



bcp  vpa

Leading

BACK TO SCHOOL

Learning Listening Connecting Leading Sourcing Inspiring

Learning

ANTI-RACISM REMINDERS
SCIENTIFIC LITERACY
ORGANIZATIONAL RENEWAL

Inspiring

ORANGE SHIRT DAY
STUDENT VOICE UNMUTED
A CULTURE OF LEARNING

Leading

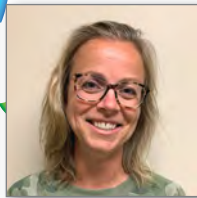
'PRECEDENTED' TIMES
CONNECTING LEADERS
WHY MENTORSHIP?

September 2021

Congratulations to the 2021 graduates!



Hugh Alexander
Principal
Central Okanagan



Kyla Babcock
Principal
Central Okanagan



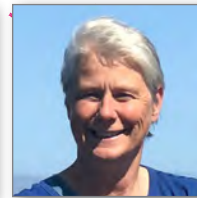
Erin Boisvert
Principal
Sea to Sky



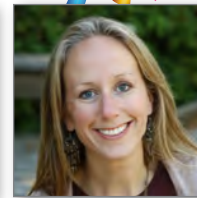
Deanna Brady
Principal
Kamloops-Thompson



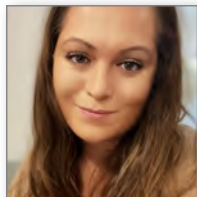
Jo-Anne Chrona
Indigenous & Anti-
Racism Ed Consultant



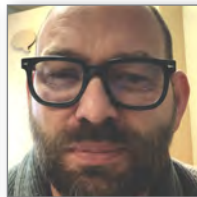
Anne Cunningham
Vice-Principal
Vancouver Island North



Claire D'Aoust
Primary Learning
Coordinator
Delta



Natalie Dickson
Principal
Gold Trail



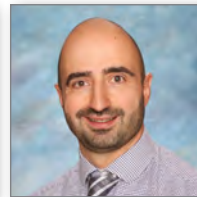
Gordon Fitt
Principal
Richmond



Kate Kerr
Director of Instruction
for Inclusive Education
Sunshine Coast



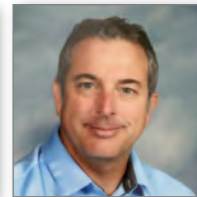
Steven Labrie
Vice-Principal
Central Okanagan



Chris Lekakis
Principal
Sunshine Coast



Jason Leslie
Principal
Richmond



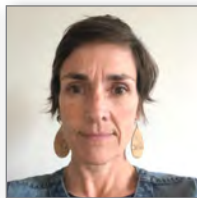
Blair Lloyd
Principal
Kamloops-Thompson



Sheila McGrath
Vice-Principal
Campbell River



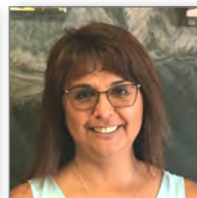
Tamalee Middleton
Principal
Central Okanagan



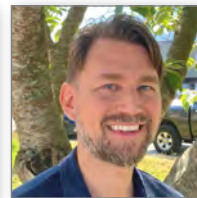
Melanie Midgley
Teacher
Nanaimo-Ladysmith



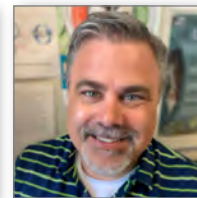
Nicole Minnabarriet
Vice-Principal
Gold Trail



Tamara Mountain
District Principal of
Aboriginal Education
Gold Trail



Chris Nicholson
Assistant
Superintendent
Sea to Sky



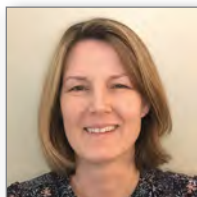
Scott Parker
Principal
Central Okanagan



Rosalind Poon
Vice-Principal
Richmond



Lisa Schwartz
Principal
Richmond



Naryn Searcy
Principal
Okanagan Similkameen



Katrina Sewell
Principal
Kamloops-Thompson



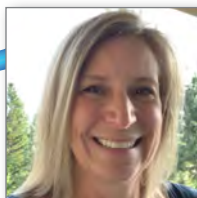
Douglas Sheppard
Superintendent
Delta



Tina Sherlock
Teacher Librarian &
Instructional Leader
Sea to Sky



Raquel Steen
Assistant
Superintendent
Central Okanagan



Deanna Steptoe
Principal
Kamloops-Thompson



Jillian Walkus
Principal
Vancouver Island North



Alison Webber
Principal
Vancouver Island North



Nicole Widdess
Principal
Richmond



Robert Wielgoz
District Vice-Principal
Kamloops-Thompson

Grads not pictured:

Keri Blacker
Regional Principal
Teacher Certification, FNEC

Lauranne Hutton
Manager
First Nations Schools Program, FNEC

Karen Linkert
Director
Instructional Services, FNEC

WHAT IS TELP?

The UBC Transformative Educational Leadership Program is designed for leaders in the K-12 system and connected sectors who are ready to transform education and improve student learning.



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LEEADLNG





Darren Danyluk @bcvpvpapresident • 2020-08-21

Overheard today: "I'm looking forward to 'precedented' times..."



Precedented *TIMES*

by
Darren Danyluk
President, BCPVPA

From September to June, since I was five years old, every Sunday has been a school night. For me, Sunday has been a field of battling tensions: a day of leisure, overshadowed by the evening homework or preparations for the inevitable Monday feeling of back to school. Lazy Sunday had a shelf life, and would certainly expire. And August is the Sunday of summer.

It was at lunch on a day in late August 2020 that I heard a lovely young woman named Sophie, an Education Assistant working in a Vancouver school, make a declaration that spoke to me and captured a sentiment shared by many: "I'm looking forward to 'precedented' times." I remember laughing at her clever wordplay, having grown exceptionally tired of everything being **unprecedented**. At that moment in time, it already had been a long haul since COVID-19 profoundly affected our personal and professional lives. We were yet unaware of the journey ahead for 2020-21, and blissfully unable to foresee the apex of Day 141, on which 179 Principals would issue exposure notifications to their communities. As we moved through to June of 2021 and put closure to the school year, it seemed that 'precedented times' awaited us on the other side of August.

As June ended, The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, BC Minister of Education, announced that educators and families could look forward to a 'near-normal' return to school in September. The news was received with optimism, and hope for a more settled future. Near-normal is an interesting term, both attractive and curious. Attraction lay in the word 'normal', something all of society has been pining for: a return to a life

*"OUR CURIOSITY
is piqued as we
contemplate just how
'near' to our former
lives we will be..."*

resembling one we had before March of 2020. Our curiosity is piqued as we contemplate just how 'near' to our former lives we will be. Soon after the Minister's announcement, a BCPVPA member shared with me her intent to reject the description of near-normal for the coming fall, choosing instead to look forward to something more **typical**.

She argued that there is no such thing as normal, particularly in a system that has a hard reset each September: students arriving new to the buildings or even the community; teachers and supporting staff moving to new schools or beginning a new career direction; Principals and Vice-Principals assuming the leadership of buildings new to them and, in some cases, buildings that are new to the entire community! Changes and transitions among senior leadership of our school districts further contribute to the reboot. Alongside this change will be those who are returning to a familiar setting; yet they, too, will experience a shift, surrounded by many new faces, creating new dynamics, and traversing unknown landscapes.

Whether typical, near-normal, orprecedented, in September of 2021 we find ourselves in a 'Back to School' season that looks and feels closer to those of our past.

Inprecedented times, the waning summer and the anticipation of a return to classes clashed within me. Back to School was an excuse for shopping, the delicious anticipation found in gathering up fresh supplies for school – the pens & pencils, rulers, cases, protractors, and paper – not to mention the new school clothes which, I must confess, were my favourite part. The clothes purchased in August were off-limits until school began, and I couldn't wait to wear them. New duds contributed to that sense of a

fresh start. The satisfaction I felt was not diminished when I had worn all the new clothes by Thursday of the first week.

Back to School 2021 will find families supply shopping for a near-normal year – more students returning to in-school instruction makes the Zoom wardrobe insufficient again! – but new items could appear on the supply lists of old. We may continue to carry a supply of masks as they can offer a sense of security as we recover our comfort with each other in our buildings. There may even be times, in different places around BC, when local guidance will call for a brief implementation of safety measures. While buildings and classrooms will continue to encourage diligent hand hygiene, our lists will still certainly include cloths and sanitizers for personal use.

After the shopping is a memory, students and staff will arrive on school doorsteps. And while a new school year typically begins with some apprehension, Back to School 2021 may arrive with more than its typical share of anxious moments. Struck to advise the K-12 Education Steering Committee, the Mental Health School Start-Up Working Group cited a number of research and data collection projects which spoke to the impacts of COVID-19 on students, families, and educators. While there is not yet a complete understanding of both short-term and long-term mental health impacts, the Working Group noted that students reported an increase in stress and a decrease in well-being; and educators reported that their mental and physical health worsened during the pandemic.

The Working Group brought together partners in education, mental and public health, and government. Their collaborative efforts identified key principles, strategies, recommended actions, and resources to support the 'near-normal' school start and a recovery from the pandemic. Those principles, [a guide for educators and school leaders](#), are meaningful in any and every September; however, 2021 may require that they are more duly emphasized.

We have important work ahead. When it comes to understanding another's experience of the pandemic, it will be crucial to humbly acknowledge ourselves as learners. Members of our school communities have

"...THE WORKING GROUP

noted that students reported an increase in stress and a decrease in well-being; and educators reported that their mental and physical health worsened during the pandemic."

been impacted in different ways by the pandemic, and we must provide supports and services proportional to the impact or the need. We must each make a personal commitment to be culturally responsive. We must pay particular attention to students who have not been connected to school and develop specific plans to connect with them. We must take time and ensure a shared understanding when teaching or discussing trauma, anxiety, and stress. And, we must pay particular attention to identifying and reflecting upon the strengths of individuals so that we may mobilize resources in ways to complement those existing strengths.

The strategies noted by the Working Group are also found in the Ministry's Mental Health in Schools Strategy document. Among them is a subset of seven strategies, particularly focused on the integral and interrelated components of **resilience**:

- build **competence** through inquiry, exploration, and new learning;
- build **confidence** by providing scaffolds to support learning;
- build **connection** with opportunities that foster connection and understanding;
- build **character** with practice that promotes responsibility and self-regulation over compliance;
 - make room for **contribution** to classrooms, school, and community;
- support healthy ways of **coping** with stress and anxiety for children and adults; and
- provide appropriate opportunities for choice and voice to support a sense of **control**.

Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe offers powerful thinking about resiliency in her book *Calm Within the Storm*, an excellent addition to our resources for 'near-normal'. BCPVPA member Margaret Paxton reviewed Dr. Hanley-Dafoe's book in the June edition of *Principled*.

In *Calm Within the Storm*, Dr. Hanley-Dafoe conjures the metaphor of lighthouses. She says they are her favourite "type of structure in the world... spellbound by their grandeur, beauty, strength, and purpose." She further unpacks the analogy, encouraging her readers to identify their lighthouses: "From what do you draw direction, connection, strength, and focus in your life?" She asserts that we can do hard things; we are brave and courageous in the face of change and uncertainty, and we will rally, reclaim, rise, and thrive. "We are enough. We have always been enough just by virtue of our existence." I think it not a coincidence that BCPVPA Director of Member Health & Wellbeing Rochelle Morandini adopted this same metaphor in her summary of the results from our spring Thriving in Education Survey. An intent of the survey was to uncover workplace factors and environments which contribute to a school leader's state of thriving. Rochelle used the metaphor to describe our 2,600 members, for they have been the lighthouses for students, staff, and parents during the storm of COVID-19.

The survey revealed very interesting information. Better than three-quarters of respondents indicated a strong confidence in their capacity to handle the many expectations of their roles. However, a somewhat greater proportion of respondents also stated they have felt overwhelmed by the volume and complexity of their work through the spring of 2021, ending their days feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted. It is unquestionable that the work intensification for Principals and Vice-Principals has significantly increased in recent years. Perhaps the most telling discovery in the survey came when respondents were asked if they were willing to give extra effort at work as needed, despite their fatigue: 92% answered that they would give more.

Our members offered rich anecdotal comments

"WHEN RESPONDENTS
were asked if they were
willing to give extra
effort at work as needed,
despite their fatigue: 92%
answered that they would
give more."

and insights. One survey question asked, "What services have you received from the BCPVPA that you believe supported your workplace wellbeing?" As I read through, one response to this question surfaced and it has become a personal lighthouse for me – as Robyne would say, something to "look out for and pay attention to." Our member answered,

"... can't think of any, I delete the emails without reading them because I am overwhelmed with real work, don't have time

to read them, and don't feel they align with the realistic nature of my day."

Simon Sinek writes that "fulfillment is not a lottery" and that, as leaders, we have a responsibility to create "an environment in which the people in your charge feel like they are a part of something bigger than themselves..." This is as true for the president of an association as it is for the Principal of a school.

A second response to the survey question noted above called for the presence of the BCPVPA in our chapters, when and as needed. I have often shared the story of my 'why', and it is bound in servant leadership. As we engage in 'Leading Back to School' in this last year of my term, I re-commit my energies to establishing meaningful connections with our membership. It is my sincere hope that the year ahead provides many opportunities for me to meet with our members, face to face, in order to serve their needs and align with the realistic natures of their days, be they typical, near-normal, or precedented.



@bcpvpapresident

Stay on top of your professional health



The BCPVPA is pleased to offer its members
the Early Intervention Program (EIP)
by humanworks

Here to help you gain greater clarity
and control of your professional health

BCPVPA EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

The EIP offers an excellent opportunity to be proactive in managing your health and well-being. It is designed to provide you with quick and easily accessible resources and counsel on how to best navigate your health-related concerns so that you can remain at work.

Questions about the EIP?

Visit the FAQ section on the BCPVPA or humanworks websites or contact:

humanworks

EMAIL: admin@humanworks.ca

PHONE: 604-734-4130

www.humanworks.ca

bcpvpa

humanworks

2021-2022 BCPVPA Board of Directors



L to R: Read Jorgensen, David DeRosa, Tom Aerts, Sid Jawanda, Paul Marsden, Heidi Grant, Brian Leonard, Jacqueline Borosa, Sanj Johal, Darren Danyluk, Sally Zryd (regrets: Jacqueline Taylor)

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ddanyluk@bcpvpa.bc.ca

President-Elect Brian Leonard
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Director Tom Aerts
(SD61, Victoria)
taerts@sd61.bc.ca

Director Jacqueline Borosa
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jborosa@nisgaa.bc.ca

Director David DeRosa
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Director Heidi Grant
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Director Sid Jawanda
(SD27, Prince George)
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Director Sanj Johal
(SD44, North Vancouver)
SJohal@sd44.ca

Director Read Jorgensen
(SD61, Victoria)
rjorgensen@sd61.bc.ca

Director Paul Marsden
(SD36, Surrey)
marsden_p@surreyschools.ca

Director Jacqueline Taylor
(SD22, Vernon)
jahtaylor@sd22.bc.ca

Director Sally Zryd
(SD73, Kamloops-Thompson)
szryd@sd73.bc.ca

**Board of Directors
Meetings**

October 15-16, 2021

November 18, 2021

December 3-4, 2021

February 10, 2022

April 8-9, 2022

May 13, 2022

*Additional Zoom meetings
as scheduled*

**Chapter Council
Meetings**

November 19-20, 2021

February 11-12, 2022

May 13-14, 2022

**Chapter President
Town Halls**

**Monthly Zoom meetings
as scheduled**



**Contract Advisory Chair
Meetings**

October 28, 2021

January 27-29, 2022

**Professional Learning &
Development Rep Meetings**

October 4, 2021

January 30-31, 2022

**BC Student Voice Rep
Meeting**

April 21-23, 2022

The BCPVPA convenes Standing Committees, in addition to Ad Hoc Committees and Working Groups that may be established for defined projects. Join us in welcoming these 2021-2022 Committee members:

BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Budget Committee reviews the budget and associated processes, and may provide advice to the Board on issues and policies.

Lyall Ruehlen	SD 64 – Gulf Islands
Frances Krusekopf	SD 62 – Sooke
Mark McVittie	SD 73 – Kamloops/Thompson
Chris Matheson	SD 83 – North Okanagan-Shuswap
Sarah Winkler	SD 61 – Greater Victoria
Devon Ross	SD 43 – Coquitlam
Heidi Grant	Director of the Board
Paul Marsden	Director of the Board
Darren Danyluk	BCPVPA President

CONTRACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The CAC supports contract reps in local Chapters and provides a comprehensive view of information, trends and issues related to member contracts.



Aaron Thorn	SD 5 – Southeast Kootenay
David Martin	SD 5 – Southeast Kootenay
Shannon Miller	SD 53 – Okanagan Similkameen
Reid Findlay	SD 83 – North Okanagan-Shuswap
Dan Heisler	SD 33 – Chilliwack
Kim Kass	SD 33 – Chilliwack
Claire George	SD 37 – Delta
Parm Hari	SD 41 – Burnaby
David Mushens	SD 43 – Coquitlam
Sarah Petrisor	SD 57 – Prince George
Brian Campbell	SD 60 – Peace River North
Craig McLeod	SD 79 – Cowichan Valley
Gord Redlin	SD 63 – Saanich
Jaksun Grice	SD 54 – Bulkley Valley
Deavlan Bradley	SD 50 – Haida Gwaii
Tom Aerts	Director of the Board
Brian Leonard	Director of the Board
Darren Danyluk	BCPVPA President

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ILAC explores ways to support members as they are introduced to Indigenous ways of learning in their schools and communities.

Jennifer Adamson	SD61 – Greater Victoria
Anne Smith	SD 36 – Surrey
Chas Desjarlais	SD 39 – Vancouver
Katie Marren	SD 57 – Prince George
Christina Chase	SD 61 – Greater Victoria
Jacqueline Taylor	Director of the Board
Jacqueline Borosa	Director of the Board
Darren Danyluk	President of BCPVPA

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The PLD Committee conducts needs assessments, and provides feedback and support for the development and delivery of current and new BCPVPA programs.

Brenda Anderson	SD57 – Prince George
Mikel Brogan	SD73 – Kamloops
Renee Hislop	SD62 – Sooke
Ranjit Bains	SD 39 – Vancouver
Lois Ehman	SD5 – SE Kootenay
Tina Pierik	SD61 – Greater Victoria
Tara Zielinski	SD45 – West Vancouver
Sid Jawanda	Director of the Board
Sally Zryd	Director of the Board
Darren Danyluk	BCPVPA President

WORKPLACE INTENSIFICATION AND WELL-BEING COMMITTEE

The WIWC advocates for healthy, respectful and inclusive workplaces, and a shared commitment to member wellness.

Genevieve McMahon	SD 43 – Coquitlam
Pam Gerrits	SD 62 – Sooke
Kathryn Jung	SD 43 – Coquitlam
Jennifer Rankin	SD 57 – Prince George
Annette Vey-Chilton	SD 39 – Vancouver
Karen Higginbotham	SD 61 – Greater Victoria
David DeRosa	Director of the Board
Read Jorgensen	Director of the Board
Darren Danyluk	BCPVPA President



PORTAL? What's a PORTAL? We're glad you asked!

The BCPVPA Member Portal is the companion site to our public website, a secure members-only area that will be filled to the brim with information and resources. We are excited to get underway this fall, and to continue to develop the portal to include new features to support your membership.

We will launch the Portal with several key sections and will expand content through several phases this fall. On August 31, members will receive an email with sign-in instructions and can explore these tools in Phase 1:

My Profile

update your contact information

Member News

find eNews, Member communications, careers, media releases & Association minutes

Member Support Services

learn about compensation, contracts and pensions, and find resources for a healthy life

Resources

find BCPVPA documents, education guides, articles of interest, research, reports, and surveys

Contacts

meet the BCPVPA team, and find out who can help you with what you need

Forms

a one-stop shop for forms and fillable documents



Questions?

sandra@bcpvpa.bc.ca

COFFEE'S ON!



Oct 5, 2021 7:30 AM

Oct 26, 2021 3:30 PM

Nov 2, 2021 7:30 AM

Nov 25, 2021 3:30 PM

Dec 7, 2021 7:30 AM

Dec 14, 2021 3:30 PM

BCPVPA Coffee Connections grew out of the early days of the pandemic, as our Association sought new and different ways to virtually connect with our members.

What began as an experiment – unstructured ‘chat’ time, 100% drop-in, and at an early hour – has emerged as one of the “Gifts of COVID” as coined by UBC’s Dr. Mark Edwards. While our gatherings are often small enough for us to remain in one ‘room’, the connections have been significant with participants reaching out to each other beyond the Thursday sessions. Some of our regular attendees shared their thoughts at the final Coffee Connections of the season in June.

Peter Gajda (SD 10)

I really like Coffee Connections for a lot of reasons. One is being at a school as the only administrator, and in a small rural district where there are only five of us, it's a way for me to connect with people and hear about their struggles and to know that I'm not alone.



I miss getting together with people at Chapter Councils, so It's great to see some familiar faces. I think the real thing for me has been hearing about what other administrators have been

doing to try and deal with changes, and it's nice to get a fresh perspective from another district – either a bigger school or a smaller school – about how they're handling TTOC shortages, or cohort struggles, or transitions around the building. It's been a great place to come to, to share ideas.

I like the 7:30 am start: I'm usually at work anyway, and it's nice to have that pop up in my window. It really makes my day go better, once I've been here. I smile and think about some of the things we've talked about.

Darren Danyluk (SD 6)

BCPVPA President

Coffee Connections is an opportunity that we have for all of our membership – not just Chapter reps or the executive in a Chapter – it's for everybody. It's proven to be such an accessible connecting point – people have frequently joined in their vehicles, on their devices, and listened in as they've driven in to work. We've also been able to offer an opportunity to connect with our Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) colleagues outside of BC when their members have been able to join us for select sessions.



Heidi Grant (SD 91)

I appreciate the connection piece, the opportunity to talk with people I would not normally connect with, and I've certainly reached out to people after these conversations to follow up on some things. The idea of accessibility, of being able to join on multiple devices is so helpful. I would love to sign up for Coffee Connections just once, and have it pop up in my calendar all year, that way I can join or not join. That would make it more accessible for more people.



Sally Zryd (SD 73)

I think one of the main things I appreciate is hearing that people are in the same boat as you, and how they have handled a situation. And not necessarily someone in your district, because it's very interesting hearing the perspective of leaders in other districts, whether they're high school or elementary. We're often dealing with very similar situations with parents, or we're often dealing with similar issues with



one of the unions, so I think that the perspective of hearing that other people may struggle or have better ideas than you is something that keeps me coming. It's been fun all year just seeing your lovely faces.

Jacqueline Borosa (SD 92)

I love seeing everyone and having that consistency. And I love that there is a flexible format to the sessions: for example, right now, we're not automatically going into breakout rooms because 'that's what we do'. It's been nice to adapt as things happen, and when attendee numbers fluctuate. I like that there's a topic to focus on, so that we have a bit of a prompt for our conversation. I sometimes sign up through the Twitter post, but it would be great if there was a place in our new member-only portal on the website where you could just click and join, without even having to register.



The early morning time is not an issue for me, but I have tried to bring a friend and their response has been, "it's at what time?" But if you do it later, the building gets filled up, and at the end of the day people often have meetings. This time works for people who are just trying to get their cup of coffee into their system.

Kyle Timms (SD 71)

I've only joined a couple times this year but I do appreciate the chance to get together. Pandemic or not, professional learning is always best when it's ongoing, so I love to see these tools. Can you imagine a few years ago, sitting all together in our offices having a meeting like this? It didn't happen. We had to go to a conference, twice a year, and it cost a lot more money. So, these tools that are allowing us to collaborate and connect with each other are great.



Jane Arbuckle (SD 82)

I agree with Peter: when you're the sole administrator on an isolated island, sometimes it's nice to know that you're not alone. I think it has been very reassuring to hear what other people were doing, or knowing what's coming down the pipe, or what the Ministry of Education is saying. It's given us some perspective; when you're having a hard day or a hard week or a hard month, and then you hear what other schools are having to deal with, then you can feel pretty thankful for where you are. I really enjoyed hearing about resources, whether its books people were sharing, or speakers, or workshops. It's the opportunity to hear directly from someone who has read the book or been to the workshop or knows the speaker, as opposed to something that just appears in my email.



Peter Johnston (SD 36)

I didn't make every one of them: failure to fills are always the priority. But it has been really nice to connect with people across the province, *and* to *connect* people across the province. And we realize that we're really in a small community and it seems to help us to get through those rough times.

The reality is that even though I'm in a school, and I have three VPs and there are 19 other high schools in the district, and we don't connect. We do a quick Teams meeting, and it's usually on an urgent matter. And you really have to connect, and put Coffee Connections right in your calendar. It will be great to continue this, and to keep connecting. This is something that you could probably do regionally with your local chapters as well, but it's nice to be able to do it on a provincial scale.





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What drew you to education?

Originally, residing in a remote Northern community, I didn't think becoming an educator was a possibility. But then, in my senior year at high school, all students were required to complete a career aptitude test. Through conversations around aspirations, my guidance counsellor gave me the confidence and courage to explore various pathways. I quickly learned that becoming a teacher was attainable. That year, the local college and a lower mainland university partnered to offer a two-year university transfer program. I was able to complete my education because the instructors offered coursework at the local campus. This opportunity increased my career choices. To this day, I love and respect being in education. I am grateful that times have changed, allowing students increased access to varied educational options. I am proud to be a part of a public education system that provides more opportunities for delivery of services to meet students where they are at.

What drew you to this role with the BCPVPA?

