

Executive Development Program / Leadership Development Program

## **FORTY YEARS LATER: STILL TRAINING EDUCATIONAL LEADERS**

In the mid 1960's School District #24 (Kamloops) was a growing District and the Educational Officers at the time saw the need to train and prepare teachers for the role of Principals. Following a review of literature and established leadership development programs already in existence, it was decided to join with the Center for the Study of Administration at UBC under the direction of Dr. Walter Hartwick.

In Kamloops, the Elementary Leadership Program began with visits from the UBC group, reviews of personnel, information sessions and nominations of "worthy" candidates. The nominations were screened and the chosen few were then put through several rigorous mental exercises. The one year training program, with admin time allocated and a \$500.00 increase to one's salary began. The program continues to evolve and today 82% of the school based Administrators in School District #73 Kamloops/Thompson (formerly SD#24) are graduates of the EDP/LDP.

The evolution has involved the following components:

- Self-nomination
- Nomination by others
- Interviews
- The "in basket"
- 1, or 2, or 3, and 4 year programs
- Theory into Practice Instructional sessions
- Outside Leadership (UBC)
- Appointment with no admin time or salary
- Secondary joined in the Program
- Must spend one year of the 2 year training period in both Elementary and Secondary schools
- District operated

Over the years the District, School Board and the Superintendents, must be acknowledged and congratulated for seeing this program continue. It has weathered the serious decline in student population and very serious budget limitations. It now is facing the baby boomer retirement. Long time School trustee Ken Christian has been on the Steering Committee for over 10 years and continues to advocate for the program at the Board level. He is also known to assist in the "in basket" program, playing the role of an irate parent.

## **TODAY, FORTY YEARS LATER**

Under the leadership of a Steering Committee made up of a School Trustee, Assistant Superintendents, Elementary and Secondary Admin officers, an Intern Rep and a Rep from the Principals' Association we have 25 Interns involved in a two year program.

## **SELECTION AND SCREENING**

The Steering Committee advertises in the spring of each school year. Application is by self-nomination and any qualified candidate may make application at that time. Candidates are expected to have completed a minimum of 5 years teaching experience and to have completed a Masters degree, be working on a Master degree, or be eligible for entry into a Masters program. The initial screening is based on a written application, followed by a formal interview process.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Leadership Development Program takes place over a two-year cycle. It is designed to teach skills that will have application in all kinds of situations and career paths. Interns will develop skills in mediation, organization, general management and group dynamics. They will also develop a body of knowledge and skills across the broad scope of the educational mandate, with particular regard to the leadership role and the practical duties of school administration.

Once selected, the Intern is expected to work in 2 different schools or education settings and experience as broad as possible exposure to administration duties. The Intern is granted some school time to carry out their duties but no additional salary is granted. Interns are invited to join the local Principals and Vice Principal Association as Associate Members.

## **PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

While there has been some variation from year to year, depending on budgets and the availability of resource personnel, the following components make up the LDP curriculum. All components are funded by the school district.

### Annual Leadership Course

Commonly called the Principals' Short Course this is a five-day course, jointly sponsored by the BCPVPA, BCSSA, UBC and the Ministry of Education, and held at UBC each July. The course is intended to provide beginning and practicing school administrators from around the province with the basic building blocks required for school administration. Special emphasis is on school law, culture, ethics, best practices, communication and conflict resolution. SD#73 continues to send one of the largest contingents to the Short Course each year.

### KTPVPA Retreat

Interns are invited to attend the annual Retreat of the Kamloops Thompson Principals' and Vice Principals' Association. This is an annual two-day event, with in-service and group discussion on key topics of the day.

### Division Retreats

Annually, each division holds a "retreat" and it is expected that the Intern would attend the retreat or stay back and "run" the school in the absence of the school administration.

### Theory Into Practice Seminars

This year both Assistant Superintendents, Jean Borsa and Ross Spina, will conduct 6 1/2 or 1 day seminars for all Interns. The topics are: Leadership, Introduction to the Board Office and District facilities, Communication, Discipline, Assessment, and Special Education.

### In-Basket Session

This is held over 2 days in which candidates experience some of the day-to-day problems and issues that may suddenly face a practicing school administrator. It's a hands-on demonstration of real life problem solving. It includes a "basket" of to do items, in a timed school setting. Interns are provided with a package of materials 1 week before the "in basket" date with info on their mock school.

Once, the "in basket" is completed the Interns discuss their actions taken on the items from the "in basket". Their interactions, defense of actions, and explanations are observed by practicing Principals and Vice Principals and feedback is provide on an individual basis.

### **SCHOOL-BASED EXPERIENCES**

Interns are provided (budgets permitting) with administrative release time. Under the leadership of the school administrator, the interns are exposed to a wide variety of school based administration duties and responsibilities such as; Contract Management, Drug Prevention and Intervention, School Based Budgets, Leadership and Team Building, School Planning Councils and Special Education to name a few.

### **EVALUATION**

All Interns receive an annual report and an interview. The school administrator completes the report and the school administrator and an Assistant Superintendent carry out the interview. While it is not possible to "fail", only those who have completed all components, over the two-year period, will receive a completion certificate.

### **THE NEXT FORTY YEARS ?**

In the forty years that the program has run in the District many graduates have gone on to many educational career paths. School District #73 (formerly #24) has had and does today have Assistant Superintendents who are graduates of the EDP/LDP. Other Districts have graduates in their schools as Principals or Board Office assignments. The Ministry of Education has been home for graduates. SD#73 has had many successful graduates move into District Coordinator roles and some have returned full time to the classroom where they continue to use the skills and knowledge they gained from their tour of duty through the Leadership Development Program.

Gordon Bell  
Principal SD#73  
EDP Graduate  
Chairperson, LDP Steering Committee