

## Northwest Teachers Think Globally and Act Locally

After decades of planning and attending conventions in Saskatoon, the teachers of the Northwest School Division have chosen to hold their convention in Lloydminster and area for the second time in two years, with a further convention to be held locally in September of '09.

When asked why, convention planner Lynda Erlandson remarked that after the 2007 convention planners had noted that access to facilities like the Vic Juba Community Theatre, the beautiful auditorium in Meadow Lake, and local Northwest School Division schools made a vast difference to the kinds of workshops that could be held: "it was so much easier to set up projectors and overheads, and to tailor the rooms to the needs of both presenters and participants than if you held the same workshops in a hotel. Having access to stages, computer rooms, art rooms and gyms just was so much better and so much more practical".

After that first experience teachers voted in favour of staging their conventions locally. Typically professional development sessions have been held in Meadow Lake and other towns in the division (notably St. Walburg and Lashburn), and the conventions in Lloydminster.

Lynda further commented on the upcoming change from the traditional February date: "I believe that we'll be staying with a fall convention after we see how this one goes. We changed to the fall after a survey showed a very strong preference on the part of the teachers to hold the convention early in the year. It enables us to introduce new initiatives at the convention and then still have time to implement them during the same school year".

She then went on to note that consideration had been given to supporting the local communities: "there are certainly economic spin-offs for local communities when 350 teachers (and spouses and families) come to town. We rent facilities, we rent hotel rooms, we eat in restaurants and, yes, we shop".

The keynote Speaker for the convention will be Dr. Lee Jenkins, who will be presenting at the Vic Juba Community Theatre all day on Thursday the 19th. Dr. Jenkins, the head of From LtoJ Consulting Group, sees that his mission is to dramatically improve student learning by providing local teachers and administrators with significant new insights and strategies. The morning session will address the root causes of educational frustration that educators have inherited from the past.

In the afternoon session Dr. Jenkins will address solutions to the frustrations that can arise when deciding on how to make the appropriate use of data. "This data is classroom focused, not division focused. Most who work with data start with division level, then school level, and hopefully classroom data. My work is the opposite: I start with classroom, then school and lastly division."

On Friday teachers will be able to take advantage of over 45 workshops in Lashburn, at both the High School and at J.H. Moore Elementary School. These sessions, which are wide-ranging and aimed at teachers and issues at all grade levels, run the gamut from "Current Issues in Public Education" to "Theatre for Teens", "Physical Activity Lessons for Large Groups" and "Handwriting without Tears".