



Cultivating Leadership

Foundations for New School Leaders
Nourishes Both New and Seasoned Leaders



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"The relationships formed during my time at Foundations have endured, becoming invaluable sources of support and friendship."

Foundations for New School Leaders

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"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."

**Island Leadership Coalition (ILC):
Nurturing Leaders, Fostering Community**



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"Lots of people will say things online that they wouldn't say in person. They don't see the reaction of how their words affect people. They are hiding behind their keyboard and screen, so they don't have to face the consequences of what they create."

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"Education is undergoing a seismic shift, brought about partially by cultural, societal, and political changes, and fueled by rapidly-evolving technologies."

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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 2700 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.

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Equity in leadership:

The Road ahead



by
Dr. Shannon Behan
2024-2026 President
BCPVPA

I still remember my fifth-grade teacher, Miss O'Hara. She was young, single, and 'From the City'. She brought an energy and enthusiasm to the classroom that was like nothing I had experienced to that point. She often wore a blue blazer, slacks, and runners; while this might not seem unusual now, at the time it was a world apart from the expected professional attire for a female at a very traditional school. Don't get me wrong: I loved all my previous teachers, but there was something different about Miss O'Hara. She was inspiring and fun, filled with laughter, and she moved beyond formality and invited us to get to know her on a personal level. Miss O'Hara cast off the trappings of the strict and strait-laced ways of running a classroom that were the norm. We worked hard in the classroom; she had high expectations, but she also brought a sense of humanity. We wanted to do the very best we could because, somehow by her very presence, she inspired us to be better. At the time we were entering early adolescence, Miss O'Hara honed in on who we were as individuals, and she inspired us to be the very best we could be. She was the first teacher to organize a two-night overnight camping trip to Camp Nazzichuk, and we still talk about it. The experience of Miss O'Hara was really the first time I saw myself reflected in an adult in the school. It was inspiring.

At the same time, our Principal – who was also a woman – was a stolid, strong leader who ran a tight ship. She, too, had high expectations and demanded the very best of us. Whenever she entered the classroom, we all stood up immediately

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"The experience of Miss O'Hara was really the first time I saw myself reflected in an adult in the school. It was inspiring."

and bleated out in unison, "Good morning!" We followed instructions without question. Her style of leadership was defined by a swift, unconditional, and unwavering decisiveness about how things would run. Her style as a school leader was very different from Miss O'Hara's style as a classroom leader. And while we cannot judge the leadership styles of the times based on the standards of today, Miss O'Hara's impact on her students was considerable; unlike the austere stature of our very capable Principal, we felt that Miss O'Hara really 'knew' who we were. She asked us questions and genuinely wanted to know what we thought. We felt like what we had to say mattered, that we had a voice, and that we belonged. We believed that it mattered that we came to school every day, not out of a sense of obligation or duty, but because we were part of making the school a wonderful place.

When it comes to setting the tone of a school, where everyone knows they belong and that their voices matter, Principals play a critical role. Simply by their presence, Principals characterize and define the culture of the school, working hard to make sure students, families, and staff know that they are welcomed and are an integral part of the fabric of that place. When students feel a sense of belonging

at school, we know that outcomes improve. We know as well that schools should be a reflection of their community, and I often wonder how many students who attend our schools see *themselves* reflected in their place of learning. That thought brings me to the topic of equity in leadership.

At the risk of being pedantic in setting the stage, equity and equality are not the same thing. Equality means that if we have ten children and ten cookies, each child gets one cookie. Everyone gets the same: it is fair. Equity is different. Equity means we recognize that different people have differing needs and starting points. For example, in schools, equality means that each student receives the same novel for a reading study unit. Equity means we provide a novel that is tailored to each student's unique needs, to ensure that all students have an opportunity to experience success. It is not always easy to do, but it matters.

In the context of school leadership, equity means that leaders actively work to understand and address the diverse needs of those in their school communities. This involves creating policies, practices, and supports that account for varying levels of resources, backgrounds, and challenges of the students, staff,

and families that come into our schools. Diversity in leadership allows for a heightened awareness of systemic inequalities, which can be a catalyst for proactive steps to mitigate the impact of inequity on the entire school community.

Diverse representation among school leaders is a critical aspect of equity in leadership. In British Columbia, we welcome people from all over the world and have a diverse population. Many educational institutions face a disparity between the demographic makeup of their student populations and their leadership teams. The consequences of a lack of diversity in leadership can include limited perspectives, fewer role models, and equity gaps. There is a risk that a homogenous leadership team might not understand the needs of a diverse school community. When we have a representation of leaders that accurately reflects the diversity of the population, this helps to create systems and policies that are inclusive; there is a greater chance that a broader representation in leadership will ultimately better serve the needs of a diverse community.

Students from underrepresented groups benefit from seeing leaders who look like them, and who have navigated similar challenges. This visibility can inspire and motivate students, providing more students with tangible role models and very real examples of success. Looking back, this is what Miss O'Hara did for me. For the first time at school, I saw a female leader who was full of energy, curious, and spirited, who asked gently provocative questions about the status quo and expanded our perspectives. She was thoughtful, hardworking, focused, and smart. She didn't conform, didn't wear dresses that hit just below the knee – as was the norm – and she presented a different vision of the world. Looking back, I suspect being a trailblazer was not easy for her; I remember that she left after a few years at my school.

In BC, women who aspire to occupy leadership positions can find a 'glass ceiling' or a 'sticky floor'. We have just seen a woman make a run for the presidency of the United States of America for the second time in history and, at the time of this writing,

we cannot predict if further history has been made. And while Canadians had the opportunity to be led by Kim Campbell as the first and only female Prime Minister of Canada from June 1993 to November 1993, other capable party leaders including the New Democratic Party's Alexa McDonough and the Green Party's Elizabeth May have not achieved that office. There continue to be obstacles that can impact the careers of women seeking to advance to leadership roles.

In her dissertation entitled, "Patterns of Success: A Study of Women Secondary School Principals' Self-Perception of their Career Journey in British Columbia", Paula Gosal shared that "In the Canadian K-12 education context, the principal's chair in a secondary school represents one of those leadership seats that remains elusive to women as it is more likely to be occupied by a male." (Armstrong and Mitchell, 2017; Porat, 1991; Reynolds et al., 2008; Tabin and Coleman, 1993). Data retrieved in February 2021 from BC K-12 School and District records shows that of the possible 225 secondary Principals, 65 are female (29%). In a workforce where 55% of secondary school teachers are female, one may expect that the composition of female Principals would follow a similar trend. Where are the female leaders? What is curious, and would be important to learn, is an understanding of the particular work that female Principals have undertaken and endured in order to navigate their role to the seat. Further, this learning may support districts in their work to encourage more women and those from diverse populations to hold leadership roles in secondary schools.

A broad diversity in leadership matters, and it is not solely the gap in the presence of female leaders. What can be done to encourage those who do not traditionally aspire to the role to become engaged and see leadership as a possibility? I remain curious as to how we can achieve and ensure fully inclusive practices throughout the system. Where current representation is reflective of the population of the communities we serve, we must examine the mechanisms that have contributed to equity.



“For the first time at school, I saw a female leader who was full of energy, curious, and spirited, who asked gently provocative questions about the status quo and expanded our perspectives.”

In the everyday work of school leaders, here are a few things we can do in our buildings that promote equity in leadership:

- Be curious
- Come from a place of courage; as Simon Sinek says, “Know your why.”
- Celebrate differences
- Lead with care and respect for all
- Lean in when needed
- Don’t be afraid to respectfully challenge the status quo
- Always ask “whose voice is missing” when making decisions
- Support the Alliance club

- Support the creation of clubs such as Indigenous Leadership Club and clubs for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of colour) students and allies
- Create and share widely an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion calendar



Surrey Schools
SD38:
2024-2025 Equity,
Diversity, &
Belonging Calendar

- Share the achievements of all students, and cast a wide net when doing so

Equity means that we are ‘okay’ with feeling uncomfortable and unsettled. We acknowledge that all of us come to the plate with different backgrounds,

and one is not 'better' than another. Place, space, and voice exist for all. Our role is to create safe spaces where all of us grow and learn from differing perspectives.

The Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI Champion) goal in the BCPVPA 2023-2026 Strategic Plan states the "BCPVPA leads and champions Truth and Reconciliation, diversity, cultural competency, and equitable opportunities to ensure a safe and inclusive educational community." A core value of our Association is welcoming and championing diversity amongst our own staff and leadership team. Our collective desire is to be inclusive in our practices, and our intention is to create an environment in the system where all leaders feel supported and empowered to contribute fully. Through our program offerings and resources, we strive to help our members to learn and understand diversity in the schools and communities in which they serve. Our goal is to enhance cultural competencies in our membership and beyond, and to work towards ensuring safe and inclusive educational communities.

In our professional learning opportunities at BCPVPA, we are mindful of reaching out to emerging leaders from underrepresented groups as this can help build a more diverse leadership pipeline. Program offerings focus on providing skills, experiences, and networking opportunities for emergent leaders, and leaders at all stages of their journey.

Reference

Gosal, P. (2022). Patterns of Success: A Study of Women Secondary School Principals' Self-Perception of their Career Journey in British Columbia [Doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas].

The BCPVPA is also collecting data this fall that will better identify the diversity of our members. Our survey invites self-identification as it relates to Indigenous/ Aboriginal Peoples, Racialized Persons, Gender Identity and Gender Expression, and Sexual Orientation, and will help us to know our members even better. Regular collection of this data will help to ensure accountability, and contribute to the measurement of progress towards more equitable representation of leaders in school and district roles throughout the province.

By addressing the lack of diversity in school leadership, we can create more equitable and inclusive environments that benefit all students, staff, and families. The presence of diverse leaders brings a broader range of experiences and perspectives to decision-making, ultimately supporting a more equitable educational experience.

When I look back, I can only wonder about Miss O'Hara's own experience when she came to our small community. Did she feel included? Did she feel like she had a voice? While my grade five perspective cannot give me all the answers, I feel certain that the kernels of my courage came from her. I am forever grateful that she took the risk, made the trek, and inspired me to "take the road less travelled" as a leader.



@bcpvpapresident

Our stories are a part of us.

When we listen to the memories and experiences of others, we make connections, learn, and thrive. We invite you to share your own stories, what you have learned as an educator and leader, what inspires you.

Contact sandra@bcpvpa.bc.ca to contribute to *Princip(ed)* magazine.

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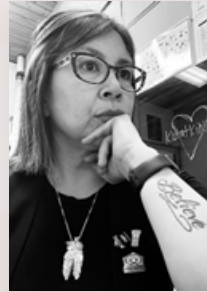
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FOUNDATIONS

for New School Leaders





for attendees and facilitators alike, the BCPVPA's Foundations for New School Leaders is a journey. It is a rare opportunity to spend a week in a reflective space, to meet new colleagues and reunite with valued friends. To learn, relearn, and explore. Here are impressions from three of those who experienced the 2024 Foundations event.

DEAN THORSELL, Principal, SD 47 (qathet) - Attendee

I began my journey as Vice-Principal at Westview Elementary in the qathet School District (SD47) in September 2023. Last year, I was unable to attend Foundations for New School Leaders due to my commitment to running summer camps, so I eagerly awaited the opportunity to learn and grow in my role. The 2024 Foundations coincided perfectly with my move to a new role as Principal at Henderson Elementary, promising essential tools for navigating the steep learning curve ahead.

Walking into Foundations, I felt nervous about meeting my table group, as we would be spending most of the week together. I am not the best at networking or putting myself out there, and consider myself more of an introvert. However, our circle sessions quickly dispelled those fears. Sharing our personal stories created a safe, non-judgmental space that fostered deep connections among us. Carolyn Roberts' guidance on relational accountability resonated deeply, as she described how we are "holding ourselves accountable for building strong relationships and allowing the relationships to guide the work we do as leaders".

One moment that really touched me was when members of my table group recalled parts of my story throughout the week, integrating personal narratives into our learning. This affirmed my belief in the power of shared experiences to strengthen bonds, a belief I further explored with Dr. Andrea McComb in a post-Foundations Cognitive Coaching session. Together, we delved into my leadership values, particularly

the importance of connection through shared experiences.

Reflecting on my previous year at a larger school, I realized I had maintained surface-level relationships with most of the community. As I embark on my first year as Principal at a smaller school, I am committed to deepening relational accountability. My goal is to ensure every student's voice is heard, and that our relationships guide our collective efforts to enhance student outcomes.

Foundations also reminded me of Michael Fullan's insights in *Drivers: Transforming Learning for Students, Schools and Systems*, and *Principal 2.0*. Fullan underscores the pivotal role of Principals in fostering community engagement and inclusivity, aligning with board visions while prioritizing the humanity paradigm. Fullan describes this paradigm as "a deep care and commitment to all living things including equity and equality in the service of helping all humans cope and thrive in the complex societies of the 21st century".

As I continue this journey, I am inspired by the potential of our school community. Together, through genuine connections and shared visions, we can achieve far more than any individual effort could accomplish alone. Foundations for New School Leaders was a catalyst in developing my leadership identity and will continue to guide the work that I do as a school leader for many years to come.



Dean and colleagues at the Foundations Celebration Dinner

PAUL GODFREY, Principal, SD 39 (Vancouver) - Facilitator

Breathing Life into Leadership

As the school year crept to an exhausting conclusion, I gathered my remaining energy, summed up for one last push, and embarked on a new experience as a facilitator at the Foundations for New School Leaders course (formerly known to many experienced leaders as the Short Course).

Back in 2017, I experienced the course as a participant and a relatively new leader, having just completed my first year as a high school Vice-Principal with the Vancouver School Board. I still remember the impact it had on me back then, how it helped to shape my vision of educational leadership in BC, and how I would never be alone on that journey.

Fast forward seven years, and I decided to step up and give back to the association that had given

so much to me. Although battle-scarred, tired, and running on fumes, I knew this was the right time for me to contribute. But why *now*?

As I was entering the school year in September 2023, I felt that I was stuck in a professional 'funk', and that I was going through the motions of being a high school administrator. It wasn't that the job didn't bring joy: it did and it does, nearly every day. Rather, I felt my professional growth as a leader had stagnated, and that I was consumed by the endless administrative tasks we process day after day. As those task lists got longer, the opportunities to enrich my own professional learning seemed to grow smaller.

