



# Report on Education

from the Deputy Minister of Education

June 9, 2006

Succession Planning has become a significant issue over the past few years. It is important for us to be aware of the many leadership development activities operating or planned within the province. I wrote in the March 24<sup>th</sup> edition about the British Columbia Leadership Council (BCELC). In fact, this is but one of several leadership initiatives that are ongoing in the province. Many school district and partner organizations are paying attention to developing classroom, school and school district leaders as they know leadership is central to student achievement. BCELC will complete its search for a full-time chief executive officer next week. Dr. Lee Southern, Executive Director, BCSTA, has kindly filled that role during this inaugural year of reflection and planning. BCELC has also opened its offices in downtown Vancouver in the same building as the downtown SFU campus, Harbour Centre.

The BCPVPA has completed planning of the annual UBC Summer Short Course that is targeted to assist newly appointed principals and vice-principals prepare for their positions. Each year a cohort of more experienced principals also attend.

BCSSA holds a summer event for its members in Kelowna each August. Gary Doi has been central to organizing a leadership conference in Penticton, also in August. A number of districts and consortia of districts have leadership events occurring over the summer. One of the best sites to find a calendar of most of these events is at the BCSSA <http://www.bcssa.org/calendar/calendarlistset.html>.

There are many other signs of healthy interest in leadership development. The University of Victoria's Certificate in School Management and Leadership (CSML), a graduate certificate laddering into a Masters Degree, continues to grow. This program began with one cohort of students last year and will be successful in adding as many as three more this year. Check it out at <http://www.educ.uvic.ca/csml/>.

There is another important leadership initiative impacting many teachers and principals. Do you know what NPBS stands for? More and more educators recognize this as the acronym for the **Network of Performance Based Schools**. This truly is a B.C. success story, and each year the network gains more momentum with greater exposure and impact. Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser initiated and sponsor the

network that is comprised of learning communities of teacher and principal teams. NPBS is a voluntary action

research community designed to improve student learning and strengthen public education through inquiry and through formative assessment using the B.C. performance standards. Schools from all over B.C., in all types of communities and locations, have joined the network.

The school teams work across roles to conduct inquiry and engage in professional conversations to sustain improvement in learning. Participating schools receive a small grant to conduct their action research. They receive the grant after fulfilling commitments to meet with other schools three times a year, to present their findings at an annual showcase of learning, and to write a two-page case study report that is published in both print and web formats.

The Ministry of Education is proud to participate in providing grants to NPBS to fund the work in schools. NPBS has a growing connection with the B.C. Education Leadership Council that administers the funds on behalf of NPBS. The connections to leadership in classrooms and schools to NPBS are very clear. Recently, three education leaders, Suzanne Hoffman, District Administrator, SD 35, Dawn Holden, Coordinator, SD 35 and Nicole Neggers, Vice Principal, SD 42, studied the effect of NPBS on leadership behaviour. Following find excerpts from their paper.

*"This paper reports the results of a study that investigated the changes in leadership behaviour of elementary principals and vice-principals who had participated in the Network of Performance Based Schools (NPBS) for two or more years (Hoffman, Holden, Neggers, 2006)."*

*"As a result of participating in the NPBS, we found that principals and vice-principals indicated that their leadership style had changed. These changes included the way school leaders thought about and approached assessment and instruction. Involvement in the NPBS was a vehicle through which administrators could create conditions that enabled teachers to question their own practice, reflect, and feel comfortable taking risks. The NPBS facilitated discussion and opened up teachers' and supervisors' beliefs and values about what it means to learn. Consequently, they had a deeper understanding of each other's perspectives."*

*"Most principals and vice-principals indicated that being a part of the NPBS allowed them to create learning communities focused on student needs."*

*“After conducting the study, the researchers discovered that educational networks supported and enhanced behavioural changes in the areas of educational leadership and professional development. The NPBS promoted and facilitated **collaboration** between teachers and administrators and furthermore encouraged a **collaborative** approach to professional development **focused on student needs**. Administrators recognized the expertise that existed within their school and consequently used that expertise to **deliver** professional development. Because of their involvement in the NPBS, we found that principals and vice-principals not only developed their own capacity as **instructional leaders**, but also **built their school’s capacity for learning**.”*

*“ Networks are structures that will take time to create, yet they can meet the knowledge gap, the experience gap, the needs gap and hopefully the student learning gap. If educators are going to make a difference for the students of the future, we need to do so in an informed, thoughtful and networked manner.”*

You can learn more about the Network of Performance Based schools on-line at <http://www.npbs.ca/>.

Very interesting observations, and I thank the authors for their permission to share these insights. This provides much food for thought in terms of a vehicle for building collaboration and sustaining healthy professional relationships through networks.

I am encouraged by the many initiatives we see that are building our future leaders. Only a few of many worthy undertakings are highlighted here.

## **BARGAINING UPDATE**

A total of 83 public sector agreements have been reached under the Province's new negotiating framework.

The agreements to date encompass 240,705 people and account for 78 per cent of all public sector employees.

More than 70,000 employees are covered by contracts that expire at the end of June, including 40,000 K-12 teachers, 25,000 K-12 support staff and 5,000 college support staff.

We have negotiated 27 of 69 agreements with unions representing K-12 support staff - that's about 40 per cent, or nearly half.

All are for eight per cent over four years. All are eligible for both early and long-term incentive payments.

An umbrella compensation agreement has been reached for the entire sector, which must be approved by union locals.

All agreements reached before June 30 will be eligible for the incentive payments.

An umbrella agreement has been reached for K-12 support staff, which must be approved by union locals.

All 11 college support staff contracts have now been ratified.

A further 8,000 employees are under contracts that expire after that date.

Updated bargaining information is available at [www.negotiatingframework.com](http://www.negotiatingframework.com).