

Principl(ed)

VOL. 1 - ISSUE 1 - NOVEMBER 2019

A Day in the Life

Nelson Principal
Tim Mushumanski
on the Energy,
Enthusiasm & Excellence
of Elementary School

**President's
Perspective**

**BC Leaders
In Education**

**Harassment:
What It Is ... and Isn't**

**Ocean Savvy
Educators**

**Turning SKIDS
Into KIDS**



The Journal of the BC Principals'
& Vice-Principals' Association



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Principl(ed)

A man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a white long-sleeved button-down shirt and dark trousers, is leaning on a wooden handrail. He is smiling at the camera. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

Welcome to our new BCPVPA Magazine!

We've changed our name

For more than 30 years, *Adminfo* has been the communications vehicle of the BCPVPA, and has ably represented our membership with stories about education in BC. In talking to our members in more recent years, there was a growing sentiment that *Adminfo*, and the reference point of an 'Admin', was no longer the way that our members identified.

Our new *Principl(ed)* movement rolls out this Fall: you'll see the brand as the centre of an awareness campaign in a variety of media, and in a new podcast targeted for launch next Spring. When we were considering a new brand for the relaunch of our magazine, *Principl(ed)* was the clear choice with its focus on education, our members and their integrity.

We've enhanced our content

The goal of the *Principl(ed)* campaign is to introduce the people behind the roles. BC's Principals and Vice-Principals practice in every corner of the province, and come from backgrounds as diverse as you could imagine. *Principl(ed)*, the magazine, will focus on our members, their lives, their interests, their activities and their challenges. We'll also profile our sector and community partners, and the many great initiatives and activities that are taking place in BC's public school system.

Principl(ed) will be published three times each year, in the Fall (November), Spring (March) and Summer (June). We hope that you enjoy the inaugural issue of *Principl(ed)*.

David DeRosa, President

BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association

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Principl(ed)

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The BC Principals'
& Vice-Principals'
Association (BCPVPA) is
a voluntary professional
association representing
school leaders employed
as Principals and
Vice-Principals in BC's
public education system.
The BCPVPA provides
its members with the
professional services
and supports they need
to provide exemplary
leadership in public
education.

We are proud to
have more than
2500 Members in the
province's 60 school
districts, and BCPVPA
membership is open to
any Principal, Vice-
Principal or Director
of Instruction at the
school or district level.
All school districts in the
province have a local
Principal and Vice-
Principal association
recognized as a Chapter
of the BCPVPA.

bcpvpa.bc.ca



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FROM

David DeRosa is in the second year of his two-year term as President of the BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association. We asked him about his first year at the helm, and what inspires him to work for members every day.

"It's hard to believe that a year can go by that fast."

David DeRosa is reflective about his first year as President. He's helped to lead the Association through some complex developments including an evolving discussion with members and the education sector about the importance of equity in contract negotiations, and the burgeoning conversation about health and wellness for school leaders and school communities.

A highlight for David has been development of a better awareness of the unique cultural and geographical context of members' work, within their school communities, in their different districts, in their Chapters and with BCPVPA as a provincial organization. "It's been a real pleasure, traveling and literally breathing the air with our members, right in their communities. They do the same work that I do, but in their local context. What I've been reminded of is that there is a very common core to what we do, because we all work with humans. We often talk about the three most important things in education – relationships, relationships, relationships – I would

"It's been a real pleasure, traveling and literally breathing the air with our members, right in their communities."

say we can summarize that as the connection of 'being human'. We sometimes forget, we refer to this overarching infrastructure called 'education' and use terms like 'system' or 'organization' to describe it. We're so connected doing very similar work as part of the system, and it's been a really good reminder for me that as individuals we may be isolated geographically, but we don't have to be isolated professionally in a way that I maybe I once thought."

David is feeling good about the accomplishments of the past year, but acknowledges a nervousness about the goals that he hasn't yet fulfilled. One area of continued focus is the work that our members do in their roles, and in particular work intensification. "It's the challenge of the role, and it's the pathway to develop leadership capacity: the two are directly connected. At BCPVPA, at an organizational level, we talk about how we have observed across the province the growing complexity of the role of our members, and how we have a lens on that complexity through our regular communication with all sixty of our local Chapters. For individual school leaders, it may feel like things are fine and moving along as they always have, but they may not be aware that just a few miles down the road a colleague is experiencing some significant challenges. The work that is both in progress and ahead is making sure we can be proactive in identifying and supporting those challenges, being proactive in supporting folks across the province."

The recognition of what leaders need to do to remain well and to thrive has been a big part of David's journey over his first year as President. "Where I was prior to the past year was in a place of developing my own awareness and understanding of

personal well-being. I've been so fortunate because I had the opportunity to attend the workshop with Peter Senge and Mette Miriam Boell: understanding compassionate systems changed much of how I do things. I've really moved into more of a systems



"At BCPVPA, at an organizational level, we talk about how we have observed across the province the growing complexity of the role of our members, and how we have a lens on that complexity through our regular communication with all sixty of our local Chapters."

thinking approach, and considered how we establish boundaries for ourselves as individuals, and for the expectations we place on our teams," says David.

"It takes some purposeful judgment in the learning process to transition from a place of sympathy – which is an observational piece, recognizing that others may be experiencing challenges themselves – to a place of empathy which is an awareness and appreciation for what the other person may have been engaged in, while leaving them to their behaviours. It's very easy to get stuck in this place, and not be able to get out of it. So the third step is transitioning to a place of compassion where we don't let go of the understanding and awareness of the challenge, but we do move to a place where we're in a position to support."

David recognizes that the challenges in the education sector are not limited to the adults. "I think that when you look at a really, really big picture, there's a new social struggle for our students, for their parents, and for the community where there's historically been different agency and support. There's a growing

recognition of the pressures on young people, we see it in the media, it's difficult. I heard some people talk about the climate strike and say 'that's kids skipping school'. Kids *enjoy* school, that's not what this is about. We need to look at purposeful skill development, and have conversations around tools that are not dissociated from the complex needs of the people that we serve, but to be compassionate about those complex needs. It's an interesting space to be exploring."

David anticipated some surprises as part of his journey as BCPVPA President, but one he didn't anticipate was his relationship with partners in the education sector. "I've had this humble perspective from when I came into this role: I'm Dave from Trail. That's still the way that I approach it, but I got past it in a sense when I recognized that people really do want to hear a perspective that they they don't have from their own day-to-day experience. I feel that I am seen as someone with expertise to bring to the table at the committee meetings where I'm representing Principals and Vice-Principals."

David smiles. "So, there are two things that I take with me into those relationships: having my own personal experience as an educator, and then recognizing that that experience has so much in common with my colleagues across the province. That's a good foundation piece, and now I'm able to be in some of our more rural and remote Chapters in school districts, and I feel confident that I can speak on behalf of that experience. Not for those members personally, of course, or for their specific roles, but I feel confident to speak on their behalf with a metro voice and a rural voice and everything in between."

David looks back on the path that led him to seek the President's office. In 2012, with his oldest daughter's graduation from high school, David recognized that

he could take the opportunity to layer on a new professional experience. He had represented the Chapter at different events and contract meetings, and was inspired by his connections with other members. “Anytime I got in a room, whether it was with five other Principals or Vice-Principals or a hundred-and-fifty, it was just a rewarding professional growth experience. I felt good about being able to share what I’d experienced, even though I was from a relatively remote area. I was enriched by sharing what teachers in my school were doing, and what my colleagues in their schools were doing, at that provincial table.”

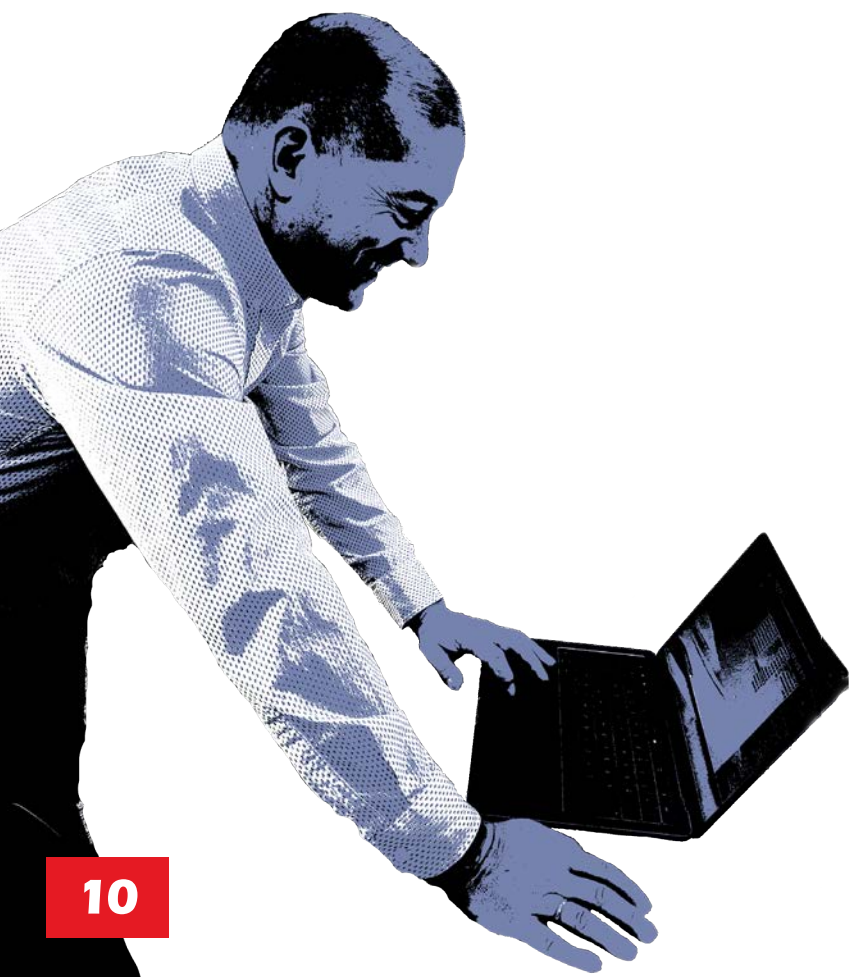
Many times, those conversations turned to contracts, professional learning, well-being and work intensification, and David felt a strong connection. As a Director of the Board, he had great respect for Shelley Green who served as President from 2012-2014. “I was so inspired by Shelley as a President,

and to have been a Director working with Shelly I knew that at some point that would be a role and a responsibility that I would aspire to. I am in awe of what she did to move the organization forward, and her leadership was inspiring. I learned more about the provincial perspective and what was critical for strategic planning. And I really started thinking about ways to bring value for our members, and to have opportunities to add value to what others are doing – that would be kids, teachers, parents and communities.”

And, particularly, kids. “I never stopped being a teacher, literally and figuratively. It was hard to come to the realization that there’s literally not enough time in the day to be an effective teacher, to be effective for the kids, if you’re constantly being pulled aside and called out of the classroom. So it got harder to do that as a Principal in a high school; then it became almost impossible, but the teacher in me never stopped”.

In pursuit of teaching, and supporting others to lead, David has been instrumental in the introduction of BetterEducate, an online platform that is a connection hub for educators. “The BetterEducate piece ties in with a core value that’s always been there for me, but has evolved into more of a focus. You have a Principal who has a fabulous skill set and experience around an early intervention reading program and there’s their neighbour at a school down the street who doesn’t have that same experience. And for them to share and collaborate around a professional growth opportunity – the networked piece of that relationship – it allows for some vulnerability, and opens space for relationship-building.”

“BetterEducate is the answer to a ton of different challenges across complex organizations, it can support and align what’s happening in classrooms,



and can shine a light on the amazing things that are happening in the sector, but also where we need support. That light, that transparency, is part of the Vice-Principal's or Principal's professional growth and there are actions that can be taken because it's aligned with our Leadership Standards. Every profession needs a framework for professional engagement, a guide to both the practical and aspirational aspects of the role. The Standards are now woven into the tool in BetterEducate, and we're excited about adding School Plans as a critical piece: it's the next level of transparency."

