

EEI bulletin

Issue Number 1
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Communications – What are We Doing?

The BCSSA's trained EEI facilitators and EEI contacts have committed to delivering the ethical fitness message around the province. Based on *How Good People Make Tough Choices*, written by Rushworth Kidder, President of the Institute of Global Ethics (IGE), Ethical Fitness workshops focus on:

- The importance of values in group cultures
- Definitions of ethical behaviour
- Why being ethical is foundational to principled leadership
- Why being able to articulate ethical thinking is foundational to principled leadership
- How to resolve an ethical dilemma when both possibilities are right.

The association is committed to providing ongoing liaison, communication and coordination of EEI. It also sponsors the development of a provincial cadre of facilitators accredited to support planning and training within the districts.

This EEI bulletin is part of the BCSSA's role to support this initiative. It is the first of four that will be published this school year. It provides a summary of workshops and district initiatives that have taken place under EEI's umbrella. It also provides an indication of the growth of this initiative and its impact on educators throughout BC.

If you have any questions or would like to have a workshop presented in your district, please get in touch with your district or regional contact or Ann Naymie at anaymie@telus.net

BCSSA Ethics Education Planning Seminar

In May 2005, 10 EEI facilitators and district contacts met to look at the initiative. They discussed key issues and potential outcomes for ethics education in the province for the next four years. The participants included Rod Allen, Bruce Beairsto, Bonnie Chappell, Wendy Herbert, Geoff Jopson, Chris Kelly, Len Luders, Wendy Lee, Ann Naymie and Rushworth Kidder. The session was facilitated by Greg Banwell of Banwell Wilson.

A list of objectives for the initiative was a result of in depth discussion. The first six objectives for July 2005 to July 2006 are (in priority order):

1. Support/nurture the people who have been developed – reinforce what we have already created, support grass roots, build from where we are, brush up with Rush, find opportunities to bring them together to speak about accomplishments/learnings, EEI people speaking at chapter regional meetings.
2. Establish baseline measurement to provide a measure of progress and communications, funding, engage a researcher/developer for instrument design and application – ethical climate measure from Rush, in partnership with participating districts that would help fund this as part of their development.
3. Hold a first annual forum for the “been there, done that” group – exchange insight, learning, improvement.
4. Implement staffing role to support the above – focused coordination, gathering and sharing information, connecting with what is going on, champion, organizing, project leadership, communications, cultivating an overview process of the process of development.
5. Grow more facilitators (breadth and depth) – find the funding.
6. Build organization connections ... invite to the table, create inclusiveness after their awareness/ understanding is raised.

In response to these objectives, (#3) a forum has been scheduled for Wednesday, November 16, in Victoria, where EEI facilitators and district contacts can exchange information and design future strategies, and (#4) Ann Naymie has been contracted to coordinate the development of this initiative for the year.

The Institute of Global Ethics – Canada is in the process of moving its headquarters from Toronto to Vancouver. It is anticipated that BCSSA’s EEI will partner with IGE on some of the proposed projects, particularly objective #2, a measure of the program’s effectiveness.

BCSSA Regional Chapters

East-West Kootenays Chapter

■ **SD 6 Rocky Mountain**

Len Luders, trained EEI facilitator (just retired)

Len has presented Ethical Fitness workshops to a number of educators and partner groups over the past 18 months in the district. To encourage implementation and a full understanding of Ethical Fitness, the district decided to provide sessions to all partner groups starting with the board of trustees. Most sessions have been a half day in length and have been provided to the following groups:

- Board of trustees for the Rocky Mountain School District ((9)
- RMSD senior and middle management (10)
- Principals, vice-principals and senior management (30)
- Principals and vice-principals follow-up session (30)
- RMSD Operations Department (16)
- District Inservice Day (teachers and support staff) in 2004 and 2005 (25 each session)
- Parent Advisory Committees zonal sessions in Golden, Invermere and Kimberly (38)

■ **SD 8 Kootenay Lake**

Bill Reid, trained EEI facilitator

During the 2004-05 school year Bill presented Ethical Fitness workshops to two school staffs. At one workshop, 16 educators were present and the workshop was delivered in two half-day sessions. At the

would face on student council or in classroom meeting contexts. She designed four scenarios, leaving different sections blank, then distributed them to different groups, having them fill in the blank sections and work with the dilemmas.

The next session was presented to 75 educators involved in the Surrey Principal and Vice-principals' Mentoring Group. This was a two hour dinner session after school where discussion focused on the need for ethical fitness, core values, the three decision-making models and four ways of viewing an ethical dilemma. Donna distributed scenarios again and reported that discussion was brisk in the small groups, but not as lively in the large group.

