

President's New Year Message 2026

As we embark upon our new year, we as your Executive come to the midpoint in our term I would like to take this opportunity to review with you some of the things we have accomplished over the past year as well as share our goals for the rest of our term



I think a real highlight for ISAAC Canada has been the **wonderful webinar series** that our **Professional Education Committee** has put forth. Each month they have identified a Canadian Speaker, or speaker with Canadian roots to share on a variety of topics. Over the last year this includes:

- Supporting the Use of AAC Systems: Insights from AAC Service Providers in Canada Presented by: Steph Lackey
- Flexible Language Practices for Multilingual AAC Users Presented by: Véronique Légaré
- “The AAC classroom” (Communication comes in different forms) Presented by: Aryana Napoleon-Patenaude, Teacher/SLP (Summit School-Montreal), Mariska Burger, SLP (Summit School-Montreal), Leslie Levinson, Teacher (Mackay Center School-Montreal) and Trish Coffin, SLP (Mackay Center School-Montreal)
- Language Learning and AAC Presented by: Gayle Porter, Linda Burkhart and Kathy Look Howery
- Vocabulary Instruction: What does it mean to know a word? Presented by: Erin Sheldon
- The Time When Tea Met Whiskey and an AAC Podcast Was Born Presented by: Chelsea Hagen and Joanne Picard

ISAAC Canada members can access these, and many more archived webinars at <https://isaac-online.org/english/webinars/archived-webinars-for-members-only/> Please do take a look!



Another highlight has been our partnership with **Breaking the ICE (BTI)**.

BTI hosts consumer-focused events for people who use **Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC)**. **ICE stands for Independence, Community and Empowerment**. The goal is to provide individuals who use AAC opportunities to come together and learn from each other, create meaningful relationships in the community, and have a platform to share ideas and feelings.

The BTI team has reinstated their in-person events in Ontario which have been a great success. With the help of ISAAC Canada it is the hope that BTI may once again expand to ICE West (in BC) and ICE Alberta. Stay tuned, and please let us know if you are interested in supporting this important endeavour!



Our **Communications Committee** has been hard at work as well. Thanks to Stacey McRuer for stepping back into her role as the editor of our Newsletter – Figuratively Speaking! It is the goal of the Communications Committee to have two newsletters per year. One in January and one in July. We hope to be back on track to have those shared both in English and French going forward!



The Communications Committee is also hard at work to re-invigorate our Website see: <https://isaac-canada.org/> There have been some challenges this past year including a time when

the site was down. It is back up now! Yay and we hope to rectify and other issues in 2026 with the possibility of a new web design that better reflects our work. Again, stay tuned.



This year's **AAC Awareness** month was highlighted by the ISAAC Virtual Event: **Innovation, Inclusion, and Advocacy in AAC** in October. I am delighted to say that Canada was once again well represented in the chosen speakers.

For those of you who signed up for the virtual event, but who have not yet been able to attend all the sessions you hoped to, please note that **session recordings are now available to watch for a period of six months**.

Visit the [conference website](#) to access the recordings. If you have a purchased ticket, just log in to your conference account to access the videos. If you have not already purchased a ticket, you can do that on the conference website.



Now to share **our goals** for the rest of the term of this Executive, which runs until the end of 2027.

1. To develop a Handbook that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Board members. This will be important for future Boards and will hopefully provide continuity as well as clarity going forward.
2. To continue providing regular webinars for ISAAC Canada Members
3. To continue to support Breaking the ICE, with a goal of supporting the re-expansion to other areas of Canada. In the past there was an ICE West (BC) and an ICE Alberta in addition to the Ontario based ICE organization.
4. To continue to engage in Advocacy activities as they pertain to issues for persons who need AAC across Canada.
5. To re-design our Website to reflect the ongoing work and direction of ISAAC Canada and to make the website accessible in both English and French.



A Canadian AAC Conference?

This executive has regularly discussed the possibility of doing ISAAC Canada conferences in the way Australia does the AGOSCI Conferences – every two years with the conference moving from Zone to Zone around the country.

While this sounds like a magnificent idea, perhaps even more so given the current challenges many of us feel about traveling to the United States for conferences, it is also rather daunting. ISAAC Canada would need commitment from the ISAAC Canada membership and a committee to be struck to begin to explore the options, costs, logistics etc.

If you are interested in supporting this and participating in a committee if it is set up this calendar year (2026) please email me at lookhoweryisaac@icloud.com

And lastly just a reminder that your membership is up for renewal! We are grateful for your support and hope you find ISAAC Canada of value! <https://isaac-online.org/english/about-isaac/members/membership/isaac-canada/>

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President
ISAAC Canada