

Island Leadership Coalition (ILC)

*Nurturing Leaders,
Fostering Community*

by

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Leading from Where You Stand

The Island Leadership Coalition (ILC) is an inspirational initiative rooted in the belief that leadership transcends titles. Dr. Jordan Tinney, a visionary educator, set the wheels in motion for the ILC in 2006. Its foundational principle is 'Leading from Where You Stand'. This simple yet profound idea emphasizes that leadership lives and grows wherever passionate individuals choose to make a difference.



The ILC History: Reflections from Dr. Jordan Tinney

"In the spring of 2006, we gathered in the Board Room of the Saanich School District to discuss the evolution of the Saanich Leadership Development Program," says Jordan Tinney. "This was an internal leadership development program called 'Gateway to Leadership', intended to develop aspiring Principals. Part of that development was an exercise that involved sugar cubes that we wrote on and stacked into a matrix. The matrix included Self, Others, Organizations as an organizer, and Leadership, Learning, and Change as content. The purpose for our gathering was to seek a grant from the BC Education Leadership Council (BCELC) to continue our work. Leadership was in my portfolio as Assistant Superintendent in Saanich, but it was only a month or so later that I was appointed superintendent of Comox Valley.

"When I moved to Comox, this leadership conversation continued with Peter Norman -- previously with Ministry Field Services, SFU, and Royal Roads -- as the catalyst. The timing was fortuitous, as four Island leaders -- Candace Morgan (SD69), John Spry (SD72), Harry Janzen (SD70), and Brian Morgan (SD71) -- had also been crafting a similar BCELC grant on behalf of their four districts. Peter and I wondered that if Saanich had a program, and these four districts were trying to launch a program, why couldn't we try something Island-wide? Everyone was running leadership programs, so we could join forces and do it together, based on the strength of the Island networks. We pitched an idea where people would come together three times a year -- they would even get a stamped passport to mark their journey -- and we would celebrate our leadership journey together. Our grant request to BCELC was unsuccessful, so we asked districts to pitch the project together. We asked for \$5,000 per district, with the small districts being subsidized and, if I recall correctly, we asked for \$2,500. With one exception, every district on the Island participated. To celebrate our collaboration, we branded the project as the Island Leadership Coalition (ILC). Our mission/vision was 'Regional Capacity for Exceptional Leadership', and our motto was 'Leading from Where You Stand'.

"Based from SD71, with Peter Norman and Neil Smith (VIU) as our consulting leads, we began the series. The flagship event of the series was likely the time we had Deputy Minister Emery Dosdall webcast (*think, ahead of the curve!*) from Courtenay to Victoria where we ran simultaneous sessions. Our intention was to



make the program accessible, relevant, and affordable. As a result, we often met centrally on the Island, we tried to piggyback on non-instructional days to reduce costs, and Comox took care of all the logistics.

"It's amazing to see the legacy continue. The needs are the same, and so is the power of collaboration."

The Vancouver Island BCSSA Chapter has sustained the journey. This Chapter embodies a spirit of collaboration and support. With their commitment to inclusivity, they have forged an environment of sharing, networking, and collaboration. When questions arise, they don't hesitate to reach out to one another, leveraging their collective expertise. One thing they have committed to is growing aspiring leaders.

Emerging from the pandemic, it was very clear that the education system needed to develop new and emerging leaders to be successful in an increasingly complex system. In 2022-23, the ILC was re-established with a focus and format of ongoing learning series targeted at new Vice-Principals and lead teachers. The Island BCSSA Chapter partnered with the BCPVPA to co-create and deliver a program that constructively builds skills while also exploring one's identity as a leader.