Feedback from both sessions was universally strong and positive. She shared her experience of using the language as a positive tool for leadership, particularly in dealing with issues of student discipline and talking with students and their parents,

■ **SD 37 Delta** John Anderson, EEI contact

Marjorie Higginson (recently retired) discussed ethics issues at administrative meetings throughout the year.

■ **SD 38 Richmond** Bruce Beairsto, trained EEI facilitator & contact
Jim Martens, trained EEI facilitator

In February 2005, Bruce Beairsto, a school administrator and a teacher presented a seminar about ethical decision making at a district convention. Fifty administrators, teachers and members of CUPE participated.

In April 2005, Bruce and a grade 12 student presented a session entitled "Ethics in the Classroom" for about 20 parents of pre-school and primary children. The grade 12 student had attended a session presented in West Vancouver by Rushworth Kidder and then written a column about ethics for a local paper. Bruce was impressed by the article and contacted the student to see if he would be interested in co-presenting. The student prepared a video, interviewing teachers and some friends discussing the place of ethics in the secondary curriculum.

In both workshops, Bruce focused on the following issues:

- Our legal and moral mandate to develop character
- The common core values we share despite our great diversity
- The dilemmas that arise from competing values (justice and mercy being the one with which most teachers readily identify)

On a district level, ethical discussions are woven into dialogues focusing on the District Directions: purpose, values, relationships and competencies. Ethical behaviour is particularly linked to values and relationships.

Bruce has also found using of the language of dilemma valuable when dealing with contentious situations (angry parents, grievances, terminations).

■ **SD 39 Vancouver** Chris Kelly, EEI contact
Corine Clark, trained EEI facilitator (recently retired)
Deb Kelly, trained EEI facilitator

Rushworth Kidder was the keynote speaker at the VSB/VASSA/VEPVA School Principals and Vice-

Principals Fall Conference at Whistler in October 2004. Two hundred members participated in the all-day Ethical Fitness seminar. Prior to the session, all VSB administrators read *When Good People Make Tough Choices*. The discussion in the small groups surfaced ethical dilemmas which administrators were currently facing. There was an enthusiastic response to the ethical fitness framework and the opportunity for shared problem solving.

Corine Clark and Deb Kelly co-presented four Ethical Fitness training sessions in Vancouver:

- VSB Leadership Preparation Program for teachers aspiring to school and district leadership. A four-hour session was held in the 2003 and 2004 LPP with 45 teacher leaders in each session. Teachers brought along their personal and professional ethical dilemmas for discussion.
- An all day session with VSB PASA staff. Fifty non-teaching, exempt staff from accounting, operations, construction, information technology, finance, and human resources participated in the session. Each participant received a copy of *When Good People Make Tough Choices* and read it before the session.
- An all-day session with 25 South Hill Adult Learning Centre staff.

Corine ran an Ethical Fitness study group this year for school administrators. The group of 15 met six times to discuss ethical problems from their practice and to read and discuss Rushworth Kidder's new publication, *Moral Courage*. Members brought along other readings on ethical decision making. Dates have been set for the study group to continue in 2005-2006. One member attended an Ethical Fitness conference with Rushworth Kidder at the Institute for Global Ethics in Camden, Maine, and will report back to the study group in October 2005.

■ **SD 41 Burnaby**

John White, EEI contact
Sheila Rooney, EEI contact
Sharon Domaas, trained EEI facilitator

Sharon delivered an Ethical Fitness workshop involving two schools, Buckingham Elementary and Gilmore Community School. Staff, support staff and some parents attended the session. Forty participants were from Gilmore and 25 from Buckingham. After working as a large group, the participants split into school groups and a half day was spent defining core values, then a large group discussion was used to compare chosen values.

At a district level, ethical decision making is included in workshops with topics about best professional practices.

■ **SD 45 West Vancouver**

Geoff Jopson, EEI contact
Christie Whitley, trained EEI facilitator

An administrators cohort of nine educators was established in 2004 and met six times during the school year. The group discussed how to resolve administrative issues and ethical dilemmas using Kidder's model of right versus right.

For two years Christie presented Ethical Fitness workshops to two groups (24 in each) of grade six and seven District Challenge students. She also presented to a group of 24 grade eight students this year.