David's ultimate focus will continue to be ensuring quality leadership in schools, and creating space for leadership all around the school community. "For every successful Principal, they are there working with amazing teachers and I'm pretty sure there's a symbiosis there: without one, you can have an okay school, but when you have them both, you have an amazing school. I always talk about how we are the second biggest impact on student success, giving teachers their due."

And his connection with members will always be his first and greatest priority. "I appreciate when members reach out and connect with me on something that I've written, or a project that the BCPVPA is doing. Even though they can't directly engage in the work of this organization, it's so important that they are doing the work they do. And if ever there's a day or a week where they can connect with us as an organization, then we feel that we're making a difference: to Principals and Vice-Principals, to students and indirectly to teachers. There are so many of our members who are giving so much, and those are the ones I worry about, because it's a tough and challenging job." Dave from Trail will serve as BCPVPA President until June 30, 2020. We can't wait to see what he'll accomplish during year two.

You've been elected President. You're leaving your home community for Vancouver. What was that like?

"It was less about me, and more about my partner Christine. I was concerned: I'd prepared myself, and wrapped my own head around it, so I guess I was worried but also confident. Christine is just an amazing educator, so a big part of me was screaming 'wait until they see her!' It's a thing about patting ourselves on the back, and we're two of the last people in the world to do that. So this was the opportunity for recognition of an amazing 25 years of impactful teaching. We talked a lot about this in advance. And now it's been a year, and she is so appreciated, being in a different school with different people who have arrived there from very different pathways. They all have so much to share as far as professional growth and development are concerned."

"It's been a really good year: but she hates driving in the city."

"The other part that's surprised me is how I'm able to replicate some of the things I loved about living in the Kootenays. So I go to Pacific Spirit Park on a Saturday and walk around, we can hike and we can ski. I thought it was going to be a lot of airports and a lot of meetings. And it has been a lot of airports and a lot of meetings, but it has been really cool. I was worried about my three kids, now they're far away, but we schedule our time together. We are probably seeing them more than we did before."

When your old electronics stop working...we start.

Recycling your old electronics keeps metals, plastics, and other valuable resources out of landfills, and puts them back into the manufacturing supply chain. It also prevents e-waste from being illegally exported or handled by irresponsible recyclers.

Always bring your old, unwanted, or unusable electronics to our authorized drop-off locations to ensure that your end-of-life electronics are being recycled in a safe, responsible, and environmentally sound manner.

The Electronics Products Recycling Association (EPRA) of BC is a not-for profit, industry-led organization designed to manage end-of-life electronic products that have exhausted their potential for re-use by donation to friends, family, or authorized re-use organizations.

WHAT CAN BE RECYCLED?



Desktop/Portable Computers



Display Devices



Printing, Scanning and Multi-Function Devices



Desktop Printers



Home Audio/ Video Systems



Medical Devices



Vehicle Audio/ Video Systems (aftermarket)



Personal/Portable Audio/Video Systems



Video Gaming Systems/ Battery Powered Toys



Cellular and Non-Cellular Devices



IT and Telecom Equipment



Musical Instruments

For more information, and to find out what and where to recycle, visit

Return-It.ca/Electronics

Electronics can become obsolete. But recycling them never will.

Craig Wisehart,
Executive Director, Western Canada

Since 2007, Return-It Electronics has provided British Columbians with safe and environmentally responsible ways to reuse or recycle old, obsolete, broken and unwanted electronics devices.

Today, we recycle more than 3 million electronics devices every year in BC, and over the past 12 years we've worked together with British Columbians to recycle more than 214,000 tonnes of old electronics. Keeping metals, plastics and other valuable resources out of landfills, and putting the recovered materials back into the manufacturing supply chain.

The Return-It Electronics program operates on behalf of the Electronics Products Recycling Association (EPRA), a national not-for-profit dedicated to collecting and recycling end-of-life electronics in a safe and environmentally responsible manner. For more than a decade we've been working together to make it easier and more convenient for people to drop off their old devices for recycling. The program has grown from only a few depots, in 2007, to now more than 265 authorized collection sites found in communities spread all across BC.

The number of categories of eligible

devices that are accepted has grown since the program inception. A decade ago we could only accept computers and monitors, printers, fax machines and televisions, but today British Columbians can recycle 17 different categories of electronic devices including cell phones, video games, home entertainment devices, medical devices, musical instruments and more.

Once they've been collected at a Return-It Electronics depot or an authorized collection site, devices are sorted and sent to local EPRA approved recycling facilities for processing, where their component materials are then separated to recover metals, plastics, glass, and other natural resources that are then used to make new products. In addition to saving these materials from ending up in landfills, this process also keeps them from being illegally exported out of Canada.

More than 75% of British Columbians are already aware that they can safely

and responsibly recycle their old electronics, whether through drop off locations like their local Return-It Electronics depots, or during one of our regular electronics drop-off events in communities across the province. Last year alone we recycled about 4kg of electronics, per person, for every person in BC.

We're also working hard to spread the word about other responsible uses for old electronics, by connecting businesses that would prefer to have their reusable electronics refurbished – rather than recycled – through organizations like the BC Technology for Learning Society. This helps give new life to old electronics by supporting the Computers for Schools program in BC, and by helping British Columbians to give away electronics items to a BC-based refurbisher qualified under the comprehensive standards of the Electronics Reuse & Refurbishing Program.

Return-It Electronics and EPRA British Columbia are not-for-profit organizations dedicated to protecting BC's environment and our shared future. The program is funded through the Environmental Handling Fees (EHF) which are applied to the sale of all new electronics products in BC. Neither a tax nor a refundable deposit, the EHF on each new device is used for the costs of the collection, transportation and responsible recycling of the device once it reaches the end of its life.

In addition to protecting the environment through the programs listed above, Return-It Electronics is also dedicated to helping protect the privacy and data of British Columbians, by providing easy, practical advice on safely and securely wiping devices and memory cards before getting rid of them. This information – and more – is available online at the Return-It.ca website.

WHAT CAN BE RECYCLED?


Desktop/Portable
Computers


Display
Devices


Printing, Scanning
and Multi-Function
Devices


Desktop
Printers


Home Audio/
Video Systems


Vehicle Audio/
Video Systems
(aftermarket)


Personal/Portable
Audio/Video
Systems


Video Gaming
Systems/ Battery
Powered Toys


Cellular and
Non-Cellular
Devices


IT and Telecom
Equipment


Medical
Devices


Musical
Instruments

Give new life to your old electronics. Learn more at Return-It.ca/Electronics

The work and responsibilities of school leaders can vary greatly from elementary to middle to secondary, from region to region, and from school to school.

In our new *Day in the Life* series, we'll share a snapshot of our members in their roles, and find out more about their path, their practice and why they love what they do.

A Day in the Life premieres with Principal Tim Mushumanski of Rosemont Elementary, a K-5 school in Nelson, SD8.

Rosemont is a mindful Community School where students use Calm, Caring, Commitment to Learning, Creativity and Common Sense to empower themselves to embrace challenge and change, foster mutual respect and responsibility, and appreciate and care for their world.

- Rosemont Elementary School Mission

"If you come to my school, you'll see that I don't take myself very seriously; my line is always "welcome to the zoo" because you'll see the energy, and the craziness and holding on for dear life, but we love it."

- Principal Tim Mushumanski

The kids – and the teachers, staff and parents – tend to call him Mr. Mush. And he doesn't mind a bit.

Tim Mushumanski has been an educator for 25 years. He started teaching in Nelson in 1995 right after his practicum, and then took a five-month contract in Fort Nelson: he ended up staying for four years. "It was an awesome start to my career, with such lovely colleagues, all young new teachers with tons of energy, and there were lots of weekends spent prepping in the schools together. My wife and I have very fond memories of Fort Nelson!"

A Day in the Life

of an
**Elementary
School
Principal**



Tim was interested in education from early on. “I wanted to be a teacher and it’s ironic because you spend so much time wondering what are you going to do with your life, how are you going to give back, what is it going to look like. And wanting to be a teacher, I really feel like it’s one of the professions that children are intimately exposed to, so that a lot of them think “I could do this” or “I want to do this” or even “I can do this better”. They don’t have that same close regular connection to a lot of other professions, so they don’t get a good glimpse into that world.”

“So I’m in grade 10, and I decide that I’m going to be a French teacher. That’s my direction, straight out of high school, straight into University. I didn’t backpack across Europe or anything like that. This is what I wanted to do and I’ve never really looked back, never regretted it. For me, I feel like this is what I was meant to do.”

Tim and his wife Janet chose to settle and raise their family in Nelson, her home town. While leadership was always in the back of Tim’s mind, he wanted to first give himself the opportunity to grow as a teacher, and to experience different roles and schools. After about ten years, he went about obtaining his Master’s Degree. “So I did my degree while teaching and raising a young family – my wife will laugh about that, because she’ll say that she did it all, and she’s right! – but that opened educational leadership opportunities to grow: department head, district volunteer positions, education committees, things like that.” After three rounds of applications, Tim was offered a Vice-Principal position at LV Rogers Secondary School in Nelson. “I really loved moving into that position, but you know it didn’t matter to me whether it was Fort Nelson, Salmo, where it was didn’t matter.”

Tim spent nearly eight years at LV Rogers as

Vice-Principal, and enjoyed all aspects of school leadership especially the instructional management piece. “It was a luxury to have another Vice-Principal and a Principal to work with as a team, and what a lovely introduction to administration for me. I really feel blessed that I worked with a number of great Principals and Vice-Principals: there were people moving around, so it was neat for me to work with different personalities.”

After 21 years in secondary schools, Tim moved into a K-5 elementary school Principalship, 200 metres from the front door of his home. The transition from secondary to elementary wasn’t a seismic shift for him.

“Structurally and organizationally, there are some key differences of course. But I find that people are people whether they’re in Kindergarten or in Grade 12, they have their needs: they need to be understood, they need to be supported, they need to be pushed, they need to be challenged. There are differences there, of course, because of their ages, but there are so many similarities.”

**"I find that people are people
whether they're in Kindergarten
or in Grade 12,
they have their needs."**

Tim smiles when he thinks about his school. “I really love Elementary. I enjoy the kids and the atmosphere, the energy and enthusiasm. I know I will need to make a change eventually for my career, but there’s a part of me that doesn’t want to leave. I know that’s not very realistic, but I really do love it. I think it’s the unbridled enthusiasm for everything, there’s still a sense of wonder and discovery. There are many things that adults and the older teenagers



Robyn Simard (L), Tim Mushumanski, Meredith Eaton (R)

either take for granted or don't notice anymore, but think of jumping in a puddle and here's a five-year-old who is in their glory and doesn't care if their pants are soaked to the bone: they've had the best day ever."

While he doesn't have a regular teaching commitment at Rosemont, Tim's goal is to get into every classroom multiple times each day. "I do have to admit I get tired sometimes, because I provide a lot of support for kids and meet with lots of parents, but my goal is to get into classrooms, to see what they're doing, see who needs support – whether it's a teacher or an EA or a kid – and see what they're learning, how I can help them. My teachers are great. When I walk in, they'll just either ignore me and keep going or say "hey, I need you right here. You can help with this little one right now." It's important that they see me as a support and know that their learning is important to me, and important for them."

"It takes some of the mystery out of 'the Principal,' for them to see us as real people."

"It takes some of the mystery out of the 'Principal', for them to see us as real people. Not the one who is ready to wag a finger at them, but as somebody who is there to guide, support and help them along when they do make those poor decisions, and to help them fix those mistakes. I don't want my kids to feel nervous about coming to talk with me if they have a problem. I also want to be one of the trusted adults who celebrates the good decisions and moments with them."

