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A Very Fond Farewell

After more than five years of passionate dedication to the support and representation of BCPVPA members during some very complex times in public education, our colleague **Ellen Roberts, BCPVPA Director of Member Support Services**, has announced that she will retire in Spring 2023.

Ellen joined the staff team at BCPVPA in early 2018 after a long and successful career with the Vancouver School District where she worked as a teacher, Vice-Principal, Principal, and Director of Instruction. As an administrator in Vancouver, she was deeply involved both in her local Chapter – serving on the Chapter Executive and as Chapter President – and with the BCPVPA as a member for 14 years before joining the BCPVPA staff team.

Her incredible skill for supporting Principals and Vice-Principals, and deep sense of care for her colleagues, drew Ellen to the role of Director of Member Support Services, and she has since become an integral part of the fabric of the Association. Her sense of ethics, professionalism, and compassion has always placed the needs of members first, and she has tirelessly and respectfully advocated for the varied and important needs of members who find themselves in challenging situations.

Ellen's work and thoughtful support of members has been recognized and appreciated not only by members themselves, but also by district staff members and sector partners across the province. She is a very well-loved member of the BCPVPA staff team, and she has reciprocated that care and support over the years (often with the help of her delicious home baking!)

Colleagues from the membership, districts, and the sector have reached out to express their appreciation of Ellen, and a sampling of their words help to speak on our behalf:

“Ellen Roberts has been a rock-solid ally for so many Principals and Vice-Principals across our province. Her extensive knowledge, compassionate approach, and unwavering commitment to her colleagues (all of us!) is a standard above and beyond. Anyone taking on a role in Member (Support) Services would do well to emulate themselves after her.”

“Musician, linguist, counsellor, world traveler, and pit bull. Ellen has been a tenacious and determined advocate for public education and its leaders. I can think of no-one I would rather have in my corner, and no-one who I would fear (more) as an adversary.”

A woman wearing a green bucket hat with sunglasses perched on it, a dark grey jacket, and a purple hair tie is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is standing in a field of tall, golden-brown grass. In the background, there are green trees and a giraffe standing in a grassy area under a clear blue sky.

"Ellen puts her heart into her work; she is hard on issues and soft on people. This approach has allowed her to maintain strong relations with those with whom she works."

"Ellen has an incredible knack for working through issues, navigating, and foreseeing problems, and providing creative solutions to best support members."

She is skillful in approaching negotiations, and she can see opportunities for members objectively even when emotions may be high. She has a gentle way about her to coach members to ensure they are as successful as possible.

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*"Ellen has a wonderful way of engaging members with a calm, reassuring manner, attentive to their needs. Her rich experience and considerable knowledge reinforce the **confident foundation of BCPVPA** Member Support Services."*

"Ellen will drop everything to help, in my experience, which has been so, so appreciated! She is always matter-of-fact and calm, but a strong advocate at the same time!"

*"I can't thank Ellen enough for everything she has done for me and for everyone she has worked with. She is a gem. She has always put the **needs of others first**, and her calm and caring manner has been such a gift to those she works with. I will miss having the opportunity to work with her, but I hope she has a fantastic, healthy, and happy retirement."*

***"From the first time we met, Ellen** has been not only a colleague but a friend. I admire so much about her: her phenomenal facility for synthesizing information, her boundless compassion, her deep **sincerity and integrity**, her fierce sense of justice, and – of course – her sassy sense of humour. She has touched so many lives in her time at the BCPVPA."*

"Ellen is the ultimate team player. She has respect for those she works with and demonstrates a strong moral compass that guides her work. She is straightforward in her approach to problem solving, and is both trustworthy and reliable. Her integrity and commitment gain the respect of those who work with her and of those that she supports in their day-to-day endeavours."

*I find Ellen to be gracious, thoughtful, and giving. A smile comes to my face as her candy jar is always full of chocolates and other sweets welcoming people to her office – **whether it is to discuss an** upcoming presentation, case, or just to visit. Ellen has a welcoming spirit at heart."*

"I've had the pleasure of working with Ellen for many years and have always been so impressed by how she makes the person she is with feel listened to, cared about and important. She is also the epitome of professionalism, always respectful and always on top of every detail."

"As a new teacher, I was grateful to have the support and guidance Ellen provided as a Department Head. She was knowledgeable, helpful, and compassionate. I was in awe of her leadership. As a woman with a young family and countless responsibilities, she always made time to listen and give you her full attention."

She balanced the needs of students and teachers with empathy and sound reasoning. Ellen was one of my early role models for leadership. Thank you, Ellen, for showing me that you can be yourself as a woman in leadership, without compromising your values."

All the best in your well-deserved retirement!"

We know that Ellen will dearly miss her close colleagues, but she is truly looking forward to spending time with family (and her dog Deacon!), exploring new corners of the world, spending time in the warmth of Mexico, and catching up on sleep and reading. *After presenting countless retirement and pension seminars to others, it's time for her to reap those rewards herself!*

BCPVPA has been extremely fortunate to have Ellen as a support for members and the BC education system. We wish her all the very best, and we thank her for the care and dedication she has provided to members.

Ellen... you will be missed!