While taking time to fill everyone else's bucket, my own bucket was running empty. So, I decided that the 2023 – 2024 school year would be the year of *ME!*

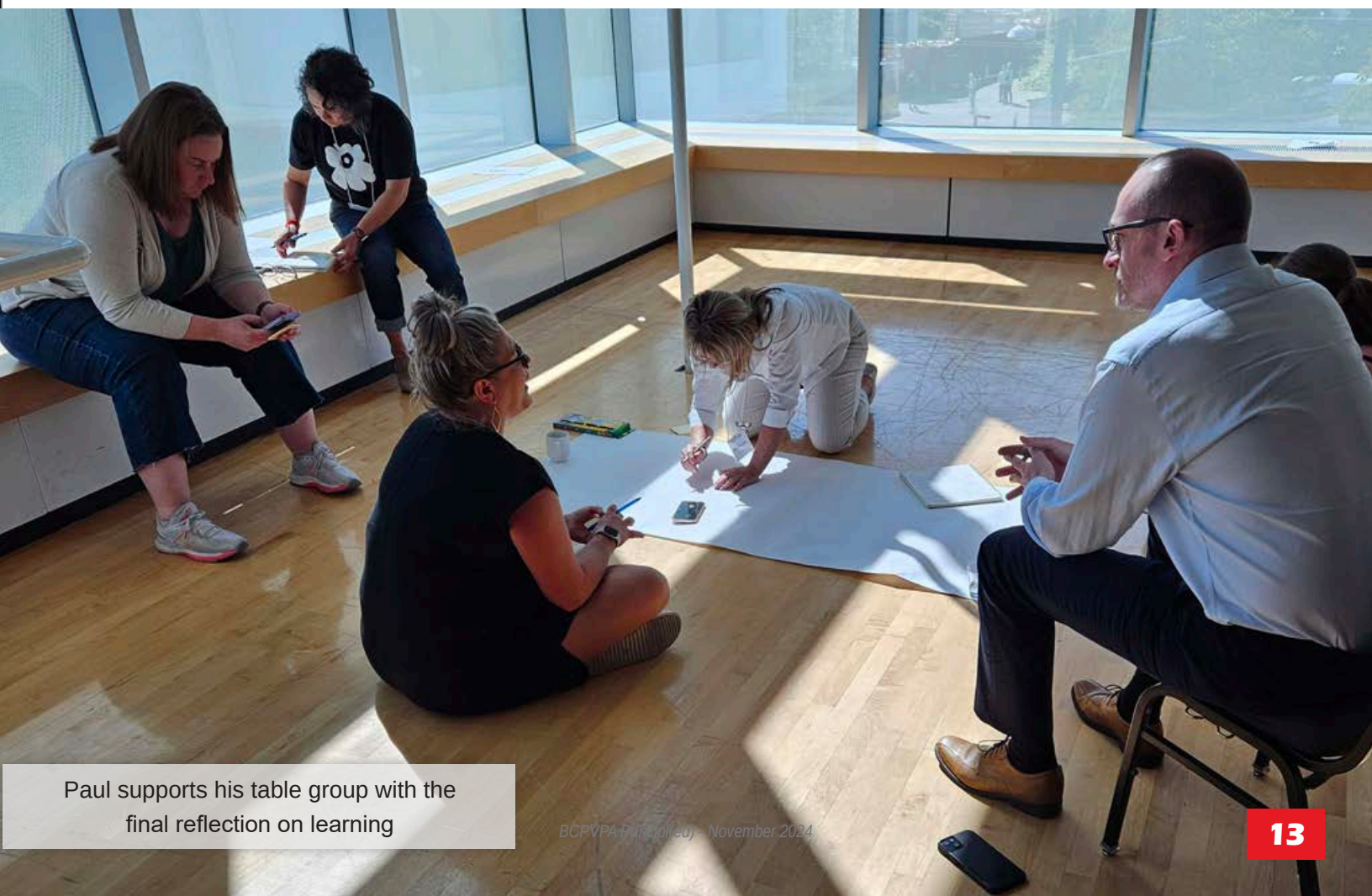
I stepped up to be a BCPVPA Professional Learning representative in my Chapter, and prioritized my own professional needs by registering for a number of professional learning opportunities both with the Vancouver Association of Secondary School Administrators and with the BCPVPA.

Within months of placing myself in new spaces with new people, I felt invigorated and upbeat and felt a new release of personal and professional energy. I was able to listen with intent, and to learn with a clear and open mind. I now understood that when I spent some time away from my building in pursuit of professional development, I was even better able to serve my school community effectively when I returned.

After a year of placing my professional growth front and centre, I experienced not only the personal lift that I needed and desired, but a new and unexpected breath of life in my day-to-day role as a high school administrator.

So why Foundations, and why now? When attending PLD meetings and opportunities throughout the year, I met with like-minded leaders from across the province, all with amazing stories and the capacity to share and learn from each other. I recognized that these are my people. That helped me to understand that when I allowed myself to step back from the day-to-day, and developed the ability to listen to and synthesize diverse perspectives, I no longer took for granted what I was doing day in and day out.

And now, it was my time to give back. I wanted to put my new renewed energy to good use, and what better way than to provide a safe space to support others as they explored their learning and embarked on the fantastic journey of being a BC Vice-Principal or Principal. It was everything I hoped it would be, and more. I had the privilege of supporting an amazing group of new-to-role leaders from all over BC, and got a glimpse of leadership life outside of Vancouver – and boy, is it different!



Paul supports his table group with the final reflection on learning

The experience exceeded my expectations, whether it was the learning from other facilitators, the learning from the course organizers, the learning from the sensational keynote speakers, or the learning from my table participants: Table 4 – you know who you are! I was continuously immersed in deep, rich, and transformative conversations. As we all built relationships over those five days, we let down our guard, we let others in, we shared, we listened, we cried, we hugged, and we demonstrated empathy, compassion, and true vulnerability.

All of the qualities of great leadership were exhibited day after day, by everyone in the room. With open hearts and open minds, more than 100 people soaked up the learning. If that doesn't fill your bucket, what will? I can say for certain, my bucket is now full. In addition to filling my own bucket, I hope that, in some small way, I was able to fill some other buckets in that room. New learning, new connections, and new friendships: not a bad way to spend the first week of July, if you ask me. And will I facilitate again? Absolutely!

I had the privilege of supporting an amazing group of new-to-role leaders from all over BC, and got a glimpse of leadership life outside of Vancouver – and boy, is it different! - Paul Godfrey

**REBECA RUBIO, Vice-Principal, SD 37 (Delta) - Attendee
and 2024 Foundations Class Speaker**

*“Stories create community – they make us more alive, more human, more courageous, more loving”
— Madeleine L'Engle*

We are all made of stories. We are each a rich woven tapestry of personal stories of heartache, calm, triumph, and joy. Our tapestries have been shaped by connections, experiences and places, and they affect our every move: from how we treat others, to how we respond to challenges, to how we choose to face each day.

But people's stories are not always visible on the surface, and can require effort to uncover. Our stories have been referred to as the “invisible backpack” which we all carry, hidden in plain sight. Our stories have been referred to as the “painting behind the painting”, in reference to Vincent Van Gogh's hidden self-portrait behind his famous 1885 *Head of a Peasant Woman*. In all of this lies that simple fact that we are a product of our stories, and we carry them with us, somewhat obscured, wherever we go.

It is said that good leaders possess the “three Rs”: they are Rational, they are Reflective, and they are Relational. Although all three are important, being

relational is key. Relational leaders lean in with curiosity, seeking connection by understanding each person's story. They know that to be successful, they must ensure that those they encounter feel a sense of belonging and a belief in their own potential, knowing their stories matter and that their gifts are both seen and recognized. Relational leaders value individual differences and they create opportunities for all voices and perspectives to be embedded in school practice, because being relational is being equitable, and equity is not something we do occasionally, but is the lens through which we intentionally plan and carry out our vision for our schools.

The 2024 BCPVPA Foundations for New School Leaders course cemented the power of personal stories and relational leadership. The week was rich with presentations, case studies, deep learning and moments of insight, but, more importantly, it was about networking, hearing the stories of others, collaboratively grappling with difficult concepts, and honing our strengths as relational leaders.

"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."

— Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Dr. Dustin Louie began the week by telling us how the Musqueam, when approaching a new territory, would enter with their paddles up, to show they were coming in peace. He invited us to enter decolonization work with our "paddles up", challenging our own assumptions and being radically anti-oppressive, for reconciliation is not a synonym for "apology", but is instead about transformational and sustainable change. Decolonization, he argued,

is about rebuilding relationships, and that involves being aware of the danger of the single story, one that elevates some and silences others. He encouraged us to deconstruct old narratives and to rebuild new ones that include more voices and more perspectives. Dr Louie reminded us that attaining strong, transformational leadership requires listening to and elevating the stories of others.



Rebeca with BCPVPA President
Dr. Shannon Behan

“A child who does not feel embraced by their village will burn it down to feel its warmth”

– African proverb

Carolyn Roberts stressed the importance of connection, reminding us that colonization has severed our relationship to the land and to each other. She argued that decolonizing is about restoring those ties, urging us to create ethical spaces where we are intentional witnesses, courageous enough to reimagine a new system of care. She also spoke of the importance of challenging held beliefs in order to move forward with authenticity and courage. Who was

displaced in order for us to be here today? Knowing this land was never bought, sold, or traded, what are we responsible for? How do these realizations inform us as leaders? We must hold ourselves accountable for building strong relationships and allow the relationships to guide the work we do, all while connecting with and honouring the stories that each individual brings.

“You don’t inspire people by showing them your power. You inspire people by showing them their power.”

– Brian Aspinall

BCPVPA Director of Health and Well-being, Rochelle Morandini, also spoke of how we need to be relational leaders, nudging us to, “lead with humility and genuineness”, and create environments with high psychological safety. In order for all members of a team to flourish, they need to feel connected and valued, safe to speak their story and know it is held with respect by their team. At their core,

psychologically safe environments are grounded in story and relationships: there is respect and appreciation, input and learning are valued, mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth, and diversity is not just welcome, but celebrated and leveraged. When there is psychological safety, all members of the group are represented and can bring forth their stories and thrive.

“At the end of our lives/ There is an exchange between worlds/ Every storyteller becomes an ancestor/ Every ancestor lives on in our stories”

– Indigenous Peoples’ Exhibit

Dr. Kristi Blakeway invited us to share and receive stories together, because stories have the power to build community, create empathy, and strengthen understanding. Stories are windows into our lived experiences; they crumble bridges, give insight, and offer validation. She reminded us to lean in with curiosity, not judgement, seeking to understand challenging behaviours by unpacking hidden drivers and personal motivations. She spoke at length of the importance of relational discipline and restorative approaches, urging us to strive to understand rather than punish, and to move from being punitive to being relational. If we are truly hoping to be equitable

and connected in our practice, we must ensure we ask the right questions:

Who was harmed? What relationships need to be repaired? How can we fix this? How can we all return strengthened? What did we learn?

It is through these questions that we can enact relational discipline and work towards equitable care for all. It is through these questions that we will understand the stories that have shaped each and every behaviour.

“Stories constitute the single most powerful weapon in a leader's arsenal”

– Dr. Howard Gardner

The 2024 BCPVPA Foundations course clearly illustrated the fact that, as new leaders, we need to step forward with curiosity and optimism, and we need to be relentlessly relational. We must show up with humility, integrity, and courage, listening to all stories, and making space for all voices. We have a responsibility to understand where we hold privilege and recognize that we can leverage

our privilege to amplify voices that have not had an opportunity to be heard. To truly be equitable, inclusive, relational leaders, we need to challenge our own beliefs and unlearn and rewrite narratives, so that all of members of the school community can see themselves represented and valued, and have a sense of belonging within our schools.

STEVEN DALLA LANA, Principal SD 57 (Prince George) - Facilitator and 2024 Foundations Facilitator Representative

A Gift Of Time

When my wife, Silia, asked me why I chose to serve as a facilitator for the BCPVPA's Foundations for New School Leaders program after a demanding year of work, it gave me pause. It prompted me to reflect on the motivations behind this commitment, and to consider why my fellow facilitators and I dedicate a week at UBC to support new Vice-Principals and Principals.

In seeking answers, I turned to my co-facilitators, who shared their perspectives on this meaningful work. The responses were varied, but centered on a common theme: the genuine joy of giving back. Many of us, having experienced the program as participants, felt a strong desire to return and contribute to the growth of our new leaders. We recognize the importance of mentorship, understanding that in this journey, one should have a mentor ahead of them, mentors alongside them, and a mentee following behind.

Our facilitators consistently demonstrate a deep commitment to both their own learning and the success of participants. While participants engage in case study groups, facilitators form their own learning communities, relishing in the process of

decision-making and guiding conversations at our home tables. This collaborative spirit is the essence of Foundations, where facilitators and participants alike thrive in a metacognitive environment that fosters growth and connection.

Personally, my reasons for serving as a facilitator are twofold: first, to give back to the BCPVPA and the leaders who have enriched my own journey; and second, because I deeply value human connection and collaboration. As school leaders, it is imperative that we cultivate these social connections, as they are foundational to our roles.

At Foundations 2024, we emphasized the significance of stories, understanding that they shape our experiences and our leadership. Reflecting on my own journey, I attended Foundations as a participant 14 years ago, an experience that was pivotal in my development as a Vice-Principal, Principal, and individual. It was during this time that I realized the importance of connecting with the BCPVPA, an organization that would become a cornerstone of my professional life.



Steven speaks on behalf of the facilitators at the Foundations Celebration Dinner

The memories of Foundations events, locations, and the wisdom of our educational elders continue to resonate with me. I recall the inspiring presence of then-Minister of Education, Shirley Bond, who highlighted the necessity of knowing and engaging with our roles at both district and provincial levels. These experiences underscored the transition from classroom teacher to school leader, expanding my perspective on the broader responsibilities that come with these roles.

The relationships formed during my time at Foundations have endured, becoming invaluable sources of support and friendship. Whether cramming into a limo with colleagues or receiving mentorship from my facilitator, Brian Chappell, the connections made during that week have had a lasting impact on my leadership journey.

Being a Foundations facilitator fosters a mutually beneficial relationship with participants. We learn alongside them, sharing in moments of vulnerability, and engaging in deep, meaningful conversations about our work, our students, and ourselves. These experiences not only enhance our professional development, but also strengthen our networks and leadership skills. The continuous support from colleagues across the province reinforces the collaborative culture we strive to cultivate.