Tim has continued to support high school students in his region as he carries into year seventeen as an Advisor for BC Student Voice, the BCPVPA's

initiative that empowers student reps to connect with partners in education about the issues that most affect them. The spirit of student voice is also evident in Rosemont's culture. "We try to empower our oldest kids in the school to be leaders. The true concept of youth having a voice in education matters is just starting to grow in a 10-year-old: they can have a hard time grappling with it. They feel more empowered organizing a pajama day, or those kinds of things. When they get just a little bit older, they really start having direction in leading and decision-making in our school."

When Tim considers the role of a Principal, he pauses for a moment. "It's harder than I thought it would be: I didn't see that when I was a teacher, I didn't see a lot of the things that the Principal did. It's very easy to get bogged down in the organizational pieces, and I always wanted to find that mentor Principal who really had the style of an instructional leader, because honestly we need to carve out more space for that. I want to think I'm really good at leading as an instructional leader but I know that I can still grow in that area. That's my focus for growth, getting in the classrooms and talking about teaching and learning: that's the hard part of our job, I think. Many of us are really good at the organizational piece, dealing with structure, and timetables and schedules and all those things, but you need lots of courage for instructional leadership. I still feel like I'm young, and wonder sometimes how to lead someone who's been doing it longer than you. But the reality is that those folks really are looking for some support and appreciate it."

"It's harder than I thought it would be: I didn't see that when I was a teacher, I didn't see a lot of the things that the Principal did."



The stakes are high: it's about improving things for kids, and doing a good job."

As for the impact that he's made in his career so far, Tim replies, "I'm most proud of the inclusion, collaboration and team effort I've created or enhanced in each school along with the connections with so many skilled colleagues, keen students and supportive parents – those connections are still strong. I don't want to build myself up, that's not the way that I am, but I feel like the schools I have left are in a better position. I am curious when it comes time for me to leave Rosemont how that will feel, because I strengthened the idea of connections, community and teamwork. I want my school to feel welcoming, so if you come to my school, you're not a stranger. If you're a parent, if you're a visitor, you're welcome to check out my school and what we can do for you. So that's what I would want people to notice once I'm gone."

"And for the kids, when they leave the school, I want them to think that "what I did today mattered." That it's not about them, but about what they can do for others. That we belong to each other."

We asked Tim to walk us through a "typical" day for an elementary school Principal.

“We’re very much a Community School: we don’t have buses, so kids get dropped off or walk. On those sunny days, when school lets out, there’s an hour of play in the playground because kids live so close. We just built an outdoor classroom, it’s pieces of stone in a circle, super durable and there’s no structure over top of it, it’s just a gathering place. And there’s a school forest on the property, and across the street we have another community forest. We actually reached a point where we have to schedule class time there, because the classes are overlapping and they’re competing for space.”

“It’s important to me to that our classes get out of the school. We have the traditional classes too, and we have multi-age teams that we break into, and our kids really know each other well. I take the entire school as my class once a week so that the teachers can have collaborative time. We’ll generally be outside, but if the weather is really yucky we’ll go inside and have multi-age groups in four different spaces in the school, and I have EAs (Education Assistants) who help for that 40 minutes, looking after the activities in different spaces.”

“I try to always arrive before the staff – and that’s not always possible, obviously, with two teenagers still left at home. Our staff is very much a texting staff, so they’re often getting a text from me at 7:00 a.m. as a reminder of what’s happening today, or connecting with someone because they’re not going to be there, and making sure that there’s some organization to the day. We have a sign-in book with a few announcements for staff, and I always try to have some kind of silly joke in there. And then it’s important to be on deck as staff arrive, find out how they’re doing and what they need, and then I try to get out on the playground at 8:15 a.m. to do the same with our parents and students as they arrive.”

“We do a morning greeting and announcements outside – it absolutely doesn’t matter what the weather is like – and then we get kids into the school with our youngest learners going first and getting their jackets off and I do the sweep: who is slow this morning, who’s having a meltdown. There are students who need regular check-ins, so they won’t start the morning in the classroom, they’re with me or another trusted adult. And I’ll ask “how was last night, what’s going on for you right now, are you ready to start your day, what are your goals?” – it’s a connection to help with self-regulation.”

“Then I’ll start in the classrooms as they’re getting settled, unless I have a parent who needs to talk to me, or online timesheets for CUPE, or whatever. At recess time I’ll try to get outside but oftentimes I’m inside supporting kids or talking to teachers, and that’s their connection time with me if they need something.”

7:00am

Text reminders to staff, check for staff absences, adjust schedules

7:30am

Arrive at school, check the rooms for heat, playground for items of concern

7:35am

Write daily notes – and a joke or two – in the sign-in book

7:45am

Staff arrive, staff check-in

8:15am

On playground for student & parent check-ins and arrivals

8:30am

Daily school greeting and announcements on playground

8:35am

Move in to the school, beginning with kindies

8:45am

Sweep in the coatroom, and student check-ins

9:15am

Start to visit classrooms

9:30am

Receive call to unplug overflowing toilet: clean up, submit work order

10:00am

Continue in classrooms, provide support for dysregulated students

10:10am

Recess supervision outside, or inside support for students

10:30am

Parent meeting

11:00am

Special needs student support
review, meet with case manager

11:30am

Planning for monthly assemblies
or multi-age activities or special
assemblies

11:45am

Manage grade one meltdown in
library

11:55am

Help sort and deliver sandwiches
and milk for PAC hot lunch
program

12:00pm

Visit classrooms while students
eat lunch

12:15pm

Outside supervision

12:30pm

Come in early to support students
with conflict on playground

12:45pm

Receive text from staff to help
bring in reluctant students

1:00pm

Visit classrooms

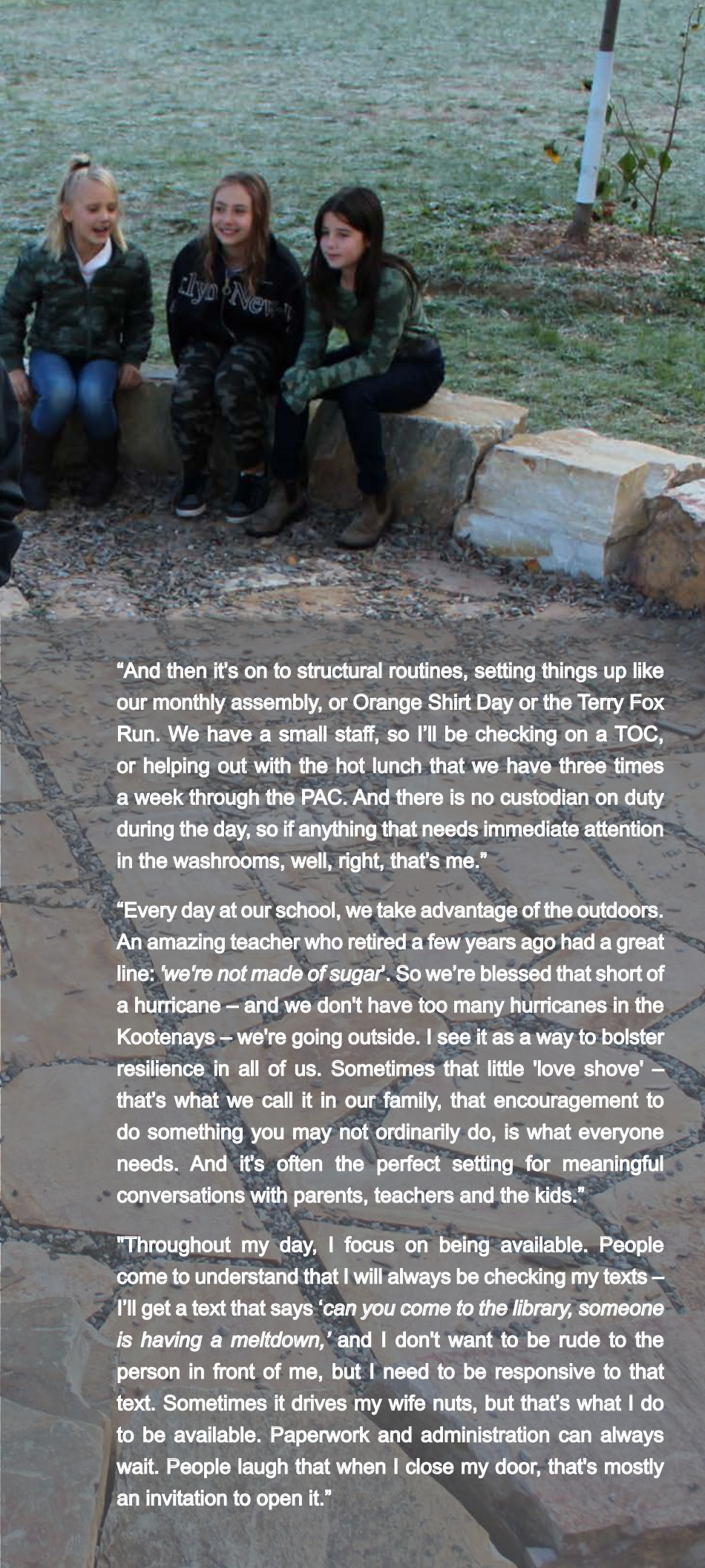
1:30pm

Stay close to the office while
secretary has lunch

1:45pm

Help students with Problem Solver
sheet at the Thinking Corner





"And then it's on to structural routines, setting things up like our monthly assembly, or Orange Shirt Day or the Terry Fox Run. We have a small staff, so I'll be checking on a TOC, or helping out with the hot lunch that we have three times a week through the PAC. And there is no custodian on duty during the day, so if anything that needs immediate attention in the washrooms, well, right, that's me."

"Every day at our school, we take advantage of the outdoors. An amazing teacher who retired a few years ago had a great line: *'we're not made of sugar'*. So we're blessed that short of a hurricane – and we don't have too many hurricanes in the Kootenays – we're going outside. I see it as a way to bolster resilience in all of us. Sometimes that little 'love shove' – that's what we call it in our family, that encouragement to do something you may not ordinarily do, is what everyone needs. And it's often the perfect setting for meaningful conversations with parents, teachers and the kids."

"Throughout my day, I focus on being available. People come to understand that I will always be checking my texts – I'll get a text that says *'can you come to the library, someone is having a meltdown,'* and I don't want to be rude to the person in front of me, but I need to be responsive to that text. Sometimes it drives my wife nuts, but that's what I do to be available. Paperwork and administration can always wait. People laugh that when I close my door, that's mostly an invitation to open it."

2:00pm

Eat lunch!

2:05pm

Solve school wifi issue

2:15pm

Field phone call from neighbour who saw a bear in the area

2:20pm

Connect with parents ready to pick up their children

2:35pm

Supervise hallway and coatroom during dismissal

2:40pm

Supervise playground and connect with students as they leave

2:55pm

Connect with custodian

3:00pm

Debrief with staff, adjust support and instructional plans for the coming days

3:45pm

Reply to emails and phone calls

4:15pm

Review weekly budgets, school growth plan and staff schedules

4:45pm

Attempt to clean up my office

5:00pm

Make a list of tasks for the next day

5:10pm

Complete one last sweep in the school and head home



Find out more at ReturnItSchool.ca

RETURN-IT SCHOOL PROGRAM 2019/2020!



Offered FREE - to all schools in BC by Return-It, the not-for-profit product steward for beverage container recycling in British Columbia.



Official Return-It 101 Certificate - Display pride in your school's recycling program with our official Certificate of participation!



Free Recycling Bins - Get up to three free Return-It bins and arrange free pick-up service (where available) from your local Return-It Depot!



\$5,000 Grand Prize Story Contest - Share your school's interesting, creative and impactful recycling story with us and you could win big!



Tools & Tips - Get support for your school's recycling program, including fundraising tips for a successful bottle drive!



