

What Value Is There In Visiting?

Joanne den Boer & Bill de Jager
SCSBC Directors of Curriculum & Instruction

Our visits began on a beautiful September morning in the Lower Mainland; then it was off to the Okanagan, back to the eastern Fraser Valley, over to Surrey, across the Fraser, to the Island, to the North, back to the Lower Mainland, up the Sunshine Coast, over again to the Island, back to Vancouver, and then up again to the North. Forty-five SCSBC school visits in 15 weeks. Done!

Or just beginning?

As new SCSBC Directors of Curriculum and Instruction, we committed ourselves to visiting every one of the SCSBC schools before Christmas. Our reservoir is now full of rich images, stimulating conversations, budding relationships, and challenging professional interchange.

“So what?” you may ask, “What value will your visits have for me as a teacher, a Board or committee member, a parent volunteer, or an administrator?”

We’re glad you asked. Allow us to provide some reflections and considerations that you – as a member of the SCSBC community of almost 10,000 students, almost 1,000 teachers and support staff, and 100’s of Board and committee members – may find valuable.

We feel privileged to now have broadened and deepened our initial understanding of all SCSBC schools. This interconnected picture of the SCSBC community is more obvious.

Each school visit introduced us to its particular ethos – its texture, its culture, its vitality. We felt, heard, and saw it as we listened, questioned and toured. The old adage – “as goes the queen/king, so goes the country” – still rings true. Besides its leadership, each school’s facilities, visual impact of student work, buzz of student life, and staff dynamics provided sensory evidence of its culture. SCSBC schools are like God’s snowflakes; each dazzlingly different!

We were deeply impressed with administration teams who are looking forward to what their Christian professional learning community should (and will!) look like by 2013, when first graders are in middle school and seventh graders don caps and gowns. They clearly define the reality¹ of what their professional learning community will be – learning. They are intentional about embedding school-wide educational learning strategies that build biblical discernment, foundation skills, and preparation for life-long learning. Their teachers are asked, “What do you need?” and seek ways to meet those needs. These administrators commit a significant amount of their time ensuring that only excellent teachers are walking beside their students². They commit to the continual professional improvement of their current staff through focused Pro-D and are involved in teacher growth plans, including regular evaluation of performance. They understand their parent community and its expectations. It will be an honour to serve and support these colleagues.



SCSBC schools are like God’s snowflakes; each dazzlingly different!



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What Value Is There In Visiting?

We also have appreciated the opportunity to begin working along side curriculum leaders, teachers, and support staff. During some of our visits, we presented a variety of workshops at staff meetings. As we prepared our presentation plans, practiced our delivery, and later assessed each workshop, we were reminded that such is the continual work done in all those classrooms. As a direct link to students, we witnessed teachers accepting the responsibility and commitment to provide learning centers that radiate the love, wonder, and awe that God has for everyone of His children. We look forward to exploring the multi-faceted elements of curriculum and instruction with these dedicated professionals.

Yet, we sensed isolation. British Columbia is a vast province. Our SCSBC schools are located in five regions: the North, the Island, the Interior, Greater Vancouver, and the Fraser Valley. Schools 1,500 km, 2 mountain ranges, and a strait apart are less likely to collaborate with each other. However, that's not what we mean.

Some schools in close geographic proximity to each other seem reluctant to connect on a regular basis. For some, there seems to be hesitancy to build professional working relationships with neighbouring administrators and staffs. Administrators know the benefits of having access to someone who is an objective listening ear and voice, especially when that person lives and swirls in the same world of developing vision, administering justice and mercy to students and staff, and leading through trauma and tension. Some larger schools are privileged to have admin team members who support each other and who bring a bountiful variety of skills and wisdom to the table; some smaller schools have principals who mostly teach. Teachers can appreciate the opportunity to be able to share learning strategies, assessment practices, and effective classroom management. Preschool educators would probably cherish opportunity of collegial collaboration, given that there are only 14 preschools so far in the SCSBC community.

Perhaps it's time to take an accounting of the isolation, of the needs, and of our collective ability to support each other. Perhaps it begins with a phone call, an email, a working lunch, or possibly shared staff professional development. Calls to each other are encouraged, even if colleagues are closer to the largest fishing pole in the world, the Ogopogo, or petroglyphs!

