

Up To Speed

Following a year as President-Elect, Darren Danyluk is ready to take on his new role as President of the BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association. And, as an English teacher with a passion for language, he's already deliberate in his narrative.

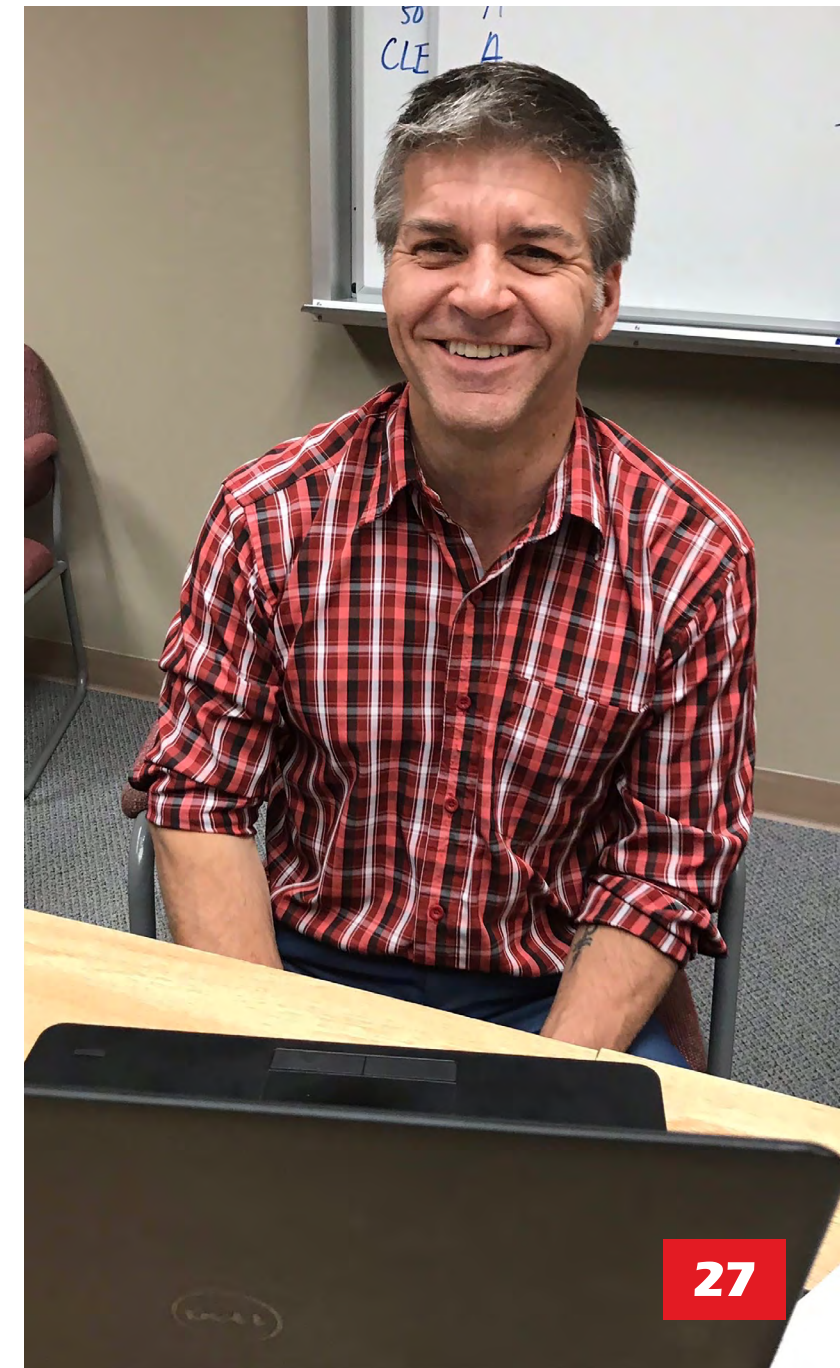
"I like metaphors," says Darren, "and I've been thinking about the metaphor of a relay race: how you get up to speed and match the pace of the runner that's currently carrying the baton. The handoff has to be accurate, and skillful. (Current President) David DeRosa has set a clear direction, and I have to pick up the baton from him at the same pace. There's a lot that is unknown about our future related to the current health situation, but I need to keep my head up, my footing steady and secure, and I need to reach my hand back for that baton."

Darren will take hold of the baton and begin his two-year term as BCPVPA President on July 1, 2020. He'll take the lead during interesting times, with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing restrictions on how we all live and work, with a significant challenge being mounted on behalf of the membership towards achieving status as their negotiating representative in contract discussions with their employers, and with a burgeoning concern about protecting and enhancing health and wellness in the education sector. Considering the challenges, Darren was ready for the race. "There was a moment for me at a Chapter Council meeting when I was Chapter Rep: one of our members was very concerned about our contract, which did not include language for maternity leave. She was a new Vice-Principal, and anticipated the kind of representation she had with the BCTF. She wanted advocacy and more, and pressed for representation of her views at Chapter Council. While I spoke to her concerns on the floor, I was struck deeply by the limitations of my advocacy and the sixty different contract realities on this point. I imagined a future wherein I could serve my colleague and all our members more effectively, having overcome the limits on our voice. That was a moment for me."

Darren continues, "Before I became a Director, and David had joined the Board a year before me, he would talk to me in general terms about how the Association was moving to try to correct some of the disparities in our circumstances. That was another big driver for me ... we're now working hard towards this goal ... I want to be there as we continue down the path."