Return-It Man Presentation - Our recycling Scientist and Return-It Man will teach the basics of recycling with a 30-minute, interactive presentation. Open to all registered Elementary schools in the Lower Mainland. Register for free at ReturnItSchool.ca to book a presentation.



Share Your Express Account - Return-It Express makes it easy for people to contribute to your school's program. Share your Express account number within your community. Learn more at Return-It.ca/Express

STORY CONTEST WINNERS FOR 2018/2019!

High School Story Contest Winner \$5,000: Heritage Woods Secondary

The Environment Club at Heritage Woods Secondary went above and beyond to reach their wider community with their recycling knowledge. Realizing that making a big impact would require outreach to the broader community, 35 passionate students in the Heritage Woods Environment Club spread their recycling message of 'Know Where It Goes, Think Before You Throw' through an entertaining video about the new district-wide sorting bins. They were able to divert 21,600 beverage containers from the landfill and engage approximately 32,000 students in nearly 70 schools. Congratulations on your inspiring work! Read the full story at ReturnItSchool.ca/schoolnews



STORY CONTEST FOR 2019/2020!

We know that our Return-It Certified Schools are doing an amazing job with their beverage container recycling programs every year and we want to hear all the great stories from around BC. Schools are getting their students involved and engaging with the community, and we want to give you the opportunity to tell your story and have a chance to win a cash prize for your school. The winning story will win \$5,000 and second place will win \$2,500. You need to be a registered Certified Return-It 101 School to enter. You can submit your story in PDF format any time before May 31, 2020. See full contest details at ReturnItSchool.ca.

Basic Criteria and Guidelines to keep in mind when submitting your story:

Objectives/Goals & Measurements of Success

- Include the total # of refundable beverage containers collected and the total deposit refund collected
- Include the Return-It Depot location used for your recycling project/program
- Tell us how you measured the success of your efforts?
- Include the objectives and goals of the project/program

Creativity & Interesting Details

- Explain how your school collection program was structured
- Let us know how successful your school collection program was
- Explain what your school did with the money collected
- Include any additional creative and unique aspects of your school's program
- REMEMBER TO INCLUDE PHOTOS AND/OR VIDEO LINKS

Impact

- Highlight the educational component of your program
- State the number of students involved and if there were any stand-out students
- How did you promote your program in the community? Was there any community outreach and involvement?
- Include any further details on how your program had an impact with your students and community

Register at ReturnItSchool.ca and join the other 300 official Return-It Schools across BC.

Elementary Story Contest Winner \$5,000: Tsi Deldel Elementary

Students at Tsi Deldel School were faced with a real challenge when they set out to promote recycling in their community. Until recently, the small First Nations community of Tsi Deldel in Tsilhqot'in territory in Central BC had no recycling infrastructure. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of students, spearheaded by 13 students in the grade four, five and six class, Return-It bins were placed throughout the community. The school collected over 20,000 beverage containers, which were transported to Williams Lake for processing. Tsi Deldel Elementary plans to keep building on the successful new recycling infrastructure they created for their community. Read the full story at ReturnItSchool.ca/schoolnews

BC Leaders

in Education **Leading Student Success**



As part of our ongoing series
profiling BC's
education sector,
we meet the President of the
BC School Superintendents
Association (BCSSA)



Chris van der Mark is the President of the BC School Superintendents Association (BCSSA). Since the appointment of the first provincial school superintendent – John Jessop in 1872 – these educational leaders have been managing school systems across BC. Although today's superintendents aren't navigating those earlier trials of travel by foot, horseback, stagecoach and canoe to inspect schools, the sheer complexity of public education has continued to increase and offers new and diverse challenges to school and system leaders.

Education has been Chris' focus from an early age. "It probably started for me when I was fairly young in high school, and then about the same time I started coaching. I think that had a really positive influence on me, it was a chance to spend time with and support younger people. As educators,

we help bring everything together for them: why *wouldn't* you want to do this work?"

Chris was elected as the President of the BCSSA in November 2018, but his decision to take on that role was preceded by significant experience in public education. "There was a long journey there: you're a teacher, a Vice-Principal, a Principal and then the next thing you know you're an Assistant Sup and so on. And these leadership roles, regardless of whether they're informal or formal roles, you've got to pay it forward. It's about continuing to put your efforts where you have opportunities to positively impact the direction of education in the province. At the end of the day, there's always a driven group of people who want things to be better."

**"We need to ensure that we
have an equitable education
system across our province,
irrespective of where you live.
We are so diverse, but we have
a commonality of purpose."**

In regard to his decision to run for President, Chris adds, "An opportunity came along, and I've had the really good fortune to be around the Executive for awhile, around that table and around the province. The Executive is built up from from the Chapters around the province, and each Chapter has a representative that sits at the Board so we have that provincial scope."

That provincial representation is important to organizations who serve a diverse membership. "It's important because everyone's got their unique contexts. I'm sure that the BCPVPA has similar examples where so much of our membership – and so much of the population – is in Metro Vancouver. They've got their own unique context. But that can be very different from being in the Stikine, with its massive geography and some of the challenges that go along with that. We need to ensure that we have an equitable education system across our province, irrespective of where you live. We are so diverse, but we have a commonality of purpose."

Chris' priorities in the role are closely linked to Enhanced Student Learning, and enhancing the leadership capacity of the BCSSA membership. "I was very fortunate when I came into the Association 11 years ago, there were really good Mentorship structures that existed to support new people as they come into their various roles. We want to ensure that people who come into these roles are all working consistently with the rest of that broader team. I feel that there's good connectivity and cooperation across the sector, and I believe that there's a genuine sense in this diverse province that regardless of where you are – whether you're in Metro Vancouver, or whether you're in the Valley – that there's consistency to that support and development of experience. It was certainly there before I came in, and we continue to grow those opportunities for members."

With the diversity of rural and urban schools, and regional and geographic diversity, members can have differing needs. Chris notes that a huge priority for the BCSSA is for members to know that they are together in the work they do. "The role can be lonely, and we know that. It's so important

to our folks that we have support, that we have people to call and people to lean on. There is so much wisdom and experience out there: if I don't have the answer to a question, I know that somebody does, so having those people available to help, regardless of their role, that's important."

"I feel that there's good connectivity and cooperation across the sector, and I believe that there's a genuine sense in this diverse province that regardless of where you are – whether you're in Metro Vancouver, or whether you're in the Valley – that there's consistency to that support and development of experience."

"I think back to when I started: you could have a mentor for a year. And then people would ask if they could have a mentor again, because it was awesome, and now it's increased! Myself, I have people that I know are available if there's something that's beyond my normal experience, and I think that's very true of this Association as well. People need those networks when you're solo. I can't speak to what it's like everywhere – I'm fortunate

to work in a smaller district – but again it doesn't matter who you call, but get ahold of somebody.”

Like the BCPVPA, the BCSSA is just embarking on the redesign of their Strategic Plan, a process that will involve all of the Chapters across the province. While Chris doesn't want to influence the members' work that lies ahead, he can see a continuation of goals that relate to leadership capacity, ensuring a positive influence on public education and continued support for members in their roles.

With the many changes that are taking place in public education, Chris agrees that the partnerships formed in the sector are important. “I can only speak of my 11 years of involvement, but the partnerships have always been there. I think they were more informal before, and now they're more formalized. It's just part of a growing understanding that we're stronger together, we're better, and there is more collective wisdom. We're seeing increasingly a breaking down of silos, and that 'being better together' extends across all of the partner groups in our sector. It's become more of a common understanding that it will support us in being more effective in our core work.”

Chris continues, “At the end of the day, we are ultimately responsible through our Boards for making sure that our focus is around the development of the Educated Citizen. It's about how students are performing, and when we see people from across the world turning their attention to look at BC's public education jurisdiction, and we're being called an educational superpower, it reaffirms that all of the partner groups are connected. None of this happens unless everybody in the system is working together to move in a

"It's just part of a growing understanding that we're stronger together, we're better, and there is more collective wisdom."

common direction. We have a reliance on our own members and our partners, whether it's support staff, teachers, Principals and Vice-Principals – they are the ones that are in the building that are charged with making sure that the vision of the Board is in place.”

Chris had the chance to be in Kenya in the summer, and it left him with a story that has resonated. “There are many challenges there – with water, medication, access to education – and there is a lot of work being done there. I have continued to reflect on this since I was there, and what strikes me is how generous the people were, how grateful the people were. I think that in all of our roles, we go back to our own ability to be generous, to be generous of spirit. We have 8,000 things that get thrown at us on a daily basis, and it's important to remember generosity and gratefulness. I just think it opens so many more opportunities for us to feel grateful for the people we work with, and the work that we do.”

The BCSSA recently launched a bi-annual educational journal: InspiEd is issued every April and November, and celebrates the great work happening every day in BC school districts.
April issue: bit.ly/Inspired



BCSSA

British Columbia
School Superintendents
Association

BCSSA is celebrating 100+ years of leadership in education,
as they "Inspire, Develop and Support" their members

*The BCSSA is currently engaged in a revision of their Strategic Plan,
scheduled for release August 2020*

BCSSA Governance

The BCSSA Board of Directors ranges in size from 9-15 members, all either elected or appointed by the active membership. The Board includes a President, Vice-President and six regional Chapter Directors, and may also have Directors who are Members at Large, and who are appointed or elected to specific positions which may include a Treasurer, Secretary, Professional Development Chair and Membership Services Chair.

The BCSSA has a current membership of approximately 320 district based senior leaders. Many of these leaders are new to their positions, and benefit from both a thriving Mentorship program and a New Members program that is tailored to the needs of the group and their roles.

BCSSA Chapters

Fraser Valley Chapter
Kootenay-Boundary Chapter
Metro Chapter

Vancouver Island Chapter
Northern Chapter
Thompson-Okanagan Chapter

Vision

The BCSSA inspires, develops and supports leadership in public education in British Columbia by:

- Providing a compelling leadership vision
- Serving as a strategic and principled voice on issues affecting public education
- Creating teaching and learning environments that effectively support the children and families we serve
- Working collaboratively with others to strengthen public education and leadership
- Creating dynamic learning opportunities for leadership development

Mission

A dynamic and successful public education system is fundamental to a democratic society and must provide our children and youth with an inspiring foundation for lifelong learning and citizenship.

As leaders in public education we work in collaboration, to create personalized learning for every student through our Organizational Purpose:

- Quality teaching and learning
- Flexibility and choice
- High standards
- Learning that is empowered by technology

Values

BCSSA identifies the following five values as fundamental guides to our work:

1. Students – at the centre of everything
2. Learning – for all of our lives
3. Ethics – guiding our decisions and actions
4. Caring – building effective relationships
5. Collaboration – working with our partners and the community

These five values are connected as we: Inspire, Develop and Support

Visit bcssa.org

bcpvpa
**Leadership Standards
for Principals &
Vice-Principals**



The Standards have been revised to reflect current practices

bit.ly/BCPVPA_LS2019

A companion Workbook has been produced for use in workshop settings

bit.ly/BCPVPA_LSW2019



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makeafuture.ca/subscribe

BC schools need your leadership to transform learning, inspire staff, and shape the minds of students.

Make a Future
CAREERS IN BC EDUCATION



Principl(ed)

We'll be profiling our members and the work they do in every issue of Principl(ed)

You or a colleague could be our next featured member in **A Day in the Life**, or we could share an initiative that is happening at your school

Get in touch!
sandra@bcpvpa.bc.ca

The Spring issue of Principl(ed) will be available
March 2020

Ocean conservation is rising to the surface of public consciousness. The impact of climate change on the oceans, biodiversity and health of our planet as a whole has reached the status of a crisis. With the climate marches fresh on our minds and youth advocating for action, educators are well positioned to be critical players in making this sustainable future a reality. Through experiential learning, projects, and inquiry based literacy programs, educators can support a passion in youth for safeguarding the environment.

