

The Last Word

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**A vision of a preferred
future leads to hope.
Hope leads to inspiration.
And inspiration leads to
commitment.**

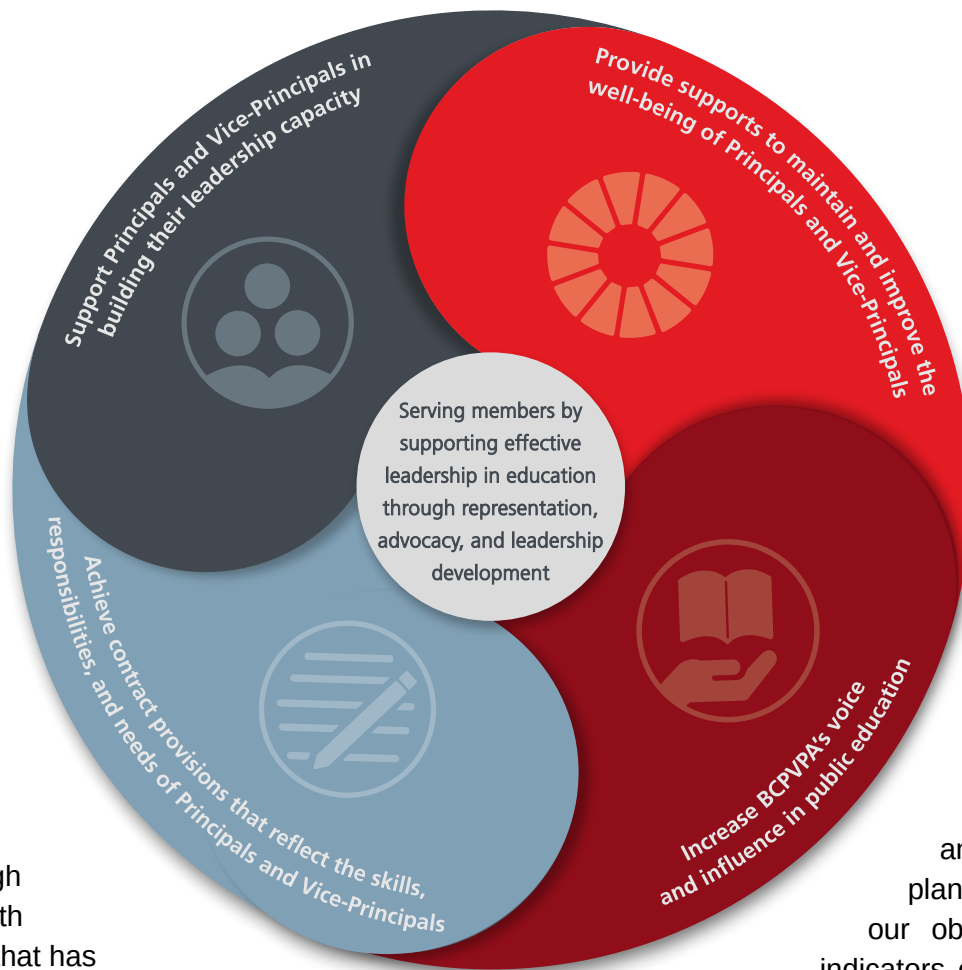
As a Principal, I had the great pleasure of learning about strategic planning from a few highly respected educational leaders around the province. When I was an elementary Principal, Faye Brownlie led our staff through an afternoon professional learning session and then stayed for our staff meeting. When the meeting conversation turned to the creation of our school improvement plan, there was some cynicism on the part of staff regarding the process and the value of our school plan. Faye listened carefully as an observer during the meeting.



Her subsequent response to the concerns that were raised quickly cut through the skepticism with a simple phrase that has stuck with me ever since: “No plan. No point.” Faye’s message was clear; without a relevant plan for overall school improvement, the individual work of teachers would not have the impact that we all hoped for.

I have also had the pleasure of participating in leadership development sessions with Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser, who describe the visioning process for schools by using a mirror and window metaphor. The strategic planning process should act like a mirror for the organization to better understand its reflected reality, and at the same time, should serve as a window which we look through to imagine our preferred future.

