

EEI bulletin

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The Ethics Education Initiative (EEI) has been part of the BCSSA's program to support effective educational leadership in the province. Beginning in 2001, BCSSA leaders made a commitment to become more knowledgeable about Rushworth Kidder's ethical decision-making model outlined in his book, *How Good People Make Tough Choices*, and demonstrated in his one-day Ethical Fitness® Seminar (EF®S). Kidder, the founder and president of the Institute for Global Ethics, based in Camden, Maine, travelled throughout BC delivering his program to interested educators.

In November 2003, BCSSA supported the training of 24 educational leaders from around the province who had attended an EF®S and were particularly interested in using Kidder's model to analyze right-versus-right ethical dilemmas. These 24 individuals became Ethical Fitness® facilitators, able to present EF®S to other educators in the province. Additionally, district contacts were identified to receive pertinent information on EF®S and provide updates about their local initiatives to the association.

While the BCSSA clearly believed in this initiative, it wanted the commitment and development of the Ethics Education Initiative in districts to be their own—a grassroots evolution. As a result, during the past three-and-half years, districts have designed their own ethics programs, compatible with their culture, district structure and school needs. The association hosted three Train-the-Trainer sessions, all with a maximum number of registrants, and also invited Rushworth Kidder to introduce his new program,

Moral Courage, at the BCSSA Fall Conference in 2005. At a pre-conference session, EEI facilitators and district contacts gathered to discuss their programs with each other and Kidder.

Concurrently, IGE relocated the Institute for Global Ethics Canada to Vancouver from Toronto, where it was originally headquartered. In the Vancouver office there are seven EF®S-trained facilitators, three of whom have worked with the BCSSA's EEI during the past four years: Wendy Herbert, Colin McDougall and Ann Naymie. BCSSA educators who are interested in continuing the Ethical Fitness® work can contact IGE Canada for information (www.globalethics.ca).

A **Train-the-Trainers** session will be provided by IGE Canada on January 18–19, 2008, in Vancouver. This is for anyone who has attended an Ethical Fitness® Seminar and would like to receive training to provide seminars in his/her district. A registration form for this session is posted on the Ethics page of the BCSSA website.

The five previously published EEI bulletins have outlined district initiatives, reported forum discussions and supplied ethical right-versus-right dilemmas. This final bulletin presents reports from five EEI district contacts and trained facilitators who describe the status of their program. Again, the level of commitment and uniqueness of each district program are reflections of the importance and universality of this work.

School District 38 Richmond

Submitted by EEI district contact and trained facilitator, Bruce Bearsto

In Richmond we have, at various times and in various ways, provided Ethical Fitness® training for administrators, teachers, support staff and students. Recently, for example, an introductory session was provided on a District ProD Day for a mixed group of 30 educators and support staff, and a full-day session for 30 students was provided as part of the district's Student Leadership Day program.

Each of these initiatives was well received and productive in the context of the individuals' particular work. The impact for the district, however, has not been primarily in the accumulation of individuals with ethics training but rather in the contribution this training has made to a cultural norm of distinguishing dilemmas from problems and dealing with the former in terms of conflicting values and/or perspectives.

This model contributes to more thoughtful conduct in general and more respectful response to conflict in particular. Ethical Fitness® training follows on a long tradition of collaboration and an ongoing focus on developing strong relationships in the district. The increased awareness of the nature of dilemmas and the increased skill in living with dilemmas that resulted from our introduction to Ethical Fitness® as defined by the Institute for Global Ethics have strengthened and extended our ability to work in partnership.

Note: Bruce wrote an article, "The Ethical Imperative in Education," that was published in the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents' Spring Journal 2007.

School District 40 New Westminster

Submitted by EEI district contact and trained facilitator, John Woudzia

During the summer of 2007, the district administrative team began to refine the work it undertook during the 2006–07 school year, focusing on the development of a set of shared values and a compelling vision statement for the school district. This work began two years ago when the team made a commitment to examine its decision-making practices and adopt an approach based in large part on the Ethical Fitness® training framework developed by Rushworth Kidder.