Darren was born and raised in the BC Lower Mainland, primarily in Port Moody and Port Coquitlam. His inspiration to enter teaching was kindled by the words

of his own English 12 teacher. "Up until that point, I had first wanted to be a pilot, and then in junior high I was going to be an architect. I was a pretty good student generally, but I wasn't doing well in Drafting 12: I won't blame the teacher, because it was probably me. I had an English teacher, Mr. Eis, and he seemed to really like his job. One day we were passing each other in the stairwell, and I said 'Hello', while going down the stairs and he returned my greeting while going up and added, 'Haven't seen much of you this semester.' I laughed, and said sarcastically, 'Yeah, pretty nice, huh?' And he said, 'No. I kinda miss you.' Here's an established teacher, he's taught me once, and he made a difference for me. It was pivotal. I had been taught by many good teachers, but until that



2018

Contract Advisory Committee
BCPVPA Short Course II Facilitator

2017

Elected to BCPVPA Board of Directors for third term

2015-2017

BCPVPA Short Course Facilitator

2016

Exam Scheduling Committee

2015-2017

Governance Committee

2015

Elected to BCPVPA Board of Directors for second term

2014

Short Course Committee
Elected to BCPVPA Board of Directors

2005-2015

BCPVPA Chapter President

2005

Appointed secondary Principal
Master's in Administration and Supervision, Gonzaga University

1998-2005

BCPVPA Chapter Rep (Rocky Mtn.)

1996-1998

BCPVPA Chapter Rep (Nechako)

1995

Joined the BCPVPA as secondary Vice-Principal

1993-1994

Taught secondary school on the Isle of Man, Language Arts

1989-1993

Secondary school counsellor and teacher, Language Arts

1987-1989

Alternate School coordinator and teacher, Language Arts

1987

Bachelor of Education, Simon Fraser University

moment – until that comment – no teacher had made me feel as valued and as worthy as Mr. Eis did with five simple words. And I had to wonder, what would it be like to arrive at a job where each day is filled with the potential to send child after child home with a warm sense of worth glowing inside?”

Darren attended SFU and did his practicum in the Lower Mainland, but when his fellow students started to report that they had secured jobs, he was eager to do that too. “I hadn’t been to many places in BC at that point, but I applied all around the province and I got a call from this place, Fort Saint James. The Superintendent flew down to conduct interviews, and he met me at a hotel near the airport. I was 22, in a skinny tie and white shirt – I even carried a briefcase, but I think I only had my resume inside. The Superintendent showed up in jeans, cowboy boots and an open collar shirt, and we sat and talked for maybe 15 minutes...and that was my first teaching job. It’s funny, moving from the city and all the things in Vancouver to a small town. I thought that I would stay there for two or three years, but I was there for 11 years.”

Darren’s journey as a school leader would include time as both a Chapter Representative and Chapter President, roles that helped him to gain a better understanding of the BCPVPA before he ran successfully for a Directorship in 2014. Through his time on the Board, he has learned a great deal about BC’s education ecosystem, the needs of Principals and Vice-Principals and his own leadership development. “I’m an inclusive leader, and not autocratic in any way. That doesn’t mean I’m not able or willing to take the responsibility to make a decision. But I don’t make rash decisions; I like to gather information, and sometimes it takes time, but I think it’s very important to step back and take a breath, to collect information and hear other points of view. I intend to do all of that and make the best decisions possible for the organization.”

Darren has clear goals for his own term as President, and for the Association’s future. “I recognize that much is overshadowed by the current health crisis, but to achieve negotiation representation for our members would be a success. I’d like to see our membership thriving as a population that is not

under duress. Looking ahead, I would like to see negotiation representation moving through a cycle over the next five years: we would be operating with a provincial template of limited common terms that we have established, and in four years’ time we would be sitting down for a regular review of that template.”

“I would also like to see our Association represent 100% of the active Principals and Vice-Principals in public education in BC, and I’d like to work towards that. Having all of the Principals and Vice-Principals in the province as voluntary members ... would be a very important aspect in the health and welfare of our members, as we would be clearly representing everyone.”

“And, I’d like to see more development around the organizational pieces of being a school leader. I’m not at all critical of our current professional learning. We have great programs out there for members to which we could expand foundational pieces, supporting Principals and Vice-Principals with learning and guidance for the operational details of the role.”

On a more personal level, Darren is ready for the move to Vancouver, when it’s appropriate to do so under public health guidelines. “I’ve always loved Vancouver, and the ocean. I’m looking forward to that, but I don’t know how to feel about the rain. I think I’ll miss more sunlight during the year.”

Darren will also miss many aspects of life in a smaller community. “I’ll give you an example of the difference: on Canada Day, there are fireworks in a small town, starting at midnight ... We can leave our house at 11:53 pm, and we can drive there – there’s parking – and we can enjoy the fireworks for 20 minutes and then be back at the house by 12:27 am. And for paddle boarding, it’s literally five minutes until I am parked at the lakeshore and the board is in the water, and three more minutes until I’m looking back at the shore. I’ll miss those things, but there’s a lot of convenience in Vancouver that I don’t have access to here. I’ll find that balance.”

Darren adds, “I’m prepared for this personal and professional transition at this point in my life. I think often of the Ralph Waldo Emerson quote ‘*If you would lift me up you must be on higher ground.*’ I come back to this quote time and time again; it’s my North Star as a Director and soon as President. My decisions, my directions, my behaviours must serve as the model, placing people, compassion, and relationships at the core. The opportunity to do this, to bring people along on this venture, this long and exciting run, is an unparalleled privilege. I am excited to begin!”

*Darren Danyluk begins
his two-year term as
BCPVPA President on July 1, 2020*