Ocean Wise is a leading ocean conservation

organization headquartered at the Vancouver Aquarium. Ocean Wise Education is leading the way in providing innovative educational opportunities for learners aged three to 103 on the topic of ocean literacy for ocean health. These comprehensive K-12+ education programs include a range of content designed to facilitate growth, drive passion and inspire action for a healthy environment. Here's a guide to how you can take advantage of the education opportunities that Ocean Wise has to offer, and be an ocean savvy educator!

Online Learning

Online learning is a fantastic way for both educators and students to deepen their understanding of the ocean in an accessible way. We have combined our passion, research and expertise on the Ocean

A Guide to Being An Ocean Savvy EDUCATOR

by
Lisa Englehart
Communications Advisor
Ocean Wise

Literacy Principles to bring you the Ocean Literacy Courses, online comprehensive programs for teachers and youth that are available across Canada and internationally. Ocean Wise draws on more than six decades of research, conservation and education to provide interactive online classrooms that help foster an appreciation of healthy oceans and pollution prevention. Online Learning offers an interactive environment that furthers understanding and connections to the ocean. You can access these opportunities at education.ocean.org.



Make it Mobile

Why not bring the Aquarium right to your door? Ocean Wise offers a number of mobile programs through our travelling AquaVan, which includes live marine invertebrates and educators on site. The AquaVan has travelled across Canada making hands-on ocean learning more widely available, and recently returned from a tour of Northern BC. These mobile programs are delivered both in classrooms and at community events. Educators can also arrange to book Aquatic Kits from the AquaVan with lesson plans that are ready for use.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, this year Ocean Wise Education will be operating a free bus to

transport local classes to our programs onsite at the Vancouver Aquarium between October 2019 and April 2020. Ocean Wise started this initiative to assist with the transportation barriers that teachers face with booking and paying for field trips. With this bus, we hope to make ocean literacy programming accessible to all! Visit the bus application page for more information: www.vanaqua.org/education/school-programs/free-bus-application.

When educators are plugged into ocean health conversations around the world, they are better equipped to deliver the latest information to students

International Reach

The topic of ocean health spans international territories, and is highly relevant on the global stage. When educators are plugged into ocean health conversations around the world, they are better equipped to deliver the latest information to students and to highlight opportunities for learners to get involved in conferences and collaborative initiatives. Joining the Ocean Wise education community brings you into a global network of leaders, allowing both you and your students to interact with peers around the world.

The United Nations has proclaimed a Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) to promote ocean health and gather experts behind a common framework on this topic in order to ensure ocean science can be developed and supported to help sustainable development of the ocean across the globe. Ocean Wise will be an active

player in this decade of Ocean Science supporting through ocean literacy programs.

Ocean Wise is involved in a number of national and international initiatives around ocean literacy. Ocean Wise is the first and only Canadian organization in the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers Network, a grouping of 27 aquariums and marine science education centers located in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. From youth summits to multi-institution projects, the CELC Network works together to engage the public in protecting coastal and marine ecosystems.

Since its creation in 2018, Ocean Wise has been an integral member of the Ocean Heroes Network, a program for youth to gain the scientific knowledge, campaign development tools, coaching, inspiration and support they need to create change. Ocean Heroes work together towards creating significant collective impact and momentum to tackle single-use plastic. As a collaborating partner, Ocean Wise created an open-sourced curriculum to enable education institutions to implement the Ocean Heroes program into their youth programs. In June 2019, 300 11-18 year-olds from 20 different countries visited Vancouver for the Ocean Heroes Bootcamp.

The North American Association for Environmental Education is a great resource for discovering upcoming events relevant to your curriculum. This

year, Ocean Wise will deliver workshops on Online Learning and Blending Science Perspectives. For the second year in a row, Ocean Wise Education is presenting at the North American Association of Environmental Educators.

The Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition (COLC) is another example of a broad network that grew out of a small, informal ocean literacy consultation and national workshop. The project is supported by a national steering committee with representatives from Ocean Wise, CaNOE, Ocean Networks Canada, Students on Ice, Ingenium, and the Canadian Museum of Nature. Ocean Wise helps coordinate National events for National Science Literacy Week's ocean theme and is taking on a leadership role in a national strategy for World Ocean Week in June 2020.

Ocean Wise Education not only provides learning resources and opportunities around ocean literacy, but also brings participants into a comprehensive network of global leaders and educators who are passionate about our oceans.

Traditional Knowledge

Stanley Park sits on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) and səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. The Indigenous groups have passed along information over time to sustain and adapt themselves to the environment. "Traditional Knowledge" is a term that has been created to encompass this information that has been passed down through generations. The traditional knowledge of local Indigenous communities is a critical piece of the education puzzle as we move forward on a path of environmental stewardship. Traditional Knowledge has been incorporated

**In June 2019, 300 11-18
year-olds from 20 different
countries visited Vancouver for
the Ocean Heroes Bootcamp**

into Ocean Wise programming, as it represents an important viewpoint that prioritizes sustainable living and a deep appreciation of the ocean. You can learn more about this, as well as ways you can share Traditional Knowledge with your students, on the Ocean Wise AquaBlog at www.aquablog.ca/2019/02/traditional-knowledge.

The traditional knowledge of local Indigenous communities is a critical piece of the education puzzle as we move forward on a path of environmental stewardship

Investing in Leaders of Today

Investing in both educators and youth is a vital step in working towards an environmentally friendly tomorrow. Ocean Wise offers opportunities for young professionals to develop their careers through teacher professional development workshops and Leadership Clinics. We want to ensure that educators are best equipped to share knowledge and ignite a passion for ocean health in their students. Youth development workshops are also available to help nurture young ocean champions. You can find more information on these workshops and clinics at education.ocean.org/youth. If you want to recognize an educator or organization that has demonstrated creativity and an exceptional passion for ocean learning, you can now nominate them for a 2020 Ocean Education Award. Read the Ocean Wise blog post on our Education Awards Night to

learn more about the 2019 winners!

These education opportunities are designed to best support BC educators in their journey to provide hands-on, engaging and practical learning. Fostering your own knowledge of the oceans, climate, and biodiversity all help to facilitate a better future.

We invite educators to join us in this global movement to inspire ocean champions.



If you have suggestions about how Ocean Wise can better engage youth or peers in the education world, contact
Ocean Wise
Vice President of Education & Youth
James Bartram
James.Bartram@ocean.org



Workplace Intensification & Wellbeing Committee

Three years ago, with growing concerns about the health and wellbeing of BCPVPA members, the Board of Directors established an ad hoc workplace wellbeing committee. The early work of that committee was to get a better sense of wellbeing issues for BCPVPA members, and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors. Today, the renamed **Workplace Intensification and Wellbeing Committee** has standing committee status alongside other essential BCPVPA Committees.

The Committee's intent is to advise the Board of Directors about the ways in which the BCPVPA can address issues of Workplace Intensification and Wellbeing (WIW) for BCPVPA members.

Founding Committee members Dean Pacheco and Annette Vey-Chilton have returned to continue their work on the Committee this year, with the addition of these BCPVPA members: Jenny Rankin, Linda Zieffle, Pam Gerrits and new Committee Chair Alison Campbell. BCPVPA Directors Heidi Grant, Bev Forster and President David DeRosa also sit on the Committee.

The WIW Committee's work is to advocate for healthy, respectful and inclusive workplaces, member self-care, and to develop a shared commitment to wellbeing amongst our leadership partners. This work has never been more important, as the BCPVPA learned last Spring that a significant

number of members are returning to the classroom or retiring earlier than planned due to reasons of work intensification.

We have more BCPVPA members on long-term disability (LTD) than ever before, primarily for mental disorders brought on by stress. The work of this Committee is crucially important, and the BCPVPA has taken action to address the impact of work intensification beyond the work of this Committee. The BCPVPA's objective to negotiate provincially on behalf of Principals and Vice-Principals could lead to increased and much-needed benefits and supports for BCPVPA members. The BCPVPA's Mentorship Program and professional learning opportunities for new school leaders may help our newest members feel a greater sense of confidence and efficacy in their work.

This Fall, the BCPVPA has partnered with Dr. Fei Wang of UBC on an important wellbeing study for Principals around the province. Dr. Wang's research partner in Ontario is administering the identical survey for Ontario's Principals. While the BCPVPA has administered a number of wellbeing surveys of its own, partnering with Dr. Wang and his team's research-based approach will help the BCPVPA to tailor programs and advocate with government and employers about the wellbeing needs of school leaders around the province.

If you have feedback or questions for the WIW Committee, please reach out using the BCPVPA's contact forms: bcpvpa.bc.ca/contact-us

2019 - 2021 BCPVPA Workplace Intensification & Wellbeing Committee

Founding Committee Members

Dean Pacheco
Annette Vey-Chilton

Committee Chair

Alison Campbell

BCPVPA President

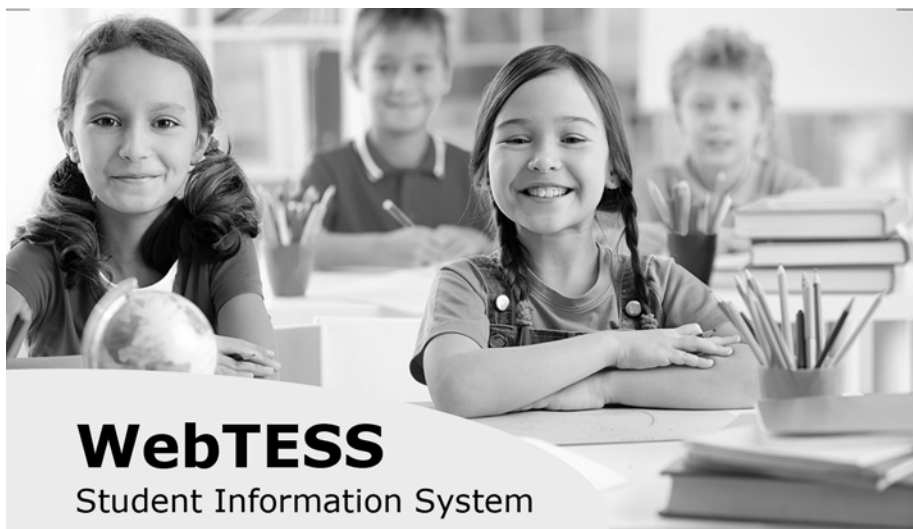
David DeRosa

Committee Members

Jenny Rankin
Linda Zieffle
Pam Gerrits

BCPVPA Directors

Heidi Grant
Bev Forster



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ha·rass·ment

/hə'rasmənt, 'herəsmənt/



Don Boyd is a Director in the BCPVPA's Member Support Services department, and supports members with issues associated with employment relationships.

This scenario plays out across the province throughout the year for some of our members. In this article, we would like to present what 'harassment' is, what it isn't, what you can expect during an investigation and what type of support you will receive from the BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association.

We begin with a definition of **harassment**. It is defined in Article E.2 of the Teachers' Collective Agreement as *"any improper behaviour that would be offensive to any reasonable person, is unwelcome, and which the initiator knows or ought reasonably to have known would be unwelcome"*. This includes objectionable conduct, comments, displays that aim to demean, belittle, humiliate or a misuse of power or authority such as intimidation, threats and coercion.

The level of harassment is guided by the words of arbitrator Heather Laing – British Columbia & BCGEU (1995) 49 LAC (4th) 193 in which she stated, *"I do not think that every act of workplace foolishness was intended to be captured by the word 'harassment'. This is a serious word, to be used seriously and applied vigorously when the occasion warrants its use. It should not be trivialized, cheapened or devalued by using it as a loose label to cover petty acts of foolish works, where the harm, by any objective standard, is fleeting. Nor should it be used where there is no intent to be harmful in any way, unless there has been a heedless disregard for the rights of another person, and it can be fairly said 'you should have known better.'"*

WorkSafe BC defines 'harassment' by saying, *"Not every unpleasant interaction or disrespectful behaviour in the workplace is bullying or harassment. It states that any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that work to be humiliated or intimidated is bullying and harassment."*

In addition to the above, each School District has a policy that deals with maintaining a harassment-free work environment for employees. An example of the language is:

"The Board of Education of School District #____ recognizes the right of employees and students to work and learn in an environment free from bullying and harassment (including sexual harassment)."