My first experience with BCPVPA was participating in Short Course I as a participant and, subsequently, as a presenter. I have also had the opportunity be part of the Contract Advisory Committee and have been representing the Northern and Fraser Valley Region for the past several years. During this past year, I was able to serve on the Board of Directors. These unique opportunities through our Association have helped me to develop as an educational leader, learn about the role of governance and policy, and understand the importance of self-reflection as it pertains to the leadership standards necessary to do our complex work. I always feel welcome and valued for my contributions as a long-standing member of our Association. The work BCPVPA does on behalf of our colleagues is far reaching. As a well-respected educational partner, I wanted to become part of the synergy that BCPVPA creates to support our colleagues in the same way the Association has supported me throughout my career.

What are you most looking forward to in this new role?

I am excited to continue to serve our Association. In the new role with Member Support Services, I am looking forward to working alongside Principals and Vice-Principals, and networking and connecting to others who share the same passion for making a difference in the public school system with all we have to offer in BC. I plan to share thoughtful perspectives on challenging issues. BCPVPA has a proven track record of providing effective and supportive service, quality mentorship, abundant professional development opportunities, quality legal education and council, and advocacy with government and other provincial educational partners. Administrators in the province have tremendous responsibilities, with vast volume and complexity that make the profession challenging, yet interesting and rewarding. I look forward to being a positive and productive team member through advocacy and providing exemplary leadership development within our system.



Teacher
8 Years

Vice-Principal
1 Year

Principal
14 Years

My favorite quote is about connection.

"Connection is the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship" This quote by Brené Brown resonates with me because we are wired for connection with people all around us, with nature and within ourselves! By creating an environment that supports listening, mindfulness, and compassion, we create the space and time to be our authentic selves. By being open, inquisitive, and generous, I feel leaders can authentically cultivate deeper relationships.

What drew you to education?

The notion of continuous learning: I enjoy learning, and sharing my learning. When I was in grade 3, I received a full psychological diagnosis of dyslexia; this element of my life has forced me to stay humble, and to use my listening abilities to work hard, unlearn, learn, and relearn. The support of my family and teachers at that time set me on a path to education, and my 4.5 years as Director of North American Markets with Franklin/Covey also fueled my passion for learning and helped me to know myself.

For many years, I have been intrigued by the idea of competency bias (*we are incompetent at knowing how incompetent or competent we are, so we may see less or more than we think*). We have no way of knowing how much other people know. Not knowing what I know is the curiosity for learning that I hope I have modelled for my students and staff.

What drew you to this role with the BCPVPA?

This role allows me to share learning, and to learn alongside my Principal colleagues. *Ever climbed a mountain?* The higher you get, the farther you can see, and the bigger your horizon. You can only see 360 degrees when you are at the top. Working with the BCPVPA gives me the 6,000 foot view to share with my colleagues. We sometimes get stuck on top of our mountain, and we don't know what's happening on our neighbouring mountain. My new role allows me to share that broad learning, and to advocate for my colleagues at the provincial level.

The BCPVPA brings many different educational contexts to our members, as a balance to the paradoxical handicap of too much information and a single perspective on understanding that information. Our culture often confuses access to information with the understanding of information and its deepening to knowledge. I plan to support our members in navigating that ever-evolving flow of educational information.

What are you most looking forward to in this new role?

I look forward to sharing Principals' and Vice-Principals' voices from around the province, and reminding those listening about the critical role of school leaders in BC's educational system.

I look forward to creating and delivering professional learning, with a focus on designing learning that is free of biases, remnants of colonialism, and inequity, in a learning environment where it is safe to share without judgement from 'others in the room'.

I look forward to sharing PLD with a firm grounding and allowing for ambiguity: so much of PLD is about unknowing and new learning. On this shared journey, we will find that we know more than we think we did, are capable of more than we thought we were, and that we all still have a lot more to learn.

A portrait of John F. Kennedy, a middle-aged man with a grey beard and mustache, smiling. He is wearing a blue checkered shirt under a dark blue blazer. The background is a dense green hedge.

"Leadership
and learning are
indispensable to
each other."

John F. Kennedy

Teacher
7 Years

Vice-Principal
5 Years

Principal
15 Years

What drew you to education?

I am from a large family. We had a playroom complete with second-hand textbooks (even a teacher's guide with the answers), a chalkboard, and a set of antique desks. My older sister was always the teacher, and I was not a very well-behaved student. When I was eight, my mom - with five children under the age of twelve - went back to finish high school and on to complete her university degree and receive her teaching certificate. With my parents as educators, modelling the ethic of care and service, it is not surprising that three of the five siblings became teachers. Teaching came naturally to us.

I realized very early in my teacher training that I love listening to children, hearing their thinking, sharing in their wonder, and seeing them grow. As a Principal, I came to understand that I love being part of a community with a shared purpose.

What drew you to this role with the BCPVPA?

It all started with Short Course I, when my eyes were opened to the legal side of the job. I quickly became involved in the Comox Valley Principals and Vice Principals Chapter as the PLD co-chair, gathering ideas from our rep meetings and bringing them back to share with our colleagues. Over the past several years, I have been the co-chair for Professional Learning in the Coquitlam Chapter. I have been involved in Short Course I as a participant, a facilitator, and a planner. I had the great opportunity to be part of a team that designed and delivered an Offshore Leadership Development program for Principals working in schools delivering BC's curriculum overseas. Over the past 18 months, I have contributed to the development of the online offerings Essentials for Aspiring School Leaders and Essentials for New School Leaders. The BCPVPA professional learning opportunities have been a valued part of my leadership journey, and I want to facilitate that experience for others.

What are you most looking forward to in this new role?

Every change I have made in my education journey has created a broadened perspective. I remember becoming a Vice-Principal, and promising myself that I could always go back to classroom if it was not a good fit. I loved the challenge, and that my world became bigger. I was not centered around my class: I had to think of everyone. When I became a Principal, I realized the responsibility was now mine, which strengthened my integrity. When I became a Principal at the district level, I had to consider all of the ripples of my decisions.

I look forward to the new learning that awaits me. I will lead inquiry into how we can deepen our cultural competency, how we can listen to learn, and how we can broaden our perspectives and challenge our personal biases. In this role, as a leader of professional learning, my objective is to support the collective strengthening of our profession through life-long learning.

*Meg Wheatley is one of my
grounding authors and
she is a co-founder of the
Berkana Institute.*

*I share Berkana's principles in
how I lead, learn, and live:*

- *Whatever the problem,
community is the answer*
- *Diversity is a blessing, not
a problem*
- *The leaders we need are
already here*
- *People support what they
create*
- *Self-awareness is the
foundation for good leadership*
- *A living system is a learning
system*

*I live into these principles
by actively developing our
collective ability to collaborate,
listen and inquire.*

**Teacher
11 Years**

**Vice-Principal
8 Years**

**Principal
15 Years**





AFFINITY SPACES

Cultivating & Promoting Diversity in the Workplace

by
Wayne Chow
Vice-Principal, SD 42

The uptake in anti-Asian racism locally and globally, as highlighted in a recent Bloomberg article ["This is the Anti-Asian Hate Crime Capital of North America"](#) pinned the Vancouver area and three other regions in Canada as the top five hotbeds of hate towards Asians in North America. Shocking? Not really! As we acknowledged Asian Heritage Month in May, a reckoning of sorts was occurring. Incidents of hate prompted an outcry for action, and we protested and stood side by side, allying with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and movements against intolerance. We stood against hate and discrimination in our communities and unto our most vulnerable Asian members of society, and we called for an end to hate. As I continued to feel this empathic distress for my fellow Asians, and felt a deep need to end this feeling of alienation, I reflected on my own context. What am I doing to end the hate? I am learning in webinars and reading a ton, but what am I willing to action?

I started by asking some students about racism and if they have experienced it in some way, shape, or form. Some of them expressed that they feel unwelcome in the very building where they come to learn, by the very people they are asked to trust, and that they feel disavowed in the history that is taught to them. Token gestures and curricular privilege take a front seat, and our Asian students and staff are left with the generational advice of not stirring the pot, staying quiet and focusing on a strong work ethic to get ahead. Consequently, this narrative has erupted in violence and bigotry, with dire consequences in some instances. How can we do better? How *will* we do better and get away from the model minority myth?

I recently called on educational leaders to join an **Asian Edchat**. The goal was simply to allow a space

that was for us: an affinity space. Affinity spaces are simply groups that share common interests, values, backgrounds, and/or goals. These spaces are meant to cultivate and promote diversity within the workspace. You may think that an affinity space is counter-intuitive to inclusion, but it actually stimulates it by allowing the members within the group to further develop an understanding of how identities shape lived experiences. An affinity space promotes a more inclusive culture by recognizing how a space responds to its participants, ultimately opening communication and dialogue about race.

I was introduced to affinity spaces through the workshop "Dismantling White Supremacy Culture in Schools", facilitated by Joe Truss. This virtual workshop was held last summer during the height of the pandemic, and it included several hundred educators from all across North America. After being provided a framework for addressing anti-racism work, we were sent into affinity breakout rooms with the purpose of providing a space to interrupt White Supremacy Culture in our adult interactions. The framework provided another tool to deepen our consciousness on racial dialogue, and enhance our practice or, in some cases, change our practice. My consideration through this school year was how to create this space, as I was the sole Asian administrator in my district. Working with Kenneth Headley, I knew that there was a group of Black administrators who had created this space within the province, and it inspired me to act.

What happened next was a roller coaster of emotions, second guessing, and elation. With support from the team at BCPVPA, I posted an advertisement promoting a connecting conversation to talk about the challenges of being an Asian educator, to share

thoughts on how to address anti-Asian racism in education, and to discuss what we as educational leaders are doing at our schools to bring about change. I was hesitant to launch this ride, but I felt excited about the opportunity. The first few days were slow, with only one interested administrator who identified as white but was wanting to join as an ally. I felt humbled and appreciative for this person's outreach. I felt relieved to know that my call to action was noticed, but I was hoping for a bigger response. I felt a bit defeated, and unsure about this call to action. *Was I the only one who felt this way?* What resulted was more than I could ever ask for: the next few days were more productive, as others reached out to join the call.

I was reminded by my good friend Grant Frend that it's not about the numbers. I had quantified success with participation rates, and I fell into White Supremacist thinking. The small group that eventually did meet over Zoom was comprised of diverse Asian educational leaders with a common goal to do better. It is not about critical mass, but more about critical friends – those who will engage you in the courageous conversations and hold you accountable

for actioning your intentions. We spoke for more than an hour, sharing common stories of triumph and challenge. We did not aim to fix, but rather to open the flow of dialogue and understanding. I learned that our colleagues from different districts need support in how to deal with educating staff, students, and the community on how to be culturally aware and responsive. I learned that we face discrimination and microaggressions in the workplace, that we deal with these in different ways, and that they can exact a toll on our well-being.

At the heart of it, we are proud of who we are, and proud of the work we are doing to support our racialized students. I would like to encourage all Asian educational leaders to reach out and look into affinity support networks. I am grateful for this space, and this ride is just starting to get momentum. This ride would not have been possible without the support of some critical friends: Grant Frend, Kenneth Headley, and Karl Lindgren-Streicher. Some may not have those friends who can encourage you to do better, and be better, which is why it is so important to find and connect to spaces to do this work.

If you would like to join an upcoming Asian Edchat session, contact Wayne Chow wayne_chow@sd42.ca



"It is not about critical mass, but more about critical friends – those who will engage you in the courageous conversations and hold you accountable for actioning your intentions."



CONNECTING LEADERS

BCPVPA

Members and Friends
are invited to join us
to learn from and engage
with these exceptional
keynote speakers

October 21 - 22, 2021

The 2021 Connecting
Leaders Conference is a
virtual experience that
can be shared in hubs with
colleagues in your district.



Healing With Laughter

An Indigenous comedian and member of Eel River Bar First Nation, Candy's comedic storytelling and unique style of stand-up comedy brings audiences to tears as she captivates with both humour and solemn emotion. Candy speaks about gay rights, Indigenous rights, the power of language, diversity, and equity. The core of Candy's presentations is her crucial message of love, kindness, and self-acceptance, drawing on personal stories and her experiences both as a lawyer and a professional comedian. Healing with Laughter is serious medicine.

Candy is a renowned Canadian orator, actor, writer, activist and multiple award-winning TV and radio personality who has executive produced three films on Mi'kmaw culture.

Candy
Palmater



Nouman Ashraf

Nouman Ashraf is an Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, within the Organizational Behavior area, and the Director of Diversity and Inclusion initiatives at the Rotman School of Management.

The Leadership Stimulus Package: A Call to All Leaders

Over the past few months, there has been a timely call for greater demonstration of organizational commitment to — and capacity for — putting a strategic lens on the work of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

This important imperative constitutes the backbone of a leadership stimulus package that is necessary to raise important questions about how leaders can address societal inequity and, at the same time, seize opportunities for greater organizational inclusion at all levels. In this highly interactive session, Professor Nouman Ashraf will offer five key insights on how leaders can assemble such a leadership stimulus package.

The Power of Conversation

Anna Maria Tremonti believes in the power of conversation — when it's fun, and when it's tough. She also believes that language matters and that "It takes leaders to ensure there is conversation".

Through decades of journalism, she has learned what to ask, and how to listen, so that voices can be shared in the effort to be transparent and to unite people in understanding. Anna Maria will share insights and ideas on how to use conversation to foster connections and equity as we all navigate change and upheaval.



A masterful storyteller, Anna Maria hosted Canada's most popular radio program *The Current* for 17 years. This former foreign correspondent and two-time Gemini Award winner is now producing original podcasts that will illuminate, challenge, and surprise.

Anna Maria Tremonti

bcp  vpa



CONNECTING LEADERS

Thursday October 21

7:00 pm

Friday October 22

8:30 am

Early Bird Fees

Until September 10, 2021

Active Member: \$225.00 + GST

Non-Member: \$300.00 + GST

September 11 - October 20, 2021

Active Member: \$275.00 + GST

Non-Member: \$350.00 + GST

INFORMATION

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CONNECTING LEADERS

WHY

Mentorship?

The learning journey of two
professionals involved in the
BCPVPA Mentorship Program

by
Aaron Maxwell

SD 61
Lani Vetter

SD 75

"It is only by being honest that we can have integrity. Actions such as being true to our spirit and accepting who we are will guide us in being honest. To be truly honest is to keep the promises one made to the Creator, to others and to oneself."

*-Excerpt from the Sacred Teaching of "Honesty" developed with Leq'a:mel artist, Ovilá Mailhot for 2020-21,
Mission Public School District, Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, September 2020*

The BCPVPA Mentorship Program has changed our practices for the better. Building professional capacity is what brought each of us to the Mentorship Program, but neither of us realized how transformative it would be. Many of our conversations were around how purposeful communication in leadership supports not only professional capacity, but also the capacity of all those in the school community. As we navigated so many unexpected situations in our school communities, the questions "What is your intention?", "What are your resources?", and "Who does it help?" broadened our capacity to identify key details when having conversations about how to support learners and staff. These questions guided us, and we are happy to share some of our experiences and perspectives, as the journey is one that we would recommend to all BCPVPA members whether it be as a mentee or a mentor.

Why did I join the BCPVPA Mentorship program?



LANI ('the mentee')

As a new school leader, I attended a presentation by BCPVPA's Jessica Antosz and Elizabeth Bell on the leadership standards at the annual leadership retreat. The workshop connected me with the opportunity for mentorship as an interactive, real-time support, and this was appealing as I considered my professional growth goals. I decided to take the leap and signed up for this opportunity, not exactly sure what it would entail. On October 18, 2019, the initial face-to-face meeting of our cohort's mentors and mentees met for the first – and last – time in Vancouver. This is where I met Aaron, an experienced middle school Vice-Principal from Vancouver Island, and we started our learning journey together. I could not have foreseen how important the mentorship experience would be in the next two years, as the unimagined unfolded in *unprecedented* ways. The dialectal approach to professional development focused on key questions that support the acquisition of learning, and practices that both developed strengths and underlined how to work through areas of challenge.



AARON ("the mentor")

As an 'experienced' school leader, I knew how important it was for me to surround myself with professional mentorship; when the opportunity to join a provincial mentorship community presented itself, I was keen to see if I could find a role within the community. I signed up for the role of 'mentor' and was excited at the potential to be involved in a BCPVPA program, as they had been very influential in my professional growth. I went to the first meeting uncertain as to what to expect, but was eagerly welcomed to the community made up of active and retired educators from all over the province. I was introduced to Lani, the person I would be paired with, and we were guided through the initial plan for our journey. We did work with other mentors, and were provided with resources and a suggested framework for the work that we would be doing. As mentors, we also spent time getting to know our mentee and sharing some of the professional goals that encouraged us to take on this opportunity.

What is the intention and purpose of our work?

LANI

The conversations were rooted in something we each held as key – accessible learning for all, and belonging for all students. The initial conversations began as an exploration of the BCPVPA Leadership Standards as they related to the core of my leadership practice. These ideas drove the early conversations: the Leadership Standards were critical to the daily work and relationships we have as leaders. Time and again, we would discuss how to make the core of my focus – supporting student learning and engagement – visible to others through strengthening my daily conversations with colleagues, students, families, and community stakeholders.

AARON

From a mentor's perspective, the intention was to help the mentee explore their practice and 'shine a light' on where they were developing capacity in their practice. One of the really interesting aspects of these conversations was that they allowed me to be reflective, not only on the mentee's work but on my own work as a school-based administrator. They helped me to process the incredible challenges that I was facing on a daily basis.

What resources are available through this journey?

LANI

Mentorship *is* a resource. Often, Aaron's questions – with the vantage point of experience and distance – could help identify where steps towards resolution could begin. His urban professional setting contrasted with my school's rural context. Ultimately, these differences offered me perspective to see the contrasts, and the strengths of our distinct settings.

As a beginning administrator, the pressures around acquiring the knowledge and skills related to processes, procedures, and documentation, and the daily tasks of supporting students and staff, invariably led to questions about how to complete all that a day brings. The mentorship relationship itself proved to be a model for how to 'do it all'. Often, as Aaron would carefully ask where I thought the right resources might be found, I would expand from my singular viewpoint. Naming the key supports as resources was a beginning. By extension, the vision to identify the strengths of those within the school community became clear, and I could see how district, school, and community members could collaborate, and that leadership means that growth is a communal experience.

AARON

As a mentor, I was thrilled with the resources and community that was provided by the BCPVPA. Beyond the print resources, there was the continued connection from BCPVPA staff and periodic meetings where, as mentors, we were able to question, share, and plan for our work going forward. As school-based leaders, we are all mentors in our communities; this time, information and support helped me grow not only in supporting my mentee, but in supporting the staff in the school where I work.

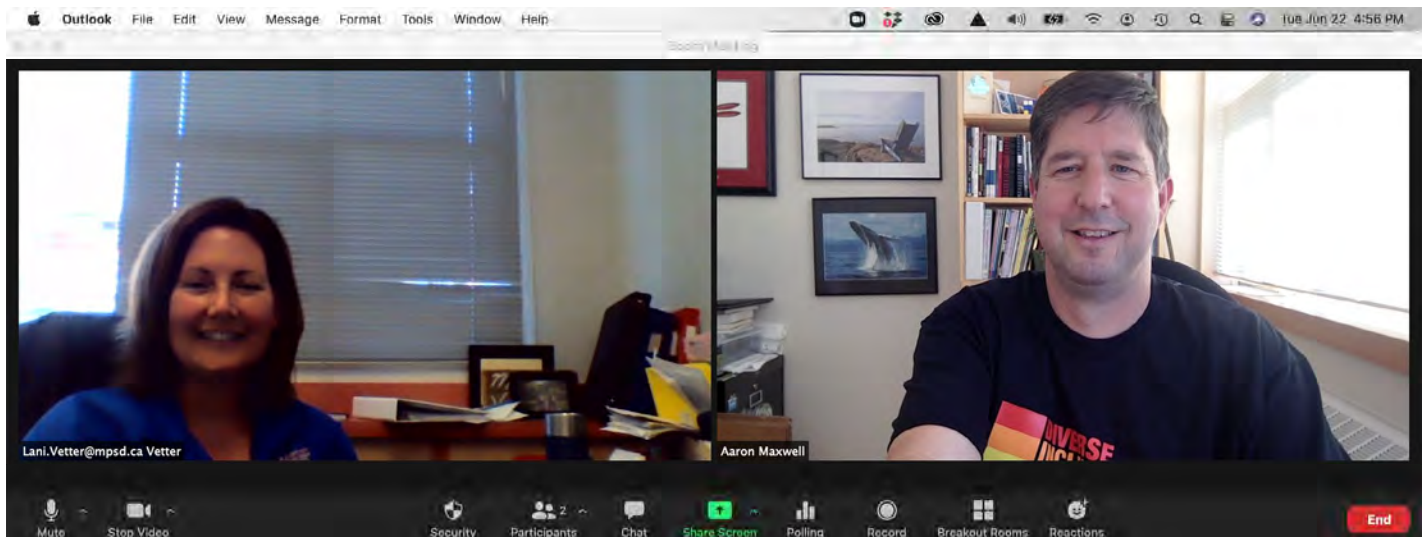
LANI

Any plan undertaken by school leaders involves the consideration of a finite resource: time. Setting aside the time to have the mentorship conversations, usually one hour a week, modelled the prioritization of tasks towards our established goal of ensuring that learning and belonging, and a culture of growth, was at the forefront. An hour a week may seem like an incredible commitment. I would marvel at Aaron's commitment to dedicate that time to my growth. He would respond that, for him, it was a time that allowed him to simultaneously reflect on his own practice. As a result, the question of time evolved into the realization of professional learning as a social and relational experience. That elusive resource of time became more available as our conversations enriched our capacity for discernment regarding our choices, and helped us to develop focus and purpose when aligning action with the anticipated outcome.

This scheduled time was also invaluable because it was a dedicated time committed to professional growth and reflection. With the tyranny of the ‘urgent’ which often fills our days, this was a time to reflect on the shared values and professional growth that motivates us to do what is best for our communities.

MENTORSHIP: Who does it help? How do you know? What do you want to talk about next time?

The mentorship relationship in and of itself is a means to accountability around doing the work in professional development. Questions such as “How do you know?” may initially cause panic: “What if I *don’t* know?” Likely one of the more difficult pieces to the mentorship relationship was where we discussed assessment and the identification of evidence of growth. If there was no evidence, then that meant that there was no growth. The question directed reflection towards what was effectual in our communities and, in turn, helped the realization of how to support areas of key change, alongside administrative partners, staff and students. The question directed reflection towards what was effectual in our communities and, in turn, illuminated how to support areas of key change alongside administrative partners, staff, and students. The accountability of weekly conversations meant that the reflective practice shaping our leadership skills became actual practice in our schools. Through our talks, the ideas and words became tangible in the school community in the form of mental health literacy, stronger student support collaboration, and the increased frequency of key conversations.



Mentorship work is challenging work It required that we share some of the good, and some of the unexpected challenges, in the day-to-day work at school. At the outset of this article, the sacred teaching for the Mission school district identifies the centrality of honesty. Reflective leadership requires the skill to identify areas of need, which connects to a vulnerability in leadership, and accountability to oneself and others. Each week, that identification of focus helped connect us to the essential skills of effective professional leadership. We are both incredibly grateful for the time, research, and intention that was committed to this journey. Through it all, we both learned a great deal and know that going forward, the key questions will continue to inform our professional growth and work in our school communities. It is fair to say that we are both glad we joined this program, and that through this work we have each grown immensely. We look forward to the continuation of this work throughout our careers, and we would encourage others to embark on their own journey either as a mentee, or as a mentor.

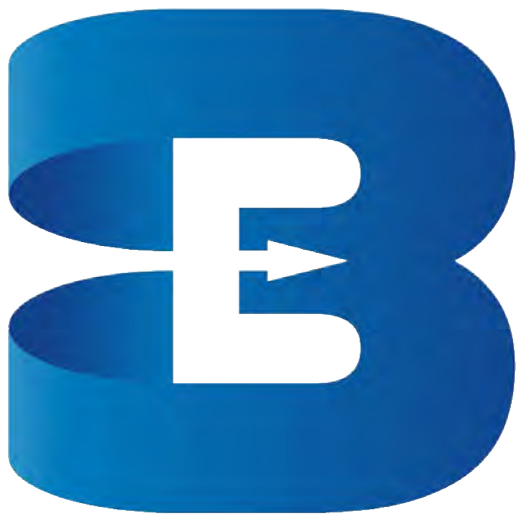
Mentors

Mentees

Are you a practicing or retired Principal?

You can make a difference in the journey of a new leader, and have an amazing experience.

Join us as a Mentor for 2021 — 2022.



The **BetterEducate** platform helps BCPVPA members and other educators to learn, connect, and share resources.

Christina Lake Principal Shawn Lockhart, and his colleague Adam DeBray, talk about the impetus behind the idea, and how BetterEducate is connecting school leaders.

Shawn Lockhart



"BetterEducate came from BetterCoaches, and that came out of a master's program at UBC when Adam and I coached together", says Shawn. "We had worked together at Baseball BC, and we wanted to come up with something that would be to the betterment of our sport. Most people were doing coaching manuals at the time, and these manuals had huge print costs and were significant to organize; even trying to organize coaches to be at the same place at the same time was challenging, so coming together to create a manual could become a logistical nightmare. I didn't have a web-based background, but Adam was in computer science, doing things

like trying to write code for a spider to move three or four of his legs at the same time. This project wove itself into three or four of our sports marketing and methodology courses. We wanted to take everything, and put it online so coaches could access it. The idea was to try to take the time and space out of people getting access to coaches and coaching content. This was in 2001-2002, when the internet was still in its infancy. We had a leader at the time who bought into the program, he wanted me to create a library for Baseball BC, so we started taping athletes and breaking down the sport: we produced a lot of content. We weren't at the point of trying to network



Adam DeBray

" The idea was to try to take the time and space out of people getting access to coaches and coaching content."

coaches, we were just trying to provide them a place to get hands-on drills. If you can picture a father of a 12-year-old who played little league at that time, he's really got nothing and needs to take one of those old National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) manuals out onto the field and try to make sense of it. Instead, he could watch a video and look at some pictures, and really visualize.