The work over the past two years has been arduous but rewarding at the same time. Presently, the district is about to embark upon its third year of working toward the goal of defining its core values and vision. Over the course of the 2006–07 school year, the district held three community meetings in the city of New Westminster, each with a focus on identifying a set of core values and ultimately with a view to developing a vision statement for the district. This process was repeated with the Board of Education in the spring, and a final summative gathering for all stakeholder groups was organized in late May to consolidate the information and agree upon a set of universal shared values. This process was originally developed and field-tested with the district's administrative team during the previous August.

At the heart of this process is a deep and abiding commitment to change and improvement. Our school district is very fortunate to have a group of educational leaders at both the school and district level that is passionate about the importance of vision, ethical decision-making, and strategic planning. The ultimate goal for our leadership team at the conclusion of this journey is the development of a strategic plan for the district that is reflective of the collective values and vision of all partner groups.

To this end, the process for the current school year will involve taking the important work of the past two years and shifting the focus to values and beliefs at the school level. This will involve engaging our students and staff in processes similar to the approach undertaken with our various partners in 2006-07. As in previous years, this work promises to be exhilarating and rewarding, and we are looking forward to the task.

School District 41 Burnaby

Submitted by EEI trained facilitator, Sharon Domaas

Last spring a team of Burnaby School District leaders invited all administrators to a training session to prepare them to lead their staff through the process of identifying their core ethical values.

Starting in September of 2006, participants began the process of working to identify their core ethical values. Staffs not based in schools were invited to one of three workshops at Burnaby Lake Pavilion to participate in a process that mirrored what was occurring at school sites. Each of the three workshops welcomed close to 100 participants. It was wonderful to see grounds crew discussing ethical values with board-office secretaries, and continuing-education staff debating values with literacy consultants. The room was abuzz with energy and a sense of common purpose.

For the upcoming year we will be looking at what we would see or hear in a school that had “respect” as one of its ethical values. We are planning to have parents and communities surrounding schools engage in a conversation and process to identify ethical values in the upcoming year.

It is exciting to work as a team to reconnect with our common belief that students should be at the centre of all our decisions and that our interactions should be guided by a core set of ethical values.

School District 45 West Vancouver

Submitted by EEI district contact and trained facilitator, Phil Pereira

This year the West Vancouver School District has continued to focus on Ethical Fitness®. After being trained as a trainer in October 2006, Brad Lund teamed up in January with Phil Pereira to work with Liz Bell of North Vancouver to present a workshop at a District ProD Day. In April they also presented at the Canadian Association of Principals conference.

The Ethical Fitness® model has been used in the classroom, with teachers, and with administrators to assist their decision making. The West Vancouver Ethical Fitness® Cohort, which continues to meet monthly, is engaged in an action research project that ties the Kidder work to the Critical Thinking work of Paul and Elder. To that end, several members are participating in critical-thinking training through BCPVPA and are working closely with the North Vancouver cohort.

School District 74 Gold Trail

Submitted by EEI district contact and trained facilitator, Lynda Minnabarriet

As the first secretary-treasurer trained as part of the EEI in October 2006, I was eager to share the information with my colleagues from around the province. So in May 2007, Rod Allen, School District 54 Bulkley Valley, and I delivered a four-hour Ethical Fitness® workshop for approximately

20 participants at the secretary-treasurers association's annual general meeting in Penticton. The group was very interested in the process and several mentioned that they would be checking with their districts to see if they had an EEI district facilitator. Certainly, secretary-treasurers and our other business co-workers are faced with ethical dilemmas on a regular basis.

In Gold Trail, I've provided a session to board office staff and will continue training sessions next year with principals and other staff. We're looking forward to beginning these important discussions throughout the district.

If you have any questions or comments about the BCSSA's Ethics Education Initiative, please contact Ann Naymie (tel 604 221-2231, anaymie@gmail.com).