Now, it is our turn to give back. By participating in Foundations and becoming active within the BCPVPA, new leaders are welcomed into a supportive community of peers. This community is a space for sharing ideas, solving common challenges, and celebrating successes — an essential practice for all Principals and Vice-Principals. Too often, we

focus on the challenges without acknowledging the successes that we achieve daily.

To our new leaders and Foundations participants, my message is this: *Who you are matters*. Your character, values, and leadership style profoundly influence your school community. Be true to yourself each day, for there is no better person than you to lead your school. Remember, you are a role model,

and your vision, knowledge, and openness will shape your school's culture.

Foundations brings together practicing Principals and Vice-Principals as facilitators alongside the inspirational voices of new leaders. It is an exceptional opportunity for leadership development, networking, and learning for both facilitators and participants. It truly is a gift of time.





THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Faculty of Education

CONGRATULATIONS UBC TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (TELP) CLASS OF 2024

A one-year program designed for leaders in the K-12 system and connected sectors who are ready to transform education and improve student learning



Heather Androsoff

District Vice Principal, Early Learning and Child Care | Sea to Sky

"TELP takes participants on an introspective journey while simultaneously linking them to a powerful network committed to transformative change focused on equity."



Juanita Coltman

Indigenous Principal | Surrey

"This experience has been the most powerful and meaningful learning opportunity in my educational career. The spirals of inquiry will have a lasting impact on my work moving forward."



Constance Easton

Coordinator Mental Health, SEL & Counselling | Richmond

"Exploring learning in a new way, using lenses of equity and diversity while connecting with an amazing network of educators gave me so much nourishment."



April Pikkarainen

Principal | Richmond

"TELP has illuminated the importance of networks, connections, and a collaborative learning community. As we consider our roles in reconciliation and systems transformation, it is imperative that we walk alongside one another in this work."



Gysbert (Gus) Ruiter

Inclusion Specialist Teacher | Gold Trail

"It was so rewarding to develop new pathways to transformative systems and equitable practices from TELP alumni and other educational leaders from around the province."



Brianne Aldcroft
Principal
Sea to Sky



Joanne Calder
Grade 6 & 7 Teacher
Delta



Kristine Canas
French Immersion Teacher
Richmond



Brenton Close
Teacher
Gold Trail



Kristen Crawford
District Principal of
Indigenous Education
North Okanagan-Shuswap



Craig Elliot
Teacher
West Vancouver



Brenna Ewing
Director of Inclusive Education
Campbell River



Tara Fisher
Principal
Coquitlam



Kimberley Grimwood
Principal
Central Okanagan



Naomi Hazon
Principal
Richmond



Angela Higgs
Teacher
West Vancouver



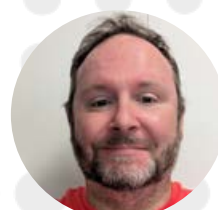
Deena Kotak Buckley
Principal
Vancouver



Sara Lai
Vice Principal
Richmond



Riley McMitchell
Principal
Vancouver



Shawn Merke
Principal
Gold Trail



Lys Paredes
Principal
Surrey



Leah Scharf
Vice Principal
Richmond



Misty Terpstra
Principal
Kootenay Lake



Kevin Vines
Principal
Richmond

Did you hear? TELP is turning 10!

As we reflect on the past ten years of TELP, we are filled with gratitude for the meaningful connections we have made and the incredible community of leaders who have joined us. Read about our alumni's journeys.



Committees can sometimes be misunderstood.

People may avoid eye contact and swerve around their colleagues in the hallway, concerned that the entreaty to join a committee may be imminent. When a committee is not purposeful, or not mindfully run, it can indeed be a problem. But when a committee has a clear mandate and objectives, it can open a golden opportunity for an organization to deeply explore a facet of their work, and to amplify informed discourse around a specific topic or goal.

Every year, the BCPVPA convenes Standing Committees that are advisory committees to our Board of Directors. Each committee is comprised of active members who have applied for the opportunity. The BCPVPA President is a member of all Standing Committees, and each committee is co-chaired by Directors of the Board and supported by BCPVPA staff.

Committees generally meet twice in the school year, with one in-person meeting and one virtual meeting.

For some BCPVPA members, being part of a committee may be the first step towards a more deliberate engagement with the Association. For others, it can be a pathway to gaining a different perspective on a particular aspect of BC's public education sector. Our members have shared many different reasons for applying to join a committee, from giving back to their community of colleagues, to exploring more deeply a particular area of interest.

No matter the reason, BCPVPA members who have joined advisory committees have both learned alongside and connected with their peers, and have supported the work of the BCPVPA members elected to our Board of Directors. The thoughts, experiences, and perspectives of our members are critical to our success as an organization.

Budget Advisory Committee

The Budget Advisory Committee reviews the budget and associated processes, and prepares advice and recommendations to accompany the budget when it is presented to the Board of Directors.



Contract Advisory Committee

The Contract Advisory Committee advises the Board on matters pertaining to the economic welfare of members.



Equity, Diversity and inclusion

Advisory Committee

Our newest committee in 2024-2025, the EDI Advisory Committee advises the Board on matters relating to equity, diversity and inclusion – including but not limited to – racism, oppression and SOGI-related issues.



Indigenous Leadership

Advisory Committee

The Indigenous Leadership Advisory Committee advises the Board on matters relating to Indigenous leadership.



Professional Learning and Development Advisory Committee

The PLD Advisory Committee advises the Board with respect to professional development programs and service to members.



Workplace Intensification, safety, and Health Advisory Committee

The W.I.S.H Committee advises the Board regarding the ways in which the Association can address issues of work intensification and well-being for our members.

A group of people are gathered around a wooden table in a bright, modern office setting. A man in a dark blazer and striped shirt stands and speaks, gesturing with his hands. Several people are seated at the table, looking towards him. On the table are laptops, coffee cups, and a sandwich. A large, stylized sun-like graphic with orange rays is overlaid on the left side of the image, with the text 'Convening Committees' in the center.

Convening Committees



Forward, Together.

As legal counsel to the BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association and its members over five decades, we provide strategic advice in all aspects of education and employment law, labour law, human rights, disability and wellness, dispute resolution, corporate governance, and commercial law.



Allen Soltan

Partner, Vancouver

allen.soltan@dlapiper.com

T: +1 604 643 2970



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ZACH'S ATHLETICS

ZACH'S ATHLETICS

Sports and Fitness Programs

We provide fun, educational programs that improve physical literacy. Our programs are modifiable to fit grades K-12 and can accommodate a wide range of skill and experience levels within the same session. Reach out if you would like to bring us in for an in-school unit or if your school is in need of more after-school care.

OUR PROGRAMS TEACH THE FOLLOWING SKILLS AND CONCEPTS...

SPIKEBALL

Rules, receiving, setting, spiking, passing, defense, offense, strategy, gameplay, serving, and more.

FLAG-FOOTBALL

Rules, throwing, catching, running with and without the ball, penalties, coverage, route-running, offense, defense, strategy, and more.

FITNESS

Body awareness, balance, power, speed, stability, agility, strength, flexibility, correct movement patterns, exercises for all the muscle groups, how to use basic equipment, plyometrics, and more.

FENCING

Rules, en garde position, movement in fencing position, footwork, lunge (attack), parries (defense), strategy, problem solving (how to beat different opponents), controlling distance, and more.

MULTI-SPORT

A multitude of mainstream and uncommon sports. Sports skills, physical literacy, and team work are emphasized in a fun environment. In a wide-scope program all-around athletic abilities are improved.



www.zachsathletics.org

Your Success Makes All The Difference

Inspiring leaders cultivate vibrant learning spaces, building school communities where students and staff feel connected and valued.

Learn more about the many exciting careers for current and future leaders.



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vpa Princip(ed)**

You can find archived editions of each *Princip(ed)* issue on our website, along with links to all of the individual articles!

bcpvpa.org

Resources/Publications

Island Leadership Coalition (ILC)

*Nurturing Leaders,
Fostering Community*

by

Dr. Andrea McComb
*Director of Professional
Learning & Development
BCPVPA*

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.

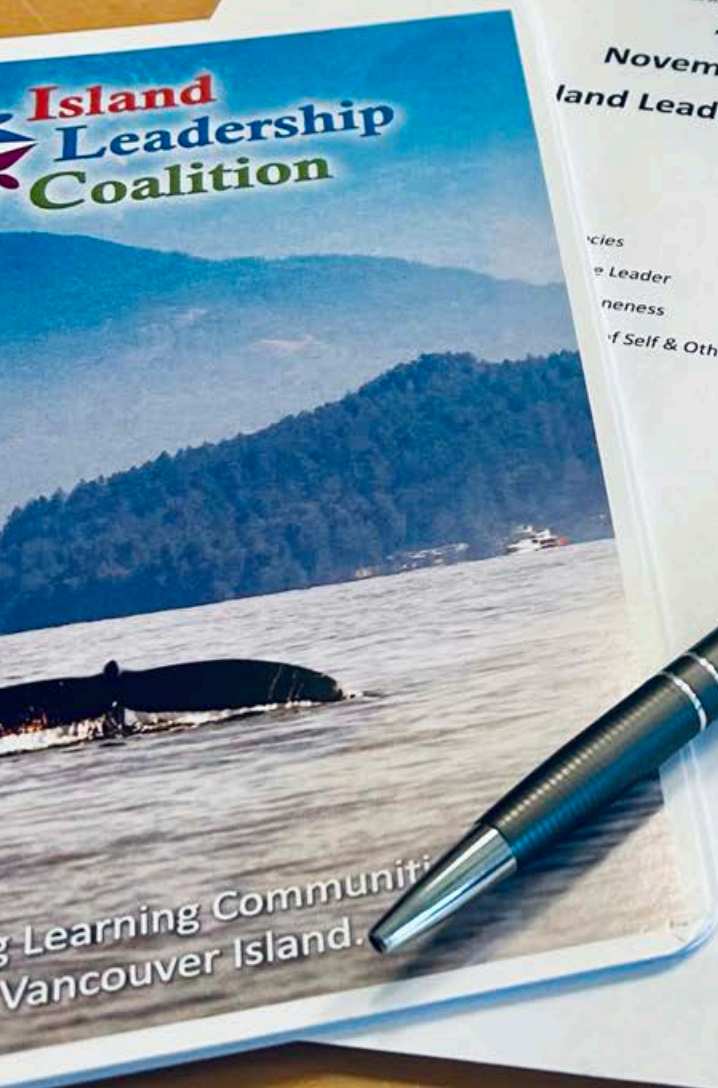
Purpose

"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
ational 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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se to start, continue, or stop in
re or hold ourselves
change is successful?
can take to help myself and
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e stand to gain from the change?

Ihana

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.

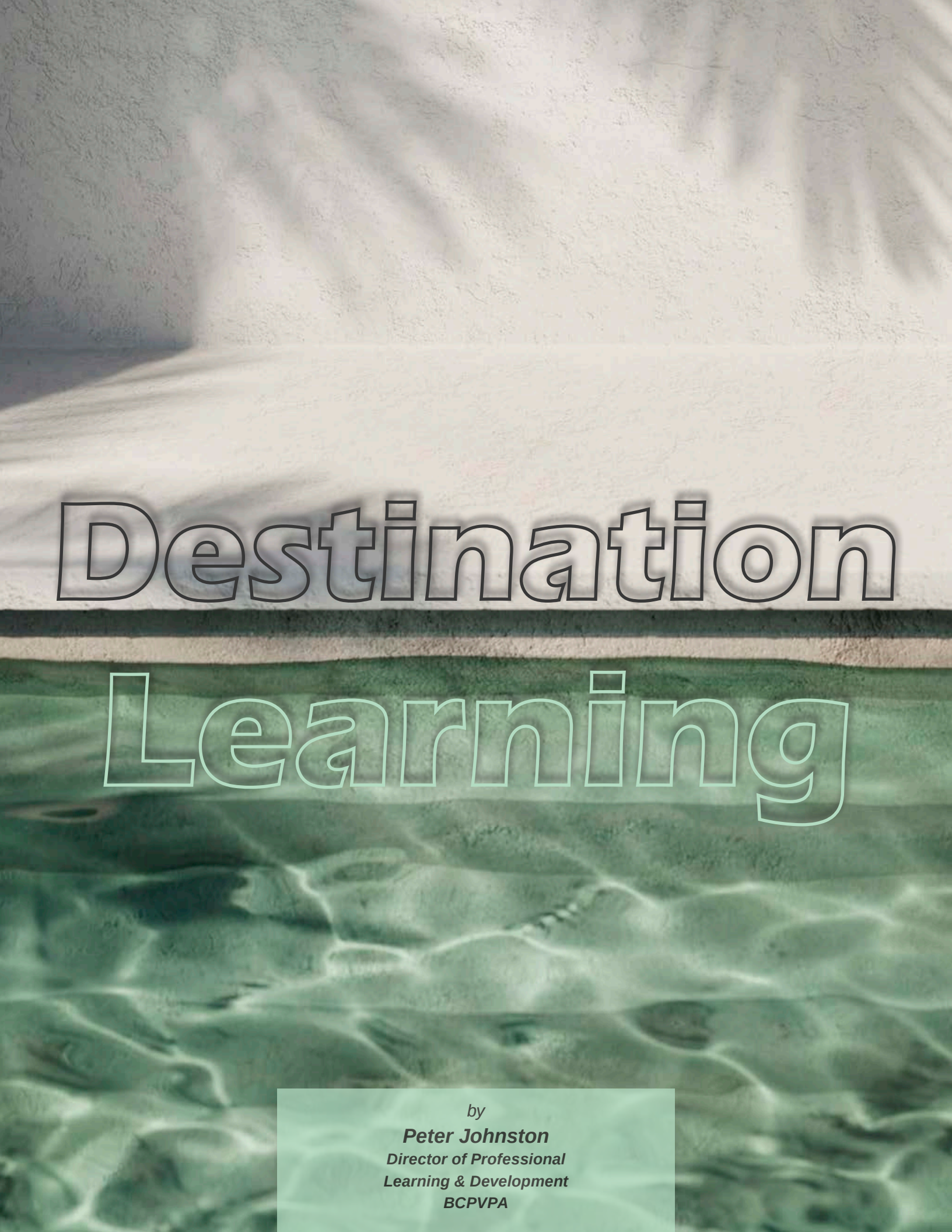
Dr. Andrea McComb is a Director of Professional Learning and Development at the BCPVPA and the lead collaborator for the ILC. "I am also a graduate of ILC. Partnering with BCSSA Island Chapter models a shared vision and mission for leadership development within education. The collaborative nature of 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.