When I left Baseball BC to become a Vice-Principal, I'd still contact Adam to help me with hosting and other things that I didn't know how to do – my technical skills weren't even close to Adam's and never will be! Eventually, Adam and I partnered up with BetterCoaches, and then we got into umpires, and volleyball, soccer, and a bit of basketball. For volleyball, they're still using it in Ontario for their coaches and officials."

"I remember connecting with Adam to say hey, let's do this for education. I thought there was a real need for teachers – and mostly for administrators – to network and learn from each other. That's the best Pro-D I think people can do: it's not necessarily about the content, it's about the strength of your professional network. It's about how many people do you know: when you're stuck, can you call somebody and know that person can help you? That was the philosophy. We had designed it when I attended a Chapter Council meeting. I remember sitting beside (2018-2020 BCPVPA President) David DeRosa. I flipped open my laptop and he looked over and said, "What IS that, Lockhart?" And I told him it was an idea, and that I hoped we could talk about it later. When we got on the plane, we talked all the way home. That was in the spring and then (Executive Director) Kevin Reimer came out for a Chapter visit in the fall. We visited about three or four schools, and met the superintendent. And then I took him fishing, and we spent hours floating down the river fly-fishing and talking. Kevin shared that at that time, there was a focus around competencies and an intent to have

a space for members to work on their competencies. I was listening to him, and I said, we can do that. I explained BetterCoaches, and it didn't take long for Kevin to put that together and we started the process of really developing BetterEducate. We were already building a platform with teaching resources, and I was doing work with our district because our superintendent was keen to see resources shared. But this was a new level."

"Resource sharing was the original concept with both BetterCoaches and BetterEducate", says Adam, "but it's developed into something more. We've started to tailor things directly towards the members and how they want to use it, whether it's using those resources to develop a growth plan or a school plan, or whatever it might be. People appreciate being able to share resources and collaborate with other members, and both the BCPVPA and more recently the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) have used it to develop specific growth plans and appraisal processes, where they can access the resources that people are posting as part of their plans."

"People can benefit from using BetterEducate in a number of ways", says Shawn. "It's based on your professional growth, and that is tied to compensation. It aligns with your practice. Principals now are working with the BCPVPA Leadership Standards far more in depth than ever before. Even for myself, I can remember not really knowing what the Standards were. I knew there was a lot of work that went into them, but now we can actually, tactically, use that framework, upload evidence, and speak to it."

"The professional network is probably the biggest thing that members can get out of BetterEducate, and

" I thought there was a real need for teachers – and mostly for administrators – to network and learn from each other. That's the best Pro-D I think people can do: it's not necessarily about the content, it's about the strength of your professional network."



Sharing a vision for leadership and what it means to be a leader in York Region District School Board.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Anchors YRDSB Leadership Framework in Human Resource Processes such as Recruitment, Promotion, Retention and Performance.

SELF REFLECTION & GROWTH

Provides interactive tools for self-assessment, reflection and growth planning using the YRDSB Leadership Framework

COLLABORATION

Collaborate with your peers and others in the education community. Learn with each other in real time.

RESOURCE SHARING

Easily browse and search through hundreds of resources organized by educator, organization, level, and category.

PLANNING

Supports system, school and Corporate Management and Professional Staff improvement planning

LEARNING

Aligns leadership learning with system and individual needs



This year, Adam and Shawn worked with the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) on the development of their interactive Leadership Framework tool.

The YRDSB Leadership Framework is designed to:

- Facilitate a shared vision for leadership and what it means to be a leader in the YRDSB
- Play a key role in anchoring other processes (recruitment, promotion, retention, performance)
- Provide tools for self-reflection and growth planning
- Align leadership learning with system and individual needs
- Support system, school, and Corporate Management and Professional Staff Department improvement planning

that's why I ask people to please upload your profile – it's important. Some people don't like to share that, but it's very good to know who to contact. The people are the resources in our building, and the knowledge is the people. And once we wrap our heads around that, we're going to be that much stronger. BCPVPA has taken leaps and bounds with this platform: when it comes to our connection, we're more of a family than we've ever been. Facilitating that professional network, and being a united team or family as administrators in the province? That's big."

Adam agrees. "There are two different parts: you have the members, and how they want to use BetterEducate. They want to collaborate; they want to be able to share their resources. And you have the organizations – the BCPVPA, YRDSB or the districts – and their role, how they are working to help their members or employees. We've been able to provide the tools for them to develop a growth plan or a school plan that is tailored for their needs."

With the return for the 2020-2021 school year, the BCPVPA opened BetterEducate to teachers and other educators to help support their connections and resources for remote learning. "That came about in recognition of a need", says Shawn, "as we all embarked on remote learning. We were lucky in my district because one of my staff members, Kristen Rezansoff, took one look at that program during spring break last year, and then she led our entire school through it. Kirsten was really instrumental in the recent developments; she has done so much work with the Leadership Standards and competencies. We had feedback that teachers felt that this had made their remote classroom experience so much better. People were struggling with Teams, and BetterEducate was easy to use."

Looking ahead, Adam and Shawn have a vision for growth. "We would like to do a 3.0 version of BetterEducate – a visual redesign, with an increase in ease of access," says Shawn. "I'd like to see us be able to share growth plans and school growth plans. I'd like to have a way that people can easily find experts in their network, as that brings our community closer and closer together. There are a lot of people that still work in silos, there are a lot of new administrators that – without sounding too sappy – are working alone,

"The people are the resources in our building, and the knowledge is the people. And once we wrap our heads around that, we're going to be that much stronger."

and that can be a recipe for burnout and depression. Our members are pretty resilient, but we have a lot of turnover, and there's a reason for that. We want people to feel that there's a place they can go, it's like a Rolodex for them to reach out to people that are experts in the field. Sharing knowledge is the greatest power of an organization. I truly think you get the best out of people when they're comfortable and they're feeling good about the work they do, and they're not overly stressed."

"Getting feedback and direction from the users is critical," says Adam. "In my role, I take a lead from the BCPVPA for focus, and it's been that way with YRDSB as well, they've come forward with ideas. They were using it for an appraisal process, and then thought about extending it to another group of people as well."

"When we started out, we thought of having a tool that people could use. And it's changed: it's still a tool, but it's derived from what people want, what the organizations want, and that's always changing. There's always different modules and features that we can add. It's not a static site."

Shawn adds, "Timing is everything. We've done a number of Chapter Councils online now, and they're good. Look at the work that BCPVPA has done to keep everyone together, and look how important that online environment has become. You can't overstate how close Principals now feel if they're attached to the Association. The job is so much easier when you know people. I'm in the middle of nowhere, six and a half hours away from Vancouver, but we built this site over our phones with Reimer and DeRosa. It was back and forth all the time, because we're connected."

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BCPVPA members sign up with
promo code BCPVPA123

Meet the 2021 BCPVPA Partnership Award Recipients

"It is a privilege to go into that school setting and see these leadership skills in action recognizing the gift that is given to these students every day to prepare them for anything in life. We look at our relationship with the school as a helping hand to what is already being done. "

*Mary-Jane Holmquist, Legacy
Church of the Nazarene*

2021 Award Recipient

"The close relationships with teachers, counsellors, and other staff have enabled us to provide mental health support for students and their families at a time when it is most needed. We are united in wanting the best for these students and are grateful for the opportunity to offer our services when they need our support."

*Adrienne Carter, Vancouver Island
Counselling Centre for Immigrants
and Refugees*

2021 Award Recipient

"I have thoroughly enjoyed working with École Glenmore Elementary students, teachers, administration, and parents as a volunteer. Being able to bring my passion for STEM education to the school, working in the classrooms, organizing STEM events, and lunchtime coding clubs, has been a tremendous experience."

Sarah Bendall

2021 Award Recipient



For more than two decades, the **BCPVPA Partnership Awards** have been presented in recognition of the immeasurable time, energy, and expertise that local people dedicate to supporting BC students and schools. Nominations are submitted by the BCPVPA's sixty Chapters, and in May 2021, the BCPVPA recognized six groups and individuals who have made a substantial difference over time through projects that benefit their local public schools.



Cam Aitken

Nominated by Greater Victoria Chapter (School District #61)

Cam Aitken has been a long-time supporter of the Esquimalt youth in SD61 through running breakfast programs, coordinating food hampers, and building relationships with the youth. He previously worked for Victoria West Community Association and is now currently working for The Community, under Youth For Christ Victoria, an organization whose aim is to provide practical support and opportunities for safe, fun youth activities for the 1,300 youth in Esquimalt.



Legacy Church of the Nazarene

Nominated by Surrey Chapter (School District #36)

Legacy Church of the Nazarene is a church community in SD 36 that has long been supporting Bridgeview Elementary and the larger community – even amidst COVID-19 – through food banks and hampers, school-wide field trips and events, provision of school supplies, and afterschool activities and tutoring. They have especially made a difference in the close-knit Bridgeview community, which has a unique and isolated local population of families in need.



Nanaimo Foodshare

Nominated by Nanaimo-Ladysmith Chapter (School District #68)

Nanaimo Foodshare has been partnering with Nanaimo-Ladysmith schools through many programs to help increase food literacy, access, and build capacity for student academic success. Since established in 1997, their programs, such as the Good Food Box and Kids Get Cooking, support both students and educators to address hunger in the community, share resources, and build community capacity to provide healthy foods to everyone.



Sarah Bendall

Nominated by Central Okanagan Chapter (School District #23)

As PAC president for the last four years at the École Glenmore Elementary, Sarah has organized many school-wide activities and fundraisers to support the school community. As well, she spearheaded initiatives at the school to improve its safety and accessibility, create outdoor learning spaces, and engage the students in various STEM and coding activities. Sarah is an exemplary PAC President who works alongside the school community to make learning fun, challenging, and above and beyond what is expected.



Story Studio Writing Society

Nominated by Greater Victoria Chapter (School District #61)

Story Studio Writing Society aims to bring literacy and creativity into children's lives by giving them the tools to tell their own stories and words. Each year, they collaborate with 20-30 teachers, mainly in SD61, to deliver workshops and help their students to write over 1500 youth-authored books. In addition, they partner with other school-related community organizations and have created a range of resources for teachers to use in their own classrooms.



Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees

Nominated by Saanich Chapter (School District #63)

Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees (VICCIR) was founded in 2015 in response to the growing needs of the immigrant and refugee community in SD 63 and has been an ongoing partner with Saanich schools ever since. VICCIR has helped families and students to work through trauma and create a sense of belonging in their new community, country, and culture through face-to-face and virtual counselling, adolescent male groups, and parenting sessions in a multitude of languages.

Nominations for the 2022 BCPVPA
Partnership Awards open February 2022

Visit bcpvpa.org/about-bcpvpa/bcpvpa-partnership-awards



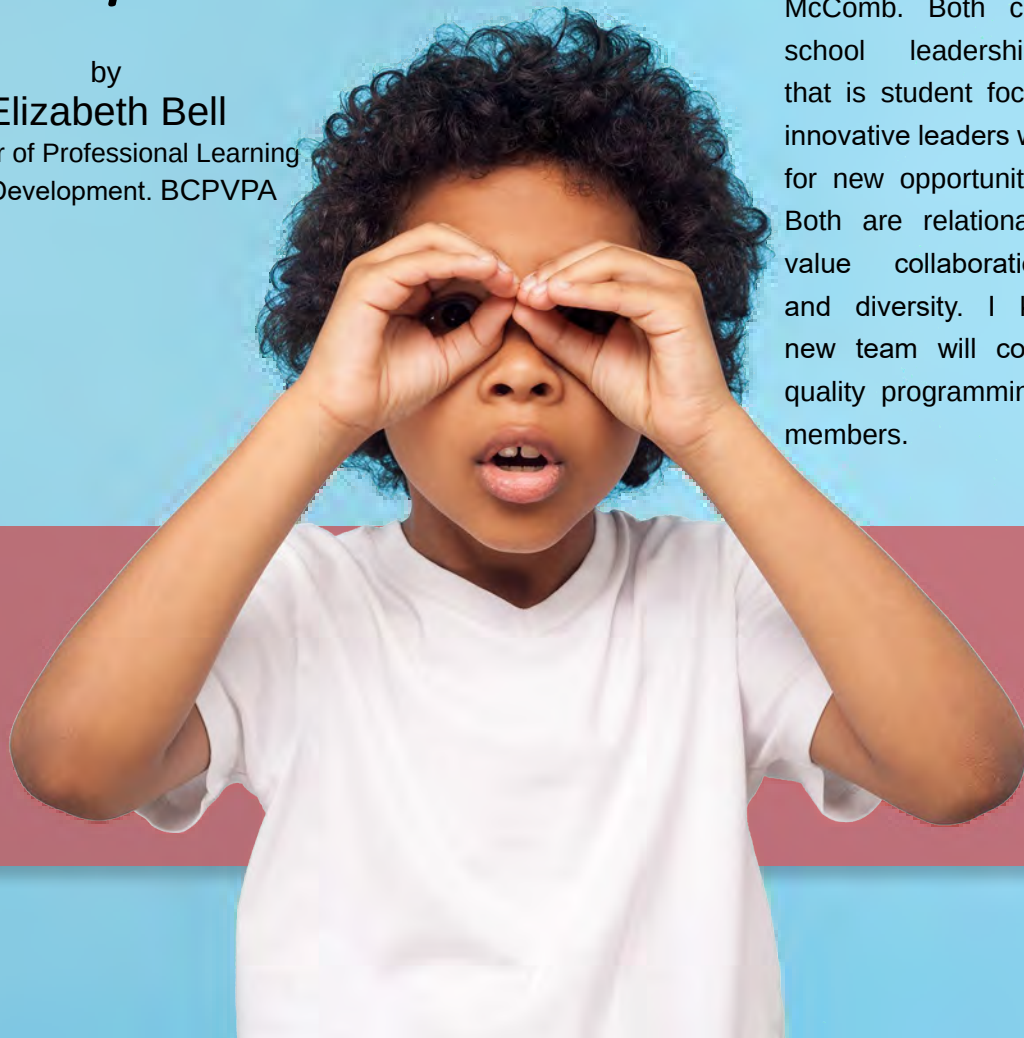
LEARN IN G



Looking Ahead

for Professional Learning and Development

by
Elizabeth Bell
Director of Professional Learning
and Development, BCPVPA



As we begin a new school year, I am pleased to introduce the new PLD Team at the BCPVPA.

Directors

With much appreciation for her seven years of dedication to provincial professional learning and development, we said farewell to Jessica Antosz at the end of July. Jessica is known for her relational style of leadership and she will be missed by many educators from across BC. I enjoyed my time of learning and leading with Jessica as we developed, delivered, and collaborated on many PLD projects.

As of August 1, two new Directors of Professional Learning and Development will join BCPVPA: Peter Johnston and Andrea McComb. Both come with rich school leadership experience that is student focused. Both are innovative leaders who always look for new opportunities in learning. Both are relational leaders who value collaboration, inclusion, and diversity. I know that our new team will continue to offer quality programming for BCPVPA members.

Advisors

As one of the BCPVPA Committees reporting to the Board of Directors, seven members serve as Advisors to Professional Learning and Development. Their responsibilities include advising the Directors on programming, budgets, and strategic planning, providing a direct liaison with PLD Representatives, and leadership at Rep Meetings and Book Clubs. I would like to thank outgoing members Chris Horton (SD 73), Ron Sherman (SD 8), Alan Stel (SD 67) and Kelda Logan (SD 64). Each of these members have offered a unique and valued perspective to the Committee, and we look forward to their continued involvement in PLD.

I would like to welcome four new PLD Advisors Ranjit Bains (SD 39), Tara Zielinski (SD 45), Lois Ehman (SD 5) and Tina Pierik (SD 61). Together with Brenda Anderson (SD 57), Mikel Brogan (SD 75) and Renee Hislop (SD 62) this group will provide rich and diverse input to professional learning and development in BC.

Chapter Representatives

Chapter Reps are a critical component to the planning and operations of BCPVPA PLD programs. Please be sure to send changes to Chapter Representatives to amorie@bcvpva.bc.ca in September. The first PLD Rep meeting will be virtual on Monday, October 4, 2021.

Your PLD Team

Directors	PLD Assistant
Elizabeth Bell	Amorie Kruger
Peter Johnston	
Andrea McComb	
Advisors	
Brenda Anderson	Renee Hislop
– Prince George	– Sooke
Ranjit Bains	Tina Pierik
– Vancouver	– Greater Victoria
Mikel Brogan	Tara Zielinski
– Kamloops	– West Vancouver
Lois Ehman	
–Southeast Kootenays	

BCPVPA Fall PLD

Leading a Culture of Learning 1

We are running two cohorts of LCL 1 this fall. One will be an in-person cohort offered in Prince George and available to the northern chapters, and the other will be a virtual cohort open to anyone in the province.

Sessions begin in the last week of August, and the registration link is on the [website](#).

Leading a Culture of Learning 2

We are running one cohort of LCL 2 this fall. The cohort will be offered in Metro Vancouver and is open to all accessible members. The location of school visits will be determined by the participants.

Sessions will begin in November, and registration link is on the [website](#).

Leading the Way: Women in Leadership – Resilient Women Thriving in Leadership

Monday September 20, 7:00 pm

Join the virtual conversation with Robyne Hanley-Dafoe and other friends of the BCPVPA as we explore resilient leadership from the perspective of thriving women leaders. Registration opens in August.

Coffee Connections

Join us every couple of weeks for 30 minutes of casual conversation with colleagues, beginning in October.

Tue October 5	7:30am
Tue October 26	3:30pm
Tue November 2	7:30am
Thu November 25	3:30pm
Tue December 7	7:30am

Lone Leaders: A Conversation Series for Rural and Remote School Leaders

This three-session series will begin on Saturday, October 16th at 4:00 pm. *You might be wondering about the timing:* please note that this conversation has grown out of the Global Network of PLD Leaders and will include participants from BC, Ontario, New South Wales, Queensland, and Western Australia.

Check the [website](#) for registration information.

Connecting Leaders Conference 2021: Leading for Equity

October 21 – 22, 2021 – Virtual Conference

The event begins Thursday evening with opening keynote Candy Palmater, and opportunities to gather virtually or in person. Many participants will gather in Chapter-based Hubs as they experience the interactive conversations with Nouman Ashraf and Anna Maria Tremonti on Friday, October 22.

The registration link is on the [website](#).

Get involved with BCPVPA Professional Learning & Development:

- Be a Chapter PLD Rep
- Participate in Coffee Connections, Leading the Way: Women in Leadership, Lone Leaders, and other webinars
- Be part of a Working Group on the BCPVPA Leadership Standards Review or the BCPVPA Leadership Planning Guide Review
- Be a Facilitator for Essentials for Aspiring School Leaders (EASL) or Essentials for New School Leaders (ENSL)
- Be a Breakout Presenter at the 2022 Connecting Leaders Conference
- Write a Book Review or other article on professional learning for Principled Magazine
- Participate in the PLD Survey

Watch eNews and the BCPVPA [website](#) for registration links, and the many opportunities to grow in your professional learning and development with the BCPVPA.



PROBLEM



Fall 2021

Anti-Racism Reminders for BC Administrators

This is not a checklist. Engaging in any one of these items listed below for the first time will be valuable for yourself, your school, and your larger community. Doing one activity, or several, will lead to important learning and allow you to create safe, brave, and inclusive spaces for your student body and staff so that they may feel not only seen, but also empowered.

by
Wayne Chow, Grant Frend,
Kenneth Headley &
Karl Lindgren-Streicher

SD 42

Acknowledge that systemic racism, oppression, and white supremacy culture exist.

(Yes, white supremacy culture isn't just hoods and burning crosses.) Do this publicly. Get comfortable with the discomfort that comes with this understanding, and with your staff's expectation that you will work to end these systems that perpetuate inequity.

Recognize that, as leaders, we are responsible for addressing systemic racism and oppression.

Be aware that doing nothing and/or staying silent is giving our tacit approval for the continuation of oppression: as leaders, we can no longer sit idly by when evidence of oppression surrounds us. Don't wait for someone to tell you what to do. As a leader, it is on you to set a clear direction for your staff. Your personal growth plan and your school growth plan are excellent places to publicly commit to this important work.

Own where you are.

Acknowledge your own implicit biases. Own your blind spots, own when you make a mistake, and commit to listening, learning, and doing better. The mistakes are inevitable. Be ready and comfortable to apologize for and learn from the missteps that you will make. That doesn't make the mistakes okay, or minimize the harm you may cause, but inaction is not acceptable.

Start learning.

Take a course. Read books: *Until We Are Free*, *The Skin We're In*, or *21 Things You May Not Know About The Indian Act* are all good starting places. Listen to podcasts: *Be Anti-Racist* or *Colour Code*. Read the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. Any of these resources may be of assistance in writing your personal and/or school growth plans.

Remember impact over intent.

Microaggressions / Macroaggressions are direct/ indirect, intentional or unintentional discriminatory interactions against members of marginalized groups. These commonplace actions happen every day, with many marginalized folx never speaking about the harm caused by these interactions. If someone 'Calls You In' based on a negative interaction or experience that took place, please remember your intent does not matter. Regardless of your intent for sharing an idea or thought or activity, if the impact of this action is seen as negative please be ready to listen, learn, and do better when concerns are brought forward.

Know your 'Why'.

Once you have come to terms with the existence of systemic racism, oppression, and dominant/white supremacy culture and how it influences everything we do, take a moment to ask yourself why this work is important for you. This centering is important because it will guide you when you feel discomfort, when you need to continue moving yourself or your school community forward, or when you receive pushback and feel unsettled. In the end, this is about removing barriers and providing equitable learning opportunities for your students and community. Engaging in this work makes the world a better place not just for students of the global majority, but for your non-racialized students as well.

We must be courageous in providing permission and protection for our teachers to take risks in teaching about anti-racism, and to our staff for addressing racism.

Be prepared to walk alongside them as they are on their own journeys, working through implicit biases they may have and how they choose to address systems of inequity in their classrooms. Be ready to defend them and their pedagogical choices around anti-racism if parent or community pushback occurs.

Recognize that racialized members of your staff are not employed to teach the rest of the staff about racism.

They may – or may not – want to share about their experiences with, and knowledge of, anti-racism. Do not lean on them for this, or expect them to speak as experts on groups they are a part of: racialized groups are NOT monoliths with homogenous experiences and beliefs. Additionally, conversations around racism and anti-racism may be triggering for racialized members of your staff.

Develop a critical friend group.

Share your ideas and observations from your campus, as well as the actions you plan on taking, with a trusted group you can meet with regularly. Stay accountable to this group, check in on progress, and how the steps you are taking are moving forward. Invite diversity into your group; remember that it is not the job of racialized members of your circle to educate you about racism or speak as a representative of any groups that they may be a part of. Think about forming affinity groups and spaces with your racialized administrators within your district and from surrounding districts. These can be safe spaces to explore where you are in this work.

Connect with marginalized students on your campus.

Do this organically, and try not to tokenize these students. Make sure to listen to them: we are trying to amplify their voices and experiences. It is important to validate their experiences and feelings. What are their experiences? What is their day-to-day life like, on your campus and in their community? How and what can you learn from these students that we may not know enough about, and how can we then act on what we learn from them? What are the celebrations and customs that are important to them, but not recognized by the school community? How do you foster better awareness in your school?

Decolonize your language.

'At-risk' has been used as an adjective to describe our students, when really it should describe the systemic barriers and conditions they may face. 'Minority' is another word that can be used to describe students who do not meet the norm and/or centre of whiteness. These are just some examples that influence how we may view and discuss families in our school community. Try to choose more empowering words such as 'minoritized', 'underserved', and 'marginalized', which focuses more on external social conditions affecting students' access to society. Also refrain from using racist phrases such as 'low person on the totem pole', 'Powwow', and 'the peanut gallery', or responding with 'no can do'. These phrases have racist origins and connotations. Ableist language such as 'crazy' and 'insane' has negative connotations in regard to mental health. Also, using proper pronouns and exchanging words such as 'folks' for folx (a spelling used to include members of the LGBTQ2S+ community) instead of 'guys' makes everyone feel more included.

We need to be cognizant of our use of language, as these phrases may negatively impact our families, staff, and school community. In the end, remember that the best way to honour students, staff, and school community members is to always use the names, pronouns, and words by which people and communities have chosen to identify themselves.

Is this a lot? Yes. Is this only a start? Yes. Is this journey, of personal reflection and learning, and courageous anti-racist leadership, ever over? No.

Will this be hard? Yes. But not as hard as the systemic inequity that so many of our students and staff face every day. Remember, this work will be heavy, so it is important to think about self-care. Think as well about your racialized staff, colleagues, and students: they shoulder the heavy burden of dealing with racism every day of their lives. We are not suggesting that non-racialized individuals do not face hardships, but the colour of their skin is not one of them. Our goal is to recognize what we can do, and then do better.



LEADING THE WAY WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Resilient Women Thriving in Leadership

A Virtual Event for BCPVPA Members & Friends

Monday September 20, 2021

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Welcoming

Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe

in conversation with

BCPVPA Director of Professional Learning & Development

Elizabeth Bell

Carleen Thomas

Special Projects Manager

Treaty Lands & Resource Dept.

