



Leadership or Lethargy? *Initiating fresh vision for your board*

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John Maxwell once made the observation that leaders tend to initiate and followers tend to react.

Consider prioritizing your board meeting agendas this year so that some prime time is devoted to one of the following topics:

LEADERS

- *Initiate*
- *Lead, pick up the phone and make contact*
- *Plan, anticipate problems*
- *Invest time with people*
- *Fill the calendar by priority*

School boards, particularly, must take into consideration how their leadership will be perceived by their support community. Will the board be seen as visionary, initiating insightful policy development and wise long-term planning? Or will the board be seen as reactionary—waiting, only to react to issues as they arise?

Helen Keller was once asked, “What would be worse than being born blind?” She replied, “To have sight without vision.” Sadly, too many people are placed in leadership positions without a vision for the people or organization they will lead.



Boards that ‘lead’ rather than ‘follow’ will be those that initiate discussion and debate around the topics that shape a vision for the school: mission and vision, governance, administration, educational programs, financial management, parent partnerships, and community relations.

1. MISSION & VISION

An excellent Christian school expresses and nurtures a clear mission and vision of Christian education that guides all of its decision making and activities.

- Does this statement describe your school?
- Do your board, committees, administration and staff take time to understand and develop the vision and practice of Christian education?
- How will your school ensure that new parents will be just as committed to Christian education in 5 years as current members of your board?
- Does your school have a graduate profile that clearly describes what your school hopes its program will accomplish in the lives of its students?
- Does your school require its employees/board and committee members to sign a “community standard” that is reflective of the school’s mission and vision?

FOLLOWERS

- *React*
- *Listen, wait for the phone to ring*
- *Live day-to-day, reacting to problems*
- *Spend time with people*
- *Fill the calendar by request*

2. GOVERNANCE

An excellent Christian school is owned and operated by an "Authority" (school society, church board, etc.) that is structured according to a well-defined set of standards as expressed in the constitution, bylaws and policies (these express appropriate ethical norms in the procedures adopted to implement policies).

- Has your constitution/by-laws been reviewed within the past seven years?
- Does your board have a well-defined, long-range strategic plan for the school?
- Does your board regularly evaluate the performance of the principal/administrative team on established criteria/procedures?
- What recent training have board members received to further equip them for their leadership task?

3. ADMINISTRATION

An excellent Christian School is led by a principal who gives competent administrative and instructional leadership.

- Is your principal's task defined in a clear job description/regularly reviewed in consultation with the board?
- Does your principal demonstrate both administrative and educational leadership?
- Do your principal/administrative

team follow a program for personal professional development? Are they actively involved in professional organizations?

4. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

An excellent Christian school:

- has a biblically-based educational program that serves student interests, needs and abilities and meets provincial requirements
- uses a broad range of instructional methods to serve student interests, needs, and abilities



Boards that have a clear vision for their task keep the big picture of board responsibilities in mind.

- is a personal and professional learning community with a clear vision, strong curriculum, child-oriented pedagogy, and valuable assessment.
- Is a biblical worldview clearly evident in your school's curriculum?

- Does your school's pedagogy incorporate a dynamic blend of purpose, content, skills and assessment that serves the diversity of students' interests, needs and abilities?
- Do your teachers engage in self-assessment on an annual basis?
- Do administrators exercise teacher evaluations as per board policy?
- Does the school assess student achievement in ways that foster learning and improve teaching?
- Does your school actively gather feedback from students, alumni, parents and the broader community?

5. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

An excellent Christian School is adequately supported with financial resources and responsible management.

- Has your board adopted a contract/benefit package that is fair and equitable for all its employees?
- Is your per-student cost of education (outside of transportation) similar to other SCSBC schools?
- Is appropriate financial support available and distributed to parents who cannot meet tuition requirements?
- Does your school have an effective development program that recruits appropriate students and raises needed

funds to secure both short-term and long-term needs?

6. PARENT PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

An excellent Christian School maintains contact with the parents and the supporting community.

- Does your board/administration/staff communicate regularly with the various educational partners and stakeholders and respond promptly to concerns raised?
- Do your board, principal and staff have a well-defined, active program regarding parent, church and community relations?
- Is your school active in the community through student service learning, teacher involvement, and parent participation?

Boards that have a clear vision for their task keep the big picture of board responsibilities in mind. Only then will board discussions move beyond reaction and micro-management detail and initiate critical direction-setting policies that will provide healthy leadership for the school.

(A detailed board meeting discussion guide entitled **Seeing the Bigger Picture: Developing Visionary Board Leadership** is available from the SCSBC upon request)

A Welcoming Place

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Another school year has begun. Returning students are eager to renew existing friendships and new students may be excited and somewhat apprehensive about their new school environment. Students arriving from other countries, meanwhile, are becoming accustomed to a school system that may be very different than the one they are familiar with.

