

The Last Word

Thank you for another great year, and all that you do for the children, youth, families, and staff that you serve so well.

As the 2022-2023 school year comes to a close, I would like to recognize the outstanding work of Principals and Vice-Principals around the province as you have continued to provide excellent leadership in your schools and school districts. Although this past school year was more 'normal' than the past three years, you still took on a range of challenges and opportunities with professionalism, grace, dedication, and selflessness.

Be proud of what you have accomplished this past year, and go into the summer knowing you have earned a break. Looking back over the last ten months, I also invite you to consider whether you feel you have been compensated equitably for your efforts and successes.

Principals and Vice-Principals are a key part of the management team in each school district. Your roles are separate and distinct from those of the unionized staff you lead. You have committed to implementing and operationalizing the direction set by your superintendent, and the goals set by your board of education, while providing oversight and leadership to both staff and students. Yours is a unique role in education, and perhaps the one that has the greatest impact on overall student success at the school and school district levels.

Mike Roberts
*Interim Executive Director
of the BCPVPA*

I am happy to say that the Minister of Education and Child Care, Deputy Minister, and Ministry staff recognize the importance of your role. They speak knowledgeably and proudly about the fine work being done by BC's Principals and Vice-Principals. Certainly, there is recognition of the exemplary work that was done over the past three years in keeping schools open and functioning during one of the most challenging times in the history of this province. Likewise, the BC School Superintendents Association (BCSSA), BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA), and the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) have gone out of their way this past year to express appreciation for the work of Principals and Vice-Principals. A positive and productive working relationship between these groups and the BCPVPA has been established, and is growing through increased opportunities for cooperation and consultation.

For the most part, this is also happening at the school district level across the province. Boards of education and superintendents are taking the time needed to continue building positive and constructive relationships with their Principals and Vice-Principals. The input of school and district based administrators is sought, valued, and acted upon on a regular basis in most school districts. Principals and Vice-Principals are seen as key members of the district management team, and are treated as such.

If all of this is true, the following question should be easy to answer. ***Are Principals and Vice-Principals in your school district compensated equitably – through equitable wages, benefits, leave provisions, and contract processes – when compared to your unionized and senior exempt staff?***

Equity for Great Service

BCPVPA recognizes and supports the designation of Principals and Vice-Principals as exempt staff. We also recognize and support the role of individual boards of education as the employer, along with the appropriateness and importance of differences in the terms of employment, both in comparison to unionized staff and between school districts. That being said, we strongly believe that all Principals and Vice-Principals should have terms of employment with their school district that are – at a minimum – equitable to those of the staff they oversee.

Toward this end, BCPVPA will encourage all boards of education to endorse and adhere to the following

guiding principles when establishing or updating the terms of employment for their Principals and Vice-Principals:

1. The overall terms of employment for all Principals and Vice-Principals should be superior to those of the unionized staff they supervise, and include a minimum of equity in the provision of employee benefits.
2. Boards of education, in consultation with their senior leadership team, should strive to provide their school district's Principals and Vice-



Principals with overall terms of employment that are equitable with those of other school districts in their region (within the limitations and guidelines provided by PSEC (Public Sector Employers' Council) and BCPSEA).

3. Annual improvements to total compensation for unionized employees should generally be provided to all Principals and Vice-Principals at the same time (subject to corresponding clearly-articulated reviews of individual performance).

4. Improvements to the unionized employee benefit programs should be provided to all Principals and Vice-Principals.

5. No Principal and Vice-Principal should be disadvantaged in terms of receiving improvements to their total compensation and/or benefits simply by virtue of having moved school districts, schools, or work location (as per unionized staff contracts).

6. There should be no changes to the terms of employment (e.g. contract or employment agreement) of any Principal and Vice-Principal (individual or group) without prior notice and meaningful consultation with their local administrators' association.

7. School districts should endeavour to standardize the terms of employment (e.g. the contract or employment agreement) for all Principals and Vice-Principals employed by them. Where 'red circling' or phased implementation is appropriate, transparency should always be ensured in its application.

8. All Principals and Vice-Principals must have access to short-term disability coverage (or corresponding sick leave provisions), maternity leave provisions, and religious holiday leave provisions on an equitable basis to their school district's unionized employees.

**"...we strongly believe that all
Principals and Vice-Principals
should have terms of employment
with their school district that are –
at a minimum – equitable to those
of the staff they oversee."**

It is important to recognize that the above eight points are not intended to limit variations in contract between school districts. The unique local context of every school district is an important consideration for both Principals and Vice-Principals and the boards they serve. As long as the terms of employment offered to Principals and Vice-Principals in any school district respect these guiding principles, BCPVPA respects the right of the local parties to arrive at agreements that reflect local priorities.

BCPVPA will continue to advocate on behalf of our members for the adoption of these guiding principles by all sixty school districts. The good news is that most school districts and provincial management partner groups already support this perspective. Hopefully, we will see all school districts operate by these general principles through the year ahead.

In closing, I would be remiss if I didn't recognize BCPVPA's former Executive Director and past president Kevin Reimer for his exemplary work over the past six years in support of equitable terms of employment for all Principals and Vice-Principals. Kevin retired from the BCPVPA on March 31, 2023, and through his tenure he provided outstanding leadership to the Association and the K-12 sector in this regard. I hope you will join me in thanking Kevin for his tremendous work on behalf of all BCPVPA members and wishing him all the best in his retirement.

Have a great summer.