Then there was the obvious discrepancy. Even though there are some small SCSBC schools who are flourishing, others struggle with declining enrollment, limited learning resources, overwhelming individual staff workloads, and deficit budgets. In contrast, many large schools live in a world of facility expansions, additional staff recruitment, and surplus learning resources. If we are truly a community of SCSBC schools, should we challenge ourselves to be open to discussing and doing something about this disparity?

For some SCSBC schools, significant staff, student, and parent commitment and effort has sown a rich blessing of mission trips, cross-cultural experiences, Third World orphanages and schools. Their value to significant learning should be applauded. And yet we possibly have obligations here in BC. Perhaps we need to commit to support others abroad and others here at home.

So here in BC, it may begin with developing relationships and mutual support with schools in each other's geographic neighbourhood. A "buddy" system comes to mind. It continues with sharing resources, if possible. Could a retired teacher or administrator be a Good Samaritan and offer to pitch in during the peak times of pressure, e.g. report card times, year end, school evaluation, or times of short-term illness? It helps diminish the isolation and provides possibilities for growth. All of our places of learning should have the potential and opportunity to flourish.

We believe that there was much value in our visiting. That value increases as everyone develops a deeper understanding of, and a stronger commitment to, the interconnectedness of the SCSBC community.

Thanks for allowing us to visit!

“ Perhaps it's time
to take an accounting
of the isolation, of
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support each other. ”

References:

¹DePree, Max (1989). *Leadership is An Art*. Dell Publishing.

²Whittaker, Todd (2004). *What Great Teachers Do Differently*. Eye on Education, Inc.

Joanne den Boer (joanne.denboer@twu.ca) and Bill de Jager (bill.dejager@twu.ca) are the new Directors of Curriculum and Instruction, focussing on Early Childhood-Elementary (preschool to grade 5) and Middle and High School (grades 6-12) respectively.



“Each community will do them differently, reflecting their community, and knowing what works in one school will not work in another.”



A Tale of Two Dinners

Gerald Ebbers

SCSBC Consultant for Stewardship & Development

Both Agassiz Christian School and Richmond Christian School held fundraising dinners last fall. The two dinners couldn't have been more different, nor could they have been so much the same.

Here's why:

Both schools faced the challenge of reconnecting with their broader support base and reminding people of the need for the school to be supported with donations rather than relying solely on tuition and government grants. At the ACS dinner, both older and younger guests were thrilled to be getting together and sharing in the support of the school. At the RCS dinners, parents grew in their sense of ownership of the school and the realization that they needed to be supporters and not just tuition payers.

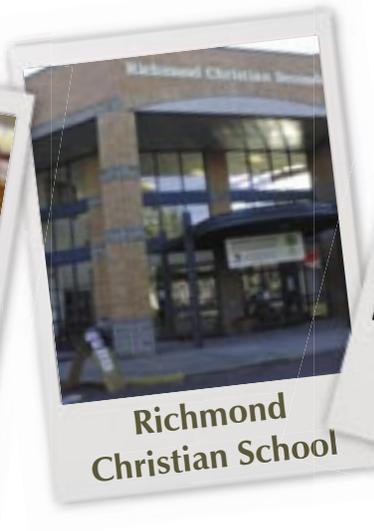
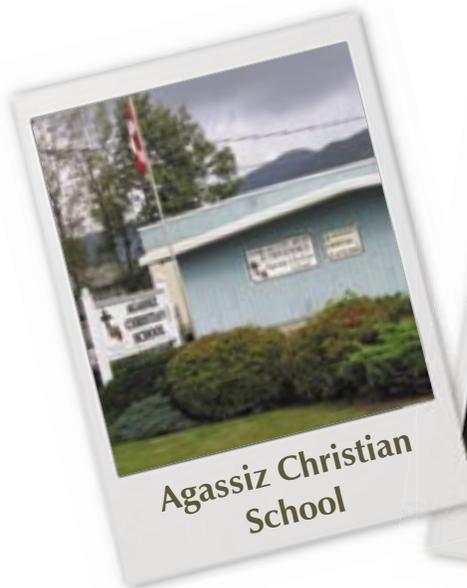
There was a wonderful atmosphere at both events, a recognition of God's leading, a sense of pride in the accomplishments of the students, and a feeling of rallying together to support the school.

