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# Leadership Decision Making

## Are we asking the right questions?

by **Henry Contant**  
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**I**t has been said that hindsight is 20/20 vision. However as administrators and board members beginning another new school year, we don't have the benefit of hindsight in making the important direction-setting decisions that will be required of us this school year. One year, five years, or even fifty years from now, how will our leadership be judged by the 10 or 20 major decisions we will make this year?

Consider the power and wonder of a profound question. Think back to your best teachers in school: they didn't have all the answers but knew how to ask the right questions. We need to do the same around our board, committee and staff room tables. Making effective decisions as Christian school board/committee members and administrators often means asking the right questions.

As we—as school leaders—master the art of asking reflective questions, we unlock information, insight and wisdom from others. Scripture records that King Solomon's wisdom was further revealed when leaders "tested him with questions." Proverbs 27:17 states that "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." Asking thoughtful questions will help board members and administrative teams in solving problems, analyzing risks, and considering leadership directions that may not previously have been thought possible.

Questions are like keys that help unlock the boxes of people's minds and hearts, hopes and dreams. In *The Effective Board Member*, Biehl and Engstrom identify a list of questions to ask before making major decisions. Not every question will help you in every situation. However, this list may serve as a checklist to prevent you from overlooking important considerations before confirming and carrying out major decisions as a board or administrator.

**Considering some of these questions before you make that crucial decision may save you countless hours and thousands of dollars:**

1. At its essence—in one sentence—what is the decision we are really facing? What is the "bottom, bottom line"?
2. What facts should we have before we can make this decision with total confidence?
3. What trends, changes or problems are behind the need for this change? How long will these continue to be a factor?
4. Are we dealing with a cause or a symptom? A means or an end?
5. What does the Bible say about this situation?
6. Am I thinking about this situation with a clear head, or am I fatigued to the point that I shouldn't be making major decisions right now?



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# INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

## *Clarifying our Vision*

by MARLENE BYLENGA

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**As a result of increased interest from parents and students overseas, a number of our SCSBC schools have established international student programs. Many of these schools have already begun to welcome students and their parents from countries and cultures very different from their own. Additional schools are considering the implementation of such a program.**

As we start a new school year, it is important to evaluate our programs, to remind each other of the rationale for enrolling international students and to challenge one another as we begin or continue down the pathway of providing Christian education to our brothers and sisters from other countries. Perhaps by asking the following questions we can again clarify the vision for international education.

- In your enrolment process, are you communicating clearly your school's vision for a Christ-centred education and sharing how that may differ from other school systems?
- Has the enrolment of international students from a variety of national backgrounds enriched your schools culture? International students bring with them their own experiences, insights, cultural expressions and perspectives. Have these students and their parents become part of the established school community? Are there programs and activities in place to enable all students to explore their differences and commonalities and has integration begun to take place?
- Has your school appointed an International Student Coordinator who can provide support to the students and resources to your staff regarding the immense challenges of those experiencing culture transition?
- Has your school been diligent in ensuring the safety and emotional well-being of those students who are



Students from Eagle Christian School in Korea during their term at Vernon Christian School in BC

here without their parents? Are the children in homestay environments where the vision of home, school and church working together is honoured?

- The gospel gives a global perspective that envisions a church made up of all nations. Jesus' prayer for all believers was *"that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."* (John 17:22b-23) Has the introduction of international students enabled your school community to become a model of that unified church? As a school, are you developing the skills and sensitivities towards each other and your unique cultures to enable you to become effective co-workers in bringing God's redemptive story to those who have not heard it?

Some of the questions above can be answered very easily where others may take time and reflection. Perhaps these can be used as a springboard for discussion at a board level or at a staff meeting.

We at the SCSBC are available to assist schools in the process of establishing a program and also provide ongoing support through workshops, on-site visits and telephone/e-mail support.

For a full list of workshops, please see the SCSBC website ([www.scsbc.ca/international/resources.html#work](http://www.scsbc.ca/international/resources.html#work)), contact the SCSBC office ([scsbc@twu.ca](mailto:scsbc@twu.ca)) or contact Mrs. Marlene Bylenga: [ieprogram@scsbc.ca](mailto:ieprogram@scsbc.ca); 604-533-4513.

**M**any years ago, when the possibility of government financial support for our Christian schools was imminent, there were some who worried that such support would erode the traditional support from the community. These people feared that the schools would attract such a broad base of students that the sense of community (and financial support from that community) that built the schools would be eroded.

To a varying extent, these worries have become reality for some Christian schools.