Destination Learning

by
Peter Johnston
*Director of Professional
Learning & Development
BCPVPA*

The Perfect Blend of Professional Growth and Rejuvenation

"I loved the networking opportunities. Discussing challenges and solutions in such a relaxed environment really helped build strong professional relationships."

- BCPVPA PLD Program Participant

In the 2023-2024 school year, the BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association (BCPVPA) launched an exciting new initiative: Destination Learning. Imagine a professional development experience that combines the rigors of deep learning with the relaxation of a resort spa. Sounds like a dream? It was a dream come true for those who participated last year. The program sold out quickly, and the rave reviews have encouraged us to bring back Destination Learning in 2024-2025, and to make it even better.

A Look Back: 2023-2024 Destination Learning

Destination Learning offered three unique programs that catered to various aspects of leadership, set against the backdrop of some of BC's most beautiful resorts:

Amplification for Experienced School Leaders

Hosted at the luxurious Sparkling Hill Resort in Vernon, BC, this program focused on school-based leadership theory and innovative practices for collaborative growth. Participants felt reinvigorated, with a renewed appreciation for effective teamwork and leadership.

Leading a Culture of Learning

Set in the serene Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort & Conference Centre, this retreat combined the world-renowned leadership paradigms of FranklinCovey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People®, Multipliers®, and more. It was a holistic journey designed to foster reflection, rejuvenation, and profound learning. And, as a bonus, participants received Dan Coyle's *Culture Code Playbook* as their workbook.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People® Workshop

Held at the picturesque Manteo at Eldorado Resort in Kelowna, BC, this exclusive workshop was a sanctuary for personal and professional rejuvenation. It offered strategies to prioritize tasks, communication techniques to build trust, and relationship-building skills to forge alliances based on mutual goals.

"The combination of deep learning and relaxation was a game-changer for me. I returned to my school with new ideas and a refreshed mindset."

- BCPVPA PLD Program Participant



The Benefits of Destination Learning: More Than Just a Getaway

Destination Learning is more than just another 'conference'. The combination of professional development with the relaxing environment of a resort spa has massive physical and mental benefits:

Deep Learning

Participants can immerse themselves in learning in a relaxed setting, away from the usual hustle and bustle. This focused environment enhances the retention and application of new concepts. Think of it as a spa day for your brain, as your mind gets the chance to unwind and soak up new ideas.

Physical Rejuvenation

The resort setting offers various wellness activities, such as spa treatments, yoga sessions, and nature walks. These activities help reduce stress, improve mental clarity, and boost overall well-being. It's like hitting the reset button on your body.

Networking Opportunities

Sharing experiences and ideas in a relaxed setting fosters stronger connections among peers. It's the difference between having a meeting in a stuffy boardroom and having a lively discussion over coffee by the beach. Which scenario sounds more appealing?

Looking Ahead: Destination Learning 2.0

We have taken the best parts of the 2023-2024 Destination Learning, and added some new elements to enhance your experience.

Amplification for Experienced School Leaders I

April 3, 4, & 5, 2025
Sparkling Hill Resort

Dive deeper into leadership theory and innovative practices while enjoying the stunning views and amenities of Sparkling Hill Resort.

Amplification for Experienced School Leaders II

April 3, 4, & 5, 2025
Sparkling Hill Resort

This learning is for those who may have taken Amplification I (but it is not a prerequisite), and would like to enjoy the beauty of Sparkling Hill Resort while they progress even more deeply into leadership theory and innovative practices using the framework of the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People®

Leading a Culture of Learning

May 8, 9, & 10, 2025
Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside
Spa Resort

Experience the serene setting of the Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort while exploring comprehensive leadership frameworks and using Dan Coyle's *Culture Code Playbook* as part of your learning journey.

*"The workshops were incredibly insightful,
and the setting made it feel like a retreat
rather than just another conference."*

- BCPVPA PLD Program Participant



Don't Miss Out!

If you're a BC Principal or Vice-Principal, this is your chance to combine professional growth with personal rejuvenation. The 2023-2024 programs sold out quickly, so be sure to visit our registration page to see which programs are ready for registration.



This is more than just professional development; it's an investment in yourself. Join us for Destination Learning and return to your school or district office with new skills, renewed energy, and a network of supportive peers. As one participant put it, "It's the best of both worlds — a break-even cost for a priceless experience."

Here to Serve: Create Your Own Destination Learning

We understand that sometimes scheduling conflicts arise, or you might want a more customized experience with your own team or local Association. That's why we are *here to serve!*

Gather eight or more Principal and Vice-Principal colleagues, and create your own Destination Learning retreat. As your Professional Learning and Development Directors, we can accommodate most of the work. From co-designing the learning sessions to coordinating with the resort, we will ensure your retreat is tailored to meet your specific needs. It is excellent value for your professional learning dollars.

Why wait? Get together with your colleagues, and make Destination Learning a reality for your team or local Association. Transform your professional development into an unforgettable experience that combines learning with relaxation. *We look forward to seeing you there!*



Visit the BCPVPA website and select Professional Learning

You can choose to register for an upcoming program or event, and find out more about the available workshops and networking opportunities. Members can select My BCPVPA to explore content in our member portal.



Return-It School Program is Back From Summer Break!

Return-It School is the free beverage container recycling program offered by Return-It. Return-It is the not-for-profit product steward that makes recycling in BC easier for everyone. The Return-It system diverts used beverage containers from the landfill and makes sure they are properly recycled. You probably know us best through your local Return-It depot.

By participating in BC's **FREE Return-It School program**, you get access to our online Teacher's Dashboard with exclusive educational resources and fundraising tips, our online activity book as well as free recycling bins for your school. Your school keeps all the deposit refunds from recycling, so you can use the program to supplement your school's fundraising efforts. We want to help students learn how to do their part to help keep the planet green by recycling their beverage containers and more.



Free Program

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



Free Recycling Bins

Get up to 3 free Return-It bins to help your school's recycling program. Plus, discover the best collection & bottle drive methods for your school, from Return-It Express to pick-up services (where available).



\$5,000 Grand Prize Story Contest

Share your school's interesting, creative and impactful recycling story with us and you could win a Grand Prize of \$5,000 or the 2nd place prize of \$2500 (two Elementary School winners and two High School winners every year!)



Tools & Tips

Registered schools will have access to resources to help with recycling programs including fundraising and bottle drive tips.



Return-It School Video Presentation Kit

Teachers can request a free Presentation Kit via mail with a fun & educational video about recycling, lesson tips, and special goodies for their students.



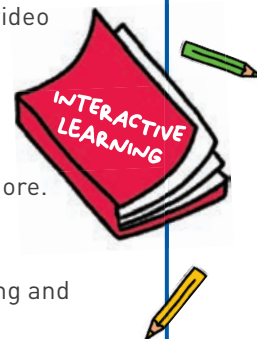
Return-It School Online Activity Book

Our Activity Book is available online to registered schools through the teacher's dashboard, and has recycling-themed games, comics, fun recycling facts and more.



Bottle Drives with Express

Return-It Express makes it easier for schools to hold their bottle drives. No sorting and easy drop offs! For more information, visit return-it.ca/programs/bottledrives/.



Sign up today at ReturnItSchool.ca and join hundreds of BC schools.

STORY CONTEST WINNERS FROM 2023/24

Elementary \$5,000 Grand Prize Winner: Mountview Elementary

Mountview Elementary School in Williams Lake has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental preservation. For nearly a decade, the school has maintained an active beverage container recycling program aimed at reducing the amount of beverage containers entering landfills. In the 2023/2024 school year, this dedication continued, and their grade 5/6 class created the "Litter Busters" group. The group, under the supervision of an Education Assistant, installed classroom recycling bins and worked on collecting and sorting materials found in the bins.



High School \$5,000 Grand Prize Winner: Kyuquot Elementary Secondary School

Kyuquot Elementary Secondary School, located in the treaty territory of the Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations (KCFN) on the west coast of Vancouver Island has no road access and the only way to access their community is by boat or plane.

Since the community doesn't have a recycling center yet, the school developed their own collection program and organized their first bottle drive where they collected beverage containers to divert them from landfill and to clean up the community. This bottle drive was met with huge success with 5,832 beverage containers collected.

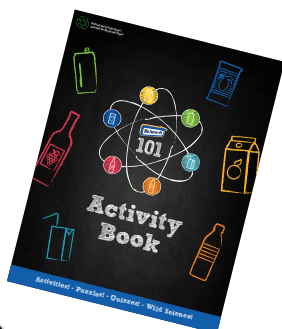


Read the full stories at

ReturnItSchool.ca/SchoolNews

RETURN-IT SCHOOL ONLINE ACTIVITY BOOK: RECYCLING FACTS, GAMES AND MORE

Did you know that we provide a free online activity book as part of the Return-It school program? It provides fun, interactive games and facts about beverage container recycling. For inquiries about printed activity books, email returnschool@returnit.ca.



BOTTLE DRIVES WITH EXPRESS

Return-It Express makes it easier for schools to plan and run bottle drives by taking the work out of fundraising. It allows students, teachers, parents and the community to focus more on spreading the word about their school's bottle drive and collecting beverage containers rather than spending time sorting and counting containers individually or holding onto physical deposit refunds. Scan the QR code for tips and resources on how to get started.



HOW FUNDRAISING WITH EXPRESS WORKS:



Sign up for a free Express account for your school at Return-It.ca/Express.



Share your school's Express account number within your school (and your community if you wish). A phone number or any memorable 10-digit number is valid.



Bring your unsorted containers in transparent plastic bags* to an Express location. To find an Express location near you, visit Return-It.ca/Locations/Express.



Log in at the Express label stand at the depot using your school's account number. Anyone with the account number can contribute to your bottle drive.



Print off the number of labels you need, stick one on each bag, and leave them at the depot.



The depot will sort and count the containers for you and credit your Express account.

* Some depots may have per-visit bag limits. Contact your local Express location directly for more information.

Neutrality is Non- Negotiable

*Southern Butler Price
Shares Their
Approach to
Conducting
Investigations*

by

Lisa Southern

Lawyer, Southern Butler Price

What (and Who) is SBP?

Ten years ago, I started my own law firm from my kitchen table in North Vancouver. By that time in 2014, I had had the privilege of working as in-house counsel for both Surrey and North Vancouver School Districts, and had conducted workplace investigations for both districts in that role. Just as I loved the sector, I loved the work of conducting investigations – it was the perfect blend of functions and skills for me, where I could lean into my time as an adjudicator at the Labour Relations Board to ensure that the process was fair, while also having the latitude to conduct the discovery that I determined was necessary and relevant in the circumstances to find out what happened. Most of the investigation files I had at that time involved K-12, where I investigated a multitude of issues that ran the gamut from misconduct towards students to complaints against parents, and from conduct involving casual custodians to leaders in the sector.

Ten years later, and my practice and the firm has evolved and grown in conjunction with the work. Today, Southern Butler Price LLP (SBP) is the largest firm of its kind in Canada, with more than 35 lawyers and offices in two cities.

Our firm is different from a typical labour and employment law firm. Our team is made up of respected talent from *both sides* of the labour community.

Most labour law firms declare themselves as ‘employer side’ or ‘union/employee side’. Prior to SBP, no BC labour law firm offered purely neutral services. Given legislative changes and growing awareness of workplace human rights issues, we believed the best way to serve clients was from a neutral firm platform, effectively, ‘no one’s side’. SBP committed to only offering core services – investigations, assessments, mediations, arbitrations, and training – as ‘impartial’. You will not see us advocate on behalf of a school district, a union or an employee;



Lisa Southern
Southern Butler Price

argue for one side or another; or try to defend a party or prove an outcome. Fundamentally, fairness is key, and neutrality is non-negotiable.

When Might Your Work Connect with Ours?

There are several different ways a Principal or Vice-Principal may come into contact with a SBP lawyer. You may meet one of our lawyers delivering training on respectful workplace issues (boundaries training, for example) or on investigation skills. You may encounter us at an arbitration or mediation relating to a workplace grievance. You may participate in a culture assessment or environmental scan led by our team to support engagement with school district staff in a collaborative process designed to improve morale or address points of friction.

More commonly, though, you may meet one of our lawyers in the course of an investigation. It is on this topic that I want to share some key information – as well as tips and tricks – that I hope will help you feel more knowledgeable and, therefore, comfortable participating yourself or supporting your staff who may be working through the process.

What Does an Investigation Look Like?

When a request for a workplace investigation is received, a very structured approach is taken to ensure the process reflects the requirements of the employer's policies, and reflects the needs for privacy and confidentiality of the complainant and the respondent.

Our paramount job is to ensure that the investigation process we offer is fair for all involved. This overarching requirement guides us in our work and how we manage complex, and at times fractious, matters.

Typically, the investigative process takes the following rhythm.

"Our paramount job is to ensure that the investigation process we offer is fair for all involved."

Step 1: Terms of Reference (TOR)

Based on the initial communications about the complaint and its required investigation, and a review of applicable policy and/or collective agreement language, we work to establish the TOR. The TOR set out the scope of work, timeline, deliverables, and reporting structure.

Step 2: Interviews

The Investigator interviews those who they identify as having relevant information, and may also ask for documents or other evidence from the employer or the participants. The first interview is typically with the complainant to fully understand their complaint, followed by witnesses or by the respondent, depending on the nature of the issues. Prior to interviewing the respondent, the Investigator synthesizes the allegations and provides a document referred to as 'particulars' (the who, what, when, where) to help them understand the nature of the allegations before they are asked to answer any questions.

We promote the practice of allowing all participants to have a support person present during their interview, even the witnesses. We recognize that these processes can be stressful for all of those involved, and that it is valuable to have someone to

debrief with, take notes of what was discussed, and be another set of ears to digest information about the process.

Each interview is structured to ensure due process and administrative fairness. The Investigator explains their role and then reminds participants of their three key obligations:

1. Confidentiality is crucial to a fair and effective investigation. Participants need to keep confidential all information they discuss during their interviews. It is especially important that they do not have any communication related to what is being investigated with any witnesses. Exceptions may include discussing the investigation with their support person/representative and any medical professionals they utilize to assist in managing their health and wellness.
2. All participants are entitled to be free from negative reprisal for having participated.
3. All participants are required to be honest and forthright in the investigation process. The Investigator relies on the information that participants provide, and it is imperative (and a part of their employment obligations) that participants be co-operative and honest in the process.