Annual fundraisers should be an important part of a school's financial plan. Each community will do them differently, reflecting their community, and knowing what works in one school will not work in another.

Will ACS and RCS do it again? You bet!

AGASSIZ CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	RICHMOND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Agassiz: small town, rural setting	Richmond: Vancouver suburb, mainly Asian
64 students, PreK-7	730 students, PreK-12; 400+ families
(First) Annual Fundraising Dinner	50th Anniversary Golden Benefit Gala II
Casual, informal evening in school gym attended by families, children, grandparents	Semi-formal evening in banquet hall attended by adults, primarily parents
Entertainment: student band, guest speaker	Entertainment: high school jazz band, professional singer, guest speaker
Meal: spaghetti supper made and served by board members	Meal: professionally catered
No cost to attendees, costs covered by donations of food	Ticket cost: \$40. Other costs covered by sponsors
140 attendees	340 attendees (230 attendees at Gala I)
No 'ask' at dinner; 'ask' done in brochure mailed out with invitation to dinner	'Ask' made by board chair at dinner plus invitations indicated a donation was expected
Raised over \$30,000 (surpassed goal)	Raised almost \$100,000 for new high school. (Gala I raised almost \$60,000.)
Guests dropped off donations at the door	Guests filled out pledge forms or left donations on table
Event will become annual fundraising dinner	Event will transition into bi-annual fundraising gala

Gerald Ebbers (geraldebbers@shaw.ca) is the SCSBC consultant for Stewardship and Development.



“It is my hope that the SCSBC School Ombudsperson will rarely, if ever, case, it would mean that each school’s own dispute resolution policy is following Biblical guidelines of Matthew 18 and principles of due

FROM THE SCSBC MEDIATION & ARBITRATION POLICY...

The objective of an SCSBC mediation is that Christians should be reconciled to one another when disputes of any nature arise between them

Matthew 5:23, 24;
6:9-15; 18:15-22

• Scripture encourages Christians not to bring lawsuits against one another in a secular court of law

1 Corinthians 6:1-8

• Christian should resolve their disputes in the context of the Christian community

Romans 12: 17-21;
1 Corinthians 12:12-31

• Christians should use their gifts to build one another up and to look out for one another

Ephesians 4:11-16;
Philippians 2:1-11

• Christians should follow a fair process for handling disputes

Matthew 18:15-22

Establishment of the Office of the SCSBC

The SCSBC in cooperation with the Federation of Independent Schools Association (FISA) and in consultation with the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools has established the position of SCSBC Ombudsperson. Its purpose is to investigate complaints made by persons affected by a decision, act or omission of an independent school or school authority that is a member of the SCSBC.

Why establish such an office at SCSBC at this time?

The Ombudsperson Act, proclaimed in 1979, was amended in 1992 to add a number of public bodies, including public schools. In 1995 the Ombudsperson reported that in the opinion of the Ombudsperson it was not equitable that students in independent schools did not have the same access to remedy for redress as their peers in public schools.

The matter was resolved at that time by an agreement in which the Inspector of Independent Schools would serve in an Ombudsperson-like capacity. Subsequently the Ministry of the Attorney-General advised the Office of the Inspector that holding the office of Inspector and the function of Ombudsperson simultaneously could create conflict of interests.

As a result, the SCSBC along with the other member associations of the FISA agreed to provide Ombudsperson services, as per the *FISA Report and Recommendations of the FISA Subcommittee on Ombudsperson and Independent Schools*.

Role of the Ombudsperson

The Ombudsperson is available to assist **only** those persons who have exhausted all avenues of redress or review within their school or school authority to resolve a dispute.

The Ombudsperson is not an arbitrator and does not have the ability to make a binding decision in a matter. The Ombudsperson, however, does provide an opportunity for an external review of a decision or action of a school.

The Ombudsperson, having completed an investigation can make a recommendation to the school or school authority in an attempt to resolve the complaint. If the Ombudsperson is not satisfied with the school’s response to the written report, the Ombudsperson may issue a report of the circumstances to the SCSBC and to the FISA.

Appointment of the Ombudsperson:

The School Ombudsperson for the SCSBC is a person appointed by the SCSBC and approved by the Board of Directors of the Federation of Independent Schools (FISA) who is qualified through training and experience to act as an impartial investigator of complaints.

