

SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS

Publication deadlines being what they are, I am writing this article during the blistering hot days of summer *before* Labour Day and the school opening for the 2022-2023 school year. You will read this article in the winter – a third of the way through the school year. When you receive our flagship magazine, you will be in the thick of reviewing report cards, tracking student progress, developing plans and strategies for learners who need additional support, deeply immersed in implementing initiatives to support your School Growth Plans, and preparing for the holiday season! From personal experience, I always saved my deep dive into *Principl(ed)* for the winter break.

I have been a passionate advocate for public education throughout my adult life. That passion led me to teaching, and subsequently to school administration. I am passionate about the work we do as Principals and Vice-Principals, and I care about the well-being of our members. It was my passion for the work of Principals and Vice-Principals that led me to a leadership role in my local Chapter and then, ten years ago, to the BCPVPA Board table. It is both an honour and a privilege to now be your president, and to present the voice of the school experience – both successes and challenges – to our sector partners, the Ministry of Education and Child Care, and the wider community. The role of Principals and Vice-Principals in student and school success is often misunderstood, or underestimated – in short, good schools are led by good Principals and Vice-Principals!

So, how will I be supporting the work that the 2,600+ members of the BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association do every day? I ran to be president of our Association on a platform with three key elements:

- 1) Improving overall member well-being
- 2) Establishing a negotiating framework
- 3) Building leadership capacity

Our Board of Directors has incorporated these goals in our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan bit.ly/BCPVPA_SP

Working with our dedicated Executive Director, Kevin Reimer, and our small but mighty senior staff team, we have developed an Operational Plan. The Operational Plan is an internal roadmap that breaks down the objectives – our 'Big Ideas' – and outlines the steps we are taking, or need to take, to achieve those goals.

My role will be to breathe life into our goals and objectives, and to give voice to your experiences when I communicate with our sector partners and stakeholders about the vital work you do to keep schools safe, open, and operating. I will be advancing our objectives through what I call the **AIMS** principle:

A = ADVOCACY

every interaction is an opportunity to educate others about the work of BC's Principals and Vice-Principals

I = INFLUENCE

communicate with decision-makers about what is required for students and schools to be successful, as decisions can directly impact the work of BC's Principals and Vice-Principals

MS = MEMBER SUPPORT

every action, decision, or priority of the Association supports the work of BCPVPA members

British Columbia has one of the highest performing educational jurisdictions in the world; our schools remained open and offered a continuity of learning through most of the pandemic, and this was due, in large part, to the efforts of BC's Principals and Vice-Principals. The work of a school leader is complex and challenging, but it is also invigorating and

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rewarding – just observe a kindergarten class or attend a graduation ceremony!

We sometimes forget that British Columbia is a massive province: most of western Europe could fit within our borders. However, we may be big in geography, but we are small as a population and spread over a huge area. As I go about my work of supporting members, I ask that you let me know how things are going in *your* part of the world. The best way I can accurately tell your story – whether good or challenging – is to hear from the membership. As

an Association, we have established formal and informal ways to connect with our members. You could email Kevin kevin@bcpvpa.bc.ca or myself bleonard@bcpvpa.bc.ca directly; you could join a Coffee Connections conversation; you could connect with your Chapter President or Chapter Representative; you could apply to join one of our committees; you could let your name stand for election to the Board of Directors; or, you could simply contact the office and speak with any of our staff. I guarantee, we are listening, and we want to hear how you are doing!

When I ran to be president, I had hoped to lead our Association in a post-pandemic world, and that things would be 'back-to-normal'. Upon reflection, I must acknowledge that some concerning aspects of our jobs existed before the pandemic – the pandemic has brought some of those challenges into greater focus. The pandemic also underscored the vital role that Principals and Vice-Principals play in keeping schools and the school system functioning, and functioning well. The pandemic is not yet over, but we have swiftly learned how to be nimble, and how to keep schools running. The BCPVPA has been equally nimble in adjusting how we 'do business' to support our members' needs. We look forward to continuing the evolution of member engagement and support, and welcome your suggestions.

BC public schools, led by the Principals and Vice-Principals of the BCPVPA, are a success story. Can we do better in some areas? *You bet*: continuous improvement is in our DNA. In my work, and using the AIMS principle, I will continue to share the stories of BC's schools and highlight the amazing work that you do every day. Get in touch so that I can help you write those success stories!

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is the 2022-2024
President of the BCPVPA



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