

Leading The Way



Strategic Look to 2011

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where we are going

A big part of our strategic look is clarifying **What Matters Most** to us and what we want to accomplish. With much reflection and input from our members, we have crafted a statement of **Organizational Purpose**, which defines our mission, values and vision, and is at the core of what we will do as an association to advance the student achievement agenda, improve services to members and strengthen our education community alliances.

how we will get there

To take our directional thinking into operational action, we created a conceptual bridge consisting of **Strategic Issues** and **Goals**, and developed specific short- and long-term **Action Initiatives** that will bring BCSSA's goals into being.



BCSSA Organizational Purpose

We believe that a dynamic and successful public education system is fundamental to a democratic society. We believe that our public education system in Canada must provide our children and youth with an inspiring foundation for lifelong learning and citizenship. We believe that leaders in public education should work together, and with others, to ensure that we have the very best public education possible.

We are an association with a passion for creating environments that nurture learning and achievement. We inspire, develop and support leadership in public education in British Columbia.

- We provide a compelling leadership vision and a strategic and principled voice on issues affecting public education.
- We advocate strongly for high quality public education that supports the children and families we serve.
- We work strategically with others to strengthen public education and leadership.
- We create dynamic learning opportunities for leadership development.

What Matters Most

Students at the core of everything

Learning for all of our lives

Ethics guiding our decisions and actions

Caring it's all about relationships

Collaboration working with our partners



Leadership Retention and Succession

Issue: The majority of our leaders retire between the ages of 56 and 59. One-third of BC educators currently fall into this age category. Given our organizational purpose, we must inspire, develop and support current and future leaders. We must provide more caring, supportive and rewarding environments for our current leaders, and take steps to encourage and attract new ones.

Goal: Improve Leadership Retention and Succession

To reach this goal, we will:

1.1 Develop, prepare and support strong leadership candidates.

Shorter-term action initiatives

- Gather input on “what works” in the recruitment of new leaders. (Take an inventory of current practices in candidate recruitment and selection and share across the province.)
- Gather information from new appointees and potential candidates. What do they need? What led them to be interested in a leadership role? Why do some not seek such roles? Use a consultant to undertake the collection of information from districts around the province.
- Coordinate leadership development initiatives with others (e.g., the newly formed BC Education Leadership Council).
- As resources permit, expand regional grant support for regional leadership development activities.
- Ask chapters to hold forums on leadership development.
- Develop more opportunities for potential leaders to experience the “world they may want to live in” (e.g., participation in review teams, acting positions, significant district projects). Keep list of people interested in such assignments and use it when requests are received.

Longer-term action initiatives

- Advocate for the improvement of compensation packages for leaders. Use the data we have to make something good happen.
- Evaluate the success of the Dimensions of Practice program (e.g., number of graduates taking on leadership roles and the extent to which the Dimensions program has or has not been a factor in their career).
- Examine and influence the criteria used by school boards in the selection of superintendents.
- Create a mentoring program for district leaders.
- Hold small group networking sessions at BCSSA conferences and other venues that focus on leadership issues. Ensure that topics and structures are designed to attract both current and future leaders. Encourage cross-district discussions. (Suggestion: Assign seating for some sessions.)
- Develop a program (e.g., mentorship, shadowing, specific experiences, informal contacts) to give potential superintendents opportunities to learn more about how things are done outside their districts.
- Expand our awareness of and potential to tap the leadership talent pool across the province.

