIUM

MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

submitted by Viktor Freiman

The Organizers of the Mathematics and its Connections to the Arts and Sciences Symposium – Astrid Beckmann, Claus Michelsen, Bharath Sriraman, Viktor Freiman, and Nicole Lirette-Pitre – are pleased to announce that the third symposium will take place in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada May 21-23, 2009. It will be hosted by Viktor Freiman and Nicole Lirette-Pitre at the Université de Moncton, Campus de Moncton.

The Symposium will pursue the initiatives that arose from the collaborative work of the Topic Study Group 21 participants of the ICME-10 Congress. The first two symposiums held in 2005 by Astrid Beckmann in Schwäbisch Gmünd (Germany) and held in 2007 by Claus Michelsen in Odense (Denmark) brought together researchers interested in connections between mathematics, arts and sciences. These two events allowed participants engaged in interdisciplinary work to start working together on collaborative research agendas.

We invite all researchers interested in contributing to the work of the Symposium to write a short proposal (2-3 pages) about their interests in the topic, which is open to a large variety of interdisciplinary connections. Reports on studies arising from MACAS1 and MACAS2 collaborations are also welcome. All proposals (including a résumé) must be sent to one of the organizers by e-mail before January 15. The selected participants will be asked to write a full paper that will be presented at the Symposium. A book with conference proceedings will be published by the Information Age Publishing.

See <http://www0.umoncton.ca/freimanv/macas3/> for further detail.

NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE / DES NOUVELLES DE L'EXECUTIF

CALL FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF PROSPECTIVE PH.D. PRESENTERS

Each year at the CMESG meeting, individuals who have recently completed their Ph.D. degrees are showcased. They are given an opportunity to present their work and share their results with colleagues from across Canada and around the world who are in attendance at the meeting.

To be eligible to present at the meeting, individuals must have successfully defended their dissertations no later than December 31, 2008.

Presenters must have completed their Ph.D. programs at a Canadian institution, or be a Canadian who has completed her/his doctorate at a foreign institution. If you are such a person, or if you know of such a person, please forward the following information to me by email (brent.davis@ubc.ca) as soon as possible. I will then contact that individual to ascertain his/her willingness to attend and present at the Toronto meeting, June 5 – 9.

Information needed:

Name:

Email address:

Snail mail address:

Name of Institution where degree completed:

Senior supervisor:

Title of the Dissertation:

Thank you for your assistance in identifying this year's addition to the community of mathematics educators in Canada.

Brent Davis (on behalf of the CMESG Executive)

ÉLECTIONS 2009 GCEDM EXÉCUTIF APPEL DE CANDIDATURES

Les mandats de deux ans de Doug Franks (Trésorier) et de Dave Wagner (Membre) au sein de l'Exécutif viennent à échéance le 31 mai 2009. Vous êtes invités à soumettre des candidatures pour ces deux postes à Frédéric Gourdeau, Frédéric.Gourdeau@mat.ulaval.ca, président du Comité de nominations, d'ici au 1 janvier 2009, ou à Elaine Simmt, esimmt@ualberta.ca, membre du Comité de nomination.

Pour chaque personne que vous désirez mettre en nomination, vous devez indiquer s'il s'agit d'une mise en nomination pour le poste de trésorier ou en tant que membre de l'exécutif. Il n'est pas nécessaire de vérifier si une personne dont vous proposez la nomination accepte de se présenter.

APPEL POUR L'IDENTIFICATION DES PRÉSENTATEURS/PRÉSENTATRICES D'UNE THÈSE DOCTORALE

Chaque année, à la réunion du GCEDM, les individus qui ont récemment complété leur thèse doctorale ont l'occasion de présenter leur travail et d'en partager les résultats avec des collègues à travers le Canada et autour du monde qui assistent à la réunion.

Pour avoir le droit de présenter à la réunion, les individus doivent avoir réussi à défendre leur dissertation avant le 31 décembre, 2008.