Making a Complaint

Any person or their legal guardian affected by a decision, recommendation, act or omission of an independent school authority may ask the Ombudsperson to conduct an investigation if the complainant believes that he or she was treated in a manner contrary to the principles of natural justice; that the school applied a policy incorrectly or inconsistently, or the decision or action of the school was contrary to the philosophy and mission of the school.

The Ombudsperson cannot investigate a matter related in any way to the employment of a person by the school.

“The Ombudsperson is available to assist only those persons who have exhausted all avenues of redress or review within their school or school authority to resolve a dispute.”

AN IMPORTANT NOTE from the SCSBC E-BULLETIN

**All existing
Independent School
Teaching Certificates
become invalid
by July 1, 2008.**

***Teachers, have you
followed steps for
re-certification?***

Recent changes to the *Criminal Record Review Act* mean that only certificates issued since January 1, 2008 (with the criminal record check included) will be valid independent school teaching certificates.

Therefore all teachers currently holding an independent school teacher certification must register on-line through the Independent Schools website before June 30th.

This on-line registration process will allow existing certificate holders to authorize the Inspector to process a new criminal record check through the Solicitor General.

Once the Inspector has forwarded the criminal record check application to the Solicitor General and has received notification that the criminal record check was successful, the Inspector will issue a new independent schools teaching certificate, now called the *Professional Certificate*.

be called into action. If this were the working satisfactorily and deemed to process and procedural fairness. ”

Ombudsperson

Henry Contant
SCSBC Executive Director

The complainant must agree at the time of making the complaint to accept the Ombudsperson as an unbiased party in the complaint and not to compel the Ombudsperson to give evidence in a court or in other proceedings of a judicial nature in respect of anything coming to the Ombudsperson's knowledge in the course of investigating of the complaint.

If the complainant does not accept the Ombudsperson as an unbiased person in the matter in dispute, the complainant may ask the SCSBC to designate another person to act as Ombudsperson for that matter.

Powers of the Ombudsperson

The Ombudsperson has the power to investigate a complaint despite any provision in the school's policy or procedures that a decision, recommendation, or act is final or that no appeal lies in respect of it.

The Ombudsperson is not authorized to investigate a decision, recommendation act or omission in respect of which there is a right of appeal, objection or review until after that right has been exercised.

The Ombudsperson is only authorized to receive complaints related to SCSBC schools. The Ombudsperson may refuse to investigate or cease to investigate a complaint, if in the opinion of the Ombudsperson it is reasonable to do so.

Procedures

A complaint to the Ombudsperson must be in writing.

If the Ombudsperson investigates a matter, the Ombudsperson must notify the school affected and any other person the Ombudsperson considers appropriate to notify in the circumstances.

If, during an investigation, the Ombudsperson decides to hold a hearing, the complainant, the school and any other affected persons must be given the opportunity to make representations.

A person is not entitled as a right to a hearing before the Ombudsperson.

If the Ombudsperson decides not to investigate or further investigate a complaint, or if at the conclusion of the investigation, decides that the complaint has not been substantiated, the Ombudsperson must record the decision in writing and notify both the complainant and the school as soon as is reasonable of the decision and the reasons for it.

Upon completion of an investigation the ombudsperson shall provide a written report to the parties involved.

Confidentiality

The Ombudsperson will hold in confidence all information that come to their knowledge in performing their duties¹.

Conclusion

It is my hope that the SCSBC School Ombudsperson will rarely, if ever, be called into action. If this were the case, it would mean that each school's own dispute resolution policy is working satisfactorily and deemed to be following Biblical guidelines of Matthew 18 and principles of due process and procedural fairness. However, recognizing those rare occasions when a parent / student within our schools feel they have exhausted all avenues of redress or review of their dispute and are still not satisfied, this policy may be very helpful to schools.



Reference:

¹FISA Memo. *Office of the School Ombudsperson*.
November 2007.

Henry Contant (contant@twu.ca) has served Christian schools for 31 years as a teacher, principal, development director and as Executive Director of the SCSBC.



SCHOOL NEWS

SCSBC Welcomes New Member School - NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN

• At its last Board meeting, the SCSBC Board approved the membership application of **NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL** in Vanderhoof. Northside Christian School was established in 1977 as a ministry of Northside Church. It currently is a Group One independent school enrolling approximately 70 students in Grades 1-12 under the governance structure of Northside Church. NCS now moves into candidacy status as it works towards full membership in SCSBC over the next two years. We welcome principal Mr. Michael Schenk and his board, staff and students to full participation within our SCSBC community.



