

For Immediate Release

The merger of two venerable Canadian educational associations has created a new national voice in independent education.

(Toronto, October 28, 2009) The membership of both the Canadian Educational Standards Institute (CESI) and the Canadian Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), has voted to dissolve their respective associations and to endorse the creation of a new organization that would combine the strengths of both founding groups.

The new organization will be headed by Anne Marie Kee, former Executive Director of CESI. A new board was also elected including, among others, members from each former board. The co-chairs of the new organization are Jeff Paikin, President, New Horizon Group of Companies, former chair of Hillfield Strathallan College, and former chair of the CESI board, and Pat Dawson, Head of Crofton House School in Vancouver and former chair of the CAIS board.

CESI was a national accrediting body for independent schools in Canada applying a rigorous process based on 12 standards drawn from international best practices. CESI was recently recognized by the National Association of Independent Schools International Commission on Accreditation, a world accrediting body.

CAIS was an association that provided professional development opportunities and hosted popular annual conferences for faculty, staff and school leadership, as well as sporting and leadership events for students across the country.

“The mandate of the new organization is to significantly enhance the opportunities for member schools to pursue their own ambitious agendas of renewal, innovation and constant improvement,” says Kee. “National accreditation based on international standards will differentiate these schools and give families the confidence of knowing that the school they choose is a cut above the rest. We will also enhance our professional development, research and think-tank opportunities for boards, administrators, faculty and students right across Canada.”

According to David Angus, Chair of St Michaels University School in Victoria, “This is the right move for independent education in Canada. We have a real opportunity, and responsibility, to be leaders in education in this country. This group of schools represents the best there is and the work we do can provide a model for the world. The students are the ones who will benefit most from this wider opportunity for their schools to engage with each other in exchanging ideas, best practices, research and professional development.”

The new organization will continue to deliver the services previously provided by each of CESI and CAIS while strategic planning gets underway this year. Members will have the opportunity to opt in or out of the new organization on renewal in the fall of 2010. Accreditation will be required of all members. The new organization is expected to vote on the strategic plan in October 2010 by which time the organizational structure will be determined along with a marketing and communications strategy to publicly launch the new entity.

“It’s an exciting time for education in Canada,” says Jeff Paikin. “We’ve come together as a community and made something very special and potentially very powerful happen. I am looking forward to building a new national voice in independent education in partnership with these incredible schools.”

The vote took place at a special, combined Annual General Meeting for CESI and CAIS, Sunday, October 25 at The Kingbridge Centre in King City. The gathering hosted school heads and board chairs from 82 independent schools across Canada. The vote passed with 87% support.

For more information, please contact Anne Marie Kee at 905 684 5658.