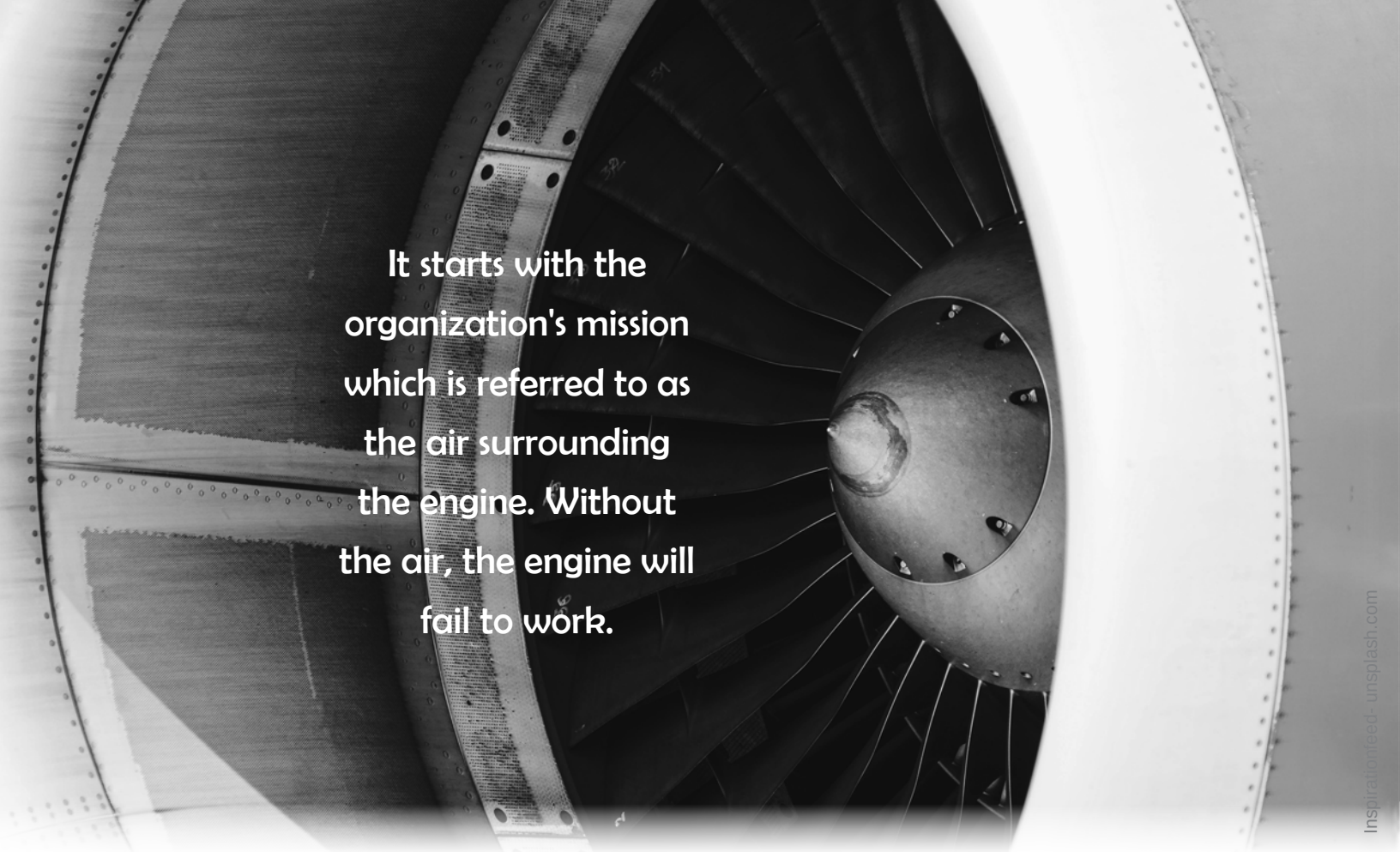
For more than a year, the BCPVPA Board of Directors and staff members have traveled the path of creating the BCPVPA’s 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. Capably led by BCPVPA Director of Finance Carol Powell, the process was a fact-finding and consultative investigation with input from our members, the Ministry of Education and our partner organizations. That comprehensive process led to



the creation of the 2020-2023 BCPVPA Strategic Plan and the operational plan that outlines our objectives and our indicators of success. While the goals and objectives are listed separately, they are fundamentally interdependent and evidence-informed, and reflect the current thinking on the research and policy initiatives that affect the work of the BCPVPA and its members.

The process led to the formation of four goals for our Strategic Plan:

1. **Achieve contract provisions that reflect the skills, responsibilities, and needs of Principals and Vice-Principals**
2. **Provide supports to maintain and improve the well-being of Principals and Vice-Principals**
3. **Support Principals and Vice-Principals in building their leadership capacity**
4. **Increase BCPVPA's voice and influence in public education**



It starts with the organization's mission which is referred to as the air surrounding the engine. Without the air, the engine will fail to work.

A book that has significantly influenced my understanding of not-for-profit organizations and how to increase their influence and effectiveness in a social sector is **The Engine of Impact** by William F. Meehan and Kim Starkey Jonker. The interdependent essentials of mission, strategy, impact evaluation, insight and courage, organization and talent, funding, and board governance, work together to enable an organization to increase its impact and realize its strategic mission.

The authors contend that not-for-profit organizations must build, tune, and fuel their strategic plan if they hope to make a real difference in the world, and use aviation imagery to demonstrate the interdependent forces of strategic planning that determine the level of engine thrust or, rather, the impact of a not-for-profit organization.

As the book details, the practice of strategic planning is not just doing 'good work' but also doing the work in effective and intentional ways. To explain their approach, they use the metaphor of a jet turbine engine to illustrate the interdependent components

of mission and strategic planning. It starts with the organization's mission which is referred to as the air surrounding the engine. Without air, the engine will fail to work. Next comes the compressor – or strategy – that takes the air of the mission and applies pressure to it, accelerating the air to increase the engine's thrust or the organization's impact on their sector.

The turbines, which generate power for the engine, are insight and courage. The fuel for the engine includes funding, personnel, organization, and governance. When the engine works well, it creates thrust or impact for the organization because it provides a sense of direction and outlines measurable goals.

With the adoption of our Strategic Plan by the BCPVPA Board of Directors, we now have a renewed organizational compass that helps guide the day-to-day decisions of the organization as we evaluate our progress, measure our impact and support our members.