A workshops series of two sessions on Ethical Fitness was offered to West Vancouver teachers. Ten teachers attended and Christie Whitley and Philipine Pereira co-presented. As a result of this series, a district cohort was established:

- To continue discussions and collaborate on how to build a "stronger ethical climate" in West Vancouver

- To develop a plan to raise the awareness of the Ethical Fitness model among all stakeholder groups
- To work with the Social Responsibility Performance Standards and investigate strategies for moving beyond the grid descriptors to behaviour and decision-making processes
- To do an inventory of promising practice
- To gather materials and develop a resource list for parents and teachers.

The district cohort is comprised of 10 educators, including the union president and the district international school counsellor. It is expected that more will join as discussions continue.

Northern Chapter

■ SD 28 Quesnel Patty Kimpton, EEI contact

In April approximately 40 educators attended an ethics workshop. Participants included a good mix of teachers, support workers, administrators, and trustees. The workshop was facilitated by John McLay, a trained EEI facilitator, and Robin Dielissen, EEI contact, both from Prince George. The after-school session (3:15-7pm) was well received and followed by dinner. School groups attended to establish a common language to deal with ethical dilemmas, and individuals attended for professional development.

One school group followed up with ethical training involving a grade seven leadership group.

Ethics are also of interest to the District Social Responsibility Committee.

■ SD 50 Queen Charlotte-Haida Gwaii Mike Woods, EEI contact

In June 2004, educators attended an Ethics in Education planning session, held by the Ministry of Education.

In September 2004, Wendy Lee facilitated an Ethical Fitness half-day workshop for a group of approximately 15 participants, including school district trustees, school principals and vice-principals and senior management.

In October 2004, the district began a practice of setting aside 30 minutes of every monthly principals/vice-principals meeting to discuss ethical dilemmas provided by the individuals in the group or from the website. People would work in pairs to analyse the dilemmas using the ethical decision-making template, then discuss the analysis as a group. As a result, all administrators are more comfortable using the model and, over time, ethical conversations have grown deeper, more complex and thought provoking. It has become part of their everyday practice.

■ SD 52 Prince Rupert Brian Kangas, EEI contact

Prince Rupert invited Rod Allen and Matthew Monkman, trained EEI facilitators from Bulkley Valley, to present an Ethical Fitness workshop to school teams. Teams from six of the 13 schools in the district attended the all-day session. Team members included principals, vice-principals, teachers and parents. Also participating were three trustees and three board office staff for a total of 25.

■ SD 54 Bulkley Valley Rod Allen, trained EEI facilitator & contact Matthew Monkman, trained EEI facilitator

Matthew and Rod presented a half-day workshop to the district's Teacher Leadership Group. The

participants read *How Good People Make Tough Choices* and included their thoughts about the book in ethics discussions. The workshop was well received and follow up sessions have been requested.

Rod also added that the use of the language of dilemma has been valuable when dealing with contentious and troubling situations.

- **SD 57 Prince George** Bonnie Chappell, EEI contact
 Robin Dielissen, EEI contact
 John McLay, trained EEI facilitator

Prince George had a series of four workshops to introduce Ethical Fitness to the district and begin the process of having this be part of district awareness and discussions. The workshops were all-day, half-day or after school. Wendy Herbert, EEI contact from the Gulf Islands, facilitated one session and John and Robin facilitated the others. Participants included trustees, senior administrators, school-based administrators and teachers.

The Encouraging Leadership Group, Prince George's admin trainees, read the first chapter of Kidder's *How Good People Make Tough Choices*. They discussed the ideas at their next meeting. Then, in a following presentation-working session, ethical decision making was woven into a discussion of case studies.

At the district level, the Social Responsibility Working Group, one of the five leadership teams composed of teachers and administrators, has as one of its strategies the promotion of an ethical decision-making program. Both Robin and John are members of the team and actively involved in the design of that promotion.

- **SD 60 Peace River North** Ron Samborski, trained EEI facilitator & contact
 Helen Gilbert, trained EEI facilitator

Helen Gilbert uses the Ethical Fitness strategies on a daily basis in her school. She finds them particularly useful when dealing with student discipline, discussing issues with students and parents. She also incorporates Ethical Fitness into the dilemmas around the delivery of their special needs program.

- **SD 81 Fort Nelson** Ray Irwin, EEI contact

After attending a conference where Rushworth Kidder presented his program, Ray and Minnie Khana, a humanities teacher, developed a unit of study about ethical decision making. The curriculum was piloted by Minnie in an English 10 class and a First Nations 9/10 course. It will be presented to their colleagues this fall.

