

April 20, 2007

I managed to spend some time at the British Columbia Education Leadership Council (BCELC) event on Monday morning of this week. BCELC had gathered superintendents, district staff and principals from 33 school districts. In addition, superintendents, parents, trustees, principals and the Ministries of Education and Advanced Education were represented. This group came together to learn of the work BCELC has been doing in its Leadership Seminar Series over this past year. Many of the districts represented plan to send newly appointed principals to the seminar series when BCELC opens its second cohort in September, 2007.

I was struck by the “footprint” BCELC has created in leadership development in a very short period of time. In large part, this is the result of the work Cathy Elliott, CEO of BCELC, and the Board of BCELC. The vision for a broad scope of leadership development is being realized, and significant progress is being made in addressing leadership succession challenges in our sector. We heard that over 240 newly appointed principals will be engaged in the developmental programs by next September. This is significant but still only a small portion of the number of principals who will be new to their positions by next fall.

Yrsa Jensen, Director of Instruction, School District No. 36 (Surrey), has played a key role in guiding the design team responsible for the Seminar series. Yrsa is well known as a result of her work provincially in Assessment for Learning and Supervision of Learning.

I was called away from the BCELC event to attend the Estimates debate in the Legislature, but I understand that after I left participants heard an overview of the program and received a hands-on sample thanks to the workshop provided by two program participants, Cathy Karam and Laura Grills from Surrey, on Assessment for Learning. A panel of participants from the first cohort,

Vicki Chapman, Delta; Kristina Willing, Smithers; Alan Millar, Maple Ridge; and Leah Robertson, Prince Rupert, discussed with those assembled the impact the seminar series had on their leadership practice. I am told the presentation was greeted with enthusiasm as districts represented look forward eagerly to enrolling their own new principals.

I was struck as I looked around the room at the Professional Learning Community that has developed as a result of the work of BCELC around the Leadership Seminar Series. The boundaries between districts and partners have come down, and all in that room share a common purpose and vision for leadership. The seminar series development is so compelling in its content that it transcends parochial interests. I am very optimistic that BCELC will continue to flourish and enjoy growing support as it adds value to school and school district leadership.

Leadership development is a hot topic provincially. Another program resulting from a partnership among the University of Victoria, BCELC and the Ministry of Education is flourishing – and it’s one of a kind in Canada. UVIC has boldly stepped into the world of providing a graduate certificate program called the Certificate in School Management and Leadership (CSML). This program is now going into its third successful year of operation. School Districts should consider encouraging teachers who wish to become school leaders to participate in this program. Following, you will find more information on this program.

CSML Program

There is no doubt about the impact that school based leaders have on student learning. We also know from contemporary research and practice the kind of leaders

that are needed to move our schools from sorting systems to learning systems. What we now have in BC is a program uniquely designed to help new and future school leaders develop the knowledge and dispositions that are required for this new form of leadership. Through a partnership with the University of Victoria, the Ministry of Education and BCELC, the CSML program was introduced in 2005. With the third cohort set to begin this summer, we are pleased with the positive impact the participants are having in their schools and districts.

Dr. Yvonne Martin-Newcombe, Associate Dean and a member of the Leadership Studies faculty, is known nationally for her expertise in the areas of education law and parent involvement. Dr. Martin-Newcombe has served as the key faculty leader in championing a new approach to leadership at the University of Victoria. The graduate students have appreciated her thoughtful and focused approach. Dr. Christopher Hodgkinson, a noted Canadian scholar in the area of leadership philosophy, has provided the distinguished lecture each year, and the graduates as well as members of the academic community at the University have benefited from his lifetime of thinking about the meaning of leadership. CSML participants also have the opportunity to gain an appreciation of Aboriginal culture and ways of knowing from Dr. Lorna Williams, the Canadian Chair in Aboriginal education and faculty member at U Vic.

Many of you are aware of the work of Dr. Linda Kaser and Dr. Judy Halbert with the Network of Performance Based Schools and with their provincial work in school, literacy, rural and Aboriginal education improvement. As a result of their sustained efforts and work in BC, they are now part of an international network of researchers and practitioners involved with innovative approaches to school improvement and deep learning. They have brought current international thinking on leadership development to the design and content of the CSML program, and they are now faculty members at the University of Victoria.

Another unique feature of the program is the partnership between the University and respected leaders. Dr. Jordan Tinney, Superintendent of Schools in Comox Valley, and Wendy Herbert, previously the Superintendent from the Gulf Islands and a recipient of two provincial awards for her leadership, are co-faculty in the program. Each of the leadership participants also works with a learning partner as a mentor during the year long program. Jan Robertson, head of the Leadership Program at the Institute of Education in London and author of *Coaching Leadership*, is also part of the faculty team. Jan works with the mentors and new leaders during the summer session.