What Harassment is and is Not

Source: Harris & Co., WorkSafe BC

Not Harassment:

Reasonable action by employer or supervisor

- Managing or directing workers
- Managing or directing the workplace
- Normal supervisory rights and responsibilities
- Normal social contact

The following actions *do not* constitute harassment:

- Managerial right: routine supervision, performance evaluations
- Appropriate discipline
- Lack of friendliness, grumpy response
- Denial of request for time off
- Interpersonal differences or professional disagreements
- Request or directive to do something that a reasonable person would consider part of the job

Harassment:

Some of the actions deemed not to be harassment might be considered harassment IF the employee is singled out for unique and substandard treatment that a reasonable person might consider unwelcome and undeserved.

The following actions do constitute harassment:

- Spreading gossip or rumours
- Vandalizing workers belongings
- Sabotaging work
- Aggressive threatening gestures
- Verbal aggression or insults
- Personal attacks based on private life, personal traits

- Cyber bullying
- Targeted social isolation
- Harmful initiation practices
- Creation of a poisoned work environment

In the more than two decades since harassment was negotiated in the BCPSEA-BCTF collective agreement, approximately 200 harassment allegations have been initiated against Principals and Vice-Principals. More than 90 percent of those investigations have resulted in findings that no harassment took place. In many of these cases, the investigator found that the school administrator was acting within his or her rightful authority as a Principal or Vice-Principal. Where harassment has been found, the consequences have varied and can include discipline up to termination. The most serious consequences are against individuals who engaged in sexual harassment.

A lesser number of allegations for harassment are made by support staff under the terms of CUPE and other support staff union collective agreements.

What Should You Do?

The initial response for many members who face an allegation of harassment is to contact the District for support and guidance in the matter. The District's usual response is to direct the member to the BCPVPA for support and guidance.

When you contact the BCPVPA, you are directed to the Member Support Services Department where you will speak with one of the professional staff.

The staff member will listen to you and provide you with an overview of the process. You will also be asked to begin gathering documentation regarding the allegations in preparation for your interview. This may include emails, notes from meetings, texts, memos and telephone conversations. You will then direct your attention to responding to the initial allegations that have been brought against you: you will create a chronology of the events leading up to the allegation, including how you know the person, in what context you have worked with them, what your working relationship with the person has been like. It

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BCPVPA EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

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Questions about the EIP?

Visit the FAQ section on the BCPVPA or humanworks websites or contact:

humanworks

EMAIL: admin@humanworks.ca

PHONE: 604-734-4130

www.humanworks.ca

is important to be factual and forthright throughout the process, as the investigator will examine credibility.

In most cases, harassment investigations are conducted by skilled independent investigators contracted by the District, many of which are lawyers. Both the complainant(s) and respondent are interviewed, and BCPVPA members have representation from BCPVPA staff throughout the process, including at meetings with the investigator.

Investigation Steps

Initial Allegation



Written allegation by complainant

Notification Letter to respondent from Superintendent

District selects investigator

Collection of Materials



Member contacts BCPVPA for support and guidance

Member sends notification to Superintendent that BCPVPA will be representing them

Member begins gathering of materials for defence

Interview Process



Investigator begins interview process, complaint first, then any witnesses

Interview of the respondent and any witnesses they may identify

Investigator completes report and findings and sends them to the District with any recommendations

Member informed of the findings of the investigation in meeting with the District

The findings of the investigation will either substantiate the allegations, or state that they are unfounded. The District will then follow up with the member: it may result in no further action, or steps to correct the pattern of behavior such as course work, coaching or training. In extreme cases the member may face a suspension and even termination with or without cause.

Being the subject of a complaint of harassment can be unnerving and embarrassing for the respondent. It is important that members reach out to the BCPVPA for support and guidance. If you require more information on this topic, please contact a member of the BCPVPA Member Support Services Department.

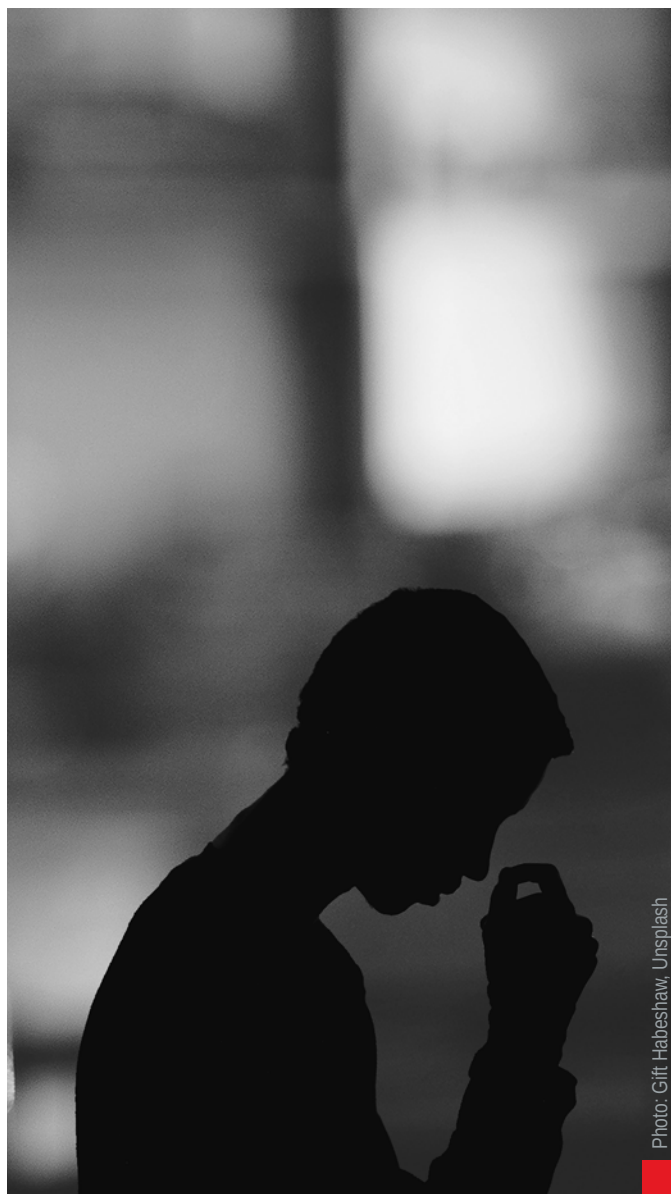


Photo: Gift Habeshaw, Unsplash

Wellness

*Ingrid Gailler is the Vice-President
of Morneau Shepell Ltd.*

*Morneau Shepell provides the monitoring,
consultation & advisement services for the
BCPVPA LTD Benefits Plan*

The financial value of the long term disability benefit is not always well understood by Plan members. Long term disability insurance can help protect you and your family if an illness or accident leaves you unable to work by replacing a portion of your income. Long term disability coverage is mandatory for eligible employees and is a key part of the group benefits coverage offered by your employer. The BCPVPA has been sponsoring the long term disability benefit since 1988. Eligible Plan members include Principals and Vice Principals, Exempt and Non-Unionized Support Staff. Details of the mandatory Plan eligibility and coverage are below:

The primary objectives of the Plan are:

- To provide Plan members with income security in the event of absence from work due to illness or accident
- Provide a monthly benefit income replacement aligned with the roles and responsibilities of the executives in the K-12 sector in British Columbia
- Offer Plan options that include benefit inflation protection (also known as a Cost of Living Adjustment) to shelter long term claimants from inflationary impact as claimants can be in receipt of benefits up to age 65 or 35 years of full unreduced pension
- The Plan must qualify with pension plan requirements (Plan members and School Districts will not make pension contributions while the Plan member is in receipt of long term disability benefits though Plan members continue to accrue pensionable service)

Participation:	Mandatory
Minimum number of hours worked per week:	50% of a normal work schedule with a minimum of 35 hours per week
Eligibility period:	Coverage begins the first day of the month coincident with or next following the date of employment
Percentage and maximum of benefit:	60% of the first \$7,500 of gross monthly earnings and 50% of the balance, rounded to the next \$1, if not already a multiple, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per month
Elimination Period:	Benefits begin after 117 calendar days or expiration of benefits under the Employer's sick leave plan to a maximum of 120 sick leave days, whichever is later
Maximum Benefit Period:	To age 65 or 35 years of pensionable service, whichever is earlier

Long Term Disability 101

Do you understand your Long Term Disability (LTD) coverage?

Much like your home insurance, you might not think too much about your LTD Plan, but it's there when you need it.

Government programs such as Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits do not provide significant benefit payments on a long term basis, which is the gap filled by long term disability coverage. Without long term disability coverage, many families may need to make drastic financial changes. Disabled employees complete claim forms, including a portion describing their medical situation that is completed by their physician, and submit them to the insurer for review. The forms, a guide to the claim process, and other information about long term disability coverage are available at bcpvpabenefits.ca.

From a premium rate perspective, the Plan can boast about the longest stretch of rate stability in the education sector: 18 years with no rate adjustment. This almost unheard-of rate stability can be attributed to the following key factors:

- Plan member demographic stability
- Financial stewardship from the BCPVPA
- Consistently lower claiming patterns compared to other employee groups and sectors

While Plan member demographics have remained stable and the financial stewardship by BCPVPA continues to be a foundational element of the Plan, the Plan has seen an increase in Plan members who need access to the long term disability benefit in the last three years. The increased number of claims and benefits being paid is a challenge for the Plan and there has been a shift in the types of disabilities that the Plan is supporting. From recent data, the top three types of disability are:

- Mental Disorders – 37%
- Neoplasms (Cancer) – 21%

- Nervous System Disorders (Strokes and Multiple Sclerosis) – 11%

In comparison, data from ten years ago did not include mental disorders in the top three disability types at all. The Plan has historically seen Neoplasms and Musculoskeletal (physical injuries) as the leading disability claim types. While many disability plans in Canada have seen significant increases in the incidence of mental health disability claims, the results from the BCPVPA Plan over the past five years was a leading factor in the implementation of the BCPVPA Benefits Plan Early Intervention Program. This program's goal is to support and empower Plan members to stay at work if possible or resume their work roles in a safe and supportive manner. For more information on the program, visit bit.ly/humanworksEIP

The primary objectives of the BCPVPA Plan remain unchanged. Members that need to access the Plan will benefit from:

- Best in class monthly income replacement plan
- A monthly income replacement amount that ensures financial needs are met during disability
- The continued accrual of pensionable service without having to make pension contributions

No one expects to be disabled from work, but recent statistics estimate that 1 in 4 employees will access long term disability benefits during their career. For the past 32 years, the BCPVPA Plan has played a crucial role in ensuring members are protected financially should they suffer an adverse health outcome.

We encourage our members to learn more about the BCPVPA Plan. Information can be found by visiting <https://bcpvpabenefits.ca>

SUPPORTING LEARNERS

**An intensive schedule and rich rewards:
an October weekend gathering brings
together members to learn, to train,
to collaborate and to share**

Elizabeth (Liz) Bell is a Director in the BCPVPA's Professional Learning & Development department, and supports members in building their capacity and leadership.

As BCPVPA Directors of Professional Learning and Development, we approached the first weekend of October with both anticipation and enthusiasm as those days would be filled with a variety of provincial Professional Learning and Development activities.