Has your school shifted from community support to “fee for service”? Here are some questions your board can ask to gauge the support of your school:

1. Does the school stay in touch with former parents, alumni, grandparents, and other potential supporters?
2. Do these same people still support the school by attending events and contributing financially?
3. Does the school have trouble getting parents to volunteer? To serve on committees and the board?
4. Is the school able to raise support through donations to an annual fund or a capital campaign?

When your school interviews new parents, I suspect that it is emphasized that they are expected to “support” the school. But while the interviewer knows what is meant by “support,” the assumption that these new parents understand the nuances of “support” is probably incorrect. Here is a suggestion: don’t just *tell* new parents (or even current parents) that you expect them to “support” the school, *spell out* what you mean by “support.”

The following is a sample of how I would define “support.”

As a parent at \_\_\_\_\_ Christian School, I will:

1. Attend student events—sports, concerts, open houses—even if my child is not involved. All students need the encouragement of a large, appreciative audience.



2. Attend society events—annual general meetings, special meetings, discussion sessions—even if I feel I have nothing to say or have difficulty expressing myself. The board needs the encouragement of my presence and comments.
3. Read what the school sends me: weekly newsletters, special bulletins, annual reports. The school needs informed parents to avoid all sorts of misunderstandings.
4. Volunteer: in the classroom, for field trips, for committees, for helping out at events. No task should be beneath me. Rubbing shoulders with other parents builds community and can encourage all of us as parents.
5. Support the school financially by buying the products the students are selling for their class trip; contributing above tuition to the annual fundraiser; donating my services or products for auctions; giving sacrificially for capital campaigns.

As you begin to educate your school community, you may be able to add to this list.

Clear communication of expectations will lead to the kind of long-term support your school needs. Hopefully, parents will keep doing all of the above AFTER their children have graduated from the school. And as they make estate plans, they may include a bequest for the school that has had such an important impact on the lives of their children.

Taking the time to develop a support dialogue with your parent community will help to ensure that your school doesn’t fall into the “fee for service” trap.

# The Place of *Love* in Learning

by Robert Koole, SCSBC Director of Curriculum [koole@twu.ca](mailto:koole@twu.ca)  
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**The summer of 2004 is quickly becoming a fleeting memory: trips taken, books read, vacations completed, weddings celebrated, funerals experienced, storms endured . . .**

What did you experience this summer? What did you learn—about yourself, your family? Your community? Your God? Were you captivated by life's enduring mysteries or did you find yourself captured by the illusory promises of our culture: pleasure, possessions, and power?

For children and young people, summertime is a major time of growth in life learning. During the weeks away from school they experienced the joys and sorrows of human life. Some were away from home for the first time; some took on their first paid job or their first volunteer activity. Some visited another culture and some had time together as a family.

Each child and young adult comes back to school different than they left in June. Will you see them with new eyes or view them as they left in June? Will your curriculum take their growth into account?

It is so easy for us to think that children and young people don't know much about what we will be teaching them this year. It is so easy to think that they have little to offer until we have taught them what they need to know. What if we genuinely allowed ourselves to be a bridge between their life learning and the enduring content and issues of school learning?

As we begin a new year we need to remind ourselves of the integral relationship between love and learning. Al Greene explores how creation is only real because God loves it, and that knowledge is impossible without love, and that love has formative power in learning. He writes, *Learning and love are meant to be yoked together. Only the chaos of sin has torn them apart and brought us into a desert where it is natural to think that learning has nothing to do with love.* **Reclaiming the Future**, p. 229

Teachers play a crucial role in modeling the integral relationship between love and learning. Children, young people, parents and colleagues do not first of all learn about this relationship from what we TELL them.

*It is who we are that is going to make the difference. It is who we are that is going to show the love that brought us all into being, that cares for us all, now, and forever. If we do not have love in our hearts, our words of love will have little meaning.* Madeleine L'Engle **The Rock that is Higher**. p.166

It is who we are that is going to make the difference. It is who we are that is going to show the love that brought us all into being, that cares for us all, now, and forever.

We need to remind each other to place love at the center of learning. During the course of the year we'll be excited when children or young people's curiosity motivates them to discover new things. We may then be tempted to think that stimulating their curiosity is our main goal. During the course of the year we'll feel fulfilled when children and young people achieve mastery over concepts and skills and see that gaining control of ideas motivates some of them to keep on learning. We may then be tempted to think that achieving mastery is our main goal.