• **WHITE ROCK CHRISTIAN ACADEMY** recently launched a \$10+ million capital campaign. Plans are to build a new school campus in South Surrey / White Rock in the vicinity of 188th Street and 16th Avenue.

• **HOUSTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL** is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. John Siebenga from William of Orange Christian School as their new principal for the 2008-09 school year. Current principal Dr. Jack Vanderborn will be retiring after 11 years of service at the end of June.



• **WESTSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL (Vancouver)** is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Ian Codling as their new principal effective January 2008. At her request founding principal Mrs. Aloha Johnson returns to her passion as a teacher.

• **BULKLEY VALLEY CHRISTIAN MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL (Smithers)** is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Hugo Vanderhoek from Credo Christian High School as their new principal for the upcoming school year. Current principal Mrs. Thea Ewald plans to retire at the end of this current school year.



SCSBC NEWS

New Publications & Communications Coordinator

Welcome, Carol Van Muyen! Carol has worked for *Insight for Living Canada* (Chuck Swindoll's organization) taking on responsibilities in Graphic Design, Marketing & Communications, and Event Coordinator. Carol is a graduate of Fraser Valley Christian High School and has a Certificate in 2D Design from the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. She is married to Matthew Van Muyen, Athletic Director/teacher at Langley Christian High School.



Carol's areas of responsibility include the design/layout/editing/production of publications, the design and maintenance of the SCSBC website, conference planning/registration, and other general administrative support.

SCSBC appoints John Vegt, CA. as Director of Finance

John Vegt began his new part-time contract position as SCSBC Director of Finance in November 2007. In doing so, SCSBC is now better positioned to advance its strategic plan and provide more intentional support and advice to school business administrators, bookkeepers, Finance Committees, treasurers and auditors.



John's areas of support to schools includes the administrative areas of school finances, accounting, budgeting, long term financial planning, charitable tax receipting, tuition-assistance, endowments, and foundations.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES!

March 11 - 12, 2008
Finance and Business Management Conference

CPABC Spring Conference
April 30 - May 2, 2008 - - - - July 7 - 11, 2008 - - - -
ELDI Pacific

Visit www.scsbc.ca to register today

DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

VERNON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL and DUNCAN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL have been selected as 2 of the 12 provincial Leader Schools for Daily Physical Activity (DPA). Leader schools are adopting the DPA program this year and providing models that other schools may consider when planning to implement the required DPA in September of 2008. We congratulate these two schools on their willingness to provide leadership to all schools in the province, regarding the need for continued healthy lifestyles for both our children and ourselves.

HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL PROVINCIALS

A Boys Provincial Volleyball results:
1st: Bulkley Valley Christian School
3rd: Richmond Christian School (Most Sportsmanlike Team!)
5th: Abbotsford Christian School
6th: Houston Christian School
8th: Duncan Christian School
12th: Cedars Christian School

A Girls Provincial Volleyball results:
5th: Langley Christian School (Most Sportsmanlike Team!)
7th: Bulkley Valley Christian School
8th: Pacific Christian School

AA Girls Provincial Volleyball results:
6th: Fraser Valley Chr. High School

AA Boys Provincial Volleyball results:
2nd: Langley Christian School
4th: Fraser Valley Chr. High School

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL TEAMS!

“Students and their parents may enter their new country with a great deal of anticipation and excitement but very quickly the newness wears off and they begin to realize the enormity of their decision to live in a new country.”



The Challenges of Cultural Change

Marlene Bylenga

SCSBC International Student Program Coordinator

Imagine waking up one morning to a world which is totally different than your own. The inhabitants of your new environment speak a language which is unfamiliar and the way they interact with each other is totally different than your previous experience.

Imagine the fascination, confusion and frustration you might experience as you attempt to make sense of this new world.