Step 3: Analysis and Report Writing

Each investigation necessitates synthesizing evidence, making factual findings, and reporting out. The final report is written and submitted consistent with the TOR. Any follow-up meetings and discussions are scheduled as required. SBP does not provide recommendations on discipline if allegations are substantiated. This is left for the school district to decide, with assistance from its legal counsel. Our job is fact-finding and determining if there is a breach of policy and/or law; it is not to give advice on outcomes.

"Our job is fact-finding and determining if there is a breach of policy and/or law; it is not to give advice on outcomes."

The Investigator may be required to attend a school board hearing, arbitration or civil trial, but not in the role of advocate; rather, it would be to provide information on their work as Investigator and how they came to their determination regarding findings.

Important Legal Tidbits

Investigators need to be mindful of the basic requirements for **procedural fairness**: impartiality, lack of pre-judgment, transparency and honesty with the parties, provision of particulars of allegations, consideration of relevant evidence, and conforming to the applicable policies and collective agreements. While these basics do not change, the degree to which the principles of procedural fairness apply may vary between investigations. In the simplest of terms: the more serious the allegations and potential outcomes, the more diligence and process the Investigator may need to apply.

The standard for investigations is **reasonableness**, not perfection. There is rarely, if ever, one right answer to any complaint or allegation. To illustrate, imagine a complaint has been brought to the Human Rights Tribunal. The same complaint is given to five different Tribunal members for decision making. It is possible, and reasonable, that members may decide differently whether or not the complaint is founded.

"The standard for investigations is reasonableness, not perfection. There is rarely, if ever, one right answer to any complaint or allegation."

They may run different hearings to arrive at their decision. So long as their process is fair, it would meet the standard of reasonableness, even if each of the five members' processes has differences within them. Even in the unlikely result that all five members make the same decision, it is a certainty that they would all arrive at that decision differently and would express the reasons for their decision differently. This scenario shows that even in judicial and administrative hearings (which investigations are not), in every case, there may be a range of different decisions, and different reasons for those decisions that – though they are different – would all be reasonable.

The Goldilocks of process is **timing**: it needs to be not too slow but not too fast. Delay can impact the investigation process in several ways, including undermining the quality of the evidence; undermining the confidence that the participants have in the process; creating uncertainty; undermining the acceptability of the ultimate findings; and creating the perception that the issues are complex or the findings hard to determine. Investigation work is reactive work, often involving emotional, difficult issues and conflict. There is almost always a sense

of urgency with respect to the process and most clients want action and answers immediately. While this dynamic is understandable, and understood by our team, we maintain that reaction cannot be the primary driver for how a process is conducted. Timely answers are desired, but no one is served by a rushed, flawed process.

Top Tips

First, let me acknowledge the wonderful work you do to support your staff, community, and most importantly, the kids. Whether you are the complainant, respondent, or witness, hold on to these thoughts as you work through the investigation process.

1. If this feels hard, get support. You do not need to be doing this in isolation. You have the BCPVPA and school district HR staff who can give you information about the process and how it works. Take the uncertainty, newness, and isolation out of this by talking to those you can (bearing in mind confidentiality). If it is stressful, talk to a counsellor to get help coping.
2. If you are the complainant or respondent, make sure you ask your Investigator some key questions to clarify the process and timelines:
 - a. Who will get a copy of the report? What does reporting out look like?
 - b. What is the estimated timeline? Can you contact the Investigator to get an update on timelines?
 - c. Can you provide names of witnesses?
 - d. When can you submit documents you think are relevant?
 - e. Who can you speak to about the process?

3. If you are the respondent, make sure you have particulars in advance of answering questions so you can fairly respond to them. If you are surprised by an allegation during an interview and are not ready to respond, explain that and ask for some time.

4. If your staff are participating in this process (and you are not involved as a complainant or respondent), do not make the mistake of thinking you cannot talk to them at all. Investigations can be very isolating for participants. You can remind them to get support, offer them reassurance that the process is designed to be fair for all, and express that you and the school district value their honesty in this matter and how much they are appreciated generally. Saying nothing is an ineffective HR strategy. We do not want participants sharing their evidence, but we also do not want them to feel ignored, isolated, or unappreciated. A simple thank you – an acknowledgement and reminder of appropriate supports – goes a long way in helping staff feel better about their role in this process, and in connecting to their school community.

Concluding Thoughts

If you are involved in an investigation, make sure you reach out to school district HR staff and the BCPVPA to get advice if you are unsure about your role or the process.

If you connect with one of our lawyers, feel free to also ask questions and seek understanding about the process and your contributions to it. A key goal of an investigation is to find out what happened, but another important goal is to try to help those involved understand the process and ensure they feel they have been treated fairly and respectfully throughout.



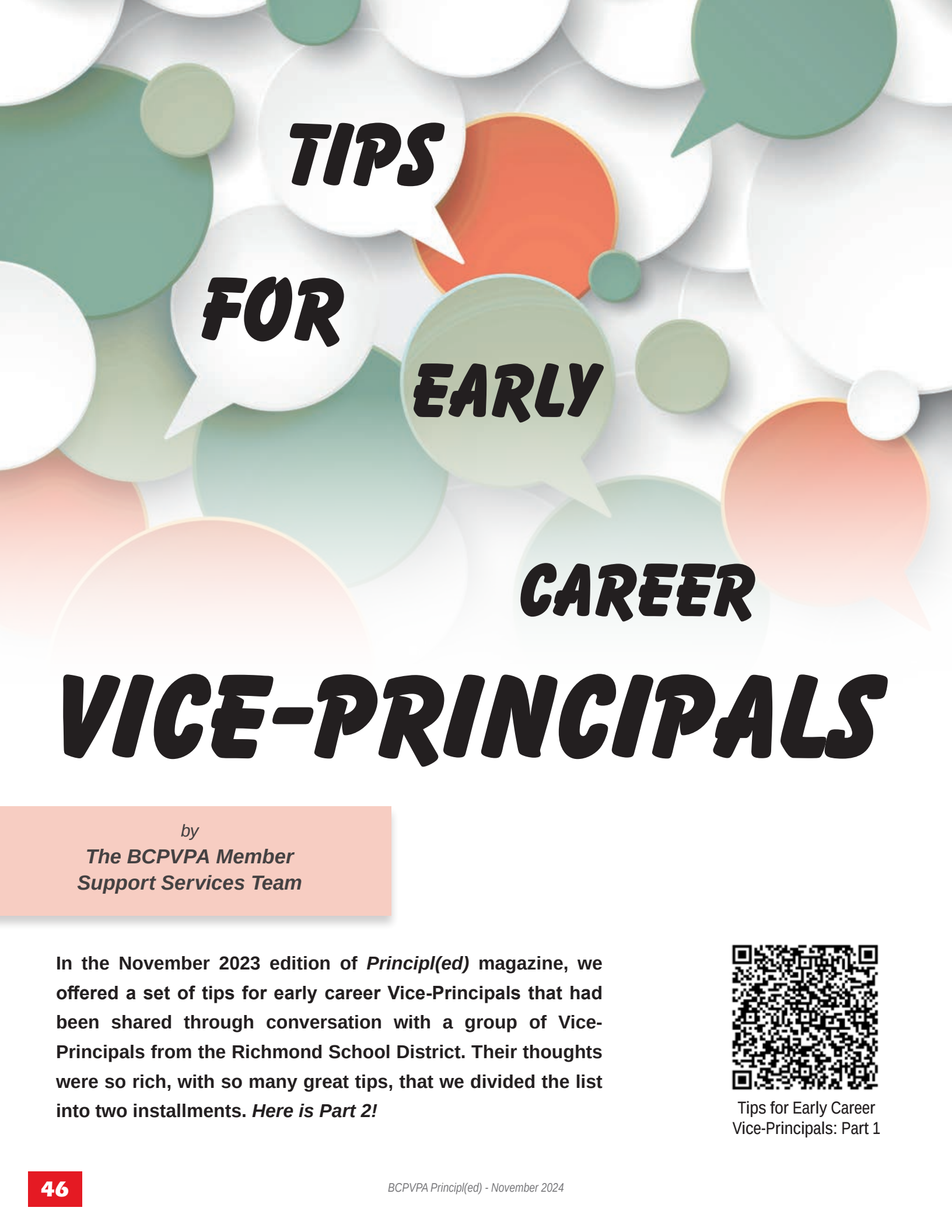
/southern-butler-price

The BCPVPA recommends that members contact an MSS Director for more information about being a witness, complainant or respondent within a formal investigation process. The Director will answer questions and guide members through the process, communicate with the district and investigator, and can be present during the interview process.

To find out more, contact
mssinfo@bcpvpa.bc.ca

Read “The Role of a ‘Witness’ in a Workplace Investigation” in the May 2024 issue of *Principled* magazine:
bit.ly/BCP_M24_Witness

BCPVPA members who are going through an investigation process can access confidential counselling support through humanworks. For more information on humanworks, please contact Rochelle Morandini, BCPVPA Director of Member Health and Well-being at rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca



TIPS FOR EARLY CAREER VICE-PRINCIPALS

by
*The BCPVPA Member
Support Services Team*

In the November 2023 edition of *Principl(ed)* magazine, we offered a set of tips for early career Vice-Principals that had been shared through conversation with a group of Vice-Principals from the Richmond School District. Their thoughts were so rich, with so many great tips, that we divided the list into two installments. *Here is Part 2!*



Tips for Early Career
Vice-Principals: Part 1



PART 2

1. PRIORITIZE DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP OVER EXERTING POSITIONAL POWER

As a new school leader, it is easy to rely on your new-found positional authority as you make decisions and work with staff and community members. New leaders who over-rely on that power, however, do so at their own peril and risk damaging relationships with those they serve as a leader. As one Vice-Principal put it, *“exerting positional power should come as a last resort and should occur extremely rarely, if ever.”*

School leaders who practice distributed leadership are there to ensure that the needs of those they lead are met first. They tend to forge deep and sustained positive relationships that last over time. They rarely, if ever, feel the need to say, *“do it because I said so”*, because those they lead want to follow them out of a sense of mutual care and respect. The irony is that those who lead through a ‘positional power’ lens rely increasingly on that power because they have neglected the critical relationships with those they lead. They have missed out on the true ‘power’ that will develop through distributed leadership.

2. PAY ATTENTION TO THE DIVERSITY THAT EXISTS WITHIN YOUR STAFF AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY

As a teacher, you likely paid attention to the diversity that existed within your classroom, and planned lessons and other activities that honoured and respected that diversity. As a school leader, it is equally important to acknowledge, support, and celebrate that same diversity that exists within your staff and school community. Effective school leaders take the time to analyze their community through multiple lenses, and are responsive in how they plan school-wide events and communicate with their staff and community.

This could take the form of school-wide events that celebrate your diverse community, involving parents, staff, and students who can share their own backgrounds and experiences in ways that are comfortable for them. It may also mean planning your school calendar carefully to avoid conflicts between events such as parent-teacher conferences or school photo day, and faith-based dates of importance to members of your community. Harness diversity, and use it as a way to build and strengthen your school culture.

3. TAKE THE TIME YOU NEED TO MAKE WISE DECISIONS

As one Vice-Principal recalled, *“Early on, my Principal shared with me that if the school is on fire, get the kids and the staff out right away. Otherwise, there are very few instances that require you to make an instant or very quick decision.”*

Rather than jumping to a quick decision, take the time to take a deep breath, gather information, consult with those who can assist you in your decision-making, consider options, and reflect on what would make the most sense. Although members of your community may pressure you to make a quick decision, be clear with them that you want to make the best possible decision and that may take some time. Don't be afraid to say, *“I don't know, I'll find out,”* instead of pretending to know and regretting it later.

4. BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Being a school-based administrator can feel overwhelming at times for even the most seasoned Principal or Vice-Principal, and being new to the role can take that feeling to a whole new level. Remember to be patient with yourself as you learn the ropes. Your job is complex, and most people will not expect you to know everything on the first day. You will likely make mistakes and that is okay, as long as you acknowledge them and learn from them.

Remember to also practice patience with others. Meeting people ‘where they are at’, whether they are a student, staff member, or parent, demonstrates kindness, respect, and understanding and will lead to others being patient with you when you need it most.

5. CHOOSE WHERE TO FOCUS YOUR TIME, ENERGY, AND ATTENTION

As a new Vice-Principal, you may feel a bit like you are drinking from a fire hose for the first few weeks and months of the job. Distinguishing between what is important, what is urgent, and what can wait is one of the most important skills you will develop as a new Vice-Principal. It is easy to fall into the trap of focusing first on paperwork and other ‘tasks’ that trap you in your office during the school day. Although that aspect of your job is important, nothing will replace the time and energy you put into being available and visible to your staff, students, and school community. As one Vice-Principal put it, *“how you spend your time demonstrates what you value most to the people who are watching.”*

In addition, when you join a school staff, there may be an existing culture of ‘The Way Things are Done’, and that institutional inertia can sometimes be tough to overcome. It is wise to step back and learn more about the culture that

may have existed for a long time. Ask questions and be curious, rather than jumping to a place of quick judgment or initiating change early in your time at the school. With that being said, as one Vice-Principal put it, *“if your spidey senses are tingling – especially if you see a shortfall in the way students are being supported – don’t hold back just because you are new to the role.”*

6. REMEMBER YOUR FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITIES

One of the biggest challenges reported by new-to-role Vice-Principals is adjusting to the transition from being a member of a union to being a member of the management team.

Remember, as a Principal or Vice-Principal, you represent your school district, and are an agent of the Board of Education at all times. You are no longer a member of the collective bargaining unit and as such you are expected to uphold the policies and practices of the district, regardless of whether or not you agree with them. Your district leadership team has the right and authority under the BC School Act to direct the work of school Principals and Vice-Principals. Criticizing the Board, senior staff, or your colleagues – especially in public or online – can lead to disciplinary action against you. If you feel you have a significant legitimate concern about a direction being given by the district, handle that concern professionally and respectfully. If you are unsure about how to manage that process, reach out to a respected colleague or to the Member Support Services team at the BCPVPA for guidance.

7. DOCUMENT YOUR SUCCESSES

Being a new school administrator can be exhausting – you are actively learning the job, while those around you may expect that you already know how to do the job. Feedback at the beginning may not always feel supportive and it can be easy to get dragged down by criticism. Try keeping a journal of ‘aha’ moments where you learned something important or made a difference in someone’s life. Take the time to acknowledge and document your successes, no matter how small they may seem. Hang on to those positive emails or cards from staff members or community members, and take the time, at least weekly, to reflect on your successes. When the days get tough, re-read some of your positive emails and cards, and remember that you *are* making a difference in your school.