To deal with those two temptations Palmer offers this caution: "If curiosity and control are the primary motives for our knowing, we will generate a knowledge that eventually carries us not toward life but toward death." (**To know as we are known**, p.8)

Learning motivated by curiosity or control frequently creates knowledge that separates us from one another and quickly becomes self-serving. Learning and knowledge that spring from love and compassion draw us together into mutual responsibility. Love and learning are integrally related—in 2004-2005 how will your classroom and school be more than places where children and young people learn to know? How will your classroom and school become places where children, young people, parents, teachers and principals also learn to love?

REFERENCES: Albert E. Greene, 1998. **Reclaiming the future: a transforming vision**. Colorado Springs, CO: ACSI; Parker J. Palmer, 1983. **To know as we are known: a spirituality of education**. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins.

# Curriculum Update

## Have you placed your order from the Balanced Menu for Language Arts?

The SCSBC Elementary Curriculum Team has developed



Coffee...  
Conversation...  
Collaboration...

for the connoisseur of  
curriculum-to-go

a great selection of  
"Curriculum to Go"  
Language Arts  
workshops – a made-  
to-order professional  
development experience  
that we hope will give  
your staff a "buzz".

Don't miss your chance!

Order now:

[www.scsbc.ca/services/  
curric/coffee.pdf](http://www.scsbc.ca/services/curric/coffee.pdf)

## Elementary

The SCSBC Elementary Curriculum Team will be offering workshops in Language Arts (see *Balanced Menu for Language Arts*, facing page) and beginning a review of K-5 science in connection with the new BC IRP and new CSI science texts.

### Science K-7 IRP

Draft #2 is available for your response at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/drafts/scik7draft2.pdf>. Originally the new IRP was to begin this September but that has been moved back to September 2005. The information on the website states "this version is provided as draft material, it is anticipated that the final curriculum will be consistent with this draft. Thus, there would be no further changes to the Prescribed Learning Outcomes for the revised Science K-7 IRP."

## Middle

The SCSBC Middle Curriculum Team will be building connections generated by the August Forum and finalizing the new resource guide *Learning Together in the Middle*. See also above note re: Science K-7.

## Secondary

Grade 10 is now part of the Graduation Program; the SCSBC Secondary Curriculum Team will continue to advise schools regarding changes and host meetings to assist in the implementation of grad program changes.

The Ministry website <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/irp.htm> has several models available for different versions of Applied Skills courses—Business Ed 10, Home Economics 10, and Technology Ed 10. Schools can continue with the general course or opt for one or more of the specific courses—each of which has its own learning outcomes. Similar materials are available for the Fine Arts: Drama 10, Dance 10, Visual Arts 10, and Music 10.

## New Publication

Our upcoming publication *Educating Toward Wisdom* will be a joint project between SCSBC and NWCSI. Robert Koole and Elaine Brouwer are combining their materials and resources into one publication. *Educating Toward Wisdom* will be a resource for school-based work for vision, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and collegial community. They have it ready for publication later this fall.



## Boys and Reading

*Boys resist* "many school-based practices by transforming the assigned literacy

work into something more personally fun, engaging, meaningful, humorous, active, and purposeful." p. 453

### Boys transform . . .

- "time to work on aspects of school literacies that appeal to them."
- "the purpose of the assignment to suit their interests."
- "literacy events into social-cultural capital." p. 454

### We need to . . .

- "offer boys a wide range of diverse texts so that they can make choices and connections between in-school and out-of-school literacies and broaden their literacy experiences."
- "transform our ideas about literacy to help boys recognize their strengths and move them beyond their own to broader, more relevant literacies." p. 459

- from "Morphing literacy: boys reshaping their school-based literacy practices" Heather A. Blair, Kathy Sanford *Language Arts* 81:6 (July 2004) p. 452-460

# Community News

- **Doug Stuart, International Student Coordinator at Fraser Valley Christian High School, and Moses Myung, Band/Choir/Music teacher at FVCHS, spent time in Taiwan and Korea this summer** to make a significant connection with parents of students currently enrolled at their school. Doug Stuart was impacted by “[T]he food, sheer numbers of people, urban development that builds upward because of such little land mass and of course language.” These things, he says, have broadened his way of thinking about living in community and how to approach the students who attend FVCHS. The generosity and kindness of the families they met was very affirming and the parents thought it was great that they would come to meet them. Mrs. Myung Kim, a Korean parent from the

school community in Canada, went along to help make the arrangements. Stuart and Myung hoped to gain some more understanding of



reasons why international students come to Canada to study and to learn a little more about the education system in Korea, as well as to share with parents about FVCHS and the Canadian school system in general.