International students and new immigrants know this experience first hand; even though they may have had to prepare for the culture change they are often shocked and surprised by the enormous hurdles they encounter entering into a new culture. Students and their parents may enter their new country with a great deal of anticipation and excitement but very quickly the newness wears off and they begin to realize the enormity of their decision to live in a new country. One of the greatest stressors entering into a new culture is encountering values and customs which contradict your own culture of origin; for example students from collective cultures have been taught that maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships is crucial and in some instances may hesitate to confront others in order to avoid creating interpersonal conflicts. Students may tend to keep to themselves or choose to endure rather than to confront when they experience problems. Although admirable, in some instances these unresolved issues hinder the student's integration into school life and may hamper the cross cultural understanding which we wish to foster in our schools.

Recognizing the need for support for these students and their families is extremely important. One way of providing support is to appoint an International Student Coordinator who understands the challenges facing these students and their families. The Coordinator can be the link between home and school, provide resources for parents, student and teachers and facilitate activities to promote intercultural understanding within the school community. Some practical ways in which the Coordinator can assist parents and students is:

- to have important school documents (e.g. Code of Conduct) translated and available for current and prospective students and their parents.
- to facilitate relationships between the new families and existing families within the school community
- to develop relationships with individuals who have been successful in integrating and who are able to provide valuable information regarding their specific culture
- to build a resource base on cross-cultural issues as they pertain to learning and adjustment to a new culture for students, parents and teachers to access
- to be a promoter of increased cross-cultural understanding in the school and its community

At SCSBC we are committed to providing training and on-going support for schools who have or are considering developing an International Student Program. Support is provided through workshops, on-site visits, coordinator networking meetings and telephone/e-mail support. Please feel to contact Marlene Bylenga with any questions you may have regarding international students.

Marlene Bylenga (ieprogram@scsbc.ca) is the SCSBC International Student Program Coordinator. To reach Marlene by phone, call 604-888-6366 or 604-533-0839 ext. 250.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

International Education Coordinator's Networking Meeting

Where:

**Fosmark Centre
7600 Glover Road,
Langley, BC**

When:

**Monday, April 28, 2008
9:00am - 1:30pm
Lunch Provided**

**RSVP by April 23, 2008
For more information
contact Marlene Bylenga**

email:

ieprogram@scsbc.ca

phone:

**604-888-6366
604-533-0836 ext. 250**

SCSBC CALENDAR

MARCH

7 Lower Mainland
In-house Pro-D

11-12 SCSBC's
Christian Schools
Finance and
Business Mgmt.
Conference

17-28 Spring Break
(Ministry of
Ed. suggested
dates)

21 Good Friday

24 Easter Monday

APRIL

18 Northern BC
CTABC Pro-D
day in Houston

28 Int. Coordinator's
Networking
Meeting

30-May 2 CPABC Spring
Conference

MAY

9 SCSBC Board
Meeting

19 Victoria Day

SUMMER CALENDAR

July 2 - 4
Orientation Seminar
for Principals and Vice
Principals

July 2 - 13
TWU School of Education
Summer Courses

July 7-11
Educators Leadership
Development Institute
(ELDI) Pacific

PRESCHOOL

- 14 SCSBC schools include a Christian preschool.

- 2 schools are finalizing the process to add a preschool

- 4 schools are exploring the possibility of adding a preschool to their educational program



Is your school considering adding a preschool? SCSBC has prepared a resource that introduces school leaders to the Health Authority's *Community Care Facilities Licensing Child Care Resource Binder*. Topics include:



- policy development
- facility requirements
- checklists
- licensing & regulations
- certification
- samples of preschool handbooks

EDUCATORS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE



ELDI Pacific
July 7-11, 2008
Cedar Springs
Retreat Centre
Sumas, WA

Educators Leadership Development Institute – (ELDI-PACIFIC) provides an exciting opportunity to help **teachers** consider God's call to school leadership/administration.

A week long *Institute*, (July 7-11, 2008) in which participants will learn from practicing administrators and explore their potential interests, abilities, and gifts in administration.

Visit www.scsbc.ca for more details

BUSINESS & FINANCE CONFERENCE

Securing our Schools' Current Mission and Future Vision

Developing a BIG PICTURE School Business Plan



March 11-12, 2008
Cedar Springs
Retreat Centre
Sumas, WA

FSA REGIONAL MARKING UPDATE

- Over 60 teachers in SCSBC schools received training to score the written portion of the Foundation Skill Assessment
- SCSBC is assisting to facilitate scoring sessions at four designated Regional Scoring Centres hosted by SCSBC schools
- Several smaller schools are being supported by sending their student booklets to the Regional Scoring Centres



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