At their bi-weekly admin meetings, the admin team (principals, vice-principals and district staff) presented content from each chapter of Kidder's new book, *Moral Courage*. This was followed by discussion and application to real situations.

- **SD 92 Nisga'a** Patrick Moores, EEI contact

Okanagan-Mainline Chapter

- **SD 19 Revelstoke** Bob Cooper, EEI contact

- **SD 22 Vernon** Bob Peacock, EEI contact

Len Luders delivered an all day session to 50 Vernon administrators on August 25, 2005.

- **SD 23 Central Okanagan** Clara Sulz, EEI contact
Dennis Tetreau, trained EEI facilitator
Pamela Samaddar, trained EEI facilitator

- **SD 67 Okanagan-Skaha** Dave Stigant, EEI contact
Deb Donoghue, EEI contact

- **SD 83 North Okanagan-Shuswap** Doug Pearson, EEI contact

Vancouver Island Chapter

- **SD 62 Sooke** Jim Cambridge, EEI contact

- **SD 63 Saanich** Jordan Tinney EEI contact
Joe Grewel, trained EEI facilitator
Janet Poth, trained EEI facilitator

After introducing the concepts and the vocabulary, Joe and Janet have coordinated admin team meetings where participants discuss dilemmas and the best resolution.

- **SD 64 Gulf Islands** Wendy Herbert, EEI contact
Michael Ryan, trained EEI facilitator (retired)

In September 2003, 24 educators from the Gulf Islands district attended a session presented by Rushworth Kidder in Saanich with the purpose of planning how this material could be integrated into the Gulf Islands culture. More than half of those attending stayed involved in the district Ethics Committee.

From that committee, workshops were offered to schools and the community (Rotary, Lions, the medical community, the Vancouver Island trustees). The principals provided and discussed ethical dilemmas at each admin meeting and some introduced the concepts to their staff and students.

Gulf Islands trustees have embraced the concepts and all but one have attended a workshop. They have added to their guiding principles that any decision must be made in an ethical framework. At meetings they remind themselves and the public of this commitment when making tough decisions, whether fiscal or operative. Currently they are using this framework as they look at the future of individual schools.

- **SD 68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith** George Duffell, EEI contact

Wendy Lee, trained EEI facilitator, presented a half day session to 100 educators in Nanaimo on October 5, 2004. The participants included district staff, principals, vice-principals, the teachers' association representative, teachers, and the CUPE rep.

BCSSA

■ Betty Boulton, trained EEI facilitator

Betty is a facilitator for the BCSSA *Dimensions of Practice* program. This two-year online learning course trains school-based leaders for district leadership. One of the dimensions that Betty teaches is (Dimension 8) Values and Ethics of Leadership. She has taught this six-week session to two groups of BC educational leaders (a total of 40). Her course design includes:

- Individual assessment of personal value system in the context of current leadership role
- The foundation of ethical practice and its application to personal and professional behaviour (including its application to the multicultural and ethnic diversity in public education)
- Examining the values of public education and its impact on a democratic society
- How to honour all students as a district leader.

■ Geoff Johnson, trained EEI facilitator

Geoff wrote an article about ethics and issues in education that was published in the *Vancouver Sun* on May 3, 2004. It is copied below:

Youth Violence, Halloween Vandalism and Junk Food

When Kids Ask Questions and We Don't Have The Answers

by Geoff Johnson

Each night, as our family watches the six o'clock news, I sense a tide of moral ambiguity flooding across my 16-year-old son's intelligence, sweeping the last vestiges of his innocence before it.

He has questions both thoughtful and thought provoking, about wars, violence, disease, politics and the media's take on it all;

"Is the war in Iraq just a matter of defeating unjustifiable violence with greater violence?"

"Why do a lot of people just become vandals on Halloween?"

"Why are things getting so violent in Vancouver schools?"

"Why do some kids need somebody else to decide what they should do, or even eat, and what they should not?"

Like many children his age, my son is not asking these questions to perplex me, he's asking because such things trouble him as he tries to develop his own ethical and moral fix on life and how he should navigate himself in this information-rich sea of contradictions.

We talk about ethics as being a set of guiding values-based rules, usually agreed upon within a professional group and about morality as being that which is generally accepted behaviour within a society. We discuss the apparent fact that ethics and morality, even as demonstrated by some court decisions, are not even always the same thing. But these definitions don't satisfy my son's specific questions.

Being a values-based household, but not one overtly aligned to any particular religion, we can't throw him back into some denominational safety net. Already, he knows that many of the great crimes against humanity have been committed in the name of one religion or another and usually the most atrocious by those most fanatically committed to their own interpretation of one of the common prophets.