Over the course of a Saturday, Sunday and Monday, three separate Connecting Leaders planning meetings were held; one Growth Plans on BetterEducate workshop/design meeting was convened; one PLD Advisors pre-Rep meeting was held; a New Representative Orientation meeting welcomed twenty new Reps; and a learning and planning event for eighty PLD Chapter Representatives spanning a day-and-a-half was assembled. It was busy. And it was great!

As presented in recent research undertaken by Dianne Turner (2019), Simon Breakspear and others have said that leadership is most effectively exercised through the work of teams. That is most certainly evident in the work of our PLD team. Here are the members we depend upon:



BCPVPA PLD Advisory Committee

L to R: Susan Clough SD36, Jessica Antosz (BCPVPA), Read Jorgensen SD61, Chris Horton SD73, Peter Johnston SD36, Sid Jawanda SD57, Liz Bell (BCPVPA)
Front: Renee Hislop SD62, Tammy Renyard SD61

The PLD Advisory Committee is a group of seven Principals and Vice-Principals from across the province, and two BCPVPA Board Members. The Committee gathers in person twice a year in conjunction with the PLD Rep meeting, and meet via video conference calls throughout the year. The terms of reference for this Committee include advising the Board of the work of the PLD Department, monitoring and reviewing services provided; and communication with and support of the sixty PLD Chapter Representatives. Essentially, the Advisors are a critical sounding board for programs as they are designed and delivered to support school leaders throughout their different career stages.

The Professional Learning and Development Representatives are another important team that supports school leadership in BC. These eighty Principals and Vice-Principals represent all sixty chapters in the province. As made evident by the statements of some Reps, they participate in PLD because they are committed to life-long learning and see themselves increasingly as a lead-learner, and because they believe in a collaborative culture of leadership in order to support student learning. Turner indicates in her recent research that leaders developing other leaders become the natural way to build capacity in the system. It is courageous of the PLD Reps to accept the responsibility of sharing the knowledge and experience gained from the PLD meetings with colleagues in their districts. Their active sharing is building capacity in the system.

At a previous PLD Rep meeting, we spent time considering the role of a Rep in terms of the Core Competencies. We examined the Core Competency framework, and collaboratively created a series of “I Can” statements for each component.

How do you as a PLD Rep Communicate, Think Creatively and Critically?

How do you attend to Positive and Personal Cultural

Identity, Personal Awareness and Responsibility, and Social Responsibility?

The exercise was very helpful and we continually refer to the Core Competencies of a PLD Rep in order to guide our thinking and practice. We understand that some Reps have successfully used a similar process with their staffs. *Here some examples:*



COMMUNICATION

CORE COMPETENCY

“I” Statements

CONNECT AND ENGAGE WITH OTHERS

- I can elaborate and explain highlights of the PLD meetings
- I can share provincial opportunities and challenges
- I can support and encourage other PLD opportunities
- I can help develop opportunities for my chapter to have deep, meaningful professional discussion and dialogue
- I can ask and respond to simple, direct questions.
- I can connect and engage with other BCPVPA professionals
- I can respond to questions from my members
- I can listen to our members' needs
- I can recognize that there are different points of view
- I can connect and engage with our local Principals/Vice-Principals regarding the region Connecting Leaders Conference



CRITICAL THINKING

CORE COMPETENCY

“I” Statements

ANALYZE AND CRITIQUE

- I can analyze my own assumptions “beliefs” consider views that do not fit with them when bringing info back to my peers
- I can identify and help others to identify evidence that reflects growth through the standards
- I can explore and share Professional Learning and Development opportunities within and beyond the district for my members
- I can help my colleagues examine current research and make evidence informed decisions around leadership
- I can help my colleagues examine their beliefs set around teaching, learning and leading
- I can provide opportunities for peers to analyze meaningful data in the schools and districts



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CORE COMPETENCY

“I” Statements

CONTRIBUTING TO COMMUNITY AND CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- I can share my voice and make meaningful contributions in my learning communities
- I can facilitate and participate in deep and meaningful conversations within my professional learning group
- I can contribute ideas and support that promote professional learning with my colleagues
- I can share out professional learning to all stakeholders
- I can collaborate with the members of my chapter
- I can participate in cultural events in the community
- I can identify and create opportunities for our chapter members to experience the natural environment in order to connect with the community

Another group of members in full swing that weekend was the BetterEducate Support Team. With the release of the revised Leadership Standards, and the embedding of the Standards within BetterEducate.com's Growth Plan section, we wondered how to best communicate this news to Principals and Vice Principals across the province.

We landed on a Train-the-Trainer approach, and guided our PLD Reps through an hour-long workshop on the Leadership Standards that they will each be able to deliver in their own Chapter. We had a volunteer group of Principals and Vice-Principals who are very familiar with BetterEducate present their workshop on Growth Plans Using BetterEducate. As Chapters confirm their interest for this session, the PLD Rep will pair with a member of the BetterEducate Support Team to deliver the workshop to the local members. This approach of leaders leading leaders is powerful, and will always be supported by the BCPVPA staff team.

The weekend was not just a series of meetings. An essential component of the time together is to network and share experiences. No two school districts are the same, with a myriad of ways to approach any one challenge and many success stories to share. It is often through sharing experiences, ideas and resources that clarity emerges and celebration follows. The purpose of the Representative meeting is to provide support for members by encouraging professional collegial discourse, and by providing a learning venue related to current issues.

BCPVPA's Professional Learning and Development team supports learners. Leaders are learners, and the expertise of leading learning is best enriched in a collaborative learning environment. Thank you to the Advisors, the Representatives and the BetterEducate Support Team for joining the PLD Directors as we all strive to support student success in BC.



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Vanguard Secondary: *Turning* **SKIDS** *into* **KIDS**

by
Dr. Patrick Thomas
Principal, Vanguard Secondary

During two years of hands awkwardly putting mics on my collar and floating boom mics over my head, I often asked myself, “Why am I doing this again?” When answering myself, I would recall my administrative assistant saying, “there’s some guy on the phone wanting to talk with the Principal.” I remembered thinking, “great...I wonder what’s wrong or what bad has happened.” Somewhat reluctantly I answered, “put him through” and again, as all Principals must often do, I prepared my nervous system for the unknown. A gentleman with a charming accent introduced himself as Gary Turner from Barbershop Films and told me he was given my name by a colleague at a nearby secondary school. Gary informed me about a project he was undertaking. It was a loose original concept documentary intended to explore the culture of bullying within schools, and he had heard that the students and staff at Vanguard Secondary (Langley School District) had a very different perspective on bullying. More importantly,

he had heard we were developing a school that was reversing the negative effects of labels upon youth, and we had the neuroscience expertise to support it. The school was in its second year of development and was already earning a reputation for innovative trauma sensitivity and therapeutic programming.

Knowing how much work had gone into creating the school’s safe, therapeutic culture, the vulnerability inherent in the willingness to be filmed fell into the realm of a challenging juxtaposition. I struggled with deciding if the value of a possible story was worth the potential negative risks to students and staff. There were many potential contrasting impacts in the filming process. I would often re-imagine that ‘Dummies Guide to Being a Principal’ that we don’t get, and thought of all that could go wrong. What confidentiality issues will be infringed? What child protection concerns need to be acknowledged? And of course, what are the FOIPPA issues I may have overlooked? Ultimately, I reminded myself

of one of our District's core values: courage. So, I sucked up my shyness and my hatred for the sound of my own voice and carefully, with the support of our District Office team, explored the permissions and processes required to tentatively support its production. In order to ensure safety for all, I made sure to position myself and our Superintendent with ultimate veto power over the final production.

The students, their families, staff members and District Leaders were consulted. Once most of the fears around the production were addressed, we had to trust the film crew and their sensitivity to uphold our school's mandate: to overcome developmental traumas and their effects. With the intent to authentically capture what we were doing at Vanguard, the students and staff were filmed mostly candidly and without any script or direction from the film crew. Almost all conversations were ad hoc and spontaneous moments, which could have led to many different stories and many different messages. Once we trusted the process and the Barbershop Crew, we were introduced to the themes being observed and captured on film by the producers and director.

What the documentary showed us was who we – the students and staff of Vanguard – are. It confirmed what neuroscience has been telling us for years. All the neuroscience teaches us beyond the simplicity of 'Occam's razor' is that basic, healthy humanity gives students what they need: it helps them balance their neurochemistry and recover from trauma. Our team at Vanguard has slowly built expertise and practice, not in the multitude of textbooks and advanced degrees within our walls, but by being in the often-forgotten learning trenches within alternate schools. We have learned by unknowingly stepping into the war of attrition with every unhealthy identity that walked through our doors. Of course, we need the Psych Eds, School Based Team referrals and resource interventions, but none of that matters if we

fail to see the youth for who they really are, rather than who they are trying to be. We see and hear an identity, we are told by others within the system 'who' that child is, and even the child communicates to us their chosen identity, but we forget that they are only children. Some of our older youth look and act like they have it all figured out. Often, they are burdened by developmental traumas, early learning challenges and addictions. As a result, their nervous systems and their complex interrelationships affect their emotional systems, confusing and ultimately delaying their identity development. For most youth, rebelling against adults is expected and is considered developmentally normal and a component of healthy identity development. For these students, rebellion reinforces their unhealthy concepts of normal, thus impairing their healthy identity development.

It is easy to get lost in the language of best practice and theory but, ultimately, we find it again in our humanity. We do this by treating every child like our own, looking beyond behaviour and its context within our own definitions of 'normal' and finding empathy, and more importantly authentic appreciation for that child's strengths and resiliency. Within this, we cannot forget the adults. When you are in the thick of the battle, and in particular the frequency of very high stress situations experienced within alternate schools, it can be easy to overlook the complex neuroscience behind the incredible staff willing to work within these schools. They self-sacrifice daily and work incredibly hard to understand their roles and responsibilities in relationship to their students and families and each other, always while

**"It is easy to get lost in the language
of best practice and theory
but, ultimately, we find it
again in our humanity."**

enduring the abusiveness of unhealthy, traumatized youth behaviours. We too need the same basics of humanity. While these challenging students test our own abilities to regulate emotions and reactions, we are equally responsible to be aware of our own neurological responses to stress, whether personal or work-related, and to know and meet our own needs accordingly.

The documentary's greatest and most unanticipated effect is that it reminded our students and staff that we are all human. While at times weak and exhausted from trauma and life's unpredictable events, we can also be strong. As our school's three-winged (*Safety, Adaptation & Leadership*) logo reflects, our students and staff have realized that we are all responsible for ensuring that we don't let labels and wrong assumptions make us feel unsafe and that we must continually adapt to each other's needs. We understand the importance of being open

to and welcoming change, and that we are always influencing others, thereby leading.

Our students requested that the documentary be titled SKIDS, to symbolize and reflect a common hurtful name that many in our society have used to label them. Rather than allowing that to stand alone, the producers and I chose to have the first 'S' disappear, because they are just KIDS. Kids that have grown up in a time where some have forgotten the basics of humanity, the fundamental importance of how we treat each other and how words and labels impact our identities and who we want to become.

SKIDS can be viewed on
Telus Optik TV on Demand,
& on the STORYHIVE YouTube Channel
youtube.com/OptikLocal
and search SKIDS



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Review

Our members read.
And read, and read.

Of course, one of the
best things about reading
is being able to
start a conversation,
and share your
thoughts with others.

In the first installment
of this regular column,
we hear from two BC
educators about the
books that intrigued
and challenged them.



Kelda **LOGAN**
Principal SD64

*Decolonizing Education:
Nourishing the Learning Spirit*
by Marie Battiste
(2013)

I was excited to read *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (2013) by Marie Battiste after the book was recommended to me by our school's teacher librarian. I was very interested in the notion of 'decolonization'. What exactly did that mean? How could educators engage in a process of system transformation so that our Indigenous learners experience success on par with our non-Indigenous students?