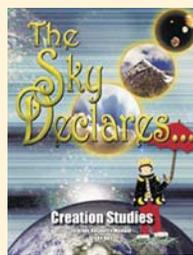
- **Bridging Cultures** is a project under the auspices of Worldwide Christian Schools through which, every year, we send \$7000 to Honduras to help support students in six Christian schools with whom we have formed connections. This year, Dianne Horner was one of the Canadian teachers who visited Honduras. She and her family (husband Dave and three children) were honoured to “live with a Honduran family, to be involved in the school and teacher’s convention, to work on pews for a church in the village, to do programs in three villages, to see and be part of another part of God’s world and God’s people.” We thank God for Dianne and her family, for Donna Ferguson of Nanaimo Christian School who was also an integral part of Bridging Cultures this year, and for Heidi Kersies, coordinator of the Honduran Teachers Conference.



## new RESOURCES

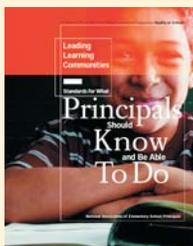
[www.scsbc.ca/resources/curric.html](http://www.scsbc.ca/resources/curric.html)

**The Sky Declares...** by Lori Salverda and Dorothy Vaandering. Ancaster, ON: OACS, 2004 - A teacher guide for the Creation Studies curriculum of the OACS. Syl Skywatcher will help grade One students to explore the sky with its patterns of day/night, the weather patterns of sunshine/rain and storms/calm, and the pattern of the seasons and discover a faithful God at work whose faithfulness is displayed throughout the skies.



**Student-Involved Classroom Assessment, 3rd edition** by Richard J. Stiggins. New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2001 - Using an accessible, jargon-free approach, the author shows teachers how to create high-quality classroom assessments and use them to build student confidence, thereby maximizing (not just documenting) student achievement.

**Leading Learning Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do**, Alexandria, VA: NAESP, 2000 - This resource identifies six standards that the National Association of Elementary School Principals believes together characterize instructional leadership in schools: Balance Management and Leadership Roles; Set High Expectations and Standards; Demand Content and Instruction that Ensure Student Achievement; Create a Culture of Adult Learning; Use Multiple Sources of Data as Diagnostic Tools; and Actively Engage the Community.



**Practice with Student-involved Classroom Assessment: A Workbook and Learning Team Guide** by Judith A. Arter and Kathleen U. Busick. Portland, Oregon: Assessment Training Institute, 2001 - To be used in conjunction with **Student-Involved Classroom Assessment** (above). The informal, yet lively presentation offers: guidance on setting up and conducting learning teams for assessment literacy development; learning activities equally effective for pre-service and in-service teachers; activities that model student involvement by engaging educators in the assessment of their own classroom practices; and much more.

- **The Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools has appointed a new Assistant Deputy Inspector.** Our congratulations to Theo Vandeweg, former principal at Timothy Christian School in Chilliwack, who begins his duties this September.
- **Doug Stam has been appointed as the new principal at Timothy Christian School.** Congratulations to Doug as he takes on this new leadership role.

- **The SCSBC community is saddened by the closure of one of our member schools. Sointula Christian School** served families on Malcolm Island in the Channel Islands for over 20 years until population changes within the community led to diminished enrolment.

- **The SCSBC is pleased to welcome two new members.** Valley Christian School is a PreK-8 community of approximately 100 students located in Abbotsford (Matsqui). Trinity Western University's School of Education joins the SCSBC as an Affiliate Member.



Valley Christian School

- **Called to Serve Prepared to Lead**, a seminar for new(er) principals/assistant principals, was held June 28-30, 2004.

Led by SCSBC Executive Director Henry Contant, the three-day action-packed seminar was attended by 15 leaders from across British Columbia.

Sue Kluska, new Vice Principal at Delta Christian School, enjoyed the seminar format: "I could

soak all the information in, relaxed. . . As a result I leave informed, reflective, excited and happy." Another attendee appreciated the opportunity for meeting other new principals and starting up networking: "[This seminar] has given me so much confidence to go into the new year."

- **If anyone was wondering where the students for the new Discovery Christian High School were going to come from,** all they needed to see were the 137 students who performed as a choral ensemble for *Gloria!* on Friday, April 30th, 2004. This "pioneer" student choir was part of a high caliber evening of musical entertainment held to raise funds for DCHS and introduce the school to the Greater Vancouver community.