1.2 Increase members' participation in association activities in

- Increase the participation of principals, teachers, and others,
- Increase our regional leadership development presence (see

	Shorter-term action initiatives	Longer-term action initiatives
order to broaden the pool of leadership candidates.	<p>in our leadership programs (e.g., fall conference).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that speakers/ announcements at BCSSA-sponsored events recognize the diversity of the audience (not only BCSSA members/ superintendents). 	<p>above).</p>
1.3 Support our members in achieving a healthier balance in their working lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer this item to the Membership Services Committee for its consideration and recommendations. • Survey our districts to identify “best practices” in work/life balance and share this knowledge across the province. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare our practices with best practices outside our industry and share with others (e.g., BCSTA). • Incorporate wellness themes and practices in our future conferences.
1.4 Increase the capacity of our members to work effectively with boards of trustees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with partner organizations (e.g., BCSTA) on this issue, with an increased emphasis on joint programs for trustees and superintendents to share their experiences and recommend ways to build effective working relationships. • Hold pre-conference workshops on this topic with seasoned superintendents sharing their experiences and best practices with newer superintendents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work directly with boards of trustees to focus on creating leadership environments (e.g., invite trustees to association learning events).
1.5 Work toward a compensation package that is an incentive to recruitment and retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the BC Ministry of Finance, and others, to ensure appropriate and competitive compensation packages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek the support of BCSTA to achieve competitive compensation packages.



BCSSA's Influence Profile

Issue: Building and maintaining a strong public education system in BC requires us to bring the best possible information to the attention of decision makers and to ensure that they use it. The issues are too complex and important for us to accept overly simple and unsustainable solutions. We should use our unique position to bridge the views of many stakeholders.

We have a voice and a responsibility to use it. We must increase our influence on the public, our government, and others who share our passion for high quality public education for our children and youth.

Goal: Enhance the BCSSA's Influence Profile

To reach this goal, we will:

2.1 Improve the association's credibility as a leading voice on public education in British Columbia.

2.2 Continue to strengthen our ability to influence government policy on public education.

2.3 Enhance our ability to speak directly to the public, especially parents, and to consult with them on issues affecting public education.

Shorter-term initiatives

- Create a toolkit of strong and coherent messages and speaking notes for use by leaders across all districts, for members to use, when appropriate, to convey a consistent message on "What Matters Most."
- Take whatever actions are necessary to ensure the toolkits are used.
- Meet regularly with key government officials.
- Expand the range of our government contacts.

- Work with BCCPAC and others to improve our ability to communicate more effectively with the public, and especially parents, on matters of importance to public education.
- Support our members in their communication with the public, and especially parents, by sharing our knowledge of "best practices" across districts (see below).

Longer-term initiatives

- Develop discussion papers on emerging and potential issues that our members can use to influence future public education policy (e.g., SPCs).
- Increase our capacity to communicate more effectively with stakeholders who do not necessarily share our views.
- Maintain our focus on the message that the BCSSA's work is passionately grounded in our commitment to building quality learning environments for the children and youth we serve.
- Use research-based evidence, where possible, to ensure that the message goes well beyond rhetoric.
- Sponsor shared educational opportunities with parents on a regional basis.
- Use webcasts and other technology to communicate more effectively with parents.

Sharing Our Leadership Knowledge

Issue: We are knowledge rich – and we need to do a better job of sharing what we know more broadly. While some districts already share what they know, we need to do an even better job of sharing what works, and what doesn't.

Goal: Improve Our Capacity to Share Leadership Knowledge

To reach this goal, we will:

3.1 Improve the quality of relevant leadership information and access to it.

Shorter-term initiatives

- Document examples of how members handle media crises. Create case studies to use in workshops, within a climate of genuine safety, in order to enhance our members' capacity to deal with such situations.
- Collaborate with other organizations (e.g., BCPVPA) in this initiative.
- Develop and share success stories across districts, throughout the province and, as appropriate, with the public.

Longer-term initiatives

- Given our desire to use our voice as an association, create an annual list of "hot topics" and key messages for our members to use to educate and influence others. Examples of topics: diversity, learning styles, class composition.

3.2 Enhance access to knowledge through technology.

- Continue to enhance our website capacity to convey useful leadership information in a concise, easy-to-use manner by building on examples of best practices, including those outside our industry. Example: a "digest" of hot issues and topics that members can pursue in more depth as required rather than extensive postings of full presentations.
- Create email lists to gather and provide timely information to members on "hot topics."