While the book is not the 'road map' I was perhaps hoping it would be, it was nonetheless a very valuable read in that Battiste does a masterful job of "critiquing past and current systems and directing attention to the disciplinary omissions that perpetrate stereotypes and contribute to cognitive assimilation" (pg 102). It has helped me to develop

a broader understanding of how our current school system perpetuates colonial structures which in turn put barriers in the way of our Indigenous learners, interfering with their ability to succeed at school.

The first three chapters outline, with examples from her own Mi'kmaw heritage, the "legacy of forced assimilative education for Indigenous Peoples." These of course included specific interventions from Provincial and Federal governments to "root out the French influence and...restrict...the Mi'kmaw nomadic lifestyle" such as "planting out" Indigenous children with English settlers and removing children from their families and placing them in residential schools to "destroy Indigenous knowledge, languages, and relationships with the natural family and replace them Eurocentric values, identities and beliefs..." (pg 56). Since the publication of the Truth and Reconciliation report two years after the publication of this book, educators are hopefully more aware of the devastating impacts of these and other assimilative policies have been on the "self esteem, self concept and healthy relationships" (pg 56) of our Indigenous learners.

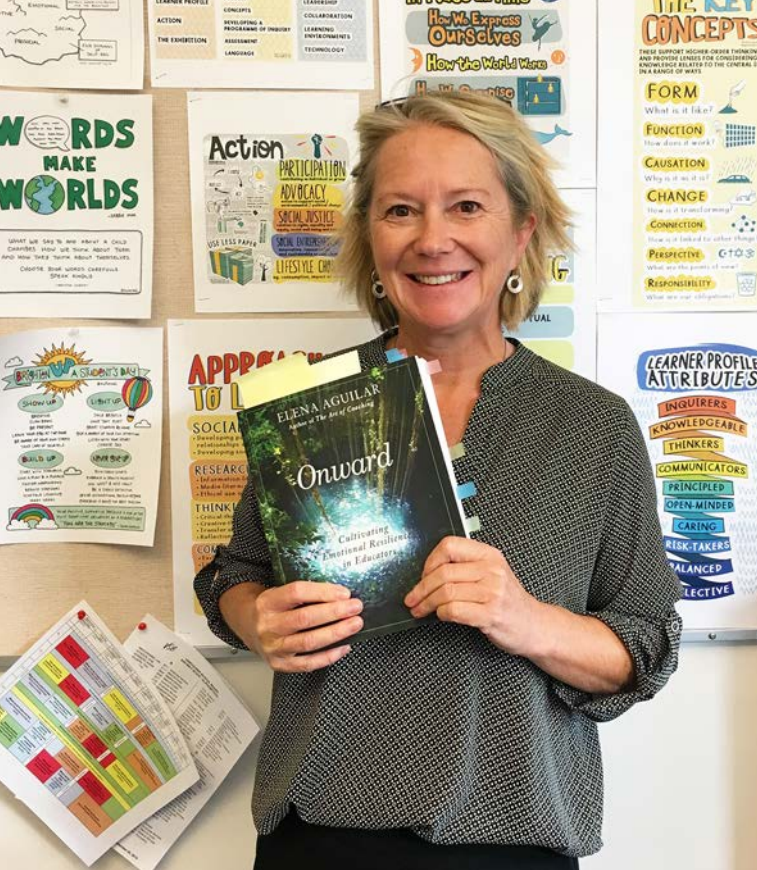
The chapters I found most interesting were Chapter 6 (Confronting and Eliminating Racism) and Chapter 8 (Displacing Cognitive Imperialism). Battiste notes that even though racism is a difficult topic for Canadians, with their "self-narrative of a generous, liberal and progressive society," it is necessary to "confront and eliminate the false concept of racial superiority" (pg 125) and to be able to clearly see our "whiteness and privilege" (pg 125) both in history and in our contemporary experience. She states, "Racism is more than hatred or prejudice... it is the structural subordination of a group in society based on the idea of racial inferiority that establishes a hierarchical power relationship" (pg 138). This is closely tied to cognitive imperialism, a "cognitive

whitewashing...where the government of Canada and religious groups have used schools and their curricula as the swords of cultural transmission; they impose a cultural and political hegemony based on superior/inferior relations" (pg 162).

The solution that Battiste proposes in her final chapters is one that incorporates both Aboriginal and Eurocentric thinking. She concludes, "...the education of Aboriginal students remains Eurocentric in its structure and content, in its exclusion of Aboriginal cognition, knowledge and ways of knowing. What a new curriculum must do is replace the failed Eurocentric educational practices with a more equitable and broader theory of education that informs, includes and builds with Canadian pluralities and identities. This educational transformation must conform to the new constitutional vision of Canada as a nation in its own right rather than a derivative British colony" (pg 163).

I personally found this idea fascinating, especially the idea that Indigenous knowledge in all its forms must be equally valued as part of a "fair and just postcolonial society" (pg 163). The integration of Aboriginal ways of knowing into our BC Curriculum and our daily teaching practices is a good first step. I feel a renewed commitment in our own school community. Our first steps are to hold monthly lunchtime meetings with our Indigenous learners to share the different traditions practiced in their homes. I look forward to a time when the learning spirit is truly nourished for all our children in all our schools throughout the country.

Kelda Logan has been an educator for 23 years, and an administrator for 11. When she isn't at her amazing little elementary school on Salt Spring Island, you can find her cheering on her boys at the local soccer field or perusing the shelves at the book store and library.



Margaret PAXTON Principal SD39

**Onward: Cultivating Emotional
Resilience in Educators**
by Elena Aguilar
(2018)

Principals and Vice-Principals interested in adopting a coaching approach with their staff members and colleagues will be inspired by Elena Aguilar's *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators*. Aguilar is also the author of *The Art of Coaching*, has written this comprehensive guide to engaging school staff members in conversations about their own resilience, emotional literacy and capacity for compassion. On the first page, she writes,

"Change is the only thing we can count on. It will rain when we wish it wouldn't, kids will say obnoxious things when we're exhausted, leaders will come and go. However, we have tremendous power in how we interpret what happens and, therefore, how

we respond to big and little incidents that we didn't anticipate, don't want, or don't like. The opportunity for resilience originates in how we make sense of the things that happen, because interpretation dictates actions." (p.1)

It seems obvious, but sometimes hard to remember, that we have choice in how to respond to the hundreds of interactions and interruptions we experience every day. Aguilar takes us through a calendar's worth of habits and dispositions to practice, including knowing oneself better, building community and cultivating compassion.

Aguilar acknowledges that schools are stressful places. I took this sentence to heart: "School leaders must focus on boosting the resilience of staff as a lever for school transformation" (p.3). At our first staff meeting, rather than dive into data as I'd originally planned, I chose to begin with conversations about our core values and hopes for the school year. Using Brené Brown's list of values from *Dare to Lead* (daretolead.brenebrown.com) teachers and support staff wrote three core values on an index card and then shared with a partner in a different role than themselves. They then met with a new partner and repeated the process. We debriefed the activity as a whole group, acknowledging that sharing in this way can make one feel vulnerable, but the conversation leads to a greater sense of connection and empathy.

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Building and sustaining a culture of belonging and safety in a school can be a daunting undertaking, especially when the group has experienced a lot of change in a short time. *Onward* is an essential

resource for leaders who want to strengthen their own resilience as they engage others in the important work of helping all members of the school community thrive, for what Parker Palmer says of teaching aptly applies to school leaders as well:

"Small wonder, then, that teaching tugs at the heart, opens the heart, even breaks the heart – and the more one loves teaching, the more heartbreaking it can be. The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able."

Margaret Paxton has been a teacher and Principal in SD#48 Sea to Sky, SD#38 Richmond, and is now at Southlands Elementary in Vancouver. She has a passion for literacy and social-emotional learning and is a Tribes, Roots of Empathy and MindUp teacher and a peer mentor for the BCPVPA.

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The Last Word

Kevin Reimer is the Executive Director of the BCPVPA, a previous Director of the Board and served as President 2016-2018.



"We honour our past while we design our future" - Simon Breakspear

BCPVPA President David DeRosa often reminds me that our current work as an Association is to build BCPVPA 2.0.

This Fall brings with it some important initiatives that will assist our modernization efforts: we have released a new suite of tools in BetterEducate; adopted the MemberTech platform to better manage our databases and communication tools; a redesigned website with a member portal is on the horizon; and the growing use of Zoom as our platform of choice allows us to reach out to and connect with members more consistently.

All of these initiatives are within our circle of influence, and we believe they will all greatly benefit the Association and our members. This is a time of unprecedented change within our system, and that change can be challenging to navigate. Blending years of research and experience, Michael Fullan calls for school leaders to become agents as well as beneficiaries of school change. To make the position more rewarding, it is important to shift the role of school leader from one of a school-based superhero with superheroic expectations of their work, to a more nuanced model of leadership that embraces "simplicity" to break the cycle of surface-level change.

The ability for the BCPVPA to negotiate at a provincial level is the highest priority of the Association and its members. Critics of this approach have stated that the BCPVPA is looking like and sounding like a union. Their logic is flawed, as it is based on a superficial level of understanding of the system, and it lacks the nuanced approach encouraged by Michael Fullan. It is important to separate the facts from the fiction.

As of Fall 2019, we know the following:

- Last year, more Principal and Vice-Principals

voluntarily chose to return to the classroom than ever before

- More Principals and Vice-Principals are on Long-Term Disability than ever before
- Our BCPVPA Member Survey of 2019 told us:
 - 59% of Principals and Vice-Principals have seriously considered returning to the classroom
 - 77% of Principals and Vice-Principals have seriously considered changing their retirement plans for reasons of work intensification and stress
 - 30% of members have seriously considered changing their retirement plans because of a perceived lack of support for their role

These statistics are alarming, and they are telling the system that we should all be concerned about the working conditions of Principals and Vice-Principals. Organizations unionize for many different reasons, but one of the most significant reasons they do so is when their work negatively impacts their health. BC's public education system is one of the highest-performing education systems in the world, a fact that is frequently lauded by government leaders, parents and international experts: how is it that the school leaders and senior leaders who have been responsible for successfully delivering this education system have become so marginalized and undersupported?

Our members and the BCPVPA have been clear that we have no intention of unionizing. However, if our objective to positively address the working conditions of Principals and Vice-Principals through a provincial approach makes us sound like a union to some, then so be it. We are unlikely to sway the entrenched views of those who are unwilling to recognize that the leaders in our system are the canaries in the coal mine.

As a system, we have perhaps viewed this significant challenge through a binary lens, when it has been

recognized at all. We have perhaps believed that there is a scale where positive learning conditions for students have an inverse relationship to the working conditions of Principals and Vice-Principals, and that the harder school leaders work, make sacrifices, and go beyond the expectations of their duties, then the better students will do. You're either at the top of the see-saw, or you are at the bottom. If this truly is the attitude that is held by some, it's an unsound and unsustainable model. When learning conditions become the sole focus of the system to the detriment of working conditions, the system risks decay; the stress and intensification of the leaders' work will be unrelenting, and there is no clear path forward in that world.

Freedom of association is guaranteed under section 2(d) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This right provides individuals the right to establish, belong to and maintain any sort of organization. For a decade or more, courts across the country have upheld the notion that the right to associate must have meaning beyond the ability to belong to an organization – the right that they have upheld is the right to good faith negotiation and consultation as a collective. The BCPVPA's desire to negotiate on behalf of members is not just what is in the best interest of its members; we believe that it is a Charter Right of Principals and Vice-Principals in BC. Court rulings have been clear that the Charter upholds the right to a process, and not an outcome. It is time that provincial negotiations become the process that can address many of the challenges for school leaders in BC.

It is time for the system to look instead through Michael Fullan's nuanced lens, and to recognize that positive working conditions for Principals and Vice-Principals will result in consistently positive learning conditions for students, and positive work environments for teachers and support staff. And that is the educational setting where everyone will have an opportunity to learn, grow and succeed.

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