With many thanks to the early-career Vice-Principals of the Richmond School District (SD 38) for generously sharing their their experiences and new-found wisdom with us.

*What is your
advice to a
new VP?*

Share it with us!

@bcpvpa



support

**The BCPVPA is all about people, and
ensuring that our members are successful
and supported in the important work they do.**

Our Member Support Services team has a wealth of experience in school and district based administration in BC, and training in negotiation, investigations, and school law. They are available to support members and provide guidance in a variety of areas relating to employment as Principals and Vice-Principals in the public sector.



The BCPVPA supports more than 2,700 Principals
and Vice-Principals in BC's public education system.

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Voices

Equity as a Mindset for Principals



Transforming Education through
Representation and Inclusivity

by

Dionte Jelks

Principal

SD 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)

Equity in education is more than a policy, or a goal—it is a mindset that educators, especially Principals, must adopt to foster inclusive environments where all students can thrive. This article explores the significance of equity as a mindset, drawing on personal experiences, historical context, and practical strategies. It emphasizes the critical role of representation in media and education, and highlights actionable principles for Principals to create equitable and inclusive schools.

My journey from the southside of Chicago to British Columbia has been driven by a passion for equity in education, and a commitment to dismantling systemic barriers. As the Principal of Ladysmith Intermediate School in School District No. 68, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of an equity mindset. This outlook acknowledges that each student comes with unique circumstances, and it is designed to identify the exact resources and opportunities needed to achieve equal outcomes.

The phrase "seeing is believing" underscores the profound impact of representation on children's aspirations. When children see characters in TV shows, movies, and books who look like them and share their experiences, they begin to imagine new possibilities for their own lives. This concept is vital in education, where students' perceptions of success and potential are shaped by the diversity they encounter in their learning environments.

The excitement of a child seeing a person or movie character who looks and speaks like them cannot be overstated. My own son's reaction to seeing Spiderman "Miles Morales" exemplifies this. His joy could not be contained as he recognized a hero who mirrored his own identity. Similarly, the movie *Black Panther* inspired him to see himself as a future scientist, using his intellect to solve problems. These experiences highlight how media representation can influence children's self-perception and aspirations. What if our education system could do something similar?

Reflecting on my childhood, the lack of representation was starkly evident. I grew up attending church

regularly, often completing my homework on the public transit bus between Chicago's Westside and Southside. On one of these journeys, I asked my grandmother why the sidewalks were uneven and cracked. She explained they were remnants of riots following Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. When we arrived at church that day, I questioned why all the angels in the paintings were white. My grandmother had no answer, and I was left wondering about my place in heaven if there were no black angels. These experiences illustrate the deep impact of representation and equity—or the lack thereof—on a child's sense of belonging and identity in our world and the education system.

"When children see characters in TV shows, movies, and books who look like them and share their experiences, they begin to imagine new possibilities for their own lives."

The landmark Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), declared racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. This decision was a cornerstone of the civil rights movement in the United States, challenging the "separate but equal" doctrine and advocating for integrated schools. Despite this ruling, efforts to integrate schools continued into the 1980s and 1990s, revealing the persistent challenges of achieving true educational equity.

During my time at Hurley Elementary School, on the southwest side of Chicago, I was part of a federal government integration experiment. This involved a busing experiment to measure how black inner-city youth would succeed attending school in predominantly white middle class schools, and the

Robert Taylor housing experiment. The place where I was born and raised faced significant challenges due to severe overcrowding, with the complex housing more than 27,000 people despite being designed for only 11,000 residents. High unemployment rates and systemic poverty further exacerbated these issues, as residents had limited access to economic opportunities, social services, and education.

The “Projects” became notorious for high crime rates, including gang violence and drug trafficking. The buildings’ design, with long, dark corridors and minimal security measures, contributed to an unsafe environment. It felt like a prison instead of a home.

Chronic underfunding and mismanagement by the Chicago Housing Authority led to poor maintenance and deteriorating living conditions. Frequent elevator breakdowns, heating system failures, and delayed basic repairs further compromised the quality of life for residents.

Despite the challenges, I was fortunate to have exceptional teachers and administrators. One standout was Mr. Martin McGrath, a towering 6’7” Irish Catholic white man who pushed me beyond my perceived limits. His classroom was a haven of representation, adorned with images of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Michael Jordan, and other black icons. His unwavering belief in my potential transformed my academic journey, leading me from struggling student to honour roll achiever. Mr. McGrath understood equity before it became a catch phrase. If he was able to do this in the 1980s, what is holding us back in 2024? I believe that it is the confusion between equity and equality.

*"Equity and equality
are often used
interchangeably,
but they are
fundamentally different."*

Equity and equality are often used interchangeably, but they are fundamentally different. Equality involves giving everyone the same resources, while equity involves allocating resources based on individual needs to achieve equal outcomes. Understanding this distinction is crucial for educators who are aiming to create a fair and inclusive learning environment.

An equity mindset means meeting students where they are, and providing the necessary support to help them succeed. This approach acknowledges that students come from diverse backgrounds with varying needs and challenges. Achieving equity in BC schools – and schools across North America – has been fraught with challenges, including resource disparities and segregation. Despite these obstacles, educators with an equity mindset can still create environments where all students can thrive.

The Importance of an Equity Mindset for Principals

An equity mindset is essential for educators, and especially for Principals, as it empowers them to identify and address the systemic and structural barriers impacting students' success. By prioritizing equity, Principals can create more inclusive and supportive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of their students. This approach helps in recognizing and dismantling the obstacles that prevent students from reaching their full potential.

Fostering inclusivity by valuing diverse perspectives is a cornerstone of an equity mindset. When educators celebrate and incorporate diversity into their teaching practices, all students feel represented and valued. This commitment to fairness, justice, and inclusivity is critical for creating a supportive and equitable learning environment. It is important to set the tone during the first week of school; don't wait for society to dictate what you will celebrate. At Ladysmith Intermediate School, we start every morning with, “We are Kind... We are Compassionate... We are LIS. Let's make it a Tiger Day because the choice is yours.” This simple phrase reminds every student and staff member how we will treat one another, despite our differences.

Considering diverse perspectives also leads to better decision-making and outcomes. Educators with an equity mindset are more likely to make informed decisions that benefit all students, thereby enhancing overall educational experiences. An environment that encourages diverse ideas fosters innovation and creativity. By promoting an equity mindset, educators can cultivate a culture where diverse perspectives are valued and respected, driving continuous improvement and excellence.

Another significant benefit of an equity mindset is reducing disparities in education. By providing equal opportunities and resources, Principals ensure that all students have the support they need to succeed, helping to bridge the gap between different student groups. By prioritizing equity, Principals can profoundly impact their schools, ensuring that every student has the chance to thrive.

Characteristics of an Equity Mindset for Principals

Valuing diversity is a fundamental aspect of an equity mindset. Embracing differences enhances decision-making and problem-solving, and educators with this mindset understand the importance of diversity in creating inclusive learning environments. Let's take a closer look at a few characteristics of an equity mindset.

First, promoting inclusivity is a key characteristic of an equity mindset. Creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and respected involves recognizing and addressing biases. This promotes self-awareness and humility among educators, ensuring that all students feel valued and supported. An equity mindset helps in identifying and dismantling barriers to inclusion, paving the way for a more equitable educational experience. This can be achieved by knowing your students and staff, understanding where they come from, and appreciating the unique gifts they bring to your school community. Seeking diverse perspectives is crucial. Including individuals from different backgrounds in decision-making processes ensures that a variety of viewpoints are considered, creating more inclusive

"First, promoting inclusivity is a key characteristic of an equity mindset. Creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and respected involves recognizing and addressing biases."

and equitable learning environments where all voices are heard and respected.

Challenging personal biases is essential for promoting equity. After reading Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's book, *How to Be an Antiracist*, I realized I needed to explore and work through my own personal biases. This insightful read helped me recognize and address my biases, which is crucial for creating an inclusive environment. By challenging stereotypes, I was able to foster a culture that celebrates diversity and promotes fairness, exemplified by the Anti-bias Mini Film Festival at LIS. This festival allowed everyone to watch videos and engage in open, candid conversations about racism, discrimination, togetherness, allyship, and empathy.

Empathy is imperative, both to teach and to learn in a school community. Understanding the experiences of others is essential for fostering inclusivity and equity. Educators who practice empathy strive to create supportive learning environments where every student feels understood and valued.

By embracing these characteristics and strategies, Principals can cultivate an equity mindset that promotes diversity, inclusivity, and fairness within

their schools, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of budget or neighborhood.

Benefits of an Equity Mindset for Principals

An equity mindset offers numerous benefits for school leaders, significantly enhancing decision-making by considering the diverse impacts on different groups, ensuring fair and inclusive outcomes. Leading with equity promotes better teamwork by fostering inclusivity and respect for diverse perspectives, leading to a collaborative and harmonious school environment. This mindset also drives increased innovation, encouraging creativity and new ways of problem-solving through the appreciation of diverse ideas. Moreover, a strong commitment to equity enhances a school's reputation, attracting loyalty and support from students, parents, and the community.

Call to Action

Here are a few calls to action to start promoting equity in education in your school community. These actions require intentional effort and a commitment to continuous improvement.

- Question our own assumptions and biases.
- Recognize and challenge harmful stereotypes.
- Reassess and adapt our practices to meet diverse needs.
- Take action to promote social justice in our communities.

Equity as a mindset requires commitment and action from educators, particularly Principals. By embracing the principles of representation, inclusivity, and empowerment, schools can create environments where all students feel seen, valued, and capable of achieving their fullest potential. The legacy of educators like Mr. McGrath serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative impact of believing in every student's potential. From the rough inner city of Chicago to beautiful BC, I am proof that Principals can make all the difference.

By embracing an equity mindset, we can create a more just and inclusive society where every student has the opportunity to succeed. Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Let us use this weapon wisely, ensuring it reaches all students, regardless of their starting point.



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Follow the instructions in
eNews to set up your account

"Lots of people will say things online that they wouldn't say in person. They don't see the reaction of how their words affect people. They are hiding behind their keyboard and screen, so they don't have to face the consequences of what they create."

~ Grade 6 Student

Be Smarter

How to be Safe and Happy Online

Navigating the digital world is tricky. It is even trickier for our youth: it is part of their everyday life, with seemingly no specific restrictions or rules. We all use, play, and interact with others through digital devices. The digital world is integrated into our lives and is always at our fingertips. But how can we use it safely while still enjoying it?

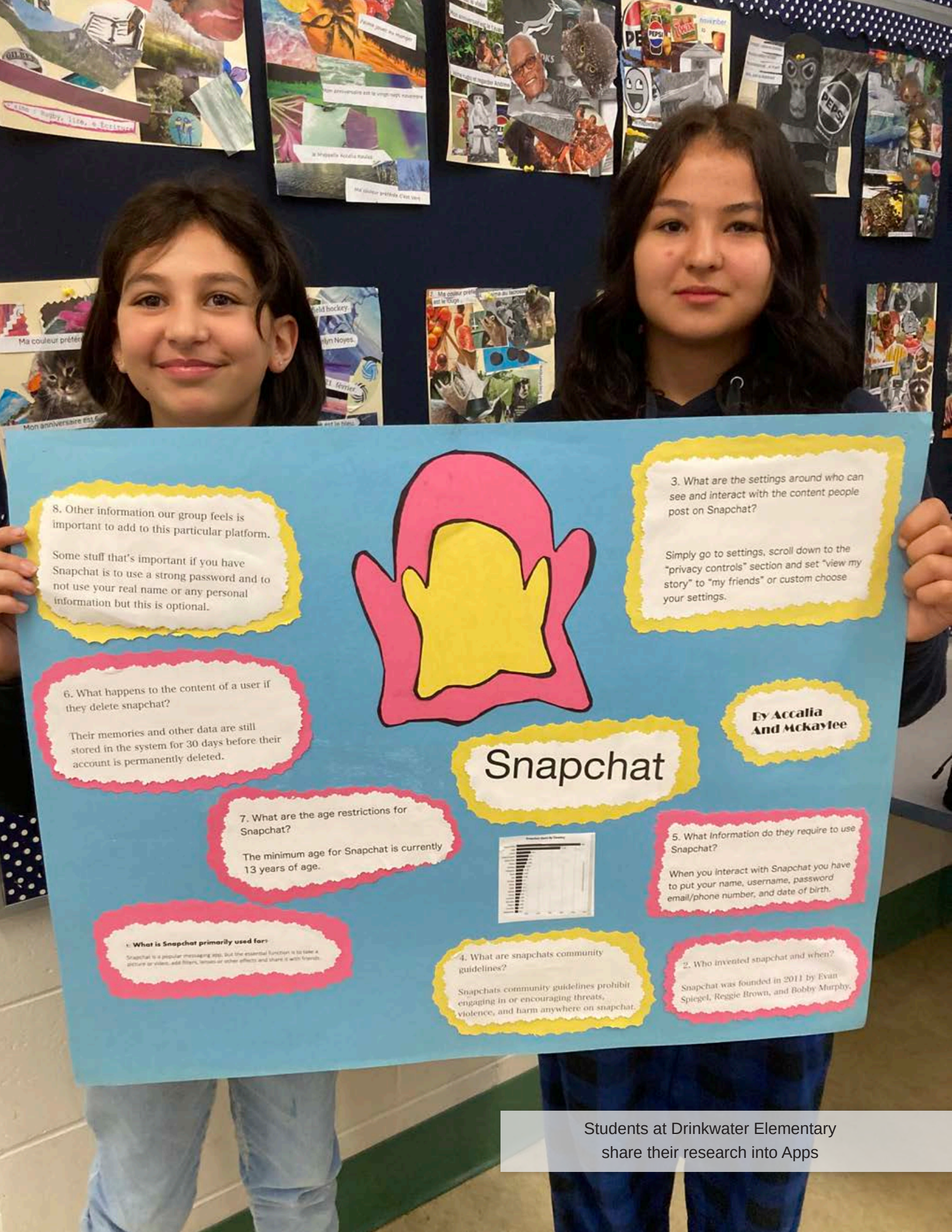
In the public education system, we have found that the school is often called upon to help problem-solve issues that arise from misguided digital interactions. In recent years, the problem-solving scenarios have increased and become more complex. Our students are clearly demonstrating how at risk they are to predators, scams, cyberbullies ... and each other.

by

Rhonda Rose

Vice-Principal

SD 79 (Cowichan Valley)



8. Other information our group feels is important to add to this particular platform.

Some stuff that's important if you have Snapchat is to use a strong password and to not use your real name or any personal information but this is optional.