These students may be overwhelmed by the challenges of adapting to their new environment, like learning a new language. How do we make our schools caring and welcoming places where students feel at home and accepted despite differing cultural and life experiences? How do we embrace these new students so that they become a valued part of our school communities?

As Christians, our interactions should be influenced by the knowledge that we are all image bearers of God and by an awareness of His incredible love for each and every one of us. We need to recognize each individual's uniqueness and strive to include them as part of the community.

New students need loving and caring attention. Each has a unique story and history and their stories need to be listened to; the school needs to be a place where these stories are heard and appreciated. As leaders, we need to foster a climate of inclusiveness by educating other students in the school to welcome new students and to develop friendships that are mutually beneficial. We need to foster an excitement within our student body, a passion to learn from others

who have different cultural perspectives and expressions but who share the same Lord and Savior. We need to enable students to develop an awareness and appreciation for the diversity with which the Lord has created us and we need to help them gain a greater appreciation and awareness of his/her own culture.

School administration also needs to recognize that as diversity increases within the student body the school will be changed by their presence. Administrators, staff and board members should view this as an opportunity to make our schools an example of a unified group of believers from diverse backgrounds who wish to serve God in every aspect of life.

It is my prayer for each school represented by the SCSBC that they will feel valued and respected, and an integral part of the community in which they have been placed.

If you have any questions regarding ways in which to become an inclusive community, or if you require help on issues related to international students, please feel free to contact Marlene

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Looking for a Recommended Professional Resource about Assessment?

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Ken O'Connor, 2002. *How to Grade for Learning: Linking Grades to Standards 2nd Edition*. Glenview, IL: Pearson Education. ISBN: 1-57517-816-8

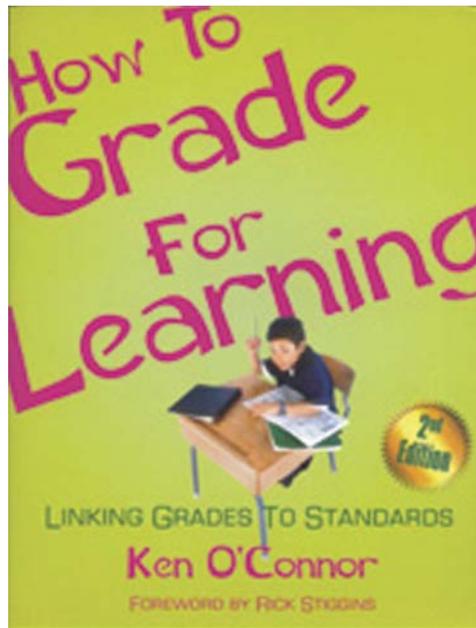
O'Connor presents eight guidelines for successful assessment at any grade level and for any teacher regardless of experience. In clearly written language, he sets down guidelines and sample assessment tools. The text is sprinkled with examples of student work and assessment of those tasks. He focuses a full chapter on each of the following guidelines:

1. Relate grading procedures to learning goals (i.e. standards).
2. Use criterion-referenced performance standards as reference points to determine grades.
3. Limit the valued attributes included in grades to individual achievement.
4. Sample student performance, do not include all scores in grades.
5. Grade in pencil - keep records so they can be updated easily.
6. Crunch numbers carefully. With this guideline, O'Connor challenges teachers to question

their practice of simply averaging marks to arrive at a final grade.

7. Use quality assessment(s) and properly recorded evidence of achievement.
8. Discuss and involve students in assessment, including grading, throughout the teaching/learning process.

O'Connor encourages schools to develop a clear, written grading policy that is shared with students and parents at the outset. He goes on to explain: "when students know how they will be assessed and especially when they have been involved in the assessment decisions, the likelihood of student success is increased greatly." This book would be a valuable resource for staff dialogue about assessment. It will simulate critical thinking about assessment and will likely lead to improvement in teachers' assessment of student learning. Each chapter ends with a page called "What's My Thinking Now?" that will stimulate further dialogue.



"If you want to appear accountable, test your students. If you want to improve schools, teach teachers to assess their students. If you want to maximize learning, teach students to assess themselves."

- R. Stiggins

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT A SPECIFIC CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

- how can this assessment reveal what a student understands?
- how will it foster life, health, joy, peace, justice, love?
- how might it distort, lead towards pain, brokenness, and despair?
- how can it give students an opening to learn more about life in God's creation?
- how might it narrow their experience of the world?