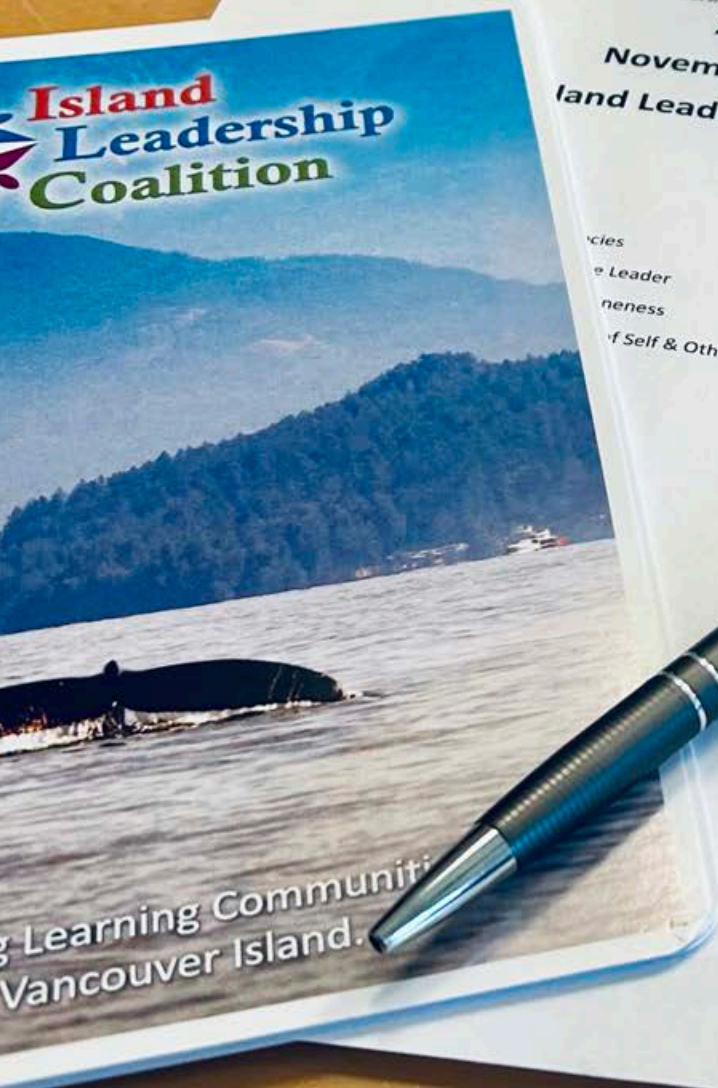
Purpose

"While the core purpose of the ILC is to develop new and emerging system leaders, the experience extends far beyond that. ILC is an opportunity to grow connections with other new leaders, and build a network of colleagues across districts. It is also an opportunity for Island Chapter districts to collaborate in attending to a shared need, while maintaining ongoing systemic relationships that are critical when navigating large-scale decision-making."

D'Arcy Deacon, Associate Superintendent SD62 (Sooke)

James Messenger, Director of Instruction: Learning & Innovation in SD70 (Pacific Rim), was in a cohort as a young teacher leader more than 15 years ago. He describes ILC as a turning point. "The ILC connected me with fellow educational leaders, and glimpses of my own potential for formal leadership roles. Today, I find myself contributing to organizing activities within our district — a full circle of growth and inspiration."

The ILC's purpose is clear: enhancing leadership capacity across Vancouver Island. Districts bring newly-appointed Vice-Principals and lead teachers with aspirations for school leadership roles. Participants in ILC have proven to be more prepared and confident when stepping into formal leadership roles. Teachers transition into



aspire
for Aspiring School Leaders
Agenda
November 22, 2023
Island Leadership Coalition

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Adapt
national change has happened so fast that
I be better equipped to adapt to the change?
And give this guide to your admin team
Which zone are you in for this change?
I understand about the change, why it
and what it means for me/my staff?
I yet understand about the change, why
what it means for me/my staff?
/or my staff benefit from the change?
es, thoughts, or feelings that could
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ise to start, continue, or stop in
re or hold ourselves
change is successful?
can take to help myself and
re about the rationale behind the
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Jhana

formal leadership inspired by collective learning and exposure to complex scenarios. The ILC nurtures potential, recognizing and encouraging aspiring leaders.

The ILC isn't just about theory; it's about relationships. New school leaders find solace in an 'in-district' group, a sounding board and safe space for professional conversations. These connections foster collaborative problem-solving and idea-sharing. As one participant reflected, "Even now, we seek each other out, supporting one another in our leadership journeys."

Another participant commented, "The ILC equipped me with skills in communication, team building, teacher empowerment, and ethical leadership. It was a springboard for reflection and research. I apply these lessons daily, emphasizing positive relationships and transformative change. Face-to-face interactions remain invaluable."

A key takeaway from Paul Block, Superintendent SD62 (Sooke): "Anyone can be a leader if they have the right mindset and willingness to learn and grow. Leadership does not have to be a lonely experience. Through initiatives like the ILC, strong relationships and support networks develop that can help throughout your career".

Key Takeaways from Participants

In the feedback from participants, there were some themes:

- We Are All Leaders:** There is not just one definition.
- Leadership Mindset:** Anyone can lead with the right mindset.
- Community & Support:** Leadership need not be lonely; community matters.
- Continuous Learning:** Prioritize learning; celebrate small victories.
- Observing Facilitation:** Learn from how learning is facilitated.
- Strength in Connection:** Relationships fuel growth.

The ILC stands as a beacon for leadership growth, empathy, and lifelong learning. As we continue to lead from where we stand, we honour the legacy of the Island Leadership Coalition by inspiring and equipping the leaders of tomorrow.

Dr. Andrea McComb is a Director of Professional Learning and Development at the BCPVPA and the lead collaborator for the ILC. "I am also a graduate of ILC. Partnering with BCSSA Island Chapter models a shared vision and mission for leadership development within education. The collaborative nature of the Island BCSSA Chapter supports belonging across districts on the Island, and the connection of participants to the provincial associations. We see ILC graduates in our BCPVPA programs, and are familiar with their ongoing learning and growth. It has been an honour to share in the work." Thank you, ILC, for shaping leaders and fostering community!

Co-create with the BCPVPA

If other regions of BC are interested in co-planning a program for their aspiring leaders, the BCPVPA would love to partner with you. Learning from the success of ILC, key aspects of the design include:

- One district lead brings a team of aspiring or new-to-role leaders.
- Programming happens over two to three days, interspersed throughout the calendar.
- Learning is aligned with competency development.
- Facilitation processes engage the learning in the room, as well as model processes participants can take away to apply to their work.
- To co-create, the BCPVPA provides a menu of content that is situated in program design.