Called to Serve-Prepared to Lead, class of 2004

## September

- 1 CTABC Commissioning Service
- 6 Labour Day
- 7 Schools open
- 10 SCSBC Board Meeting
- 16 SCSBC Compensation Cmte. Meeting
- 20 SCSBC LPG Cmte. Meeting
- 21 International Education Coordinators Networking meeting - SCSBC office
- 23-25 Christian Schools Canada 2004 Conference - "Educational Leadership for Christian Schools: Building Personal and Professional Learning Communities"
- 29 SCSBC Stewardship Cmte. Meeting
- 30 Directors of Development Network, first meeting

## October

- 7-8 CTABC Convention
- 11 Thanksgiving Day

## November

- 11 (Thursday) Remembrance Day
- 12 Charitable Tax Receipting/Business Managers Networking Meeting
- 13 Leadership for Christian Schools (SCSBC Board Leadership Conference); SCSBC AGM



Gloria! Discovery Christian High School's Gala Concert evening



The SCSBC is a member of  
Christian Schools International  
and Christian Schools Canada.



Continued from Page 1 . . .

7. What would the ideal solution be in this situation?
8. Should we seek outside council in making this decision?
9. What are the hidden agendas that are “pushing” for a decision in this situation? Why do “we” or “they” want a change? What is the source of emotional fuel that is driving this decision?
10. If I had to decide in the next two minutes, what decisions would I make, and why?
11. What decision would I expect each of my three most respected advisors to favour in this situation?
12. Can an overall decision in this situation be broken up into parts, with “sub decisions” made at a few “go/ no-go” points along the way?
13. What are the key assumptions in our thinking that underlie the decision we’re leaning toward? What do we assume it will really cost? What do we assume will be its real benefits?
14. Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? How much?
15. Have we given ourselves 24 hours to let this decision settle in our minds?
16. What difference will this decision make a year from now? Five years? Twenty years? A hundred years?
17. Is this decision consistent with our values in the past or does it mark a change in direction or standards?
18. How will this decision affect our overall Master Plan? Will it sidetrack us?
19. Will this decision help to maximize our key strengths?
20. Have we verified what the results have been for others who have made a similar decision in similar circumstances? Have we checked this thoroughly?
21. How do we really feel about this decision?
22. Is this the decision we would make if our budget was twice as large as it is? Half as large? Five times as large? One tenth as large? Is it the same decision we would make if we had twice as many staff members? Half as many?
23. What would happen if we would not carry out this decision?
24. If we didn’t carry it out, what would be the best three alternative decisions?
25. Is this the best timing for carrying out this decision? If not now, when? And why?
26. Is this decision truly appropriate in scope and size to the situation we face? Are we possibly hunting an elephant with a BB gun or a rabbit with a cannon?
27. As I pray about this decision and look at it from God’s perspective, do I have a sense of peace about it?
28. How do our families feel about this decision? How will it affect them? How will it affect our students? Our staff?
29. What questions still linger in our minds? What aspects of the decision will not be resolved or solved by this decision?
30. Should we write a policy about this decision to guide us in similar situations in the future?

(Biehl & Engstom. *The Effective Board Member*, p.177)

God has called us to provide leadership in our school communities. May we do so with a sense of calling, joy, servanthood and the wisdom to ask insightful questions.

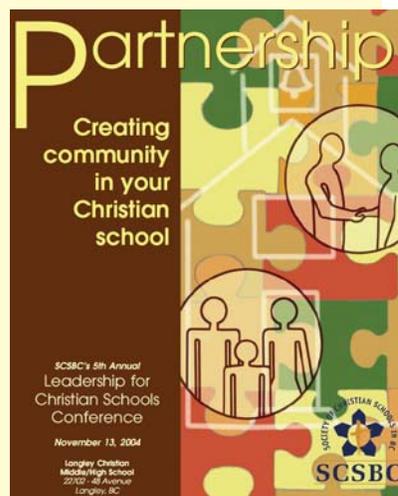
The SCSBC provides a one-day conference every year to help boards, committee members and administrators as they grow in leadership. This year’s conference—*Partnership: Creating Community in Your Christian School*—will take place on November 13, 2004 at the Langley Christian Middle and High School.

Details will be available on our website and the conference brochure will arrive at your school soon (see left).

## SCSBC’s 5th Annual Leadership for Christian Schools Conference

**November 13, 2004**

**Langley Christian  
Middle/High School**  
22702 - 48 Avenue,  
Langley, BC



High school career planning; avoiding wrongful dismissal suits; admissions contracts and the law; culture transition and international students; Christian worldview in education; and much more . . .

[www.scsbc.ca/services/conferences/blc/blc.html](http://www.scsbc.ca/services/conferences/blc/blc.html)

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