Ministry of Education Update

IRP Response
Drafts are
available for
Science 8–10,
English Language Arts K–7, and Physical Education K–7.



For more information, see: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/drafts/

IT'S NOT TOO LATE!

Register your
school today for a
Staff Professional
Development
workshop (or two)
with the SCSBC.



See the SCSBC website
for more information.

www.scsbc.ca/prod.html

“Over the years, in focus groups and case studies, adolescents have talked openly about how they like to learn: They need choices so topics become interesting and relevant to them examples of quality work to show them how to meet standards opportunities to revise assignments so they can profit from mistakes an audience beyond the teacher so their learning will have a purpose beyond compliance teachers who will challenge them by building from what they know, instead of criticizing them for what they don’t.”

*- Holly Holland, “Reaching all learners:
you’ve got to know them to show them.”
Middle Ground 3:5 (April 2000) p. 11*

“If teachers (and principals) feel threatened by standardized tests in their own schools or communities ... history warns them to be skeptical but realistic. These tests are clearly here to stay, and very real punishments will be handed out to students and teachers who don’t perform well on them.

But accommodating to the reality of standardized tests doesn’t mean being ruled by them, catering to them, or even believing in them. It means giving your students the coaching they need to do their best on the tests – and then returning to the real business of education, which is nurturing the growth of students’ thinking, over years, across disciplines, and among collaborators.”

*- p. 204 in **Methods that matter: six structures
for best practice classrooms.** Harvey
Daniels and Marilyn Bizar, 1998.
Portland, ME: Stenhouse
Publishers*

SCSBC Curriculum Teams

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE CURRICULUMS

The SCSBC Elementary and Middle Teams will continue their work on Thematic Statements, Essential Questions, and Culminating Assessment Ideas for the new Science K-7 IRP. (You can view elementary samples on the SCSBC website).

In connection with this work your school may be able to send a representative to the SCSBC Elementary Science K-7 Professional Learning Day hosted by Duncan Christian School on September 23 (see page 8).

SECONDARY CURRICULUM

The SCSBC Secondary Team will be developing a discussion guide for Breaking Ranks, an excellent resource for staff dialogue about high school. The Secondary Team will also facilitate further development of the Graduation Portfolio with a particular emphasis on continuing the work accomplished on the Choice Component

at the August 26th and
29th Portfolio
Days.

'Branding' Your Christian School

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No, we're not talking cowboys and cattle. We're talking about consistency in the visual image that your school projects.

Companies care about their 'brand' and their 'look' because it complements their marketing. Your school's marketing can be weakened if potential students and parents are confused about your identity: "Are you the school that says such and such? I'm not sure, because your ad looks so different from your website (or your letterhead or signage, etc.)."



So here's an enjoyable and short-term project for a staff member or committee member who has some understanding of the 'look' of your school.

LOGO: Your logo should look contemporary without being so diffuse that no one can tell whether it's a logo or a child's scribbling. Your logo does not have to be blatantly Christian; it does not have to tell your whole story. A logo is simply a visual symbol that catches attention in a positive, contemporary format. Check the logos of other Christian schools to get some fresh ideas.

SCHOOL COLORS: My college used black and white as its school colors. Good contrast—even biblical, I guess—but totally unimaginative and not very 'colorful.' Choose two complementary colors and possibly some tones of those colors and then make sure those colors are the only ones you use on everything from paper to cloth.

LETTERHEAD, ENVELOPES, NEWSLETTERS, FOLDERS: Use your logo and your school colors and nothing else. A soft color tone on your letterhead and envelopes looks professional. A better quality paper for your letterhead is a good idea (make sure that the second page is on the same color/quality of paper). Include your school's slogan on the letterhead and possibly the envelope. Keep a file of all the letterhead and envelopes you get from other organizations and companies and check that yours is contemporary and fresh. Remember that the look of your letterhead is often the first impression that people have of your school.

BRIDGING CULTURES

A note from Matt Sherwood, one of the four BC teachers who went to Honduras this summer:



Four unsuspecting teachers were whisked off to a really hot part of Southern Honduras called Choluteca. The neighbourhood has bumpy dirt roads that are easier to walk on than drive on...The school was close by and the teachers and students welcoming. It was so great to see the joy in their eyes as we shared supplies and [gave] of ourselves. Honduras is a poor country...but what was most touching was the joy even the poorest people can have when they have Christ in their lives.



