

As my two-year term
draws to a close,
this is not the way
I anticipated Spring 2020
would play out.
It is not the June that anyone,
on a global scale,
could have envisioned.



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My heart breaks for the loss of life and the impacts this epidemic has had, and is having, on families everywhere. I feel for those kids that rely on their schools for so much more than their education and learning, and I acknowledge the incredible efforts of those who are doing all that they can to connect with, and sustain, our vulnerable learners and families. What many of us took for granted – food, structure and a sense of connection – has been disrupted in ways we could not predict. As the days have stretched into weeks and months, societies across the globe now recognize that schools are a foundation for hope for many children. COVID-19 has exposed this reality in the glaring light of each day.

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In the face of these incredible hardships and challenges, we are also witnessing unprecedented kindness, care and compassion. Patience, once an aspirational virtue, is now a daily practice. I see it in stores, schools, hospitals and homes. We see familiar attempts in media outlets to stir controversy to generate a story, but we're not engaging like we once did. No: things are very different and the resilience of the human spirit is glowing and is revealed in how we continue to support each other. Humankind is being reminded of the power of connectedness. I marvel at the creativity and innovation used to allow a grandparent to hug a child. The simple touch of a family member or friend is also something we once took for granted, but no longer. I choose to reflect on these warm moments in this challenging time.

During this time of isolation, I also find myself reflecting on my BCPVPA journey, as I accept the realization that it is coming to a close in a few weeks. What was a whirlwind of engaging meetings and Chapter visits; trains, taxis, airports and car rental counters; Chapter Councils, Committee and Board meetings; has transformed into a steady flow of Zoom meetings from my basement office in the Kootenays.



David with BCPVPA Executive Director Kevin Reimer



David with former BC Teachers Federation President Glen Hansman

Fortunately, the office has a window that looks out onto a green space and allows the sunlight to stream in, encouraging me to daydream a little and reflect on how grateful I am for the past two years.

I am grateful for the opportunity to directly serve and support the Board of Directors and our members, to speak on your behalf, to share the perspective of leaders that lead from the middle, and to support the public education system by shining a light on the exceptional work of Principals and Vice-Principals in their diverse and contextual roles across the province. While there are many reasons for my gratitude, I am most grateful for the opportunities to meet, learn from and work with so many amazing people, including many of you who are reading this magazine.

You have influenced my personal and professional

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practice. You taught me that balancing work and life is not about less of one and more of the other. Balance is a practice that blends intra/ interpersonal awareness with self-care. By giving ourselves permission to breathe and taking the time to ask the simple question, 'How am I arriving?', we are able to identify and address what is moving within us. This awareness is the bridge to empathy, and eventually compassion, where action awaits. This compassionate practice has the capacity to sustain us, as we support the growing needs of our school communities. I hope I have given the many lessons you have shared with me some space to take root.

I have learned the importance of incorporating systems research into strategic planning. Early in my term I was told that stories are 'just anecdotes', but data to accompany your contextual and compelling stories is a powerful force for advocacy and influence. Researcher John Sterman said, "Research shows that showing people research doesn't work." Stories connect us, to each other and our communities, as we see our own experiences in the experiences of others. Building community through connection, familiarity

and common vision 'does work'. You showed me this each time I visited your home, school, District, Chapter or community. By sharing your collective stories in conversations, at sector tables and in the media, I hope I have advocated effectively for you and for public education.

"Building community through connection, familiarity and common vision 'does work'."

COVID-19 reminds us that educators and education systems play critical roles in our communities and around our globe. During my two year term, I have been consistently reminded of why: the children, of course. As the saying goes, 'children are our future' and the world relies on their success. Although the BCPVPA has our members' needs at the core of our

own 'business', indirectly – and often directly – we support school communities and the thousands of children we connect with every day. At some point, hopefully in the near future, we will look back at COVID-19 and reflect on our collective journey. When that future arrives, I will remember the unprecedented kindness, the care and the compassion that I see people extending to each other. Margaret Wheatley must have had a crystal ball in 2004 when she said, "It is possible to prepare for the future without knowing what it will be. The way to prepare for the unknown is to attend to the quality of our relationships, to how well we know and trust one another."

As I reflect on the past two years, I am so grateful for the opportunity to build community through connection and for the many new relationships that we have developed together along the way. Thank you for putting your trust in me.

Take Care,
David

**Thank you, David, from the Board
and Staff of the BCPVPA**