6. What happens to the content of a user if they delete snapchat?

Their memories and other data are still stored in the system for 30 days before their account is permanently deleted.

7. What are the age restrictions for Snapchat?

The minimum age for Snapchat is currently 13 years of age.

1. What is Snapchat primarily used for?

Snapchat is a popular messaging app, but the essential function is to take a picture or video, add filters, lenses or other effects and share it with friends.

4. What are snapchats community guidelines?

Snapchats community guidelines prohibit engaging in or encouraging threats, violence, and harm anywhere on snapchat.

5. What Information do they require to use Snapchat?

When you interact with Snapchat you have to put your name, username, password email/phone number, and date of birth.

2. Who invented snapchat and when?

Snapchat was founded in 2011 by Evan Spiegel, Reggie Brown, and Bobby Murphy.

3. What are the settings around who can see and interact with the content people post on Snapchat?

Simply go to settings, scroll down to the "privacy controls" section and set "view my story" to "my friends" or custom choose your settings.



Snapchat

By Accalia
And McKaylee



"You must be careful because a friend may not always be your friend, and an enemy may not always be your enemy."

~ Grade 5 Student

At our school, Drinkwater Elementary in the Cowichan Valley, each issue has been addressed as it occurred, but as we walked students through the resolutions to problems arising from their digital interactions at home and school, the students *themselves* began to recognize that there were rules they needed to follow.

It was this acknowledgment from the students that led teachers to pose a challenge: the creation of a Digital Citizenship Code of Conduct that would provide the guidelines necessary for online safety.

The challenge was accepted by six divisions of students in grades 5-7. The students asked guiding questions, and the teachers presented important learning opportunities through their answers. The classes used learning, completed over several months, to determine which rules were important for others to know and to follow. Through assessment of student essays explaining why a Code of Conduct was important to them, two students were then chosen by teachers from each division. Those representatives committed to work on their own time, outside the school schedule. In this smaller group,

they collated and refined the rules that each division had suggested. Twelve students worked for weeks debating, rewording, and creating the Code that they then sent back to each division for feedback and final approval. Once all divisions approved the final Code, it was presented to the school administration.

Coincidentally, the day the students presented the Code was the same day the Minister of Education and Child Care announced that cell phone policies needed to be in place in each district. *How timely!* Their work was accepted as the Code for the school to use.

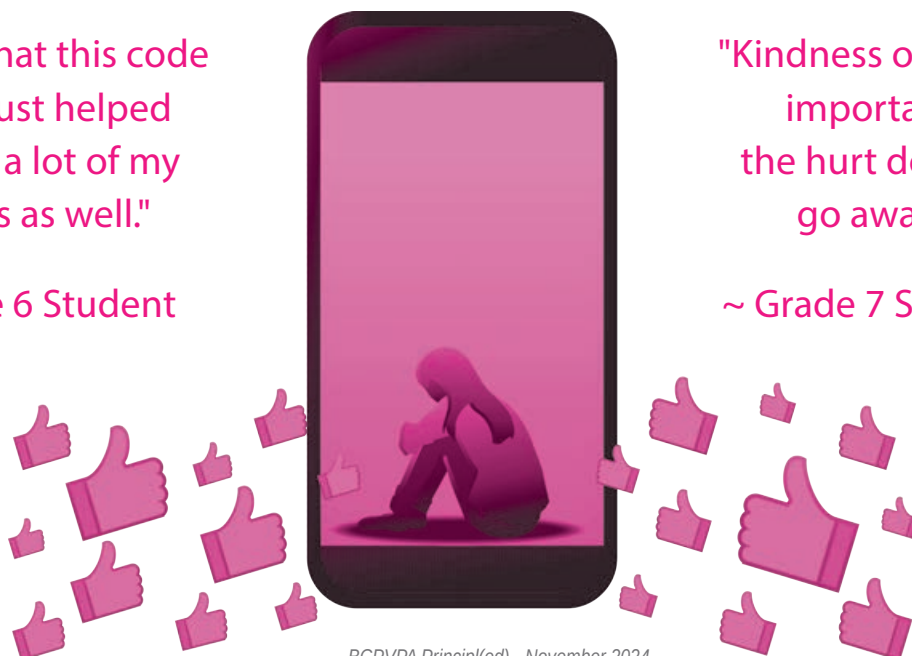
Every student from each division created a 'product' designed to share the Digital Citizenship Code of Conduct. These included brochures, posters, videos, and skits. The student representatives presented these projects to the Board of Education and senior staff of Cowichan Valley School District (SD 79). The representatives' request to the Board was that the student's Digital Citizenship Code of Conduct be adopted or incorporated into the district's code for every school, and that their work be shared at the provincial level.

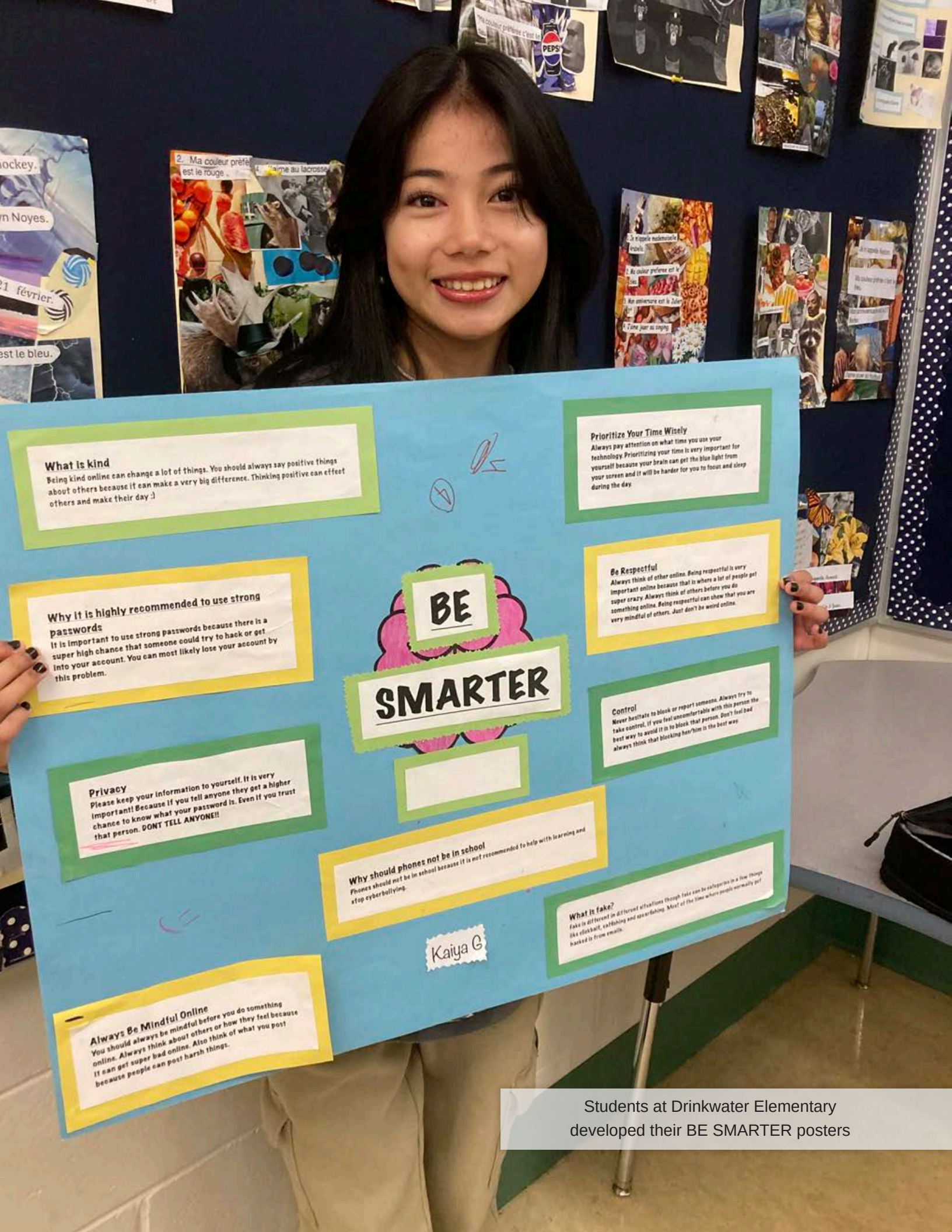
"I found that this code hasn't just helped me, but a lot of my friends as well."

~ Grade 6 Student

"Kindness online is important; the hurt doesn't go away."

~ Grade 7 Student





What is kind

Being kind online can change a lot of things. You should always say positive things about others because it can make a very big difference. Thinking positive can effect others and make their day :)

Why it is highly recommended to use strong passwords

It is important to use strong passwords because there is a super high chance that someone could try to hack or get into your account. You can most likely lose your account by this problem.

Privacy

Please keep your information to yourself. It is very important! Because if you tell anyone they get a higher chance to know what your password is. Even if you trust that person. **DONT TELL ANYONE!!**

Always Be Mindful Online

You should always be mindful before you do something online. Always think about others or how they feel because it can get super bad online. Also think of what you post because people can post harsh things.

BE SMARTER

Kaiya G

Prioritize Your Time Wisely

Always pay attention on what time you use your technology. Prioritizing your time is very important for yourself because your brain can get the blue light from your screen and it will be harder for you to focus and sleep during the day.

Be Respectful

Always think of other online. Being respectful is very important online because that is where a lot of people get super crazy. Always think of others before you do something online. Being respectful can show that you are very mindful of others. Just don't be weird online.

Control

Never hesitate to block or report someone. Always try to take control. If you feel uncomfortable with this person the best way to avoid it is to block that person. Don't feel bad always think that blocking her/him is the best way.

What is fake?

Fake is different in different situations though fake can be catagorized in a few things like clickbait, catfishing and spearfishing. Most of the time where people normally get hacked is from emails.

Students at Drinkwater Elementary developed their BE SMARTER posters

The following rules were determined by the students to be important for everyone to know:

- B**ased on school rules use your phone only at appropriate times.
- E**ducate yourself on what fake images, fake news, scams, trolls, and bots look like.
- S**trong and private passwords are essential.
- M**ind the consequences of what you do, say, and post.
- A**lways be as kind and positive as you can.
- R**espect the privacy of others.
- T**ake control and block or report inappropriate behaviours.
- E**veryone should keep their private information and photos to themselves.
- R**emember to prioritize your time wisely.

BE SMARTER!

Positive change is happening! Correspondence, along with a copy of the students' video, has been sent to the Minister of Education and Child Care. The district has committed to an update of the Administration Procedures around cell phone use in the summer of 2024, considering and incorporating the ideas presented from Drinkwater students.

Drinkwater has taken a step towards solving a big problem that impacts all students in the province with the hope that, in the future, we can all Be Smarter!

"We feel this code that we have co-constructed is essential for the safety and well-being of students across the district. This code is important because it helps students understand how to be safe online, how to avoid scams, and how to protect themselves.

~ Grade 7 Student



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Leader Life Stories

Every leader has a story: what's yours?

The Leader Life Stories series in *Principl(ed)* magazine brings together member voices from across the province on a variety of topics.

We want to hear from you!

Do you have an idea for a theme for an upcoming article?

Contact sandra@bcpvpa.bc.ca

Read the November 2022 Leader Life Stories
"Diverse Women in Leadership"



Read the June 2023 Leader Life Stories
"The Family Balance"



Your Stories: Anti-Racism

As BC Principals and Vice-Principals, you and your teams are working to ensure welcoming and inclusive environments in your schools. Tell us your stories about the anti-racism initiatives that are taking place in your school community, and we will feature your story in an upcoming issue of *Principled* magazine.

Send your stories, along with your high resolution photos, to:

sandra@bcpvpa.bc.ca



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TELL A FRIEND!

BCPVPA Members: do you have a colleague who has not yet joined our Association? Help them to be part of our community of leaders, and to get access to employment relationship support, professional learning and development, committee opportunities, and much more.

bcpvpa.org/membership/application



School Leadership in the Digital Age



by

Cari Wilson

*District Vice-Principal
SD 45 (West Vancouver)*

I am the District Vice-Principal of Innovation & Technology with West Vancouver Schools, but I haven't always been an administrator. In fact, I have been a classroom teacher and a leader in educational technology for most of my thirty-plus years in education.

Not long after my teaching journey started, I discovered the school's computer lab, and my students and I began pushing the devices to see how far we could go beyond basic typing and word processing. I was one of the first teachers in the province to have a pod of laptops in my classroom, and I was amazed at how my teaching practice began to change.

From there, I earned a Masters in Educational Technology (MET), began delivering professional development to other teachers, kept learning, started a weekly ed-tech blog, taught myself how to code, became a Google Trainer, an Apple Distinguished Educator, and even taught Robotics! In 2023, I received the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. It has been a crazy ride, but through it all my goals have not really changed. I

want to help educators and students use technology in safe, engaging, and meaningful ways, and to use technology to amplify and transform teacher and student voices.

Administrators are in a unique position to influence how, when, and why digital technology is used in schools. Yet, alongside our other leadership priorities, and the speed with which technology is changing, it is not surprising that many Principals and Vice-Principals feel overwhelmed when the topic of technology comes up.

Education is undergoing a seismic shift, brought about partially by cultural, societal, and political changes, and fueled by rapidly-evolving technologies. In such a dynamic environment, school leaders need to weave new technologies amongst the threads of tradition in order to create engaging, equitable, and future-proof learning experiences, while still keeping students safe, and educators onboard. No easy feat, combined with everything you must juggle! Where do you start? What follows are my **Top Tech Tips** for administrators.

"Administrators are in a unique position to influence how, when, and why digital technology is used in schools."



Tech Second

The best place to begin is the place where most of us are comfortable: 'education and learning first'. Don't get trapped by SNTS – *Shiny New Tech Syndrome*! In other words, don't be persuaded to adopt a new technology without understanding how it will enhance or augment the learning experience. At the same time, be open to the awareness that you might not see the immediate advantage of a tool or app. Check in with your tech experts if you are not sure. The second part of this involves ongoing assessment and weeding. If a technology tool is no longer serving its intended purpose, or has been eclipsed by newer, better technology, don't be afraid to make a change. Remember to provide loads of notice, of course, and a clear explanation to those who may be married to the technology. *I am speaking from experience on this one!*



From 10,000 Metres ... to Close Up!