Tsleil-Waututh Nation

Paula Gosal

Principal

Chilliwack Middle School

SD33

REGISTRATION

\$20.00 + GST

REGISTER

CONTACT

Amorie Kruger

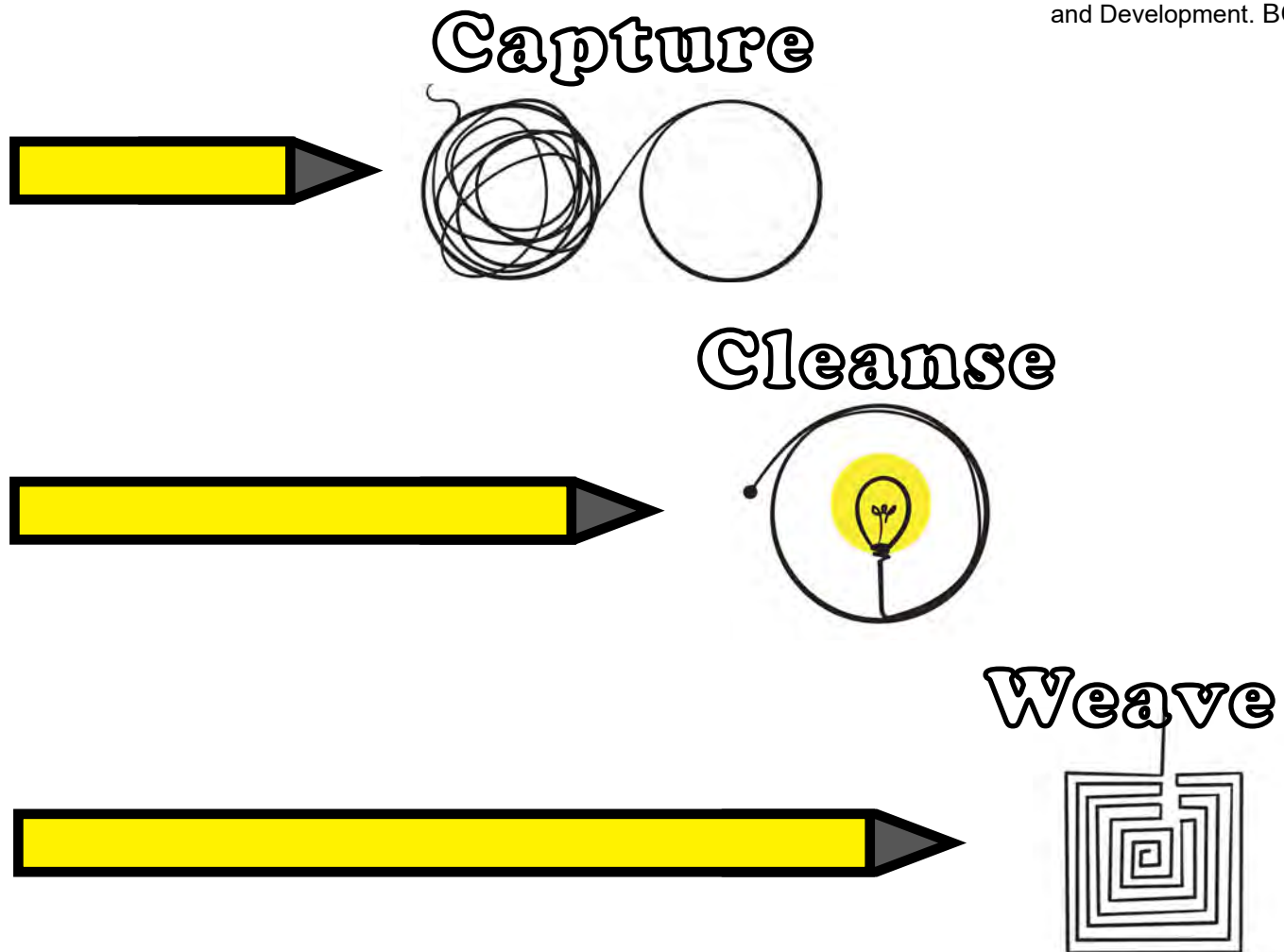
amorie@bcpvpa.bc.ca



A Process for Reflection on Organizational Renewal

As Shared by Dr. Simon Breakspear

by
Elizabeth Bell
Director of Professional Learning
and Development, BCPVPA



In January 2020, we were aware of a deadly virus in China but it seemed to have only a distant impact on our daily lives here in Canada. At the beginning of March, we were still looking forward to a Spring Break of travel, or upcoming visits with friends and family. Then, on Friday, March 15, our individual fears were realized when the official word came that, in fact, we too were in the midst of a global pandemic. Not only was it necessary to restrict travel and gatherings, but schools in April would look nothing like they did in March.

Indeed, for the next two months in BC—as in many other jurisdictions – staff, students, leaders, and parents

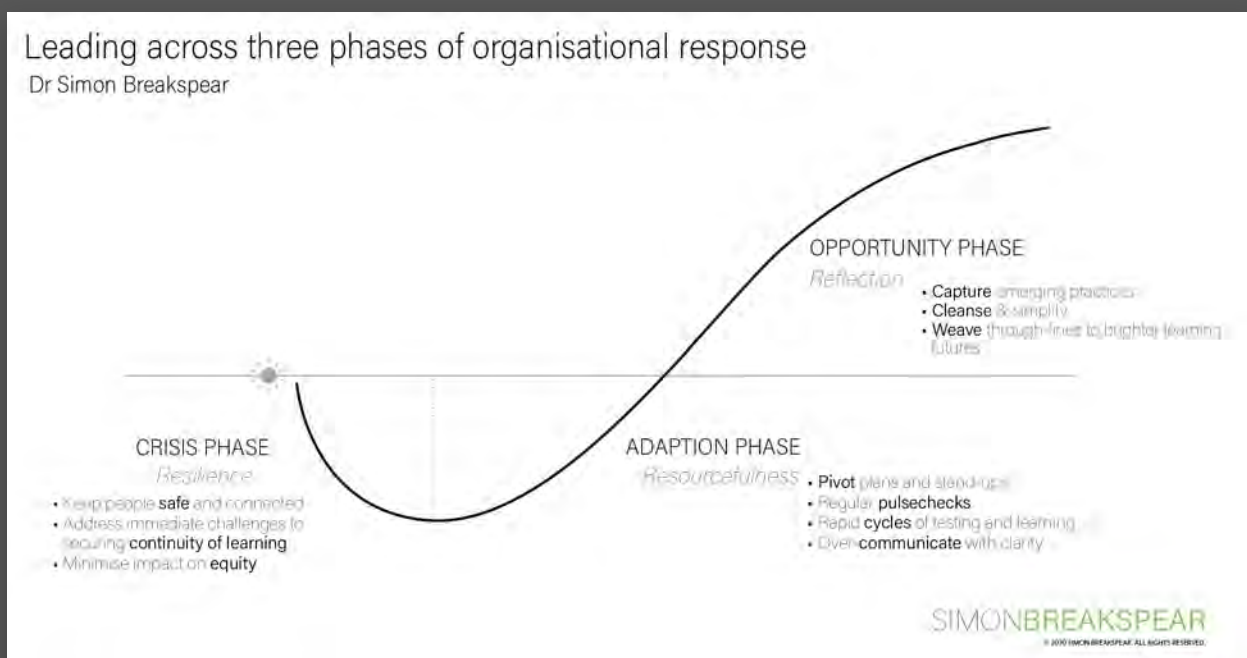
were required to adapt to new ways of thinking about school in order to provide an equitable continuity of learning for all. The inclusion of technology became a necessity at all levels of education, and required equipment, training... and willingness.

It is amazing to look back at what we were able to accomplish in the past 18 months. Teachers who thought they would never want to, or be able to, connect with students who were not literally in front of them, found that they could guide learning in a virtual setting. Principals, Vice-Principals, and district staff learned the intricacies of Teams, Zoom, or other platforms for staging meaningful and interactive

meetings. Parents learned to support their children's learning in a direct way, and students learned to manage their time more independently. Key to all of these adjustments has been the increased importance of the Social Emotional aspect of teaching and learning, and the necessity for consistent clear communication.

Sometimes change is thrust upon us in ways that are far beyond our control. And, sometimes we are intentional about creating change as we innovate curriculum and embrace world views of learning. Either way, when structures in schools change, there should be a means of meaningful reflection and evaluation in order to sustain that which is advantageous without overloading an already complex system.

In June of 2020, BCPVPA was fortunate to host a webinar presented by Dr. Simon Breakspear in which he emphasized the importance of school leaders as they lead organizational learning and renewal in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Breakspear led us through his explanation of three phases of organizational renewal: the **Crisis Phase**, the **Adaptation Phase** and the **Opportunity Phase**. His basic supposition is that at the end of a time of crisis that requires innovative change, we have two options: to return to a replica of the pre-crisis model, or to embrace the opportunities that have emerged as a consequence of crisis management.



Dr Breakspear suggests that in the initial phase of **Crisis**, school leaders are required to be extraordinarily resilient. The first natural and professional instinct is to keep people safe and connected, and to do so in a way that promotes an element of calm. When we think of the impact of COVID-19 and the ensuing school disruption, school leaders were called upon to be the voice of understanding, a conduit of information, and a beacon of hope, even if they did not have all the answers. The physical and emotional safety of students, staff, and parents has rarely been as exaggerated as it has in the past year when school leaders ensured a continuance of learning amid radical restrictions. This crisis phase is one in which leaders act instinctively, responsively, and with the intention that everyone endure in the most positive way possible.

As the crisis moment elongates into a newly-shaped reality, Dr. Breakspear suggests that the second phase of **Adaptation** emerges, and that this is when resourcefulness steps in beside resiliency. The notion of 'pivoting' with short, often minimal notification and with continual change rose to the surface for educators globally in 2020. Innovative ideas began to emerge around timetable structures, technology usage, implementation of safety protocols, and relational progress between educators, students, and parents. Dr. Breakspear notes the need for regular "pulse

checks” and “rapid cycles of testing and learning” during this phase to ensure that the intent of innovation is meeting the rapidly shifting expectations. School leaders were continually asking, “What have we done, how is it going, where are we getting stuck, what do we do next?” He suggests that during this phase, communication becomes of paramount importance and the element of trust within a constituency is critical. Resourcefulness and resiliency are part of the nature of change, and are at a premium for all who have been affected by the necessary adaptations.

One can note that Breakspear’s phases of organizational response can apply both to crises beyond one’s control and to intentional change. In many ways, these phases of organizational response and renewal echo Michael Fullan’s concept of an “implementation dip” defined in *Leading a Culture of Change* (2007) as “a dip in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and new understandings.” The experience that accompanies any change often requires both resiliency and resourcefulness to withstand and sustain change.

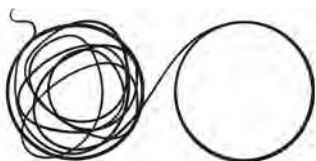
When a crisis recedes, Dr. Breakspear suggests that an organization has the potential to either “snap back” to the default of a pre-crisis reality, or advance to an **Opportunity** phase. Through an intentional reflective process, Dr. Breakspear suggests that the pivot to new ways of working, the skills learned out of necessity and the organizational changes made could renew an organization, and therefore the organization can capitalize on the crisis. He suggests that if we can “capture emerging practices, cleanse, and simplify what we know, we can weave through to a newness”. (Breakspear, 2020)

Reflective Process

Capture, Cleanse and Weave

The **Capture stage** is intended to be a rapid documentation of the collective experience. It should be simple and lean; it should be “street data” as Shane Safir might call it. It involves asking questions of staff, students, and parents not to directly evaluate a process, but to record their feelings and learnings.

Capture questions to students should be quick: he suggests two minutes, and it could be done through students asking other students.



Examples of Capture questions you might ask your **students**:

- What were the hardest parts of remote/hybrid learning?
- What is the thing you learned most about yourself over the last year of learning?
- What did you get better at over time in managing your own learning? What did it take in order for you to improve?
- What things should we keep doing from remote/hybrid learning after going back to school?

Asking staff Capture questions can be done through what Dr. Breakspear calls an “Innovation Jam”, a Google document remotely shared in a virtual staff meeting with 20 minutes provided for staff to enter their responses and to view those of others.

Examples of Capture questions you might ask your **staff**:

- What surprised you about your students over the past year?
- What surprised you about your colleagues over the past year?
- In what ways have you surprised yourself?
- What are you most proud of?
- What went well? What are the key factors that contributed to success?
- What have you come to understand more deeply about effective teaching?
- What did you learn about collaboration and teamwork?

- What are you sensing about what is now different in the ways we might be willing to work together?
- What question are we now willing to ask that we weren't willing to ask before?
- What is really clear now that wasn't clear before?

Parents should not be left out of the Capture stage, and questions applicable to your jurisdiction can elicit observations that parents have about their own child's learning.

Example of Capture questions to consider in surveys to **parents**:

- What has surprised you about your child's learning process?
- What have you learned about the connection with the school?
- What have you noticed about how can you support your child's progress?

Once you have Captured data, Dr. Breakspear suggests that you sit with it for a while, and then engage in the **Cleanse stage**: making sense of what was captured. This is a time to consider the behaviours, beliefs, practices, and ways of working that might affect organizational designs moving forward.



Here are some helpful Cleanse questions that can be used at a **staff meeting**:

1. *Don't return to:*

- What things have we discovered to be essential?
- What things that we lived without can we avoid letting back in?

2. *Deepen & sustain the new:*

- What have we recently gained that we don't want to lose?
- What new ways of working do we want to keep and deepen?

3. *Revive the old*

- What have we deeply missed?
- What things should we bring back in?
- What have we lost that was valuable?

These are questions that can be asked in relation to a variety of scenarios, including staff meetings and interactions, communication, professional learning, team planning, parent and family engagement, leadership structures, and organization design. We have all been working differently, and there is no doubt that we have learned much. This process of Cleansing allows for intentional reflection based on the data Captured.

The final stage offered by Dr. Breakspear is that of the **Weave stage**. This is done at a time of planning and preparation for the future, and can allow us to embrace the Opportunity phase of organizational renewal and avoid a 'snap back' to previous practices.



Here are some Weave questions that might be used with your **leadership team**:

- What are our collective aspirations for the type of learning community we would like to sustain?
- How can we connect our previous school plans and directions with our new ways of working?
- How did this situation help us accelerate desired transformation?
- What do we need to do next?

Through a purposeful process, school leaders have the opportunity to guide others in making sense of the lessons learned over the past year, and to make changes, not just for the sake of change, but based on what we have learned about ourselves and the organization in the midst of crisis, changes that might not have been considered previously.

As expressed by UBC's Dr. Mark Edwards to participants in the BCPVPA 2020 Essentials for New School Leaders program, there have been some "Gifts of COVID" that we can embrace. We have all learned to work differently and with a sense of hopefulness; the work and efforts need not be lost to a crisis, but in fact woven into newness and renewal,

keeping the jewels of the past, the best of the present, and the possibilities of the future.

Thank you to Dr. Simon Breakspear for sharing his thinking about how school leaders can lead for organizational renewal out of this time of crisis, and apply this process during any time of change.

If you have any questions or interest in this process, please contact the BCPVPA PLD Directors:

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bcpvpa Leadership Planning Guide

Developed by the B.C. Principals'
& Vice-Principals' Association
Revised June 2020



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Raising a Scientifically Literate Citizenry

How Collaboration in STEM Enrichment is Making a Difference

What is Scientific Literacy and Why Increase our Collective Focus on It?

Is being a scientist the same thing as being scientifically literate? The answer is a little more complicated than a simple 'yes' or 'no'. Scientists, presumably, are scientifically literate, but being scientifically literate is a characteristic we want for every single member of society. Provide repeated experiential learning opportunities that pique STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) interest for young scientists throughout elementary school years, and this impact may very well be long-lasting.

Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson was once asked if he hopes that his children will follow in his footsteps and become scientists. Tyson's response was that, above all, he hopes to raise children who are scientifically literate.

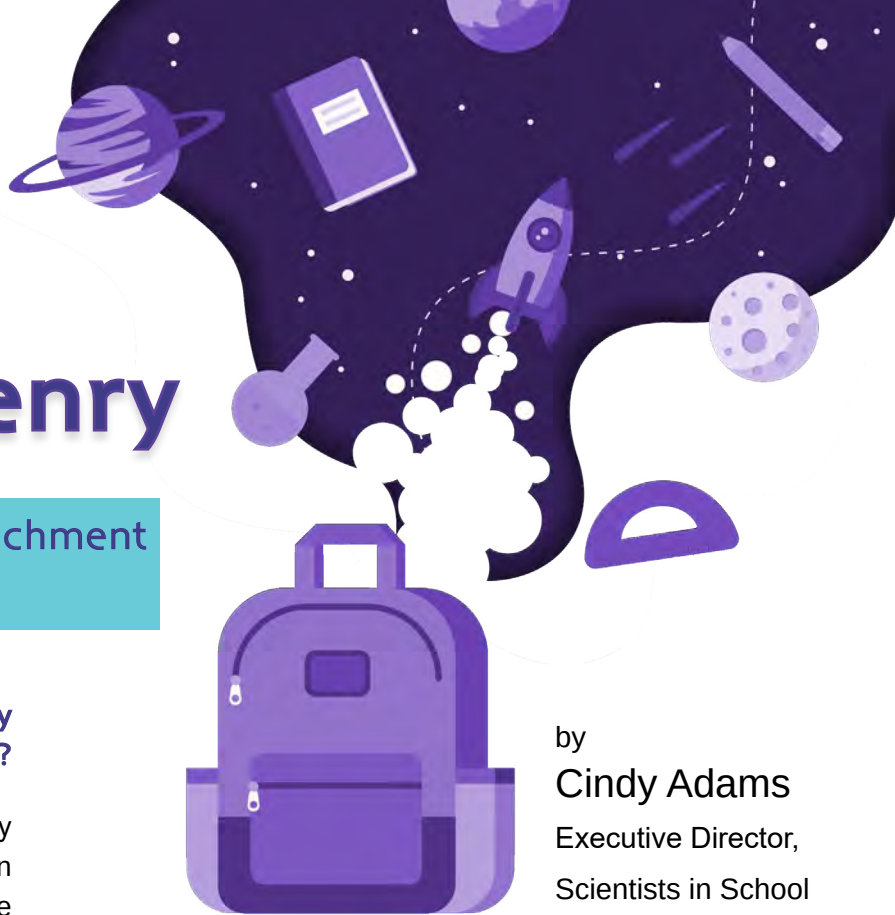
Being scientifically literate is not about **what you know**. An understanding of the speed of light, the Pythagorean Theorem, or Bernoulli's principle does not necessarily make you scientifically literate. Being scientifically literate is about **what you do** with new information. It is grounded in "*being able to engage with science-related issues, with the ideas of science as a reflective citizen, and with a willingness to engage in reasoned discourse about science and technology*" (OECD PISA Framework, 2015). In other words, when you are presented with new observations, studies, or data, you comfortably draw from an understanding and appreciation of scientific concepts and processes to ask, find, and explore

this new information critically. It's about having the necessary skills, confidence, and scientific knowledge to question intelligently, learn through discovery, and analyze the validity of this new information. It's about being able to reasonably evaluate the arguments put forth so that you can draw meaningful conclusions and make informed decisions. And – most importantly – it is the underpinning for a thoughtful citizenry for Canada.

Coming through a year where COVID-19 and climate change have delivered harsh blows has been extraordinarily tough for Canadians. But we are seeing that science-based issues can be solved by science-based solutions. A silver lining from the magnitude of these particular challenges is that they illuminated the importance of scientific literacy for every citizen, including young children. This is important, given that these and other big challenges such as clean drinking water for all, require innovative solutions and united action.

So, how can educators and STEM-enrichment organizations leverage our collective sense of disequilibrium, especially with pandemic restrictions in place? How can we work together to ensure that we

by
Cindy Adams
Executive Director,
Scientists in School

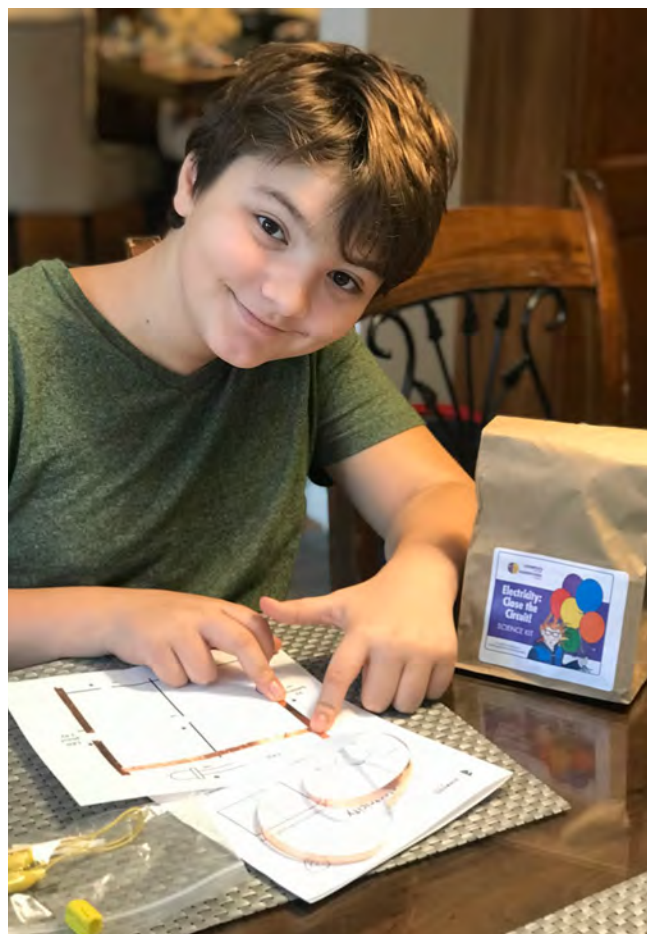


support every child to be more passionate, confident, and engaged in science, ultimately improving their level of scientific literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving competencies?

One way is by working with STEM enrichment organizations to bring even more hands-on science into the classroom, particularly during the formative Kindergarten to Grade 8 years. Interestingly, this was a core premise upon which the charity Scientists in School was founded in 1989 as a local project of the Ajax-Pickering Branch of The Canadian Federation of University Women. The CFUW is a national organization that encourages its members to act on issues that empower women and/or benefit society, especially in the area of education. Their members realized a need to foster a love for science, technology, engineering, and math in all children, especially in the most reluctant and/or underserved STEM learners. They saw an opportunity for local scientists, engineers, and STEM experts to help support and enrich elementary education, and to get students excited about science through engaging curriculum-aligned workshops that mirror real world science and engineering. They brought visiting scientists into elementary classrooms and noticed collaboration happening: teachers were absorbing new ideas to help science lessons mirror the real world, and visiting scientists were deepening their pedagogy knowledge and refining skills for working with the age groups. This multiplied the impact that either alone could have for the students.

We believe that children need to become scientists to gain an interest for and appreciation of STEM and the world around them. Peek into our workshops and you will find children highly engaged, as they figure out the components of Vitamin C, design electrical circuits, identify the prey eaten by an owl through dissection of regurgitated owl pellets, and learn that in science there are no mistakes – only discoveries. Scientific literacy comes from discovering and exploring; from varying tests to see the effect on the outcome; and from not being afraid to make mistakes.

The vision from the outset was always one of collaboration with elementary teachers, who benefit from new ideas, support, plentiful materials/equipment, and extension activities. Visiting scientists



flourish from the opportunity to ‘watch’ teachers’ student interactions. Our organization’s name reflects the children becoming ‘scientists in school’, but also captures the visiting scientists. Allowing children to see themselves in science is important: a high proportion of the workshop presenters are females, helping to combat girls’ confidence and interest erosion, which we (and others) have identified as starting to become significant around grade 6, especially in science areas connected with physics and engineering.

Ultimately, there are many contributors to a child’s long-term interest in STEM, both inside and outside of schools; experiential STEM experiences are important ones.

We Use a Measurement Approach to Understand and Maximize Impact

In a typical year, approximately 20% of teachers take the time to complete our post-workshop survey. Here are key 2019-20 results, the last pre-pandemic school year:

97% of teachers said Scientists in School was very to extremely effective in encouraging students to make discoveries

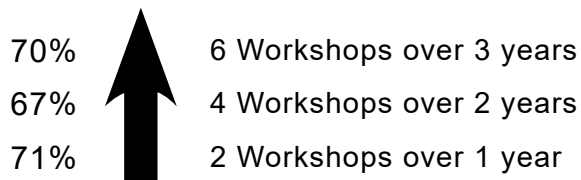
92% of teachers said Scientists in School was very to extremely effective in enhancing students' interest in STEM

92% of teachers said Scientists in School was very to extremely effective in enhancing students' understanding of scientific principles

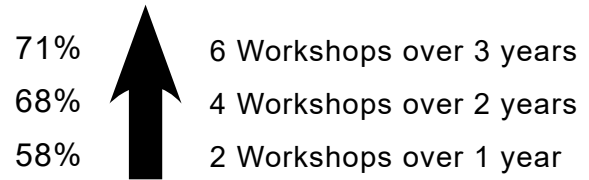
Just ahead of COVID-19, Western University researchers, led by Dr. Isha DeCoito, completed a largescale longitudinal research study to help inform our focus on maximizing key STEM outcomes. The study included approximately 2,000 middle school students in marginalized urban communities,

surveyed twice in each year of participation. All of the classes received two workshops from our topic selection in each of grades 6 to 8. The researchers further reconnected with almost 300 of them during grades 10 to 12 to probe for evidence of lasting impact. The results during the elementary years portion of the research showed amongst other findings that: students who had two Scientists in School workshops starting in grade 6 and through to grade 8, had highly positive responses for key outcomes – interest, confidence, and understanding the relevance of STEM in the world around them. What was most encouraging was that the degree of positivity for interest and confidence of the girls grew with multiple workshop experiences, to the point that with six workshops over three years, gender gap differences for a suite of STEM outcome indicators between grade 8 girls and boys shifted from sizable to insignificant. The results below, from two questions and three years of grade 8 classes data, illustrate this:

"Scientists in School workshops help me better understand the STEM we do in class"

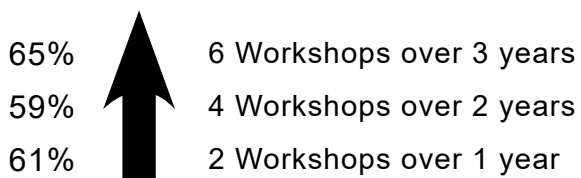


GRADE 8 MALES

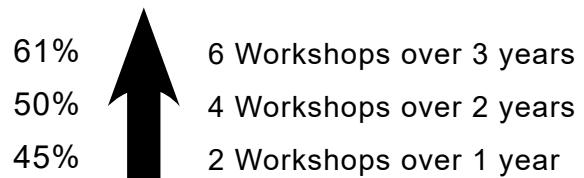


GRADE 8 FEMALES

"Scientists in School made me more interested in STEM"



GRADE 8 MALES



GRADE 8 FEMALES

In the high school phase, what was exciting was the lasting impact and strong positive memories of the workshop experiences into the upper high school years, for both genders. High level findings from this phase include:

90% of Grade 11 students who had six workshops in elementary school and 55% of Grade 12 students who had four workshops in elementary school responded that the workshops taught them skills that they were able to use in high school.

