

Committees

bcp vpa



CONNECTING LEADERS
Leading for Equity
October 21 - 22, 2021

How does a conference come together?

How does it hit the mark, and feed the need? Like many successful ventures, a great conference flows from the work of a dedicated committee that understands the needs of the attendees, presenters, and keynotes, and has a vision for an event that will stand out in the moment, and be memorable in the weeks and months to follow.

The 2021 Connecting Leaders Conference is hosted by the Metro Region Chapters of the BCPVPA; co-chairs Rosa Fazio (SD 39), Peter Johnston (SD 36) and Andrea McComb (SD 43) talk about the committee experience, and why the 2021 Conference is a hot ticket.

by

Rosa Fazio, Principal, SD 39

Peter Johnston, Principal, SD 36

Andrea McComb, District Principal, SD 43



1. Deciding to Get Involved



Peter

I was part of the Professional Learning and Development (PLD) Advisory Committee, and there was a call in the Spring of 2019 for a Metro Chair for the 2021 Connecting Leaders Conference. Recognizing that it was a monumental task, we thought it would make sense to have Co-Chairs. So, with that in mind, I signed up. I am honoured to be part of this fantastic team, putting together this unique conference. The pandemic has sent us all a curveball, and has forced us to think out of the 'traditional conference' box. Knowing that I am working alongside Andrea and Rosa as Co-Chairs, and Liz, Jess, and Amorie as BCPVPA staff, also makes the work much more enjoyable.



Andrea

The Coquitlam Chapter always plans their conference on the same date as BCPVPA's Connecting Leaders. As a PLD Rep, I was exposed to the excitement when the Island planned the first regional conference in 2018, and I was watching Prince George build momentum for the 2020 conference. By hosting the conferences regionally, it seemed to highlight leadership all across the province. I attended Prince George's online Connecting Leaders Conference in October 2020, and left feeling very proud of my colleagues. I saw participating as a Co-Chair as a way of representing the Coquitlam Chapter in the Metro conference. Being part of growing a conference also builds your leadership network and connections beyond your own district. At the root, to be honest, I love being part of a team that continually learns and grows.



Rosa

The Vancouver district has had a long-standing history of an annual October Whistler conference held at the same time as Connecting Leaders. We thoroughly enjoy connecting with our Chapter members and district staff annually, yet recognize that we are not able to learn from the amazing speakers and provincial colleagues who are attending the BCPVPA conference concurrently. As the PLD Rep for the Vancouver Elementary Chapter for a number of years, I had the opportunity to connect with other Chapter PLD Reps and recognize the privilege that affords. Sharing experiences amongst districts is invaluable. Knowing that the BCPVPA wanted to organize a Metro-hosted 2021 Connecting Leaders Conference provided the perfect opportunity to unite leadership and learning across districts through a common lens. I am delighted that we landed on Leading for Equity. This conference is two years in the making, and it's been an honour and wonderful professional growth opportunity engaging in meaning-making discussions and broadening my perspectives. Co-chairing has been a gift.

2. Defining the Focus

Educational leadership is complex, with many moving parts. As school leaders, it's hard to know where to begin but it's easy to understand that our decisions must always be made in the best interest of all students.

Deciding on the theme – Leading for Equity – came relatively easily to the committee since issues of equity are part of a national conversation and a primary issue faced during the pandemic, thus becoming a priority in schools.

This past year, we have witnessed many racist acts, and many of us have confronted our own blindness and bias. As we learn to become allies, we need to embrace discomfort in order to be better equipped to have courageous conversations for the sake of all learners.

Truth and reconciliation brought us a call to action. Education is an historic tool of oppression, and we must ask ourselves how to create change so that education becomes a tool for equity. We hope Connecting Leaders 2021 will be one such tool for our members.

3. Determining the Speakers

We researched different speakers by combing through YouTube videos, Ted Talks and articles, and brainstorming together about who most inspired us. It was important to us to bring to our members a Canadian perspective, with Canadian presenters. We chose three top-notch Canadian speakers, ensuring representation from the BIPOC and LGBTQ communities, with insights on leadership and listening.

Meet the 2021 Keynotes:



Candy Palmater 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.



Anna Maria Tremonti is a masterful storyteller who hosted CBC's *The Current* for 17 years. This two-time Gemini Award winner is now producing original podcasts that illuminate, challenge and surprise.



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.

4. Overcoming the Uncertainty of the Times

We want to thank the Prince George CL 2020 Committee for their outstanding work in mounting their virtual conference: we learned a lot from them. We also want to thank the BCPVPA PLD team who have been indispensable as we plan the detailed logistics of producing such a massive event during these uncertain times.

While we had hopes that the global pandemic would be over, and that everyone would be vaccinated by October 2021, we know that the future is unpredictable and that masking-up, social distancing, and small numbers for gathering may

all still be in place this Fall. It is important to us to ensure that BC's Principals and Vice-Principals are continuing to set the standard and ensure compliance with the health and safety protocols. We delayed our decision-making on what the conference will 'look like' until the very last moment, but we believe we have come up with an exciting hybrid model that will serve us well in October and beyond.

5. Delivering the Conference

For 2021, in keeping with health protocols, colleagues can choose to attend as individuals, or to gather safely in small local 'HUBs' to participate in the virtually-accessible Conference.

HUBs are a gathering of multiple participants in a face-to-face large-room setting that is focused around the presentation broadcast through the virtual platform, and utilizes table discussion groups. Individual delegates who are joining on individual computers will participate in the Conference through the virtual platform, and will be part of virtual breakout rooms with other colleagues for discussions.

6. Drawing Upon What We've Experienced

Nothing can ever replace sitting in a conference with your colleagues while you listen to an engaging speaker. However, with the swift advancements in technology for conferencing and the HUB format, we hope our model does offer attendees that same opportunity. With a laptop, projector, and screen, you can sit with your colleagues at your local HUB, listen together to the speaker, and collaborate with your colleagues. Or, you can watch and listen on your laptop and join collaborative breakout groups with colleagues from around the province. We believe that in opening up the conference to a truly BC-wide audience of members and friends, we are combining the best of both worlds.

We are delighted to present BCPVPA Connecting Leaders 2021: Leading for Equity. The speakers will offer insightful perspectives that show what is possible when equity can be achieved. It will be inspiring, and we hope that it brings further unity to the work undertaken by the BCPVPA in support of all learners.

Andrea, Peter and Rosa

Co-Chairs, BCPVPA 2021 Connecting Leaders Conference



CONNECTING LEADERS
Leading for Equity

Thursday October 21, 7 pm
Friday October 22, 9 am

Register
bit.ly/BCPVPA_CL2021

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