So I take another tack and try to explain, as Yan Martel explains in his award winning novel *The Life of Pi*,

“The main battlefield for good is not the open ground of the public arena, but the small clearing of each heart.”

We talk about that and how to decide what feels right and what does not, as if there is some conscientious compass built into every human spirit which, if trusted, will point to somewhere between the true north of ethical behaviour and the magnetic north of free will. And that this compass often needs to be realigned.

But it's not enough, I know. He'll need some way when the time comes, and it will likely come when I'm not around, to resolve his own dilemmas and guide his own behavioural choices. Life will seek to obstruct his safe journey towards becoming a rational, ethical human being, one possessed of an ecology of conscience which will guide him to a life of simple self-imposed rules producing, in turn, complex but worthy personal and social outcomes.

Most kids, probably all kids, at some formative stage in their lives, want to learn how to face issues and make their own rational decisions, how to move beyond the monochromatic blacks and whites of their adolescent philosophies, how to appreciate the shades of grey in every issue.

Some never do and the quality of their lives is proscribed accordingly.

Right now our Canadian public education system offers few formally organized courses in how to examine daily issues judiciously and prudently, how to sort out justice from injustice, equity from inequity, sanctimonious public sham from objectively balanced analysis.

Public education in Canada is very good and widely respected internationally, but like our society it is a politely secular and increasingly politicized system where any discussion of values, ethics or morals is sure to offend somebody – and then things get ugly.

So young teachers, ready and eager to engage and challenge younger minds, feel that they have not been prepared and are not ready, nor is it safe, to talk with kids about the things kids want to discuss most.

More and more public educators feel there is a need for some approved curricula to support them in teaching children to examine issues beyond the level of simple fact or political correctness. Social studies, history, government and leadership courses are a good start and sometimes braver and more skilful teachers are able to teach their students to think using those curricular platforms.

But many kids are left with the major questions unanswered. Is there such a thing as right and wrong? Can both sides of an issue be right, or wrong? How do you distinguish?

And to find out, in the absence of any other properly structured experience, they turn back to the classroom of last resort and ethical ambiguity, and just watch television.

Geoff Johnson is a retired Superintendent of Schools who lives and writes in Mill Bay, BC.
(gfjohnson4@shaw.ca)

■ Wendy Lee, trained EEI facilitator

Wendy presented a third workshop to Douglas College. Participants included 12 people from the HR department and the college president. The session focused on developing a decision-making process that was balanced so all aspects of an issue are considered. Also discussed was the articulation of the process to parties affected by the decision.

Wendy attended a two-day overview orientation to Rushworth Kidder's new book, *Moral Courage*. This session took place in Camden, Maine, and was part of Wendy's professional development program for the year.

■ Len Luders, trained EEI facilitator

In addition to sessions in the Rocky Mountain and Vernon school districts, Len has presented the following sessions to other education partner groups:

- Board of governors and senior management for the College of the Rockies (15)
- Orientation session for the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) and the Alberta School Business Officials Association (ASBOA) (30).

■ Colin McDougall, trained EEI facilitator

Colin presented a half-day workshop at the BCCPAC provincial conference in March 2004. Twenty-six parents and conference delegates attended. They considered the impact of ethical decision making on public education and the responsibilities of the provincial association to incorporate these ideas in their organization.

■ Ann Naymie, trained EEI facilitator & contact

As a faculty associate with Royal Roads University's MALT program, Ann incorporated Kidder's ethics program into the course work with 50 master's-degree students, Alberta administrators and teachers. She ran four half-day sessions where values and ethical decision making were presented, then students provided an analysis of, and resolution to, their right versus right dilemmas. Issues included the rights of special education students and the regular classroom students, the ethical responsibilities of a principal when dealing with a death in the school, the rights of the child versus the rights of the parents, conflict between teachers, the effects of timetabling on staff and students, and sports programs—cooperative or competitive.

Additional workshops

Wendy Herbert presented an Ethical Fitness half-day session to 40 experienced principals and vice-principals from around the province at the BCPVPA Short Course. The session was very well received and provoked thoughtful discussion.

NOTE: A new resource!! IGE is a partner in developing a website that presents ethical dilemmas from a global perspective. Take a look at www.changemakers.net

If you have any questions about any of the information in this bulletin or want to contact a facilitator about a workshop, check the BCSSA website under Ethics in Education and the lists of facilitators and district contacts.