87% of Grade 11 and 12 students strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: “Scientists in School workshops in elementary school were an important part of learning about STEM.” The consistent reasons they gave were that workshops were an interesting and/or fun hands-on experience that increased their interest in STEM, understanding of STEM concepts, and awareness of careers.

The top skills they consistently highlighted as being strengthened were:

1. Collaboration and group work.
2. Preparation for the high school STEM curriculum.
3. Communication, critical thinking, and creativity.

As educators, we cannot underestimate the importance of hands-on experiential collaborative STEM opportunities to build a thoughtful, scientifically-literate citizenry who will use their knowledge and critical thinking skills to tackle some of the world’s most pressing issues.

Making a Difference for the Next Generation

At Scientists in School, we are determined to make a difference for the next generation. We are a vibrant social enterprise charity, built on in-person connections. Pre-COVID, we inspired over 700,000 Kindergarten to Grade 8 student scientists in 25,000 classroom and community setting workshops annually. Equitable access to our programs is a priority for us; 10% of workshops delivered are funded by donors and free to schools in low-income communities. We know the need across the country is greater than this, though, so we are always looking for new donors who





(STEM), and the environment, but we also help them to develop the 21st century global competencies that they will need to succeed not only in the careers of tomorrow, but in the world of tomorrow.

In every workshop, our mission is to ignite scientific curiosity in children so that they question intelligently; learn through discovery; connect scientific knowledge to their world; are excited about science, technology, engineering, and math; and have their interest in careers in those fields piqued.

Today they're scientists in school, tomorrow they're our leaders and innovators.



are passionate about STEM education to help us to increase the number of free workshops we can offer.

COVID-19 halted us in our tracks; no longer able to enter schools and community locations, our team was emboldened to reimagine our in-person workshops into an innovative new virtual delivery model with plentiful live interactions between the students and our visiting scientists. Individually-packaged mini science bags that students get to keep are sent ahead of each workshop, and provide deep engagement through highly investigative experiences, leading to continued exploration in the class, or at home.

With overwhelmingly positive feedback in our original in-person service areas of Ontario and Alberta, having a virtual workshop model has encouraged us to pursue a long-time dream of a national offering, using our new investigative Virtual Workshop model, where the travel barrier restriction is no longer an issue. A workshop presenter living in Ottawa can visit a class in Surrey, a Lethbridge presenter can visit a class in Toronto, and so on. By engaging children across Canada in real-world experiences that spark curiosity and nurture their inquisitive young minds, not only do we help them to discover the fascinating and fun side of science, technology, engineering, math

**Scientists in School in British Columbia:
We Make It Easy to Bring
Scientific Enrichment
to the Classroom**

We are thrilled to announce that Scientists in School is now offering virtual investigative STEM workshops for Kindergarten to Grade 8 classrooms in British Columbia!

Our 60-minute workshops are curriculum-enriching, hands-on, engaging, and led by a topic expert who is a scientist. The workshop is LIVE and students are able to ask questions and share ideas as they explore. All teachers need to do is connect to the presenters at the time of the workshops and distribute the individually-packaged mini science bags sent ahead of each workshop with all the materials needed for full participation.

Check out our [BC Catalogue](#) to see available topics; more will be added throughout the school year.

A year ago, schools across the province welcomed back students in September under the cloud of a global pandemic. K-12 education had spent the preceding months in a tenuous position, consumed with uncertainty about the 2020-2021 school year. Reliable, time-tested processes needed to be reconsidered and continually tailored to meet the everchanging health and safety protocols and 'unprecedented' became the most overused word of 2020.



by
Kevin Reimer
Executive Director, BCPVPA

School leaders were challenged to maintain authentic connections with their staff members to develop and reinforce a shared understanding of the purpose of their common work. School leadership teams did benefit from a flexible start to the school year with only staff returning for those first few days. However, that time was used to ensure that the health and safety protocols were clearly understood and that the building – and staff members – were adequately prepared to welcome students back to school.

With the potential for a more normal return to school this year, there may be more time to work with staff members on developing a collective vision that ensures the highest levels of learning for students. With that, I am sharing with you an activity that I have used with staff members in the past, and that has helped me take the first steps on establishing our collective vision.

Collective efficacy, a potential outcome of that vision, hinges on the staff members' belief that in accessing the communal wisdom of the school, they have the collective capability to make meaningful change in the lives of their students. According to [Michael Fullan](#), certain conditions are essential to create collective efficacy, but I believe that you must first start with a shared understanding of what positive learning conditions and impactful teaching looks like.

So: I refer to this as the **Hall of Fame** activity, and it is based on the following process. As experienced educators we have wonderful stories to share about great moments in our own teaching or leadership. Perhaps your Hall of Fame moment is about making a meaningful connection with a struggling student, igniting a passion for a class, or winning over a challenging parent. These stories of significant successes in education are inspiring and motivating. If there was such a thing as a Teacher Hall of Fame, these stories would likely be at the centre of a staff member's induction into that hall. Now, I often introduce this activity by sharing with the staff that as a twelve-year old baseball player I got into a post-game scuffle with a boy who would turn out to be a future NHL hall-of-famer, and that is as close as I was ever going to get to a sports Hall of Fame. That story is for another time.

Here is how I engaged staff in this activity.

Before beginning, we have spent some time together building consensus about what a Hall of Fame is, and why people are inducted into a Hall of Fame.

Step One:

I ask them to answer the following questions on paper:

What is your Hall of Fame moment in teaching/working with students and their families?

What do you view as a significant success or accomplishment in the work that you do with students, families or staff members?

What beliefs or values are you able to connect to that moment?

Step Two:

I ask them to share their Hall of Fame stories with several partners:

I ask them to choose a partner and share their Hall of Fame story. While listening to their story I ask the partner to come up with what they think are the beliefs/values central to that story and to record them. The process is then repeated with two or more colleagues.

Step Three:

We engage in the Obligatory Sticky Note Process:

Every staff activity needs a sticky note moment. To conclude the activity, staff members transfer the list of beliefs and values at the centre of their shared Hall of Fame stories onto individual sticky notes. Those one- or two-word value statements are then stuck to a piece of chart paper to be reviewed by the staff.

While this is the final activity for the staff, the process has not concluded. It is now the leadership team's responsibility to go through those notes to review, collate, and organize the beliefs/values statements into coherent themes that represent the collective voice of the staff.

The late Rick DuFour, the founder of the Professional Learning Community (PLC) approach, talked about building consensus. For DuFour, consensus did not mean that there was unanimous support for the initiative or decision, but that the will of the group was evident. Understanding the will of the group is time-consuming and usually involves the leadership team revisiting results with the staff a number of times to ensure clear consensus. I refer to this as the 'shampoo model' of understanding the voice of the staff – lather, rinse and repeat until you have distilled those beliefs and values down to their most essential elements.

When the process was complete, many of the themes below tended to emerge:

Impactful learning requires an environment where appropriate risk-taking is encouraged.

Learning successes should be celebrated.

Trust is at the core of Hall of Fame teaching and positive relationships.

Meaningful assessment of and for learning drives instruction.

Positive learning conditions are founded on a strong sense of community, integrity, and respect.

Learners must be met where they are.

A growth mindset, coupled with opportunities for empowerment, are integral to impactful learning and teaching.

Fun and laughter should be practised daily.

When the process was concluded, each teacher could connect their Hall of Fame teaching story to many – if not all – of these belief statements. While this activity does not necessarily provide the structure for a compelling vision for the school, it is the beginning of that process.

As the leadership team, we would revisit these beliefs during staff meetings throughout the year. They served as a compelling reminder of our shared belief about powerful teaching and learning opportunities. The list alone is insignificant and could be nothing more than another unnoticed poster that hangs on the wall of any classroom in any school in BC. The power comes in the process of developing a shared understanding. Inherent in that understanding is an implied commitment that we should always be striving to manifest these beliefs in our daily teaching.

This is just one way to begin to develop a process with your staff that puts them on the collective efficacy pathway. If you use this activity, let me know how you tweaked it and made the process even more meaningful for your staff.



@optimus_rime

*How have you
crafted a
school vision
with your staff?*

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sandra@bcpvpa.bc.ca

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LISTENING



FALL HEALTH FOR LEADING

by

Rochelle Morandini

Director, Member Health and Well-Being
BCPVPA



August finds Administrators busy finalizing student schedules, working out teacher assignments, and preparing schools. But do your plans include strategies to create an environment that promotes and supports the well-being of your team?

The end of June saw teaching, support and administrative staff heading off on a well-deserved, much-needed summer break – tired and frazzled, yet relieved. But was the summer enough to refresh their bodies, minds, and spirits? For some, the answer is yes. They will return happy, motivated, and energized. Others will be okay, and ready to go. And yet others, perhaps, will return like some students you may know, dragging themselves back but wanting – needing – more of a break.

What can you as a leader do to create a plan that will allow you and your team to start the year with ideas and actions dedicated to well-being?

The Leader's Role in Employee Well-Being

Earlier in my career, I was involved with studies that looked at the interplay between manager and employee relationships and engagement, as well as the influence on employee absence. We found that there was clearly a negative correlation between the quality of the relationship the manager had with an individual employee, and the number of days that employee was absent due to disability. *The better the relationship, the fewer days lost.* Engagement

studies have also proven, time and time again, that the lower the engagement of a staff member at work, the greater their time off for disability. An employee with low engagement takes at least twice as many days off during the year than an employee who is highly engaged.

This leader-to-health influence was also revealed through a similar pattern in our own BCPVPA membership when we examined findings in our recent Thriving in Education survey. Members with better relationships and support from their direct leaders indicated that this was important to their overall well-being, and vice versa.

Your relationship with each individual you lead, and the working culture you create, can have a powerful and positive impact on the well-being of your staff. This is especially important during uncertain times, and when staff are challenged. Good relationships are about sincere caring and understanding. Building those relationships requires genuine effort, time, and empathy.

The good news is that your role as a leader in supporting your team members, including their well-being, uses many of the same tips and tools that make you an effective manager.

Building Healthy Relationships and a Culture of Well-being

Be vulnerable. One silver lining of the pandemic is that it is normalizing mental health challenges. Almost everyone has experienced some level of discomfort. But the universality of the experience will translate into a decrease in stigma only if people – especially people in power – share their experiences. Being honest about your mental health struggles as a leader opens the door for employees to feel comfortable talking with you about their own mental health challenges.

Model healthy behaviors. Don't just say you support well-being. Model it so that your team feels they can prioritize self-care and set boundaries. Administrators who are focused on the well-being of their students and teams often forget to take care of themselves. Share that you're taking a walk in the middle of the

day, having a counselling appointment, or prioritizing your personal time on weekends (and actually turning off email) so that you don't burn out.

Build a culture of connection through check-ins.

Intentionally checking in with each of your direct reports – one-on-one, on a regular basis – will be even more critical this fall. Everyone will be arriving differently in September, and how they each navigate the first few months of the new school year will vary. How staff members manage this re-entry will define how well they cope and perform into the fall. Take time, early in the year, to touch base with each one.

Go beyond a simple “*How are you?*” and ask specific questions about what supports would be helpful. Wait for the full answer. Really listen, and encourage questions and concerns. Make space to hear how your team members are truly doing, and to be compassionate. They may not want to share much detail, which is completely fine: knowing that they can is what matters.

Generate a culture of team connection and compassion at team meetings by asking each person to offer a quick check-in as to how they are arriving that day. Depending on your current team structure and relationships, this process may be a little strained at first. But when you take the lead and share your own status, others are more likely to be comfortable over time.

Offer flexibility and be inclusive. Expect that the situation, your team's needs, and your own needs will continue to change. Check in regularly — particularly at transition points. You can help problem-solve any issues that come up, but only if you know what's happening. Inclusive flexibility is about proactive communication and norm-setting that helps people design and preserve the boundaries they need.

Don't make assumptions about what your staff need; they will most likely need different things at different times. Take a customized approach to addressing stressors, such as challenges with childcare or feeling the need to work all the time. Proactively offer flexibility. Be as generous and realistic as possible.

Ask team members to be patient with one another as

the team continues to flow and adapt with changing circumstances in the district and your school. Trust them, and assume the best. They are relying on you, and will remember how you treated them.

Communicate more than you think you need to.

Remove stress where possible by setting expectations about workloads, prioritizing what must get done, and acknowledging what can be put aside if necessary.

Feel free to share the weekly ReFresh tips — or any other well-being resources that the BCPVPA provides — with your staff, and be aware that shame and stigma prevent many staff members and peers from using their mental health benefits to seek treatment, so normalize the use of those services.

Create trust. The most important part of a leader-staff relationship is trust. Always be honest with your employees and never twist your words. Always tell the truth, and be transparent with your staff. Never gossip about your employees or share any of their personal information to others. Trust is the building block and makes your relationship with employees sustainable. Efforts dedicated to trust-building will give you great results.

Respect your employees. Respect your employees and their opinions. Never make your employees feel neglected. Don't be harsh when you disagree with them. Honour their input, and make an effort to explain your point of view with empathy.

Have a learning attitude. Maintaining a learning attitude helps staff to feel more comfortable when they offer their point of view. This helps employees to realize that they are all the same, and instills a sense of oneness.

The relationship is about trust, and believing in their work. It's a collaboration where genuine involvement from both parties is important.

For the growth of any organization, it's important to understand the subtleties of your relationships. The bottom line for this relationship is to learn, grow, understand, and implement.



Tips to Promote Well-being on your Team

Stay active. Provide staff with opportunities to stay active throughout the day. Transform weekly sit-downs into one-on-one walking meetings. Help staff find materials to make their own standing desks. Let staff know that they are allowed – and encouraged – to get up every hour to stretch and move.

Show gratitude. Being thankful and expressing gratitude is one of the easiest things that managers can do to boost employee well-being. By simply thanking employees for a job well done, work positivity and morale will thrive. Employees who feel valued are happier with their jobs. Make it a habit of finding things to be grateful for – even if it's not the best day at work.

Offer sessions. Education plays a critical role in wellness. Employees can always benefit from new learnings or reminders about healthy eating, getting active and taking care of their mental health. Consider introducing speakers on different well-being topics to staff meetings or pro D days. Reach out to the BCPVPA for ideas if you feel this will help!

Make wellness convenient. Often staff are hesitant to get involved in wellness initiatives because

they are busy. Administration can help combat this by giving employees the opportunity to get healthy at work. Offer employees the ability to get in some exercise throughout the workday. Check with your district to see what is possible.

Offer healthy choices. Rethink sugary, fatty snacks that are brought to meetings or the staff room. Put an end to the 'cake culture' that might be tempting employees to consume more calories. Create a community fruit basket for everyone to share, where employees can pitch in or grab a healthy snack.

Keep wellness stress-free. Wellness should never be complicated or stressful. In fact, for best results, wellness initiatives should be simple and fun. Employees will be more inclined to get involved when initiatives are short, targeted, and easy. Providing wellness ideas for your staff should not stress YOU out!

Participate. Lastly – and most importantly – leaders must also participate. Leaders need to be visible in leading their school's efforts in well-being. Staff need to know that you value well-being and want to give them space and opportunities to incorporate health into their daily routine. Participate in any group wellness activities or challenges such as walking clubs, group meditation, or hourly stretching.

The Leader's Role When A Staff Member is Struggling

Ignoring a staff member who is struggling at work is a risk. Period. In the context of this article, ignoring or downplaying the issue could be interpreted as management negligence.

As a managing leader, you are expected to manage the following working requirements:

1. Staff attendance and tardiness
2. Quality and quantity of work
3. Behaviour and relationships with others
4. Safety

When a staff member's health condition impacts any of these performance points, a responsible and

caring leader will support their staff by hosting a safe conversation and bridging the staff member to available resources. In fact, employers have a Duty to Inquire when a health issue may be impacting performance.

If the employer reasonably should have known that a disability might be the cause of an employee's poor performance, absenteeism, or other issues in the workplace, they have a duty to inquire about the potential existence of a disability.

[Learn more](#)

Some Administrators are more comfortable with these discussions than others. Being confident in facilitating a conversation in situations such as these includes having a clear plan and an understanding of your role and boundaries.

Each staff situation is unique. That said, there are four steps that you as a leader can take to approach the specifics for that individual:

1. Awareness

What have you seen or noticed?

Document any observations and facts that would suggest the staff member is struggling. Align the impact of the observation to one of the four working requirements above.

Make notes of what was happening, the date and time, and the impact of the situation on students, co-workers, parents, school operations, etc.

2. Listening

What is your staff member experiencing?

Set up a time and location to meet with your staff member where you will not be interrupted.

Prepare for the meeting by having a pad of paper and pencil ready for your staff member to take notes, and have tissues available.

Have your documentation organized for reference as required. Be clear with yourself on what would look different if the staff member was working from a place of well-being, and describe it to the staff member.

Visualize your conversation and several types of scenarios, and how you would handle each one.

Bridging to Resources

Before hosting the meeting with your staff member, you may wish to reach out to Human Resources for a list of the types of services and benefits the individual may be able to access. Resources could include, but are not limited to:

- Employee Assistance Program contacts
- School District disability or wellness team members
- Extended Health Benefit information
- The Human Resources team

- Community resources that HR feels may be helpful

Facilitating the Meeting

Park your assumptions and beliefs at the door. You will never know someone's full story, and you want to enter the meeting with a 'clean perspective' rather than a tainted picture based on previous interactions, rumours, or unconscious bias.

Begin the conversation directly and with empathy. Do not dance around the subject. Here are some examples of how you can start the conversation:

"Thank you for meeting with me today. I wanted to check in with you and see how you are doing."

"We have worked together for many years, and lately, I have noticed some changes (appearance, patience, demeanour). Are you okay?"

"You have always been amazing at connecting with students in the hallway, but lately, I have not seen you engaging with them. Is everything alright?"

"Is anything going on that may be distracting you these days? You have not seemed like yourself the past couple of weeks, and I just wanted to check in to see if you are okay."

3. Directing

Your role in the meeting is to be a compassionate and empathetic leader. You are there to:

- Show you care, as you have noticed some changes in how they normally 'show up'
- Assure the staff member that your conversation is confidential
- Determine whether there is anything in your role as an Administrator, within workplace policy, that you can do to support them at work
- Bridge the staff member to available resources

You are NOT there to:

- Learn all the details of your staff member's challenges. You do not need to know about

an individual's health situation or details of personal issues

- Make assumptions or be judgmental
- Analyze or solve the staff member's problem, unless their problem is specifically related to work and you are able, in your role as Principal or Vice-Principal, to make a difference
- Share your own personal experience and/or give a pep talk

If the staff member opens up about possible concerns that are impacting them at work, be open in your listening and thank them for sharing, and trusting you with the information. Acknowledge that you have heard them share that they are struggling, and that you will do what you can to support them within your role and the district's policies.

Should the staff member be very distraught during the meeting, and is open to speaking to someone, offer to immediately call the Employee Assistance Program. Call in, hand the phone to the staff member, and leave the room to give them privacy. It is a great idea to have the EAP number on your speed dial.

Remember: everything the individual shares with you needs to remain confidential unless, of course, they discuss harming themselves or others.

If you are concerned that the staff member may be at risk to harm themselves, you can call the BC Crisis Centre:

**1800SUICIDE
(1-800-784-2433)**

**310 Mental Health Support
310-6789
(no need to dial area code)
www.crisiscentre.bc.ca**

Have the staff member speak directly to the Crisis Counsellor. Should the staff member leave the meeting, and leave the building, and you are worried that they may harm themselves, never hesitate to call 911.



Generally, when a staff member is struggling at work, their issue can be placed in one of the three categories:

Health issue: The staff member is responsible for being proactive in addressing their health issue, accessing the right medical support, and complying with the treatment. As their leader, you are in a position to consider temporary workplace accommodation while the individual is undergoing a health process.

Personal issue: The staff member is responsible for taking action to mitigate the impact of their personal life issue on their ability to attend work in a safe, productive, and timely manner. As their leader, possibly in partnership with Human Resources depending upon the situation, you are in the position to offer temporary accommodation or a leave of absence if this is what the individual needs to get things in order. This can be supportive when the staff member is finding a retirement home for parents, or addressing legal issues in their divorce.

Workplace issue: In this situation, the staff member, and the workplace – including you as a leader – have a role in addressing any issues that are impeding the individual from successfully performing their job.

This table can define your role, depending on what the staff member reveals during your discussion.

Listen <i>What is the source of the problem?</i>	Direction <i>Direct to resources</i>	Responsibility <i>What is my role?</i>
Health Concerns Staff or family member health issues Medication effects Chronic conditions that flare up, deterioration etc.	Direct to Resources Physician EFAP Early intervention programs	Employee Responsibility Accommodation request * Schedule a follow-up date Outline goal(s) to review
Personal Concerns For example, marital or family issues, life change, legal problems, childcare, financial strains	Direct to Resources EFAP Early intervention programs	Employee Responsibility Accommodation request * Schedule a follow-up date Outline goal(s) to review
Work Concerns Conflict at work Ergonomic or safety needs Workload Skills needed Harassment Violence	Determine next steps & review resources Policy and procedures Consult HR/OH&S Action planning EFAP support	Leader and Employee Responsibility Accommodation request * Set plan and expectations Schedule a follow-up date Confirm desired outcomes and key points to review

* Administrator will want to coordinate with Human Resources

4. Action Plan and Follow-up

At the end of the meeting, commit to the actions you and/or the staff member will undertake to work towards returning the staff member to their regular level of performance. Set a date and time to follow up with the staff member to see how things are progressing.

At the follow up meeting, acknowledge improvements. If there are still challenges, reassess the expected steps and realistic timelines, then set another follow up date. Repeat this process as necessary.

These are not always comfortable conversations for you or your staff. However, addressing concerns early, and showing your willingness to listen and support, will go a long way to strengthening relationships, reducing assumptions, and improving workplace effectiveness.

Let us know if your chapter is interested in any specific training related to your role as a leader in supporting your team's well-being. BCPVPA can provide a two-hour course on how to have these challenging health/performance discussions, including what to do if the individual does not believe that there is anything wrong, and/or will not take adequate steps to address their situation.

Contact
Rochelle Morandini

The Principl(ed) Podcast with host Chris Horton
is a made-in-Canada monthly series that connects with BC school Principals
who are working everywhere in the province, from the smallest rural schools to the
bustling urban centres. Some guests are in the early years of their leadership journey,
and others can share a wealth of professional experience to help
school leaders everywhere enhance their own learning and leadership skills.

It's like networking and Pro-D, all wrapped up in a podcast!

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Episode 2 - Anneli Duncan

Episode 3 - Barb Hamblett

Episode 4 - Darren Danyluk

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Episode 8 - Mikel Brogan

Episode 9 - Dan Watt

Episode 10 - Andrea McComb

Episode 11 - Brad Baker

Episode 12 - Jessica Antosz

**Listen to
The Principl(ed) Podcast**

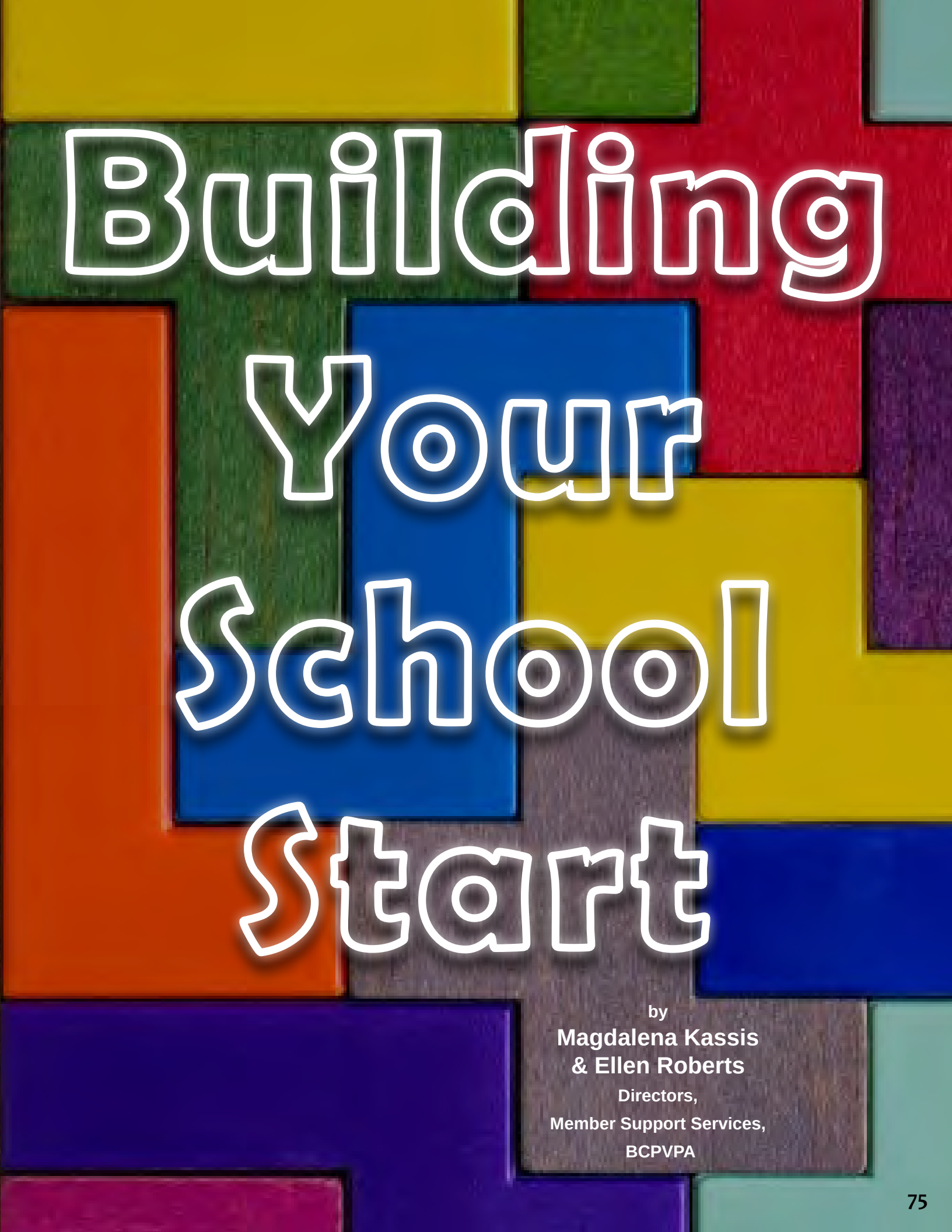






SOURCING



The background of the cover is an abstract composition of various colored squares and rectangles in shades of yellow, green, red, blue, orange, and purple, some with a textured appearance. The title is written in a large, white, outlined font with a slight drop shadow.