Have a clear vision and expectations around the use of technology in your school or district. Think about ages, devices, needs, budgets, and equity. What that may look like in a small, rural elementary school with spotty Wi-Fi will be very different from what it looks like in a big metro high school where every student brings their device. The plan is best developed with input from various stakeholders, including students. The new Ministry of Education and Child Care guidelines on personal devices will give us all a chance to revisit our vision and expectations, and to clarify or modernize them. Once the decisions are made, make sure you communicate the plan clearly so that everyone understands the direction you are setting.



Modelling a Growth Mindset

Not a real techie? No problem! You might not truly understand the cybersecurity course your seniors are taking, or have the time to learn how your kindies created the “All About Penguins” video, but the teachers and students will remember that you took interest and asked questions. And, along the way, your own knowledge and expertise will grow. I was recently at a district-wide meeting where our superintendent used an AI tool to write a song about a retiring administrator. It was the perfect technique to model a new tool in a fun, non-stressful way. It sent the message that it is okay to try new things, and that play is a great way to learn!



Pro-D For Everyone

Connected to this, part of your job will be to ensure that the teachers on your staff have time to play with and explore new technologies. Ongoing professional learning will help teachers feel comfortable enough with technology that they will find ways to use it to engage students while tackling their pedagogical goals. Look to your techie teachers for a start on Pro-D. Honour their time and skill by giving them a stage. If they are not comfortable presenting, lots of educational technology apps have great webinars on their sites.

Accept that you will have people on your staff who are keen to try new technologies, and people who are not. Cultivate a school culture that allows for innovation and experimentation (as long as safety guidelines are followed), while ensuring that your less eager teachers still feel supported.

"Have a clear vision and expectations around the use of technology in your school or district. "



Don't Forget the Parents!

Many parents feel just as overwhelmed and helpless as some educators do when it comes to technology and their kids! Make sure you communicate your school's plans with them. Work with your PACs to run parent information nights or bootcamps. Engage some of your trustworthy secondary students to teach parents the basics of navigating social media or online gaming. Get a techie teacher to introduce parents to the apps and websites your students use to support teaching and learning.



Seek Allies, Mentors, and Questioners

Build a professional learning community. Read blogs, listen to podcasts, follow gurus on social media, read books. Do all of the above, or only one thing, but have a real or virtual place you can go, and people you can turn to, when questions arise! Don't forget to check in with people who have different opinions from yours – challenging your thinking is good practice. If none of that feels right for you, feel free to follow my blog or reach out to me!



Live Where The Kids Live

It is important to arm yourself and your staff with knowledge about the ed tech tools used at school but – as an administrator – you also need an understanding of the social media and gaming apps that your students are using. I have learned that when you approach students in a genuine way, they are usually quite willing to tell you about the latest SnapChat or Discord-type tool!

Too many students get in over their heads with these apps, suffering mental health issues, cyberbullying, and addiction. When things fall apart, people may very well turn to you for help and advice. Make sure you cultivate relationships with parents, the local police, youth workers, and tech-savvy teachers, all of whom can provide aid in tricky situations.



Make Sure They're Learning Digital Literacy and Citizenship

This one is non-negotiable. You must develop a plan to ensure that students are learning these vital skills, as many teachers are not yet teaching them. Students need to be taught how to safely, responsibly, and ethically live and thrive in an increasingly digital world. They need to learn about topics like online safety, critical thinking for evaluating

online information, and cyberbullying prevention. The goal is to empower them to navigate the digital world both confidently *and* ethically. If you are not sure where to start, Media Smarts and Common Sense both have great lesson plans. Teaching these skills can be done in a variety of ways. Make it a school focus for a week, such as during Digital Citizenship Week in October, and focus on certain grades – I find Grades 4 to 8 are the best ages to tackle many of these issues.

"The goal is to empower them to navigate the digital world both confidently and ethically. "

What About You?

Along similar lines, it is important that you have a working knowledge of data security and privacy issues. What would you do if one of your students hacked into your laptop, or if a student's school accounts were compromised? Do you understand why certain websites are better than others in terms of protecting student data? These are all real issues that could have far-reaching consequences. Check with your district IT team, as they may have training sites you can access to learn more – or they might be able to give you the 'Coles Notes' version!

School leadership is complex, and technology issues may seem like just another responsibility among many. But having a fluency, comfort, and confidence with technology as a Principal or Vice-Principal will have a critical influence on a wide spectrum of your tasks, and will become increasingly important as a tool in your toolbox. I invite you to dig deeper, to connect with friends and colleagues who are just starting to learn about educational technology, and those who are well on their way. You will learn so much, you will make many connections, and – perhaps – you will wonder what was holding you back.



Media Smarts
Canada's Centre for Digital
Media Literacy



Common Sense
Media



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BCPVPA Early Intervention Program

Humanworks is proud to have developed the Early Intervention Program (EIP) to support members of the BCPVPA Benefits Plan.

The objective of the EIP is to support and empower Benefits Plan members who are experiencing personal or professional disruption as a result of illness, injury, or disability.

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Humanworks provides programs and services to enhance the health and wellbeing of professional educators in their work and personal lives.

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For more information, visit www.humanworks.ca



Taking children's health care to new heights

At École Dr. Knox Middle School in Kelowna, students and teachers have proven how small acts lead to extraordinary outcomes. It all began in 2005, when a dedicated teacher, Dave Lafontaine, rallied colleagues and students together to launch what would eventually become Bald Falcon Day—an annual event where they would shave their heads or cut their hair to raise funds for children's health.

Dave's motivation was deeply personal. His son, Jesse, was born with a heart murmur and underwent three open-heart surgeries at BC Children's Hospital. Now 26, with two master's degrees under his belt and plans to complete his medical degree, Jesse is pursuing his dreams.

As the only hospital in the province devoted exclusively to children, many families at the school have also counted on the specialized care at BC Children's. Each year, staff and students raise funds in their own unique ways throughout May.

“Our family often talks about how Jesse's early experiences in the hospital played a pivotal role in shaping his character and ambitions.”

— Dave Lafontaine

Their efforts culminate in Bald Falcon Day at the end of the month, where they gather during a special assembly to shave their heads and cut their hair to support BC's kids.

The event owes much of its success to strong support from the school's principals—along with community sponsors who generously offer incentive prizes like gift cards and iPads. Through their collective efforts, the school has had an outsized impact in tackling the toughest challenges in child health. This year's event raised a remarkable \$26,016.60, bringing the cumulative total to more than \$500,000. These funds have supported kid-tailored care, transformative research and breakthrough treatments across BC Children's Hospital.

The school is immensely grateful for the support of partners like Odlum Brown*, which matched donations of up to \$5,000 during this year's Bald Falcon Day.



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*Odlum Brown is proud to once again be the official schools program match sponsor for 2024. Gifts will be matched up to a cumulative total of \$30,000.

Visit bcchf.ca/schools-youth/

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Alex Howard

DECODE

YOUR

FATIGUE

by

Rochelle Morandini

Director, Member Health & Well-Being

BCPVPA

Decode Your Fatigue:

A Clinically Proven 12-Step Plan to Increase Your Energy, Heal Your Body and Transform Your Life

Written by Alex Howard

HAY HOUSE, 2021

Do you, or someone you know, struggle daily with fatigue? Not just, “I didn’t sleep well last night, and I am tired”, but bone-tired fatigue? If the answer is yes, this book may be a valuable resource to incorporate into a healing journey.

I was made aware of Alex Howard’s book by one of our members who is struggling with long COVID. They were an early case, and had done considerable reading and research; they probably knew more about the recovery journey than some of the health professionals who laboured to understand long COVID as it evolved. They found this book to be very helpful and structured in approaching their recovery, particularly as it related to fatigue. I went on to suggest this book to others and then, finally, I read it myself. The teachings in the book are relatable, logical, and make difficult concepts so much easier to understand.

Fatigue is extremely complex. As the book explains, fatigue can be associated with many different health conditions, and often comorbid conditions. In his teens, Howard himself was plagued by fatigue. He describes the disabling impact and how, based on a comment and the “tough love” of a family member, he realized that only he could take responsibility and figure out how to recover his energy. The book starts with Chapter 1: Radical Responsibility, which is **Step 1** of the recovery process.

I watched my own mother in the 1970s and 1980s as she struggled with, and pushed through, what was yet to be defined as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. She was regularly told it was ‘in her head’, and was accused of exaggeration. In Chapter 2: Why Conventional Medicine is Baffled by Fatigue, Howard describes how Western medicine has basically failed those with fatigue; I found this to be incredibly insightful and validating for so many who are afflicted, and who have not received the answers and solutions they seek.

The book details, to whatever level of science you choose to absorb, how your body generates energy at a cellular level – it is like an updated Biology 12 course! Understanding this process, and what impacts energy production, reveals an objective, biological and physiological reason why someone may struggle with a sense of fatigue that is marked by both physical and psychological factors.

With this foundation of knowledge, Howard provides a roadmap of steps that explains how recognizing your symptoms can help you to guide your own recovery and gain back your energy. These steps include:

Step 2:
Get an accurate diagnosis

Fatigue is a *symptom*, not a *condition* – often, the process of ‘diagnosis’ as it relates to fatigue is ruling out what it is not, rather than gaining clarity on what it is.

Step 3:
Understand the role of your mitochondria

This is how, at a cellular level, we produce energy, and this Step explores what may impact that process, including our management of stress.

Step 4:
Understand your personality

Howard outlines the five personality patterns of fatigue; if you have one or more of these traits, you will be at a higher risk.

Step 5:
Create an environment for healing

This step looks at the loads on your body, including current and past stressors and traumas, and what you can do to relieve some of these loads in order to create an environment for healing.

Step 6:

Get in a healing state

If creating an environment for healing in Step 5 requires addressing the external environment, Step 6 is all about building an internal environment for healing.

In a healing state, you work on calming your nervous system. Getting into a healing state is a key step in helping regain your energy.

Step 7:

Optimize your digestion

You will learn the fascinating facts of how you digest, and how you can support that process to generate more energy.

Step 8:

Balance your hormones

Howard explains six practical ways to balance your hormones to promote healing.

Step 9:

Support your immune system

As your immune system is a large, demanding operating system in your body, it uses up your energy resources. The less work it has to do, the more energy you will have.

Step 10:

Discover your baseline and learn to pace

Talk to anyone recovering from a concussion or long COVID and they will explain to you that there is a very faint, indiscernible line that they must navigate between trying to expand their energy resources and

causing themselves a huge setback the following day. This chapter discusses the importance of understanding where that line is, and how to pace yourself.

Step 11:

Optimize your food

This chapter explores how food intolerances and the blood sugar roller coaster can impact your fatigue, and how to manage these better.

Step 12:

Manage your team

Howard explains what to look for in a good practitioner (regardless of specialty), defines the red flags, and directs how to maximize your clinical appointment time.

The book concludes with advice on the development of your own personalized recovery plan. As you can imagine, there is no 'silver bullet' or a simple solution to 'cure' your fatigue – if there were, we wouldn't need this book! Howard's roadmap is clear, complemented by tools and specifics.

There was something that really struck me at the end of the book, and I believe that it is worth exploring the book with this point in mind. Fatigue can be multifaceted and hard to diagnose. The real intent of the outlined steps is not a 'cure'. When the conditions are right, the body has an amazing ability to recover. *Decode Your Fatigue* offers the steps that are needed to prepare your body to heal itself.

Dr. Saray Myhill's quote in the book's introduction is resonant: "...*this is not an easy journey, it takes determination and courage. But....you can do it.*"

bcp vpa Principl(ed) BOOK REVIEW

Do you have some recent reading that you would love to shout about?
why not contribute a book review to *Principl(ed)* magazine:

contact sandra@bcpvpa.bc.ca

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The Last Word

The role of a Principal and Vice-Principal in British Columbia is becoming more and more complex, while at the same time more and more valued within our sector and the larger community.

As school leaders, Principals and Vice-Principals genuinely value each and every student in their care. They have a crucial role in providing the needed supports to students and families, and they ensure that school staff have the resources they require to deliver the curriculum in a way that is inclusive while meeting the unique needs of each student. They base decisions on district policy and – alongside numerous other factors and documents – on the Professional Standards for BC Educators and the First Peoples Principles of Learning.



Professional Standards
for BC Educators



First Peoples Principles
of Learning

BC Principals and Vice-Principals are the ambassadors of the BC education system. They are held to a high standard and have an essential leadership role within the education community. They seek to lead with humility; they act as stewards of the future; they understand the diverse community context in which they lead; and, ultimately, they bridge policy and practice, and are the liaison between the needs of families and the district, and the existing structures and supports within our education system.

Magdalena Kassis
Acting Executive Director
BCPVPA

Whether as school or district level leaders, Principals and Vice-Principals model fiduciary responsibility and professionalism. They coach and support their new and aspiring colleagues and sustain a collaborative community of practice.

These are important yet complex expectations, and the BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association is here to provide all needed supports and resources to members to ensure they can thrive in their roles. The BCPVPA's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan reflects the increased and varying needs of Principals and Vice-Principals, with a focus of objectives, supports, and resources in the following areas:



BCPVPA 2023-2026
Strategic Plan

- Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Employment Equity
- Leadership Development
- Member Health
- Respected Voice



A Crucial Role

The role of Principal and Vice-Principal has a lot of moving parts, yet the work is so rewarding. We recognize that the needs of each of our 2700+ members are unique and evolving, and we strive to provide a range of supports for our members so that they may achieve a sense of success in their roles.

Members are strongly encouraged to engage with the Association to enhance their professional competency journey. Some ways to engage include:

- Register for one of the many Professional Learning opportunities



- Reach out to Member Support Services for any confidential employment-related support



- Consider signing up for the Wel-Tel program at no cost by contacting the BCPVPA Director of Member Health and Well-being: rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca

- Read the weekly e-News for updated information about resources and opportunities available to members

- Encourage colleagues who aspire to leadership to participate in the Explorations for Aspiring School Leaders program, to help support continued growth and capacity within our profession



- Participate in meetings and events in your local Chapter

- Participate in BCPVPA surveys when they are issued – ensure that your voice is heard, and that the Association can best advocate for all members

- Check the My BCPVPA member portal regularly for resources and member-related information



Members are encouraged to reach out when needed. Our team is here to help bridge the complexity of the role with the supports and resources that will help BC Principals and Vice-Principals to lead into the future with both confidence and humility.

bcp vpa

