

January 26, 2007

Leadership Seminar Series

Leadership is central to success regardless of the area of work we are undertaking. On Monday this week I attended an all-day meeting sponsored by the British Columbia Education Leadership Council to inform district staff about the Leadership Seminar Series offered to new principals. I will talk more of this later but first, I want to take a step back and talk about a larger vision – the Pacific Leadership Agenda presented by the Premier at the UBCM and in a recent speech he made in Penticton.

The Premier articulated five cornerstones of the Pacific Leadership Agenda that will support Government's Five Great Goals. As you read this, ask yourself how you can contribute to the Pacific Leadership Agenda through your leadership where you work and live. The five cornerstones are:

1. Capitalizing on British Columbia's potential as Canada's Pacific gateway to North America.
2. Building new relationships with First Nations, working to conclude treaties, and closing gaps in health, housing, education, and economic opportunities.
3. Improving health of our citizens and renewing our public health care system.
4. Developing vibrant connected communities that are socially responsive and environmentally sustainable.
5. Improving our competitiveness and productivity through education, skills training and immigration.

The education sector, schools and school districts, can play a major role in establishing these "cornerstones"

and developing leadership. There are already many international offshore students in BC, and we need to develop and expand that tie with Pacific Rim countries. We can enhance language curriculum, particularly in Mandarin, Punjabi, Korean and Japanese, for all BC students between grades 5 and 12. Further expansion of offshore independent schools will also create more ties.

Our sector has the responsibility to work with our First Nations communities to focus on Aboriginal school completion. More enhancement agreements will be signed this year that will lead to greater Aboriginal success. Curriculum will be revised to bring Aboriginal history and culture into classrooms through the "Shared Learnings" resource guide.

Education will lead the way in a number of initiatives aimed at improving the health of our citizens. Smoking will be banned on school property. Healthy foods only will be made available in vending machines in schools. Fifty schools are piloting the "Fruit and Veggies" program to help develop healthier eating habits. Food Guidelines are also being developed and distributed throughout the province.

Community development will be an important aspect of school and school district work as new activities are undertaken supporting early learning and community literacy. This will require new inclusive, innovative and cooperative activities with communities often led by educators.

Education has a central role in providing our province with skilled and knowledgeable citizens able to participate in and contribute to our economy. Greater emphasis on trades will result in filling more than 7,000

new apprenticeship spaces by 2010. The Education Guarantee will provide every British Columbian of any age free access to courses through LearnNow BC so that all citizens can upgrade their qualifications and participate more fully in the workforce.

The Pacific Leadership Agenda focuses on BC's leadership in a broad way. Education has a vital role to play in achieving the great goals, and leadership within schools and districts is essential to achieve desired results. BC can be proud of the work we are doing through organizations like BCELC to assist our school and district leaders develop their skills. Under the leadership of Cathy Elliott, Chief Executive Officer, and the board of BCELC, a Seminar Series was designed last summer and made available to newly appointed school principals and vice-principals at nominal cost. The seminar series includes 12 days of leadership development. The first series of three days has already occurred. On Monday, district staff from 27 school districts that are engaged with the first group of 121 new principals and vice-principals came together to hear about the program design and content.

There are five topics within this seminar series. The design of each of these topics is ongoing. The five areas of learning for these new leaders are:

- Leadership Mindsets for Deep Learning – This session is based on the most current international research about leadership. Three days of seminar are presented by Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser and are connected closely with the work they have done with the Certificate in School Management and Leadership at the University of Victoria. The leadership mindsets leading to deep learning are:

- o Action-Oriented Design
- o Evidence Informed
- o Intense Moral Purpose
- o Inquiry
- o Trusting Relationships

- Assessing Learning – Formative Assessment and Assessment for Learning are central to this section of the seminar series. The use of qualitative and quantitative evidence to inform instruction at the individual student, school and system levels is discussed.
- Supervising Learning – The Principal's role in knowing the learning results and needs of individual learners is an important leadership theme. The art of inquiry, conversation and reflection practiced in this section spring boards from the mindsets and assessing learning topics.
- Leading Learning – This section, still under development, focuses on tying the parts together and providing an opportunity for the participants to construct their leadership practice. The district staff present on Monday spent much of the afternoon providing input to the design of this piece and the next topic.
- Planning for Growth and Change – Finally, these sessions address the leadership principles behind distributing leadership through inclusive and reflective planning processes.

There have been many familiar names associated with the development of these sessions. A number of Principals, Vice-Principals, Directors and Superintendents have come together under the leadership of Yrsa Jensen, Director, School District 36 (Surrey), to plan the program. Of course, Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser have

been closely involved as has Audrey Hobbs-Johnson, Pat Dooley, Gary Doi, Peter Drescher and Bev Rundell. They, in fact served on a working group to vet the plans. My thanks to all of these people and others too numerous to mention for their work on making these sessions so powerful.

Our challenge is to connect these leadership initiatives to the larger framework represented by the Pacific Leadership Agenda for the purpose of providing each of our children in this province with the best life chances possible. Think about ways you can participate through leadership in that undertaking.

StudyBUZZ

As a follow up to our recent announcement regarding enhancements to the Tutoring Services offered on the LearnNow BC website, we would like to ensure that you are aware that StudyBUZZ is a licensed service and available free of charge to all valid BC students via the [LearnNow BC](#) website.

To ensure that no charges are levied to your students, it is important to direct them to access StudyBUZZ through the LearnNow BC website.

Questions on the above can be directed to the following email for response.

educ.distanceeducationonlinelearning@gov.bc.ca