



The Role of the Principal

Mastering the Climate and Context As We Lead Our Schools
by Kevin Reimer

BC's Principals and Vice-Principals operate in a time of accelerated change. Despite the countless responsibilities within our roles as school leaders, it is important that we remain flexible and adaptable. This requires that we not only understand the core dimensions of our own work as school leaders, but that we can recognize and absorb the many overlapping spheres of influence through which that work can maximize the learning conditions for students.



As we begin another Fall cycle, it's a good time to consider the context of our own work and how we can articulate the scope of the work to a variety of networks. This is a time when we may be reaching out to parents, staff and school communities to help them to better understand what we do, and how we can come together to support students and ensure a vital and dynamic school environment.

We invite you to download a new resource that you can adapt as a presentation for your own PAC meetings or other school events.



While the School Act and its regulations outline the powers, duties and responsibilities of BC's Principals and Vice-Principals, the actual school and program context in which we each lead varies greatly.

At the centre, BC's school leaders have **fundamental responsibilities**:

- Creating a shared vision of success for all learners
- Creating positive learning conditions for all learners
- Managing people, processes and data

The National Excellence in School Leadership Institute (NESLI) believes that there are **five core dimensions** at the heart of the work of school leaders:

- Reflective ethical leadership based on service and purpose
- Leading people
- Leading learning
- Leading change
- Leading the business

The Principal is generally responsible for:

- the organization of the school
- the development of the instructional program
- the assignment of duties to and the supervision of staff members
- the general operation of the school or program the Principal oversees

The Vice-Principal, in the absence of the Principal, assumes the duties and responsibilities of the Principal. The other duties of the Vice-Principal are those worked out by mutual agreement with the Principal.

Within the five core dimensions, school leaders:

Reflect ethical leadership based on service and purpose

- Promote a positive, caring climate for learning
- Lead teachers and other staff members in developing a healthy school culture aligned with the vision, mission and values of the school
- Develop and maintain a student behaviour system that results in positive student behavior
- Maintain a safe and orderly school

Lead people

- Deal sensitively and fairly with persons from diverse social and cultural backgrounds
- Communicate effectively with students and staff
- Are responsible for interviewing, selecting, and orienting new staff
- Evaluate, assess and report on the performance of staff members
- Promote the professional and academic growth of staff members
- Serve as a liason between the staff, parents and the community

Lead learning

- Participate in development and evaluation of educational programs
- Ensure that school programs and initiatives are in alignment with the Board of Education's policies
- Develop and support a high level of student morale through a comprehensive extra-curricular program

Lead change

- Develop organizational goals and objectives consistent with the vision, mission and values of the school and the district
- Participate in professional development to improve skills related to job assignment

Lead the business

- Continually endeavour to improve the operating effectiveness of the school
- Develop, maintain and use information systems for record keeping and to track progress on objectives and student success
- Supervise reporting and monitoring of student attendance
- Effectively manage the school's budget based on the direction of the district and in the best interest of students and staff members
- Are responsible for the proper registration and transfer of students in the school and for the maintenance of up-to-date student cumulative records