Building Your School Start

by
**Magdalena Kassis
& Ellen Roberts**
Directors,
Member Support Services,
BCPVPA

For Principals and Vice-Principals, September heralds a mixed bag of thoughts, emotions, and tasks. It is a time of renewal, hope, and new beginnings... especially this fall! The actions Principals and Vice-Principals choose to take in September can set the stage for the year ahead – and for years to come – in the school community. Each Principal and Vice-Principal brings their own unique ideas and strategies to ensure a smooth start-up and a successful year, and there is value in sharing ideas with colleagues and learning from each other.

With this in mind, we canvassed our BCPVPA colleagues – many of whom came from the ranks of Principals and Vice-Principals – for ideas to help with your back-to-school transition. We thought about the proactive activities and strategies that we used when we were in schools. What were the valuable tips that helped us in those first few days and weeks? What advice could benefit our colleagues across the province?

When canvassing our colleagues for their ideas, we did not anticipate that each response would touch on being purposeful in setting aside time to build relationships. Yet, without exception, we all described what we did in our practices to focus on establishing strong working relationships with the different groups in our school communities.

We have grouped our BCPVPA colleagues' words of wisdom in two sections: ideas related to 'people', which include establishing, developing, and enhancing relationships with staff, students and families, and community members; and ideas related to 'personal preparation', which include the technical preparation that will be of benefit at the start of a school year.

Depending upon your role, the current pandemic context, or district policies, some of these ideas may not be directly relevant. But we hope that this snapshot of suggestions may spark new ideas, or simply reaffirm the strategies you currently have in place.

In a perfect world, you would have uninterrupted quality time with your admin team or – in the case of single-administrator placements, with your office staff – to do nothing but get yourself organized for the start of the school year. However, there are a million things to achieve in those days in August and early September. So: what are the 'non-negotiables'? We suggest that taking the time to intentionally build relationships, and defining roles among your team members can be critical.

Building relationships with your administrative teams and/or office team

- Plan intentional meetings or sessions early on where you can have fun, get to know each other, vision, strategize, plan, and share ideas.
- Schedule regular weekly meetings throughout the year, and keep the communication lines open and trusting. The benefit of creating a strong school leadership team is that it sends a message to the staff that there is a unified voice among the leaders – a team that is moving the school in the same direction – and leaders who, despite their individual skills and personalities, value teamwork and each others' contributions to the team.

Building relationships with your teaching and support staff

- Send out an opening letter to staff with a personal message, a welcome, and an

introduction to yourself for those who are new.

- Be well prepared for the first staff meeting, with everything your teaching staff will need when they arrive. Plan fun activities as well!
- Be **PRESENT & VISIBLE** to the staff. The office work can be done early or late in the day; even when there is a lot of work you need to do, be 'present' for staff members who come in to see you.
- If you are new to the school, consider surveying staff to find out about their priorities, what they value at the school, and what they see as challenges.
- Try to meet with each staff member if you can. In a large secondary school, this may not be possible, but in a smaller school, set up meeting times just to get to know your staff. Remember to include support staff, too.
- Consider taking photos of staff for a 'welcome wall'.

Building relationships with students

- Especially in the early days, make sure you are visible to students – before school, break time, lunchtime, and after school.
- Pop into classrooms, and introduce yourself to all classes. Make that personal connection.
- Ensure students (and staff) know the school expectations and Code of Conduct.
- Try to find a way to communicate any expectations in a fun and engaging way with students.
- A multi-age stations approach early in the year can be a great way for students and staff to get to know each other and the school.
- In an opening assembly, consider producing a fun video or game to engage the students in the school culture and expectations.



Building relationships with your PAC

- Meet with the PAC Chair early in the school year or – ideally— before the year starts.
- Get to know each other, and review the school goals and needs.
- Ensure that you keep the communication lines open.

Building relationships with families

- Send a welcome/introduction letter to families at the beginning of the year.
- Make sure families are aware of the school's communication system, and the best method for reaching you.
- Connect directly with families whose children struggled the previous year; connect prior to start-up and see if there is anything they may need to help them with a successful return. You may decide to enlist in your support staff (Counselors, Indigenous Support Workers, Child and Youth Care Workers, Resource Teachers) to reach out to these families in the first few weeks of the school year.
- Ensure families know how they can best support their children and the school.

Building relationships with other relevant teams or individuals

Every district and school context are unique. Take the time to be intentional in building relationships with those who will be part of your daily work contacts – either directly or indirectly. For some, that might be your district's Inclusive Education or Indigenous Education department staff, or it might be the staff at the community

centre or daycare next door. You will know your community best. And if you are new to your site, take the time to ask questions to ensure you are reaching all key people who support your school community.

Being intentional about relationship building early in the school year is essential for everyone's success. The time you take building relationships early on with stakeholders and community members will make difficult conversations later in the year easier to manage. It can also help to set a trusting and positive tone among the staff, encouraging individuals to feel comfortable and confident, to take risks, and to be involved. It may also reduce the likelihood of legal and formal issues down the road.

And while building relationships is important at the beginning of any school year, it is equally important to take the time to prepare yourself for the formal and legal aspects of the job to ensure all-round readiness. We recommend that whether you are a seasoned administrator, or new to the role, that you make the time each year to review the documents and strategies which will support the more technical aspects of your work:

- Familiarize yourself with your district's **Policies and Administrative Procedures**. These are often sent out by district staff but are accessible on the district's website. From a Member Support Services perspective, policies and procedures that relate to Human Resources and staff, and to respectful workplace issues such as harassment and bullying, are especially relevant.
- Take time to look through the **Collective Agreements**, especially those of the teachers and support staff. Review clauses pertaining to class sizes and composition, hours of work, working conditions, and expectations around areas such as meeting attendance.
- Meet with your **Staff Reps** early on, and

on a regular basis: it's a best practice to keep the communications lines open! Don't wait to be approached with a problem – be proactive, genuinely curious, and committed to working together.

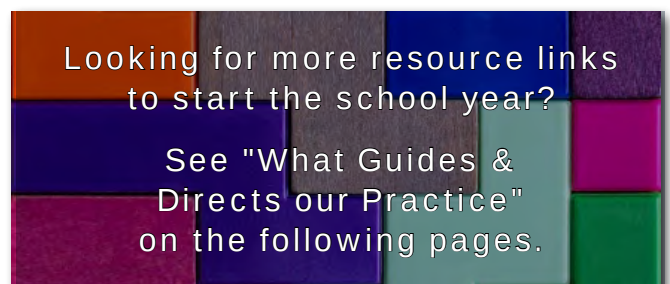
- Meet early on, and regularly with your **office staff and custodial staff**. Regularly scheduled meetings can be a crucial piece in ensuring that your school runs smoothly.
- Review your **own employment contract**. Make sure you have a copy. Is it current? Are you aware of all the clauses in the contract? Familiarity with your own contract is a helpful proactive measure.
- Review the **School Act** – specifically sections that relate to your work as a Vice-Principal or Principal (Section 5).
- Ensure that you and the teachers on your team are familiar with the **TRB Professional Standards**. This is a crucial step in ensuring that the Standards are being upheld and can pre-empt formal complaints being lodged.
- Ensure that you and the teachers on your staff review the **BC redesigned curriculum**.
- Take the time to review the **BCPVPA Leadership Standards**. These form the basis for the work that you do as Principals and Vice-Principals, and in many districts, they are the criteria for hiring and evaluation.
- Look at the school organization structure in the Collective Agreement – there may be language on how **Staff Meetings and Staff Committee Meetings** are structured. Keep in mind that different districts often have different structures and clauses in the Collective Agreement when it comes to staff committees. If you have changed districts, it is possible that the language is different from what you are used to.
- Plan the year's **calendar** collaboratively as early as possible: ensure important dates from previous years (reporting dates, regular meetings) are

planned and publicized well ahead of time.

- Ensure that your **school plan and district plan** are accessible, and that staff are aware of these important plans.
- Meet early on with your **PAC Chair**, and set regular meetings if you can: communication is key!
- Familiarize yourself with the **confidential files** and gain an awareness of the students and families as best you can. Ensure that students who require IEPs are appropriately matched with case managers.
- Ensure that office staff (and other relevant staff) know about court orders, safety alerts and other immediate **student safety issues**.

September is a busy, complex time for all Principals and Vice-Principals. Your role is pivotal in ensuring a safe and smooth start-up for students, and success for staff. Your community needs you, so remember to look after yourself and your own well-being. Know your limits, and show compassion to yourself and to others: be calm, kind, and safe! Set personal boundaries and maintain healthy living when it comes to sleep, exercise, and nutrition. Engage in self-care or learn more about what you can do to be proactive. Remember to connect with professional and personal support networks when help is needed. As a BCPVPA member, you have access to **humanworks** and the **Early Intervention Program (EIP)**, the support of the Member Support Services Team, and other resources.

Whether you are a Principal with years of experience, or a Vice-Principal new to the job, remember that the **Member Support Services** team is here to answer any questions or concerns related to your professional role. *We all wish you the very best in this new school year – filled with hope, health, and renewal!*

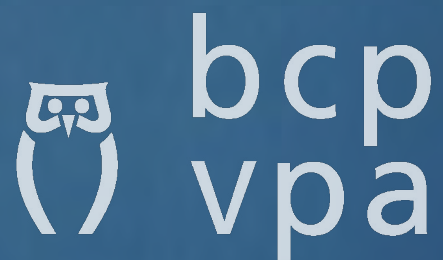


***"THIS HAS LITERALLY BEEN AN ANCHOR IN THE STORM THIS YEAR.
I AM SO, SO GRATEFUL."***

(2021 MENTEE)

***"I HAVE GROWN SO MUCH AS A MENTOR IN THIS PROGRAM; I AM
A MUCH BETTER LISTENER, I ASK DEEPER QUESTIONS.
HELPING MY MENTEE TO FOCUS DEEPLY ON THEIR LEARNING AND
GROWTH MAKES ME A BETTER LEADER AND A BETTER MENTOR."***

(2021 MENTOR)



bit.ly/BCP_Mentorship

From government regulations and district policy to professional standards, Principals & Vice-Principals need to be familiar with their rights and responsibilities.

What guides & directs practice?

Fall is a perfect time to review and refresh your knowledge: follow the links to find out more.

BCPVPA **Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in BC**

Revised in July 2019, the Leadership Standards is a guide to hold student and adult development, engagement, and learning central to all leadership practices, and to foster continuous professional learning and development in working towards effective leadership.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is part of Canada's Constitution. The Charter protects every Canadian's right to be treated equally under the law.

General Standards of Care

Principals and Vice-Principals owe a duty of care to:

- protect students from reasonably foreseeable risk of harm
- appropriately supervise students

There are potential employment consequences for failure to supervise.

Codes of Conduct

Every school has its own Code of Conduct: a set of rules or guidelines that everyone in the school is expected to follow to ensure an environment of fairness, respect, and safety.

General Standards of Conduct

Principals and Vice-Principals:

- hold a position of trust, confidence, and responsibility
- are held to a higher standard of conduct than the general public

What guides & directs practice?

Employment Standards Act

The Employment Standards Act sets out BC's rules on hours of work, time off, notice, severance pay, and other topics.

Contract

Principals and Vice-Principals currently contract with their school district under a Personal Services Contract. It's important to be familiar with your contract. If BCPVPA members need assistance with clarification or explanation of contract clauses, they can review their contract with the Member Support Services team.

Collective Agreements

BC School District Collective Agreements

for school support staff exist between the districts and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Locals.

Provincial Collective Agreement (PCA)

for teachers exists between the BC School Public Employers' Association (BCPSEA) and the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF).

School Act/ Regulations

The BC School Act is a provincial statute governing primary education and secondary education in B.C.

The Act outlines important roles, rights, and responsibilities for parents, students, and the education system.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

FIPPA sets out the access and privacy rights of individuals as they relate to the public sector, and establishes an individual's right to access records in the custody or control of a 'public body' including access to one's own 'personal information'. FIPPA also sets out the terms under which a public body can collect, use, and disclose the personal information of individuals.

School District Policy

Each school district develops their own policies to support the governance function of the Board. It's important to be familiar with the policies in your district.

Professional Standards for BC Educators

(Commissioner for Teacher Regulation)

The Professional Standards, formerly the Standards for Education, Competence and Professional Conduct for Educators in BC, outline the conduct and competence requirements for an individual to be issued and maintain a BC teaching certificate of qualification.

Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (Worksafe BC)

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) contains legal requirements that must be met by all workplaces under the inspectional jurisdiction of WorkSafe BC. The OHSR promotes occupational health and safety and protects workers and other persons present at workplaces from work-related risks to their health, safety, and well-being.

Basic Duties and Fiduciary Responsibilities of a Principal or Vice-Principal

Placing employer interests first

Cooperating with employer:
following reasonable and
lawful orders and directions

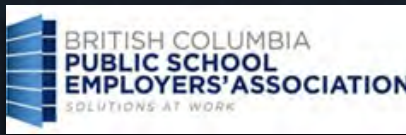
Speaking and acting
on behalf of the employer

Exercising care, diligence, and
skill that a reasonably
prudent person would

Unconditionally demonstrating
honesty and integrity
toward the employer

Ensuring confidentiality

Complying with all statutory
requirements and general
legal principles pertaining to
their duties and responsibilities



Ministry of Education

Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat

BC Teachers' Council

BCPSEA is a full-service employers' association and is the accredited bargaining agent for the province's 60 public boards of education, for unionized teaching and support staff in the British Columbia K-12 public education system.

BCSTA serves and supports their members, BC's boards of education, in their key work of improving student achievement.

BCSSA enables their members to be visionary leaders of public education by supporting their individual professional development and by representing their collective wisdom and interests.

The BC Association of School Business Officials (BCASBO) is a member-driven organization dedicated to providing membership value, advocating for members, and building relationships.

BCCPAC represents the parents of children attending BC public schools, and engages, empowers, and supports parents for the success of all learners through collaboration, partnership and education.

CUPE BC represents more than 30,000 education workers including education assistants, school secretaries, custodians/caretakers, Indigenous support workers, IT workers, Strong Start facilitators, trades and maintenance workers, and bus drivers.

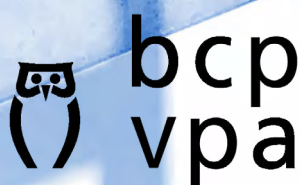
The British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) is the union of professionals representing 45,000 public school teachers in BC. All public school teachers belong to the BCTF and their local teachers' association.

The **FNSEA** represents and works on behalf of First Nations controlled schools in BC, supporting those schools in creating effective, nurturing, and linguistically and culturally appropriate education environments for students.

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) is a policy and advocacy organization that represents and works on behalf of First Nations in British Columbia. FNESC has a mandate to support First Nations students and advance First Nations education in BC.

Who's Who?

In BC's Education Sector



The BCPVPA collaborates with a variety of organizations in the BC education sector on behalf of our members. Get to know the many groups who are working to achieve success for students, staff and leaders in the province.



Making your Professional Health and Well-being a Priority

by

Jack MacNeill

M.Ed. (Coun. Psych) RCC, RRP, CVRP(f)

President

humanworks consulting group

Welcome back! I am truly hoping you have all had a restful and restorative summer after navigating a trying 2020-2021 school year. For many of you, preparing for the start of a new school year brings feelings of optimism, wonder and the all-so familiar nervous anticipation. As professional educational leaders, you know getting the year off to a good start can set the right tone and intention for many good things to follow. This goes for our professional health and well-being as well.

Having spoken to hundreds of administrators over the past few years, I can say without a doubt that setting realistic wellness goals, remaining in regular contact with close professional peers, and creating healthy professional/personal boundaries are fundamental to remaining well at work – and at home! I can add that accessing professional support and guidance during times that are more challenging can significantly reduce the intensity and duration of the challenge. Fundamentally, this is why the Early Intervention Program (EIP) was created by the BCPVPA in partnership with humanworks.

I have rarely met an administrator who was not highly capable, engaged, and self-directed: it's how you are built! However, it is inevitable in this public education sector for administrators to face situations and dynamics that are beyond their control or influence, leaving them vulnerable and uncertain. Thankfully, your BCPVPA has an excellent Member Support Services team that can help you navigate the professional workplace challenges.

humanworks offers professional health and wellness support to Members working through these difficult times. Our EIP Program provides confidential, professional guidance, and counselling support to BCPVPA LTD Benefit Members. Through the Program, you will have access to one-to-one contact with a consultant who is well-versed in the K-12 system, and very experienced in working with educators navigating professional health concerns. We take pride in our professional urgency, making ourselves quickly available and remaining in regular contact to help Members prioritize and attend to their wellness concerns.

Over this past year, we have supported many members seeking a place where they could professionally share their wellness concerns, problem-solve together, and then prioritize a collaborative action plan to address their unique challenges. One of the more critical factors in 'getting in front' of wellness concerns is reaching out early. We strongly encourage Members to contact humanworks at the earliest stage of their wellness concerns or decline. Members have typically reached out after receiving negative and invasive feedback from other stakeholders, overcoming challenging confrontations, or receiving unwanted and discouraging health news. For some Members, it's been due to increasing exposure to work stressors, compounded by a struggle to guard their minds from invasive thoughts, or chronic poor sleep. Whatever the reason for reaching out, we are truly here to help you sort through your challenges, make greater sense of your circumstances, and develop a plan together to help better manage and overcome your unique wellness obstacles.

Wishing you a successful and healthy year!

Jack



humanworks offers practical and personalized services: vocational rehabilitation, disability management, occupational therapy, wellness and education, organizational leadership, and consulting. We help individuals and organizations develop sustainable and durable work lives, and productive environments. We help people get to work and stay at work while maintaining healthy lifestyles away from work.



*You can easily access the support of the
Early Intervention Program (EIP):*

[Contact the BCPVPA](#)

**Call the humanworks office
604-734-4130**

**Access the EIP referral form
on our website
www.humanworks.ca**

Email us at admin@humanworks.ca



SOGI 1 2 3

by
ARC Foundation

SOGI-inclusive education hasn't always been as easy as 1-2-3.

In fact, the acronym SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity), was not particularly well known in 2016 when the BC Ministry of Education and a group of Provincial Education Partners made a commitment to create meaningful change to improve the lives of students of all sexual orientations and gender identities in BC schools. Over the last five years, we have seen remarkable progress, helping make BC schools safer and welcoming for all students.

Many teachers and administrators had been working for years to build the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to support 2SLGBTQ+ students and families; however, many more were still unsure where to start. Pockets of great work were happening throughout the

province, but there continued to be a need for system-wide change. In the 2015-16 school year, ARC Foundation partnered with the Delta School District to provide funding for .2 FTE position to establish a SOGI Lead role, who would in turn create a structure of support and resources for educators in the district. The goal was to build capacity and awareness to make schools more inclusive.

The SOGI District Lead engaged volunteers at each school who began building a professional network within the district to share SOGI-inclusive practices and create resources together. The model of the SOGI District Lead supporting the SOGI School Leads was highly successful, and became the framework for the structure that has now grown throughout BC.

As a result of the successful experience, ARC Foundation partnered with the Ministry of Education to invite other districts to participate in the model that has come to be known as the SOGI Educator Network. By the end of June 2016, nine districts had signed on to be part of the SOGI Educator Network.

The goal was to build capacity and awareness to make schools more inclusive.

In July 2016, a change to the BC Human Rights Code to include gender identity and expression as a prohibited grounds of discrimination became the catalyst for action by the BC Ministry of Education and school districts. On September 8, 2016, all BC school districts were advised of the requirement to put in place District and School Codes of Conduct and policy that aligned with the change to the Human Rights Code. At that time, school districts were in various stages of readiness to implement strategies and policy and needed support, thus garnering momentum for SOGI 1 2 3.

ARC Foundation held the first SOGI Summit on October 19, 2016, an inspirational day that brought together 140 educators from the nine pilot districts to share stories of success and

learning. That same day saw the broader launch of SOGI 1 2 3 and the website SOGIeducation.org. The website shares proven SOGI-inclusive tools and resources in three key areas:

SOGI 1:

Policies & Procedures

The key components of effective policies and procedures that explicitly reference SOGI.

SOGI 2:

Inclusive Environments

Inclusive operations, language, and practices to help create positive and welcoming environments for all students.

SOGI 3:

Teaching Resources

Lesson plans and other resources – created by educators, for educators – in age-appropriate approaches from K-12 that teach diversity and include examples of SOGI topics. These resources provide opportunities for learning to reflect the SOGI diversity in students' lives and society.



The SOGI 1 2 3 website also offers a resource section for parents that includes terminology, a parent brochure, and a set of videos. To better support families where English is not their primary language, the [Parents' Page](#) is available in Mandarin, Punjabi, and French. The parents' brochure has been translated into nine different languages: French, Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Russian, Arabic, Farsi, Korean, and Tagalog.

The nine-district SOGI Educator Network pilot was a success, and was opened to the province for the 2017-18 school year. That year, fifty-four of sixty public school districts took part in the provincial SOGI Educator Network. The following school year saw the Network expand into all sixty school districts across BC, all of whom continue to participate to this day.

In addition to the efforts of the SOGI Educator Network, forward momentum with SOGI-inclusive education in BC is also being championed by a dedicated group of Provincial Education Partners, known as BC's K-12 SOGI Collaborative. The K-12 SOGI Collaborative includes the BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association, BC Teachers' Federation, BC School Superintendents Association, BC School Trustee Association, BC Ministry of Education, BC Association of School Business Officials, CUPE, BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, First Nation Schools Association, First Nations Education Steering Committee, and Federation of Independent School Association, with ARC Foundation as facilitator. This group meets regularly to identify, support, and provide advice on strategic actions that will facilitate SOGI-inclusive education and policies in BC schools.

One of the priorities identified by the K-12 SOGI Collaborative was to develop a [SOGI-Inclusive Education Resource Guide](#) to share practices recommended by educators who, for many years, have been actively supporting students of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The BC K-12 SOGI Collaborative prioritized the development of the resource guide, and all contributed and provided substantial input. The Resource Guide was created in 2020 and launched in January 2021. By the end of the school year, the SOGI-Inclusive Education Resource Guide had been accessed more than 7,300 times.

"As the parent of a transgender child, from the bottom of my heart, I thank you for this document," a local parent shared. "The guide is clear and accessible. It will very much help school leaders and teachers to understand how to better support LGBTQ+ students. My family's experience with the school system has been overwhelmingly positive. Everyone we've connected with at the school and district level has wanted to support us and has worked hard to do so. But not everyone we've worked with has known how to do that or what support looks like. This Resource that you've put together will serve as a guide for people with less experience supporting LGBTQ+ students and should help ensure kids have a more consistent experience."

The Resource Guide builds on the [BC Ministry of Education SOGI Policy Guide](#). While the Policy Guide focused on what to include, the Resource Guide provides many more details on how to implement and support SOGI-inclusive education efforts.

The Resource Guide is broken down into six sections designed to help schools, administrators, and educators no matter where they are along the journey to more SOGI-inclusive education:

Who is the SOGI Lead in
your School or District?

If you're not sure, please
reach out to us at

info@sogieducation.org

and allow us to
connect you!

- Policies and Procedures: Building Effective Policies and Procedures that Work Together
- SOGI Teams and Committees: A Collaborative Approach to SOGI-Inclusive Education
- Professional Development: A Holistic Approach to SOGI Pro-D and Ongoing Learning
- Students in Transition: Facilitating a Student-Centred Support Plan
- Washrooms and Changerooms: Short, Mid, and Long-Term Considerations
- Rainbow Displays: Creating an Impact with your Rainbow Display

The SOGI-Inclusive Education Resource Guide brings together ideas gathered from the BC K-12 SOGI Collaborative, a vast range of educators and stakeholders, and input from more than 2,500 SOGI Leads who, both directly and indirectly, provide feedback to ARC Foundation. The Guide, while written by ARC Foundation, was created from the thoughts and recommendations of these generous contributors.

The start of the new school year brings an opportunity to reflect on BC's SOGI-inclusive education journey, including a look back to celebrate the incredible achievements that have been made so far, and a look forward to determine where additional efforts may be needed.