Tout présentateur/présentatrice doit avoir complété son doctorat à une université canadienne, ou doit être un(e) canadien(ne) qui a complété son doctorat à une université étrangère. Si vous remplissez ces conditions, ou si vous connaissez quelqu'un qui remplit ces conditions, veuillez m'envoyer l'information ci-dessous par courriel (brent.davis@ubc.ca) aussitôt que possible. Ensuite, j'écrirai à cet individu pour m'assurer qu'il/elle veuille assister et présenter à la réunion à Toronto, du 5 au 9 juin.

Renseignements nécessaires:

Nom :

Adresses de courrier électronique :

Adresse postale :

Nom de l'université où le doctorat a été complété :

Superviseur principal :

Titre de la dissertation :

Merci pour votre aide à ajouter des noms à la communauté des éducateurs de mathématiques au Canada.

Brent Davis (de la part de l'exécutif du GCEDM)

ELECTIONS 2009 CMESG EXECUTIVE CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The two year terms of Doug Franks (Treasurer) and Dave Wagner (Member) on the Executive Committee will be ending May 31st, 2009. You are invited to submit names of candidates for the two positions to Frédéric Gourdeau, Frédéric.Gourdeau@mat.ulaval.ca, chair of the Nomination Committee, or to Elaine Simmt, esimmt@ualberta.ca, member of the Nomination Committee, no later than January 1, 2009.

For each nomination, please indicate whether it is for the position of treasurer or as a member of the Executive. It is not necessary to verify if the individuals you wish to nominate are willing to run for the office.

NOTICES / AVIS

Nous avons appris avec tristesse la mort de Richard Pallascio. Richard a participé régulièrement aux conférences annuelles du GCEDM, plus récemment en tant que conducteur d'un groupe de travail en 2002. Il était professeur à l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il décédait des suites d'un cancer le 7 mars, 2008. On peut trouver un avis de décès à ...

We recently learned with sadness of the death of Richard Pallascio. Richard participated regularly in CMESG annual conferences, most recently leading a working group in 2002. He was a professor at the University of Quebec at Montreal. He died of cancer on March 7, 2008. An obituary can be found at ...

http://www.sciences.uqam.ca/scexp/14avril08/vol7_no8_art_tabl1.html

CMESG Editors / Les Éditeurs du GCEDM

proceedings editor / l'éditeur des actes: Peter Liljedahl (liljedahl@sfu.ca)
webpage editors/responsables du site sur l'hypertexte: George Gadanidis (ggadanid@uwo.ca),
Nathalie Sinclair (nathsinc@sfu.ca)
newsletter editor / editeur du bulletin : Dave Wagner (dwagner@unb.ca)
University of New Brunswick
P.O. Box 4400, Fredericton, NB, E3B 5A3
phone 506-447-3294, fax : 506-453-3569

CMESG EXECUTIVE / L'EXÉCUTIF DU GCEDM 2008-2009

The members of the executive extend an invitation to you to contact us about any item of interest. If you have something you want to suggest, if you have a concern you wish to raise, if you want more information, etc., please let one of us know. In order to be of service to the membership, we need to be aware of what your interests are.

Les membres du Comité exécutif vous invitent à leur faire part de votre point de vue concernant n'importe quel aspect de la vie du GCEDM. Que ce soit pour transmettre suggestions ou commentaires, ou encore pour être mieux informé, n'hésitez pas à entrer en contact avec l'un d'entre nous. En nous faisant connaître vos intérêts, vous nous aidez à mieux vous servir.

Florence Glanfield, President / Président
Department of Secondary Education
University of Alberta
email: florence.glanfield@ualberta.ca

Dave Wagner, Secretary / Secrétaire
Faculty of Education
University of New Brunswick
email: dwagner@unb.ca

Brent Davis, Vice-president / Vice-présidente
Member-at-large / Membre adjoint
Department of Curriculum Studies
University of British Columbia
email: brent.davis@ubc.ca

Laurent Theis, Member-at-large / Membre adjoint
Faculté d'éducation
Université de Sherbrooke
email: Laurent.Theis@USherbrooke.ca

Doug Franks, Treasurer / Trésorier & Membership Secretary
/ Secrétaire aux membres
Faculty of Education
Nipissing University
email: dougf@nipissingu.ca

Walter Whiteley, Member-at-large / Membre adjoint
Department of Mathematics and Statistics
York University
email: whiteley@mathstat.yorku.ca