- *Students at Maple Ridge Christian School raised \$10,000 for the construction of 20 wells to provide clean drinking water in Cambodia. Students held a variety of fundraisers throughout the last school year. The project was part of Project Living Water—a fundraising initiative with headquarters in New Westminster. A goal for the upcoming school year is to send a MRCS student to Cambodia so they can see how the money raised is being put to use.*



ADS, BROCHURES: Again, be consistent in your use of your logo, colors, and slogan. If you have a marketing folder, insure that all of the material inside that folder has the same look; that is, the same quality and color of paper, the same font, etc. Again, check with other schools; the best ones will be obvious.

SIGNAGE: First impressions count! Is your school sign an old, weather-beaten wood carving? Maybe that's an accurate portrayal of your school, but let's hope not. Your school sign needs to be made of durable material, it needs to look new and fresh throughout the year (not just in September) and it needs to be large and prominently placed. Insure that it can be seen and read from both directions by drivers at 50 km/h. A lighted sign is a good idea, especially if your sign allows you to advertise events at the school. But please, please, please

do not use your sign for those didactic gospel messages that proliferate on church signs. If you don't have an event to advertise, put something on like "Grade two's going to Science World this week." Be creative, even humorous, but don't sound 'preachy.'

WEBSITE: This is another 'first impression' location so insure your website is colorful and consistent with the rest of your 'look.' Remember that your target market is computer savvy kids and young parents, not grandparents. Again, the best way to check if you are in the game is to compare your website to those of other Christian schools. Our SCSBC conferences often offer a workshop on websites; that may be your best training tool if this is an area where your school's image needs some work.

AND FINALLY, SCHOOL ATTIRE: School attire must use your school's logo, name and colors. Don't allow a sports team or a special event group to design their own logo and choose their own colors—it's all got to look like it comes from one school. Speaking of school attire: choose one or two items each year and bring in a good supply of various sizes to sell to students, parents and alumni. This is NOT a fundraiser, but you should be able to make a profit on the sale of school clothing.

As always, if you need some help reviewing your school's image in these areas, give me a call at SCSBC and I'll sit down with you and review what you currently have.

- Carver Christian High School has a new website: www.carverchristian.org



- Several SCSBC schools have new administrators beginning this September:

- Jim Embree, Acting Principal at John Knox Christian Middle School;
- Anne Ferguson, Acting Principal at John Knox Christian Elementary School;
- Lorna Baerg, Interim Principal at White Rock Christian Academy;
- Klaas Kort, Vice Principal at Bulkley Valley Christian Elementary School;
- Thea Ewald, Interim Principal at Bulkley Valley Christian Secondary School;

- Mary DeBoer and Monique VanderWart, Vice Principals at Vancouver Christian.

- Langley Christian Middle/High School's building addition is well under way. Walls are now up; they hope to see completion during 05/06.



- The Vernon Christian School community is completing its vision for a K-12 school with the addition of Grade 12 this year.

Coming Up

SCSBC ELEMENTARY SCIENCE K - 7 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DAY

September 23, 2005 at Duncan Christian School

Information has been sent to schools; if you haven't registered yet, don't wait!

CURRICULUM LEADERS SPECIALIST MEETING

Wednesday, October 5, 2005

AGENDA ITEMS:

- Model for Curriculum Leadership
- Educational Excellence: Where do FSA and graduation exam results fit?

Watch for details to come (will be mailed to schools)



LEAD ME TO THE ROCK: CHANGING TIMES – UNCHANGING TRUTH

*6th Annual Leadership Conference for Board/
Committee Members & Administrative Teams*

Saturday, November 5, 2005

Langley Christian Middle/High School

9 TRACKS AND 25 WORKSHOPS, FEATURING:

- Ruth Ross – Executive Director, Christian Legal Fellowship
- Jim DeKorne – Director of Support Services, Christian Schools International
- Mike Goheen – Geneva Chair and Professor of Religious and Worldview Studies, Trinity Western University

For more information, visit the SCSBC website:

www.scsbc.ca/services/conferences/blc/blc.html

CALENDAR

September

September 6	Schools open
September 9	SCSBC Board Meeting
September 23	Elementary Science K - 7 Professional Learning Day
September 26	International Student Coordinators Networking Meeting
September 28-30	CPABC Fall Conference - Cedar Springs Christian Retreat Center, Sumas WA

October

October 5	Curriculum Leaders meeting
October 6-7	NWCSI-CTABC-ACSI Teachers Convention 2005, hosted by Pacific Academy
October 10	Thanksgiving Day

November

November 4	Charitable Tax Receipting Seminar
November 4	SCSBC Board Meeting
November 5	"Lead Me to the Rock" - SCSBC's 6th Annual Leadership for Christian Schools Conference
(Fri.) November 11	Remembrance Day
November 28	International Student Coordinators Networking Meeting

December

December 16	Schools close for Christmas vacation
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www.scsbc.ca/calendar.html



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