The start of the new school year brings an opportunity to reflect on BC's SOGI-inclusive education journey...

The SOGI 1 2 3 model is working successfully across BC, systemic change is taking place within the education system and more educators have access to the tools and resources needed to create SOGI-inclusive learning experiences for students and families. Part of the program's success has been the consistent, ongoing support system-wide, and the impact that the Educator Network has on educators. While ARC Foundation and SOGI 1 2 3 facilitate discussions, learning, and new resource development, it is the educators themselves who are liaising professionally across this network, both intra-district and inter-district, creating professional connections and learning in a more accelerated and networked approach. Success can also be attributed to the dedicated and continuous support that the BCPVPA has provided to SOGI 1 2 3 – the leadership, participation in the BC SOGI K-12 Collaborative, and overall support from the organization has been invaluable in helping ensure alignment and progress on improving the education environment for students of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

Building on those successes, and with a strong SOGI Educator Network in place, work on supporting more nuanced needs in various education settings is underway, from working with the Federation of Independent Schools Association (FISA), to developing more culturally competent tools, expertise, and guidance when adapting the model to First Nations schools and Indigenous learners.

Both the First Nation Schools Association (FNSEA) and First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) are already supporters of, and participants in, the K-12 SOGI Collaborative. Additionally, there are a small number of First Nations schools that are working together as part of the SOGI Educator Network. In collaboration with FNSEA, FNESC, and educators who are involved in this work, a series of Dialogue Circles will take place this fall to further

Looking for ways to incorporate SOGI 1 2 3 into your back-to-school planning?

1.

**Talk to your SOGI School Lead!
Ask them what they need from
you and build a plan together.**

2.

**Check out the [SOGI-Inclusive
Education Resource Guide](#) for
ideas on how to implement and
support SOGI-inclusive education
efforts in your school.**

3.

**Small changes can make a big
difference. Take a look at our
[Inclusive Environments](#) page
and see if there is one thing that
you can commit to for the year
ahead. Feel free to share that
commitment with your team and
encourage them to do the same!**

examine how to encompass First Nations approaches to pedagogy, culture, and learning. Work will then take place to build a plan that will both respond to and tailor the programming approach in a culturally competent and respectful manner that aligns with how best to deliver SOGI-inclusive education within, and from the perspective of, First Nations teachings.

Another area of continued focus for SOGI 1 2 3 is Youth Voice & Leadership. There are some inspiring examples of this leadership taking place around the province. In many schools and districts, students hold advisory positions on SOGI committees to help guide the work, or take leadership roles in supporting their local GSAs (Gender-Sexuality Alliance). There are countless stories each year of successful student-led professional development, peer learning opportunities, and public displays of inclusivity. Students know what they need, and can provide fundamental guidance on how to make their schools and learning experiences feel safer and more inclusive. Finding ways to include student input, feedback, and participation – alongside SOGI Educators and the SOGI K-12 Collaborative – should help guide and improve the efforts of SOGI 1 2 3 in BC.

Lastly, this fall will see the return of the annual SOGI Educator Summit, scheduled to take place on October 27, 2021. Every October, SOGI District Leads from across British Columbia come together for a full day of knowledge exchange, connections, and conversations around SOGI-inclusive learning. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, last year's Summit was offered virtually for the first time. The virtual format proved to be successful, and even removed barriers to participation for some attendees. This year's Summit programming will be available virtually once again while we work to determine when and how to re-introduce in-person elements.

The BCPVPA has been instrumental in helping start and continue fostering SOGI-inclusive education in BC through the efforts of SOGI 1 2 3. BCPVPA's leadership and voice is a big factor in helping create alignment and ensuring this marginalized group of students can feel safe and welcome, and see themselves – and be seen – in the school community.

For more information and resources on SOGI 1 2 3, please visit [SOGIeducation.org](https://sogieducation.org) or contact us at info@sogieducation.org.



Occupational Health and Safety Resources & Tools

The K-12 Violence Prevention Working Group has developed and collected resources and tools to support occupational health and safety performance in the K-12 public education sector.

[Visit the BCPSEA site for updates](#)

[What does compliance with the regulation look like in schools](#)

[Workplace Violence Prevention Tools Guidance Manual](#)

[Workplace Violence Gap Analysis](#)

[Workplace Violence Prevention Procedure](#)

[Workplace Violence Incident Report and Review Form](#)

[Refusal of Unsafe Work Process Form](#)

[Enrolling Learner Planning](#)

[Workplace Violence Field Trip Risk Assessment](#)

[Functional Behaviour Assessment \(PTR-FBA\) and
Positive Behaviour Support Plan \(PBSP\)](#)

[Home Visit Risk Assessment](#)

[Individual Safe Work Instruction](#)

[Point of Contact Risk Assessment](#)

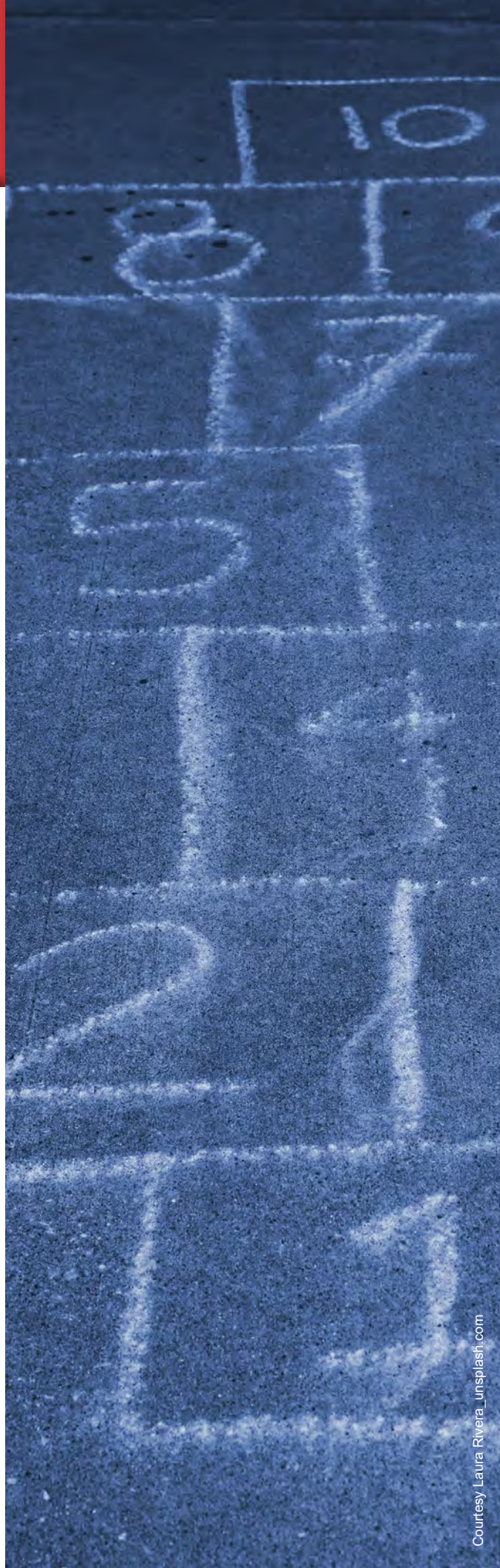
[Workplace Violence Risk Assessment](#)

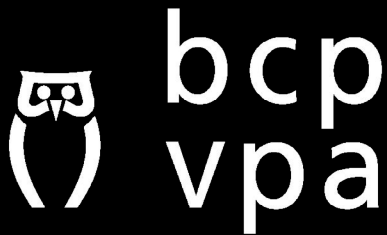
[Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Table](#)

[Workplace Violence Examples](#)

[Workplace Violence Worker Experience Survey](#)

[Workplace Violence Worker Orientation Checklist](#)





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Supporting Mental Health During Back to School

by
Karen Speirs
Foundry BC

The start of the school year can be anxiety-inducing for students of any age, and this year will bring new challenges. Through foundrybc.ca, educators can access a variety of tools and resources to support the mental health of their students – all in one place.

Foundry offers young people ages 12-24 health and wellness resources, services, and supports through integrated service centres in communities



"The start of the school year can be anxiety-inducing for students of any age, and this year will bring new challenges."

across BC, and through the new [Foundry BC App](#). Our focus is lifecare for youth. We provide youth and their caregivers with rapid, free access to advice, experts, tools, and resources.

Supporting the orientation of teachers, counsellors, and school staff to the different mental health issues that may be experienced by students – and the resources that support youth mental health – is important preparation for the school year.

A New Set of Mental Health Concerns

Schools have played a critical role in student mental health during the pandemic through school-based programs and relationships with service providers in communities. During this challenging time, young people have shown incredible strength and leadership.

The year ahead will also be unique. Through our work with young people across BC, and learning from our provincial data, the Foundry team has identified five new concerns to watch for this year. Foundry offers tools, resources, and services for each.

1) Anxiety around returning to school

For youth who live with anxiety, remote learning may have provided respite. Many of them report feeling better – less depressed and experiencing fewer mood issues – without the pressure of attending school in person. What does this mean for the transition back to school? Some students may feel overwhelmed attending school for a full day.

2) Concerns around the 'return to socialization'

Many students have had limited social interaction since March 2020. They report feeling disconnected. Many have come to rely on videogaming to pass the time and to stay connected with friends. They may feel anxious to suddenly be reinserted into an intense social situation when school is back in session, or to break away from some of the activities that have allowed them to feel connected.

3) Dramatic increase in disordered eating

One of Foundry's youth peer support workers doesn't mince words when she reflects on the significant increase in disordered eating among young people during the pandemic: "It's shocking," she says. Restrictions over the past 18 months have created a perfect storm of conditions: fear of gaining weight, scarcity in grocery stores, and social media 'compare and despair' to name a few. Some young people speak about the pressure to have improved themselves. And since disordered eating is often a hidden problem, it may go unnoticed.

4) Impact on OCD and other conditions

The increased focus on sanitizing and physical distancing during the pandemic has heightened our vigilance, and for some this has led to OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) behaviours. Young people who have not yet had OCD recognized may not be coping well and may struggle when restrictions are lifted. They may continue to experience symptoms.

5) Angst around missed learning and other experiences during the pandemic

Young people are likely aware of concerns among educators about the inability to complete curricula during the pandemic period. For students in Grades 11 and 12, there may be concerns about not learning what they need to advance. Missing out on their final years of athletics, arts, and other experiences may impact applications for post-secondary education (and scholarships).

"Many students have had had limited social interaction since March 2020. They report feeling disconnected."

Resources and Support for Youth, Families and Educators

Beyond understanding the issues, there are several ways educators can support the mental health of students.

1) Info & Tools on foundrybc.ca

Info & Tools on the Foundry website features extensive information, self-checks, tips, apps, and stories from other young people. For the individual who wants to explore issues on their own or privately, this is a terrific way to gain a better understanding of issues ranging from anxiety and body image to substance use and self-injury.

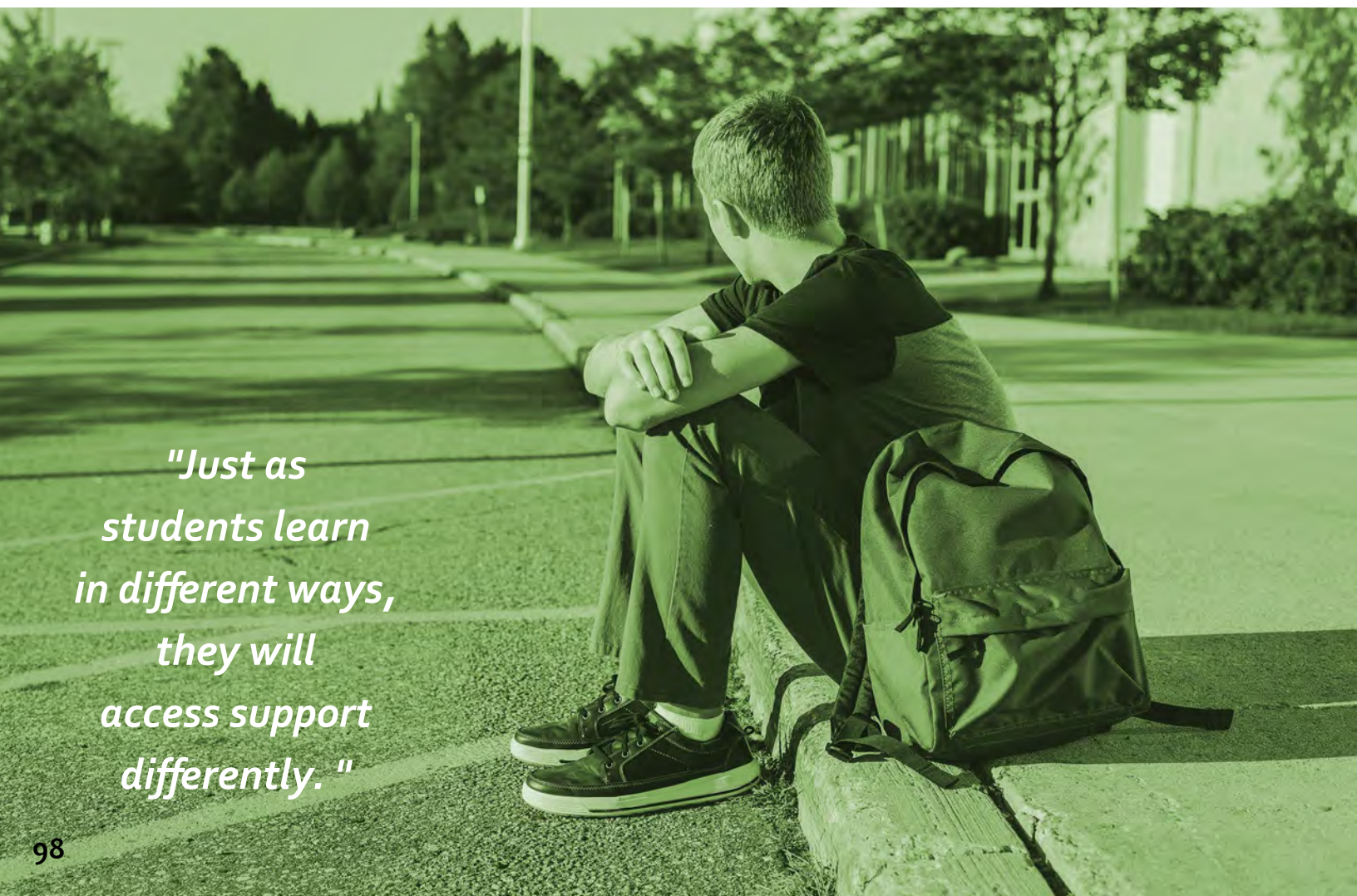
- School Professionals Section has resources for people working in school communities to learn more about mental health and support student mental wellness.
- Pathfinder helps individuals find support through a four-step interactive tool that helps individuals

identify issues, understand how issues are affecting them, and find a personalized list of support options.

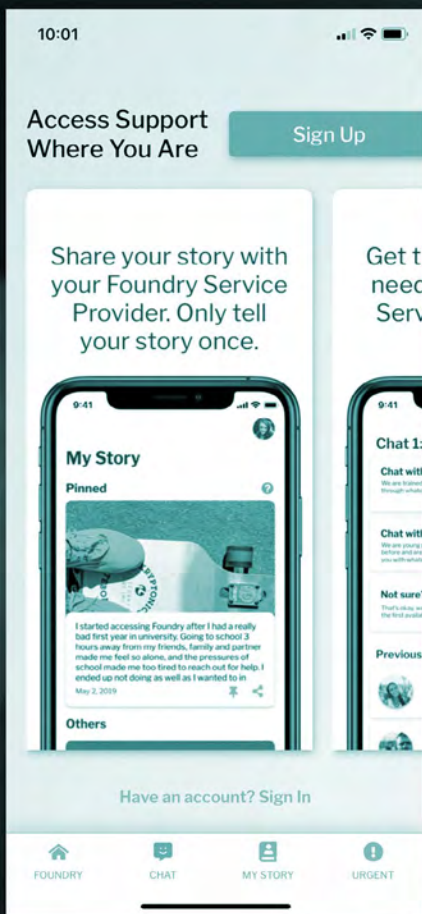
2) Foundry offers a variety of supports

Just as students learn in different ways, they will access support differently. Foundry offers a wide range of approaches to support the mental well-being of young people.

- Foundry centres are located across BC and offer multiple services in one location. Young people can get support from health and social service providers. All centres provide free, respectful, non-judgmental, and strength-based services in a youth-friendly environment. Foundry's holistic approach helps young people find the help they need without having to retell their story and trying to navigate a complex system alone. Referrals are not required, and caregivers can also find navigation or peer supports.



*"Just as
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- The Foundry BC App is a provincial virtual service, the first resource of its kind in Canada. Young people aged 12-24 and their caregivers can use the app to access drop-in or scheduled virtual counselling appointments, find peer support, or join groups that include mindfulness, SMART recovery (substance use), or Emotion-Focused Family Therapy.

Dr. Steve Mathias, Executive Director of Foundry, has a simple suggestion for educators: “Walk your class through the Foundry website, and download and demo the Foundry BC App. Take 30 or 40 minutes to explore the various tools and resources. This introduction will give students familiarity with support that is available, whether they need it now, will suggest it to a friend or may access it in the future.”

3) Offer validation

Foundry’s peer support workers emphasize the importance of validating the feelings that young

people are experiencing. There is uncertainty, frustration, and anger. Youth often feel they are the only one feeling that way. By reassuring students that it’s okay to feel that way, it helps normalize how they are feeling.

In addition to the services and supports available through Foundry, family doctors and other services in communities, such as the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) Child and Youth Mental Health Teams, are important resources.

Educators play an important role in supporting the mental health of students, creating supportive school environments so they feel safe, and connecting them with resources and services when needed. Help make your school community aware of the resources that exist.

Foundry centres, our virtual care team, and online resources are here to support school-aged youth. We look forward to the new school year!





LEADING A CULTURE OF LEARNING AT BARRIERE SECONDARY

by
Angela Stott with
Kristy Dolha and
Thomas Lowe



Sane Leadership

Through my career as an educator, I've changed schools and districts, but I never imagined that I would leave my current position after such a short ride. In the waning weeks of the school year, in preparation for new adventures, my 'Pandemic Principalship' has showcased some big wins – a library renovation, and a commitment to getting our basketball courts resurfaced – but I am most proud of getting out of

the way and supporting our school's two Leadership Development Program¹ candidates so that they could take on educational leadership in our school.

Kristy Dolha and Thomas Lowe model how we became curious about better serving students and then – despite a pandemic, and perhaps because of the pandemic – how we made huge gains in shifting from a culture of ranking and sorting to a culture of learning. In getting out of the way, I worked to exemplify what Margaret Wheatley calls sane leadership, “the unshakeable faith in people's capacity to be

1 Kamloops-Thompson School District's Leadership Development Program (LDP) is a district developed two year opportunity for teachers to develop their leadership skills.

generous, creative, and kind... the commitment to create the conditions for these capacities to blossom, protected from the external environment. It is the deep knowing that, even in the most dire circumstances, more becomes possible as people engage together with compassion and discernment, self-determining their way forward.”²



Shifting Practice in Assessment

by Kristy Dolha

It's probably safe to say that the spring of 2020 was a challenging time for us all. Given this context of chaos, isolation, and uncertainty, it shouldn't be surprising that when June report cards rolled around, there was more than a little aimless wandering of the halls. Collectively, we were dazed and confused; *what were we even supposed to be reporting on, and what did it even matter?* We were coming to a troubling realization – there was an assessment elephant in the room, and it went beyond a global pandemic. We needed a plan to address the deficiencies in our assessment practices. As we connected our dilemma to the Spiral of Inquiry framework, we engaged in the 'scan, focus, and hunch'. It pointed us in a clear direction for learning.

Over the summer, our leadership team connected with Ken O'Connor, a renowned author and assessment expert from Toronto. Ken agreed to work with us, and we embarked on a learning journey that has had a powerful impact on shifting our staff's assessment practices. With Ken's guidance, we chose a collective book study and designed a series of three professional development days where we would tackle big ideas about assessment, feedback, grading, and reporting. The approach was simple: learn, address our tough questions with an expert, and take action. The format we developed was highly effective, and the process got pretty messy at times. The results, however, were robust. Every single teacher in our building is questioning their assessment practice, taking action, checking, and

reflecting. This is exciting work. From a place of safety and trust, we have established a community of care in the efforts we are making to increase our assessment literacy. This is deep learning, and has led to powerful action that has improved the quality of student learning in our classrooms.

In between our professional learning days with Ken, we collaborate, debate, and co-plan our assessment activities. We work hard to document our journey and share our learning. We make videos of our process to share at staff meetings, and we purposefully set out to pull other colleagues into our learning. The result is shifting practice for not only one or two teachers, but for our school community as a whole. We are beginning to talk openly about our epic experiments, and we are definitely building on one another's success. While there were many rabbit holes for us, one that stood out in particular was the challenge of making sense of the curricular competencies, and transforming them into meaningful learning targets. The more we talked about this dirty little secret – that the curricular competencies were not transparent or obviously addressed in our classrooms – the more we realized that not only did the students have no clue as to what these competencies are, but that the teachers were struggling with them as well. We needed an intervention.

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² Wheatley, M. Who do we choose to be? Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2017.

The intervention, referencing the Spiral of Inquiry Framework, was our action. Along with two colleagues, we agreed to work on pulling apart the curricular competencies with our students. Each of us took a slightly different approach in the classroom activities, but we all ended up with a lot of input from our students about what the competencies mean. This process pulled us away from assessment of learning, and threw us into the depths of assessment *for* and *as* learning. We were engaging the kids in the process of creating dynamic formative assessment tools that would help them be more reflective in their own learning. The difference in the classroom was immediate and unmistakable; experiencing this type of success collaboratively was highly energizing... and it was infectious. Other teachers were compelled by our enthusiasm for increasing student voice and ownership for learning through effective and meaningful tasks connected to assessment. It has been an organic and authentic shift, and it was not the only shift in assessment practice that was taking place.

To speak of the results of our adventure would be premature. We are very much in the messy middle; however, at this point in our journey, there have already been some valuable takeaways. First, having authentic access to outside expertise is key. The pandemic handed us a mountain of lemons, and we made some tasty lemonade; in fact, we created a whole new flavour that was previously unavailable. We discovered a format that worked, and we will work hard to continue with this format. Second, collaboration and strong relationships amongst staff are absolutely paramount. We needed to be vulnerable, we needed to let others join us in the trenches of our own classrooms, and we needed to build each other up. Finally, it is important to remember that there is no end to this messy and meaningful work. This IS the Spiral of Inquiry. Therefore, as we move to checking, we are also simultaneously scanning – asking “what is going on for our learners?” – so that we may dive deeper into our work to put students at the centre of every pedagogical decision we make.

So: how do we know if we are making enough of a difference in this work? To evidence that, I will share a synopsis of a conversation I had with a student recently:



Anthony: “Ever since you teachers changed your grading, I’m really having to think harder at school. It used to be that I could try only at the beginning, and then coast for the rest of the course. Now I can’t get away with that anymore.”

Me: “Anthony! You make me feel like we’re winning here!”

Anthony: (only marginally confused) “Hmm. I never thought of it that way.”



Going Gradeless

by Thomas Lowe

A shift to remote learning in March 2020 that saw education transition from a bricks and mortar model to exclusively online learning was a major disruption in students’ educations. My students began to focus on the ‘game’ of online learning, and attempting to ‘complete’ courses faster by speed-running their requirements as opposed to actually focusing on learning and skill development. Students had lost the focus of what I know, love, and preach: learning matters, grades do not.

I was teaching a small Chemistry 12 class filled with some very keen students. It would be an understatement to say that they became stressed by the news that we were transitioning to an online environment. I listened to their worries, approached the situation with curiosity, and inwardly stressed about how I would best serve the needs of my students. It was obvious that the main stressor for my

students was that their grades would slip in an online environment. I sensed a learning moment.

I have been talking a big game for years about how grades don't improve learning. These students had all been subject to many of my rants about learning over grades, and yet their biggest worry was whether or not the pandemic will affect their grade as opposed to their *learning*. So, I put my money where my mouth was and completely threw out all formal summative assessments. I invited my Principal, Angela, to our first online learning session as a class and we laid everything out for our students. When told that we would follow the Minister of Education's commitment to sustaining the grade each student had prior to a move to remote learning – in this case all As – there was actually some initial pushback. We had two types of reactions: suspicion that this was some sort of trick – “what's the catch?” – and worries about their motivation, as these were students that thrived on extrinsic rewards and accolades. We continued to listen to the students' concerns, and then presented them with research that “the misuse of extrinsic rewards impedes creativity, stifles personal satisfaction and turns play into work.”³ There was still some trepidation from the students; however, after reminding them that they would need the skills learned in the class to be successful at the post-secondary level, there was complete buy-in and we never looked back.

Initially, I was worried that students would lose interest as the course became more academically rigorous, because there was really nothing for them to lose by not pushing themselves. I envisioned that students would stop showing up to scheduled Zoom meetings, work would not be completed, and a general mood of complacency would bog down the class. In reality, the opposite happened. Students were asking for more. I started a study hangout Zoom time – this became their ‘pandemic social’. We created a WhatsApp group where students would answer other students' questions before I could get to them. We were growing community.

Because students no longer had to do any of the *work*, I was forced to reframe *work* into *practice*. This pushed me to cast a critical eye on all of *my*

practices. *Is this the most efficient and best use of my students' time?* became a theme in my thinking and professional development. My students gained study skills and efficient learning practices. Many students shared that learning became easier in their other classes as well, and many admitted to spending way more time than they usually would by adding details and supplementary information where they normally would have done the minimum to *get the grade*. Maddison, a student in the class, said it best in a 2020 conversation: “Before, I would just do assignments to finish them. I would copy off a friend and just hand it in for the mark. Now I can't believe I did that; it was stupid. I didn't learn anything. Now everything that I do, I check myself to see if I am learning.” Finally, my students told me that they felt less stressed about assignments because they were less focused on *getting it right* or *pleasing the teacher*; they were focused on the purpose of the practice – to learn. I saw increases in creativity, metacognition, and even risk taking.