The CSML program is six units of graduate work or one-third of a Master's degree. Participants can elect to do the program as a stand-alone certificate or as part of a Master's program. CSML learners attend a ten-day intensive session on campus the first summer, work online during the winter both through formal course work and in regular communication with the faculty, and complete a five-day session on campus the second summer. During the program the participants:

- Learn, apply in practice, and reflect on key leadership concepts including trust, inquiry-based staff development, supervisory practice, formative assessment and learning theories, networked learning and democratic community development, cultural understanding and Aboriginal world views, and legal, fiscal and ethical decision-making perspectives.
- Develop and implement a leadership inquiry project at their school focused on creating capacity and improving student learning
- Communicate their leadership findings in published articles and in portfolio-based, visual presentations.

Feedback from the participants, their district colleagues, and from the University has been positive. Many of the participants have moved into formal leadership roles

since beginning the program, and many others are influencing the learning program in their schools as teacher leaders. There is a sense of a provincial learning culture that is being developed across BC as participants and their learning partner/coaches come from a range of districts and school types, public and independent – from Fort Nelson to Sooke, Coast Mountains to Coquitlam, and Sunshine Coast to Gold Trail.

For more information about CSML, please go to <http://www.educ.uvic.ca/csml/>

Feature for this week

Wayne Leckie, Superintendent, School District No. 27 (Cariboo–Chilcotin), provides this story. Teachers in this school are making a difference to their students' literacy attainment. Notice the role leaders play in this school as they pursue their literacy goals.

The Literacy Initiative

In School District No. 27, the district has used funding from their Literacy Innovation Grant to provide teacher time at thirteen elementary and secondary schools. This time is used in a variety of ways but must be used to support professional development related to school literacy goals. Elementary schools provided with this funding have designated a staff member to act as a Literacy Initiative Teacher (LIT). For approximately two hours each week, these teachers may model instructional practices, access new resources, or release a teaching colleague to work in another's classroom. Some secondary schools have also designated LIT's, while others have used the funding to release groups of teachers to plan collaboratively.

At 100 Mile Elementary, first year Vice-Principal, Mike Davidson, also acts as the school's Literacy Initiative Teacher. For the past three years, most of the teaching

staff have been trained to use D.A.R.T. (District Assessment of Reading Team), a performance-based classroom assessment tool. With extra release time provided by the district, Mike has met with groups of teachers to study assessment results and find commonalities across the grade levels. The school has then chosen a school-wide literacy focus for two months at a time. A bulletin board in the staffroom allows teachers to post theme-related lesson ideas and titles of picture books and novels that they have used successfully.

100 Mile Elementary Principal Rob Breden ensures that the school's literacy goal is front and centre at every staff meeting. These staff meetings are used not only to choose the next school-wide literacy theme but also to discuss and debrief the previous theme. There are many teachers on the staff who have literacy expertise in a variety of areas (from Reading Recovery to guided reading to literature circles). When given the chance to share this extensive knowledge, these teachers, supported by strong school leadership, have been the key component in the success of the school's literacy initiative.

CAP Conference 2007

"Connecting Leaders"

British Columbia played host to the silver anniversary of the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) national conference this past week. Congratulations to the host committee co-chaired by Maeve Buckley and Ray Comeau for an event that attracted 500 delegates representing all of our territories and provinces, including 55 of our school districts. Attendees also came from as far away as Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The theme of connecting leaders featured many of British Columbia's top educators sharing their expertise and provided an excellent forum for the rest of the nation to see some examples of the quality of our education system.

One of the highlights of the awards ceremony was having another B.C. Principal recognized for outstanding work. Richard Franklin, Principal at Pinecrest Elementary in SD No. 27 (Campbell River), was honoured as the "CAP Distinguished Principal of the Year". In addition to being a member of the "Network of Performance Based Schools" and a mentor in the CSML program, Richard has designed a diagnostic math assessment that is being used in 21 school districts. In his nomination papers, Craig Gillis, Acting Superintendent, stated that "Richard has infused his staff and community with a spirit of possibility by collaboratively developing a team that truly believes in the moral purpose of changing life opportunities for all students." His work is a positive example of the leadership that exists in our schools. Another of B.C.'s leaders, Les Dukowski (BCPVPA President), was elected to the position of Western Vice-President for CAP and will serve his term starting July 1, 2007.



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