At the end of June, seemingly in contradiction to everything I had done from March to year end, I asked the students to write the final exam for me. I needed evidence that eliminating traditional assessments and all grading, and relying solely on feedback, transferred to what was considered a ‘high stakes’ final. They came prepared to show their best

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³ Pink, D.H. Drive. New York: Penguin Group, 2009.

learning as contributors to my Inquiry. The students outshone previous cohorts. This, coupled with anecdotal evidence and a researched base, tells me that taking grades out of the learning equations has so much potential. We know that extrinsic rewards and punishment really only work for the short term, and destroy many of the things that we are looking to nurture in our students. When Taylor, a 2020 graduate, said, "Grades... aren't what matters. At the end of the day, it's learning that matters," I knew that my decision to pivot in March was right, and that I had my work cut out for me in the coming year, because this was only the beginning.



Embracing Uncertainty

In creating the conditions for leadership to thrive, Kristy and Thomas are only two examples of what is possible when educators step into the arena to challenge the mindset of 'tradition' or 'what has always been done', and embrace the uncertainty of the unknown.

When I arrived in February of 2020 to Barriere Secondary, I did not plan for my stay to be so short. I am grateful that, collectively, we did not let a virus get in the way of keeping learning at the forefront of our agenda. I am proud of the work we have done.

In sum, I think this exemplifies what Margaret Wheatley argues the world needs: "we need leaders who put service over self, who can be steadfast through crises and failures, who want to stay present and make a difference to the people, situations, and causes they care about... Let us use whatever power and influence we have, working with whatever resources are already available, mobilizing the people who are with us to work for what they care about." ⁴

⁴ Wheatley, M. Who do we choose to be? Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2017.

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ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Parents with children, teachers with students, and Principals with staff can introduce conversations about the inter-generational trauma that has affected Indigenous communities, how we can decolonize spaces, and how we can create pathways to reconciliation.

In September 1973, Phyllis (Jack) Webstap was six years old and was set to attend St. Joseph Mission Residential School – she was excited for her first day. Her grandmother, who she lived with at the Dog Creek Reserve, had bought her a new shirt for the occasion: it was shiny and orange with a lace at the collar, and Phyllis had picked it out herself. On her first day, wearing her new orange shirt, she arrived at the school. Upon admission, she and the other children were stripped of their clothes. Her orange shirt, and all of the other clothes, were never returned.

Phyllis' story of her stolen orange shirt serves as an educational narrative and symbol for the abuse and trauma endured by Indigenous children who attended Residential 'Schools'.

Orange Shirt Day originated in Williams Lake and is the legacy of the May 2012 St. Joseph Mission Residential School Commemoration Project and Reunion. It began as a project

that brought together former students and their families from the Secwepemc, Tsilhqot'in, Southern Dakelh and St'at'imc Nations, and was supported by the Cariboo Regional District, mayors and municipalities, school districts, and other civic organizations.

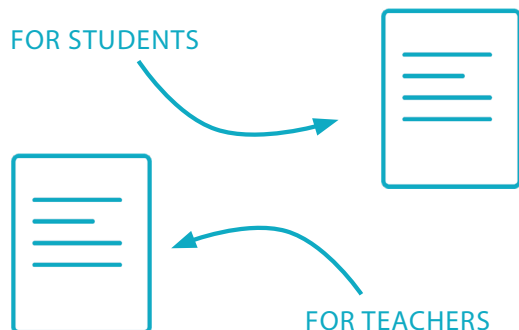
Orange Shirt Day is observed across BC on September 30, the time of year when children were taken from their homes to Residential 'Schools'. This day, near the beginning of the school year, can serve as a time for meaningful discussions about the impact of this experience. Parents with children, teachers with students, and Principals with staff can introduce conversations about the inter-generational trauma that has affected Indigenous communities, how we can decolonize spaces and how we can create pathways to reconciliation. This is a day when a precedent can be set in schools for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies.



St. Joseph Mission Residential School - Northern BC Archives

We encourage all school leaders in BC to participate in **Orange Shirt Day** in order to amplify Indigenous stories and experiences. If you are unsure of where to start, here are some resources and ideas for activities.

Make sure teachers and students are supported. The Orange Shirt Society has created a handout that can be sent home with children, which you can find here.



Provide teachers with information on lesson plans, reading materials, and activity ideas, which have been broken down by age and grade.

Get inspired by the Orange Shirt Society's ideas for school activities:

READ

Invest in books by Indigenous authors, read their stories, and read their stories to students.



WATCH

Play an informative video and start a discussion around 'Every Child Matters'; ask questions based on age and grade.



Video from Orange Shirt Society



Video from Shaw TV Northern BC



Videos for Grades 10, 11 & 12

Video from First Nations Education Steering Committee

Find more video resources about Residential 'Schools' and Reconciliation for Grades 10, 11 & 12 on the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) website. There is even a *First People 10-12 Teacher Resource Guide* that staff and high school teachers can access for lesson planning.

CRAFT

Have children trace their hand, then write in the hand a word or phrase that represents what they can do to help others feel like they matter.



Brainstorm single words with children that describe how you are supposed to feel in school. Have the students write a word on a decorative piece of paper – perhaps shaped as a bird, or a flower – and allow them to colour and decorate their art. These messages can turn into a beautiful display, and be a lesson in how to treat classmates and make others feel safe.

Decorate paper orange shirts with the words 'Every Child Matters'

Make 'Attachment Hearts' that students and educators can share with the people that are important to them. Here is a [step-by-step guide](#) on how to make them:

ATTACHMENT HEARTS

Attachment Hearts are made from soft fabrics, like flannel. The fabric is cut into the shape of a heart and partially sewn closed, and one of the four medicines — cedar, sage, sweet grass or tobacco — are tucked inside before the heart is sewn fully closed.

The attachment heart is a soft, tactile object that someone can rub; rubbing the heart will be pleasant to the touch and will also release the scent of the medicine that has been stuffed inside. Attachment hearts can be used to help increase well-being and relieve anxiety or sensory issues.

WRITE

Organize a letter writing campaign to the Prime Minister of Canada, asking the federal government to honour Orange Shirt Day and to commit to fair and equitable access to education for Indigenous children.

Whether through individual letters written by high school students, or a collaborative class letter led by a teacher, students can learn the importance of democratic communication. Do not worry about cost: postage to the Prime Minister is free!

Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

[Find the contact form](#)

BUY

Buy an orange shirt or orange shirt lapel pin for OSD. The Orange Shirt Society has an [online shop](#) where you and your staff can purchase shirts that are printed with a design created by a Cree student from Dawson Creek. The proceeds, in part, go to OSS to support awareness.

OSS has partnered with Tribal Roots Imports to produce beaded Orange Shirt lapel pins. These pins are hand beaded and partial proceeds benefit OSS.

*Our gratitude to
the Orange Shirt
Society for resource
information for
this article*





2021 BC STUDENT VOICE FORUM

by

North Delta Secondary School Students
Tanisha Misra (Grade 12), Bhuvnesh Kaushal
(Grade 11), Tavneet Jandu (Grade 11)
and their Principal
Aaron Akune

Without question, the pandemic has forced upon us many restrictions and changes in our schools. We haven't gathered in large groups for many months, and our face-to-face interactions have been significantly reduced. Our inability to conduct many long-anticipated events in the customary manner has left many people feeling disappointed. However, others have accepted the new parameters under which we live and learn as merely a 'challenge'.

'Challenged' is precisely how Tanisha Misra, Tavneet Jandu, and Bhuvnesh Kaushal – student leaders from North Delta Secondary – have approached their desire to lead throughout the pandemic. All three were a part of organizing and participating in a BC Student Voice Forum held at North Delta in January 2020, and joined the BC Student Voice presentation held virtually in the Fall of 2020. Their experience of meeting with approximately 200 Grade 7-12 students from five different school districts, and discussing topics such as student success, mental health and wellness, vaping, and student transitions, was positive and rewarding. They were so pleased by the high level of engagement that as late Fall 2020 approached, the team started to ask about again hosting a similar conference. Soon enough, conversations with the BCPVPA began and, this time, the team accepted the opportunity to host the BC Student Voice Spring Forum.

The team was excited by the opportunity to organize the forum, but quickly realized that the pandemic would necessitate a significant number of adjustments. This started with the planning process which, for the most part, took place through virtual meetings. The team established the following main objectives:

- To provide participants the opportunity to share how the pandemic has impacted their well-being and learning.
- To engage participants in authentic and open conversations about some key topics that are currently impacting school communities.

- To ask participants to consider action plans and steps that they can initiate in their local school communities.
- To enable student leaders from across the province to connect with one another, share successes and challenges, and inspire one another to action.

The team decided to title the forum 'UNMUTE', a fitting name for a virtual conference in which the goal is to enable students to speak openly and have their voices heard.

The conference was divided into two main components. After a brief opening breakout room check-in with participants to find out how the pandemic has been impacting their learning, the conference kicked off with a keynote presentation from Dr. Kristin Buhr about student mental health. Dr. Buhr shared strategies that students can use to improve their mental wellness. She also shared information about Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to help students reduce their physical symptoms of stress and anxiety, develop healthier self-talk to combat worries, and take active steps to face fears and improve their emotional health.



"The team decided to title the forum 'UNMUTE,' a fitting name for a virtual conference in which the goal is to enable students to speak openly and have their voices heard."

The second portion of the conference allowed students to contribute their perspective on a variety of topics that are having an impact on student learning and schools. Participants chose one of the following topics: Student Mental Wellness, Promoting Digital Citizenship, or Anti-Racism in Schools. Each participant was placed into one of eight breakout rooms. Each room included approximately 6-8 students, and two North Delta students acting as facilitators and recorders. The dialogue was rich, authentic, and thoughtful. Students identified gaps, shared concerns, described creative initiatives at their respective schools, and shared with one another a sense of hope and optimism that by working together, and by involving their school staffs, they could set in motion new innovations and initiatives.

These student leaders, along with a dozen other leaders, facilitated similar discussions during a Delta Youth Advisory Council (DYAC) Meeting in mid-May. Similar to BC Student Voice Forums, DYAC meetings are platforms for secondary students from Delta School District to contribute their perspectives.

What emerged from the BC Student Voice Forum and the Delta DYAC Meeting was an incredible collection of thoughts. What follows is a summary of ideas and recommendations that have been prepared by the team from North Delta.

MENTAL WELLNESS

During this year's BC Student Voice Forum, powerful conversations took place surrounding Mental Wellness. Within the breakout rooms, the participants quickly cultivated a safe environment with their high levels of enthusiasm and courage. This effectively broke down the walls, eliminated stigma, and made the discussions all the more impactful.

The conversations began with a look at each participant's definition of mental wellness and, more specifically, the role it plays in their everyday lives. Students shared that mental wellness essentially occurs from understanding one's emotions to the point that one is able to achieve a balance in life that is right for them, and navigate through stressful situations. They added that mental wellness does not necessarily mean being happy, but rather describes

being in a state of peace and balance.

Later on, the conversations shifted to shed light on the factors that influence students' mental wellness. Themes of social media, relationships, exercise, and society quickly surfaced in the conversation. Although participants recognized that the internet can be used to find helpful resources for sustaining mental wellness, many acknowledged the negative influence of overusing social media. Many students shared how spending too much time on various social media platforms led to comparison and an unhealthy mindset. For this reason, they stressed the importance of self-regulating and 'unplugging' oneself for a while if needed. Students then elaborated on the influence society has on their mental wellness. Society has constructed the barrier of stigma which can prevent students from openly addressing mental health. Many of the participants who joined from smaller communities shared about the lack of counselling and psychiatric support available to them; at times, there may be only one psychiatrist across their school district. In this situation, students shared their frustrations of being waitlisted for needed support, and being judged while waiting for school counsellors. Participants advocated the need to change the narrative surrounding the concept of mental wellness. We are pleased to report that many participants are planning to conduct honest discussions similar to the BC Student Voice Forum within their own communities, to help create a positive shift in people's mindsets.

While participants voiced their thoughts on mental wellness, they simultaneously provided valuable insight to help enhance the student experience and increase access to mental health resources. Participants identified that the root cause of challenges associated with managing mental wellness is a lack of education early on. In their experience, students noted that conversations about mental wellness had not taken place in elementary school, and they felt that this would be the best time to introduce the topic. The sooner youth are informed about mental wellness, the better prepared they are to manage their own health. Furthermore, students said that a positive environment can easily be created at a young age, which is instrumental to battling the stigma associated



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with mental health. They proposed the idea of having peer or staff groups to turn to for support at school. This would encourage conversations like the ones held during the forum on a more regular basis, and help students cope with having limited access to counsellors or psychiatrists.

ANTI-RACISM IN SCHOOLS

Often, students find it difficult to share their input on the implementations that are necessary to combat racism within schools. However, the BC Student Voice Forum provided students with the platform to voice their ideas in an independent and collaborative manner in an effort to spark change within schools. In an attempt to further explore these ideas, delegates

took a step back and discussed what anti-racism means to them.

A key point raised in the forum was, “Anti-racism is acting against racism.” This statement spoke volumes to the students, and rich conversations arose. This included the topic of bringing racial and cultural awareness into elementary classrooms. Whether it be integrating anti-racism literacy into Humanities-related subjects such as Language Arts and Social Studies, or honouring a variety of cultural celebrations within the classroom, participants stressed the importance of exposing elementary school-aged students to the cultural and racial diversity that surrounds them. So many students come from a variety of different backgrounds, and they wish to have the opportunity to educate their peers about their cultural roots and simultaneously immerse themselves in other cultures.

However, students believe that racism is often portrayed as an uncomfortable subject to discuss. As a result, conversations surrounding what racism is and the impacts of racist behaviour have been limited within schools. Yet, discussing important issues like this enables students to be more conscientious about their actions, and to think ahead about the consequences for others of their actions. Moreover, students will be equipped with the knowledge they need to promote anti-racism activities beyond the scope of their classroom and into their everyday lives. In an effort to cultivate safe learning spaces for students, having anti-racism school clubs and anti-racism workshops enables students to seek resources to learn more about racism, identify racist behavior and learn how to actively take steps to call out racist behaviour. Ensuring that students are educated on these topics is a vital factor in the prevention of further racist conduct in school communities.

The discussions surrounding anti-racism amongst the student participants at the BC Student Voice Forum fostered a safe space for students to ask questions about racism, share their thoughts, and combine their brain power to develop implementations that can be made within schools to combat racism. Implementing discussions like this into schools allows a greater number of students to ask questions and voice their ideas. A greater emphasis on racial and cultural awareness within school settings will be



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a profound opportunity for students to broaden their understanding of anti-racism, and contribute to the cultivation of racially inclusive learning environments for all students.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

In the vital and thoughtful discussions at the BC Student Voice Forum, participants discussed the platform that the online world provides, with a focus on how education can contribute to making it a safer

and more reliable place for students in the future. As students continue to immerse themselves in a technology and automation-based world, there is no doubt that the anonymity and sense of protection provided by a computer screen are having an immediate effect on youth in our province.

Students commented that they were unable to recognize the intentions of someone through a screen, and that it became an obstacle to effective and honest communication. Students also mentioned that social media applications are a platform for concerning online activities, such as the creation of fake accounts for cyberbullying. These interactions can have a detrimental effect on students' mental health and can evoke feelings of helplessness, exposure, and fear when there is a lack of digital literacy and understanding of the difference between the online world and the physical world. With their personal and school lives becoming more digital, students suggested that the incorporation of digital citizenship and literacy into the curriculum is a fundamental step. This plan includes an introduction to internet safety from an early age, and opportunities to learn new computer skills to better understand and communicate in the online world.

Despite the seriousness of the online interactions, participants emphasized that the online world provides platforms for anyone to display exemplary digital citizenship. They commented that social media applications have helped bring social justice issues to light, and keep people informed about topics they might miss on other news sources. Students explained that because of the digital world, they have unprecedented access to an enormous amount of learning and working opportunities. Participants emphasized that there need to be more seminars or assemblies, where someone educated on the subject could help students better leverage the online world. Instead of viewing social media as an obstacle or a hazard to student learning, schools and educators should emphasize its importance as a tool and a key ingredient for success in the modern world.

As a part of the first generation living digitally-dependent lives, most students are in uncharted territory. So, when questions do naturally arise, they do not consult with those they trust the most:



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their parents. Participants highlighted that parents often have little to no experience with the social media applications their children use, and that the advice when offered can sometimes be outdated or irrelevant. Consequently, it's essential that the older generation also have access to resources that enable them to stay updated and connected with their children and the world around them. Students came to the conclusion that it is crucial for parents to be better informed on digital citizenship to help their children to become responsible and honest digital citizens.

The conference organizers would like to thank all of the students and facilitators who participated in the BC Student Voice Spring Forum. The forum proved once again to be a tremendous success, and listening to the perspectives and ideas of the student participants provides a sense of optimism that these passionate leaders will continue to shape and build their school communities positively in the future.



The Rose Quartz Crystal end-of-meeting EDAS club debrief protocol and heartfelt share

EVERYBODY DESERVES A SMILE

by

Kim Marks

EDAS Club Teacher Lead

and Teacher Librarian

École Puntledge Park Elementary

SD 71

It's almost 5:00 pm when students in the École Puntledge Park Elementary library gather in a circle around a pink salt crystal. A student stands, takes the crystal in his hand and hefts it as he makes a connection to that day's guest speaker. He replaces the crystal on the ground and another student stands, picks it up and shares her thinking. The gesture is repeated until almost every student has chosen to speak. Many share sensitive personal information. Most express feelings of gratitude. Some break down in tears and are comforted by their peers.

The students are members of Puntledge Park's Everybody Deserves a Smile (EDAS) club in Courtenay. An initiative of French Immersion teacher Chantal Stefan, EDAS works with school and community volunteers to reach out at holiday time to people experiencing homelessness. The EDAS club invites students in Grade 7 to coordinate and package donations that pour in from the community and local businesses—woolen socks, toques, gloves and scarves, soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste, and cellophane bags of lovingly decorated

"When I was the Principal of Ecole Puntledge Park Elementary School, I got to witness firsthand just how powerful of an impact EDAS had on students, staff, and parents. The messaging around empathy, compassion, kindness, and caring was incredible. Shedding a light on the plight of the homeless in our own community and around the province was a lesson the students will never forget. I watched students transform their image of homeless people and then take action to do something impactful for them. EDAS is the epitome of hands on, real life learning that leads to a life-long attitude of helping others. For many students, it was the highlight of their elementary years."

Geoff Manning

Assistant Superintendent

SD71 Comox Valley Schools

"EDAS has become part of the fabric and the values of the school and one the key reasons why Puntledge is very much known as a School with a Heart. The project has set an overall tone of kindness, caring, and compassion in our entire school community. Of course, a project of this magnitude incorporates much more than the social/emotional pieces, it provides an authentic learning experience for some of our grade 7 students to show their inspiration, their leadership, their commitment, and their involvement. The EDAS project allows our students to develop their core competencies in a most meaningful way."

As a proud School Principal, I can confirm that the lasting and provocative impact of the rich learning experience that is EDAS has left an indelible mark on our students and future leaders. It is most definitely not surface learning, but rather deep service learning."

Stephane LeBlanc

Principal / Directeur

École Puntledge Park Elementary School

holiday sugar cookies. EDAS club members also meet with guest speakers each week: homelessness advocates, addiction and substance abuse counsellors, church leaders, and public relations experts. The speakers aim to help students challenge the stigma and myths surrounding addiction and homelessness, while showing them how to become advocates for social justice in their communities. These are tough topics for pre-teens to take in stride, and the salt crystal ceremony allows them to debrief in a supported atmosphere where all voices are welcomed, and mutual support and trust are guaranteed.

Since its inception in 2003, the EDAS project has provided more than 21,000 holiday care packages to homeless shelters, soup kitchens, library programs, low-income housing, support agencies, and those on the streets. EDAS is a heartfelt endeavour that takes an entire school community to organize. Classroom teachers lead students in hand-painting gift bags, and penning holiday cards with genuine messages of caring and hope. Home Economic classrooms and local bakeries bake and decorate thousands of cookies in their kitchens, using a time-honoured recipe from Stefan's childhood. EDAS club members collect and count mountains of community and business donations. As the winter holiday season approaches, students lead a packaging day in the school gymnasium where elementary school children carefully select items for their handmade gift bags while local musicians play Christmas carols and children's songs to create a festive and joyous atmosphere. At the end of the day, the entire school community gathers in the gym to witness the splendor of thousands of gift bags ready to share with those in need.

The project takes up huge swaths of time, so Stefan and her team of EDAS leads – locally, and across Vancouver Island and beyond – have been deliberate in connecting each aspect of EDAS to the BC Curriculum. Primary and intermediate core competency mats link the project to British Columbia's Communication, Thinking and Personal/Social proficiencies. Big Ideas from the Art, English, Social Studies and Career Education curricula figure strongly in all stages of the project.



Grade 1 French Immersion love for our homeless population



A local homeless man speaks to the students about making wise choices in life



Grade 7 EDAS club student doodle of their servant leadership experience with the EDAS project.

"The EDAS curriculum, and the opportunities that it presents, offers some of the most important and authentic learning that any public school system can offer its students. For students and adults of all ages, the 'service for others' focus builds practical skills, as well as a social and emotional maturity that underscores that one person CAN make a positive difference in the lives of others. Addressing many of the key components of personal and social responsibility, EDAS has given thousands of students the confidence to believe in themselves as change agents, and has created connections with community that take student learning outside of the school walls. It is one of the most humbling and inspirational learning platforms that I have ever experienced as a senior leader in British Columbia!"

Sherry Elwood

Retired Superintendent

SD71 Comox Valley, SD38 Richmond

"To see EDAS in action in a school is truly phenomenal. What EDAS accomplishes goes far beyond the artwork that students complete and the donations of warm clothing they bag up. It teaches to the heart of students in a way that is profound. It gives them life lessons that they can use immediately and into the future. EDAS asks students and staffs to learn how to listen and hear information that may be contrary to their current beliefs, asking them to reconsider what they thought they knew about people's struggles ... The EDAS curriculum is a simple one – easy enough for any teacher to incorporate into their class, but the depth of it is complex. I feel that it is one of the most important curriculum of our times. I encourage everyone to bring EDAS curriculum into their schools, to help make our world a better place."

Jennifer Hedican

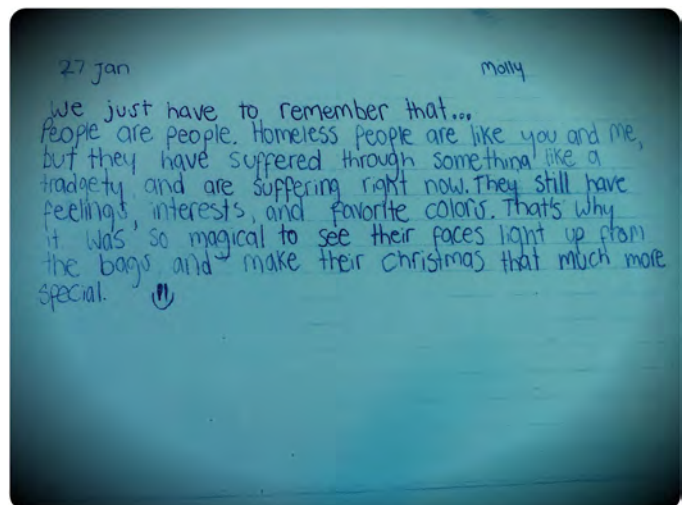
Vice Principal & Outdoor Education Teacher

Huband Park Elementary

Perhaps the greatest impact of the project on students' hearts and minds is felt on delivery day. Piling out of the district minibus at stops across Vancouver Island, students hand out gift bags to people struggling with addiction and homelessness who are eager to share their experiences and offer advice. *Listen to your parents, listen to your teachers. I listened to my friends and look where I am now. Stay in school*, they tell students. *Make good choices. If I had it to do over again, I would have finished school, I wouldn't have tried drugs and alcohol, I wouldn't be in the position I am in now.*

Students realize that no one ever chooses to be homeless, and that many of us are only a few 'life hits' from finding ourselves in that same situation. They develop empathy and compassion for marginalized individuals in our society, bringing us one step closer to the EDAS vision for a more just and inclusive society.

Everybody Deserves a Smile has grown exponentially since Stefan and her friends first placed 88 homemade care packages on garbage bins in the backstreets of downtown Edmonton. The project shines a little holiday light into the lives of individuals experiencing terrible darkness, but above all it impresses upon students – more powerfully than almost any other experience in their school years – the importance of the choices they make today in setting a course for their futures.



Presentation from Molly, grade 7 EDAS club, to the BC Minister of Education, to the SD 71 Board of Education, and at the School District 71 Conference.

THE EDAS PROJECT ACROSS VANCOUVER ISLAND & BEYOND

Annually, as an EDAS team across Vancouver Island and beyond, we hand out to more than 2,000 people living on our streets at Christmas.

Campbell River	Active
Comox Valley	Active
Nanaimo	Active
Port Alberni	Project Runs Every Two Years
Duncan	Project Runs Every Two Years
Powell River	Active
Red Deer, Alberta	Active

Victoria & Vancouver

Care packages are delivered to local shelters in Victoria, and to local shelters and the streets of the Downtown Eastside in Vancouver

Montreal, Quebec

EDAS runs a piece of the project, and partners with La rue des Femmes in Montreal

London, England

EDAS runs a piece of the project, and partners with Refugee Community Kitchen in London, England



Grade 7 EDAS club works to ignite their school community to help the homeless population at Christmas



Grade 7 EDAS club delivers care packages at the Rockbay Landing Shelter in Victoria, BC

