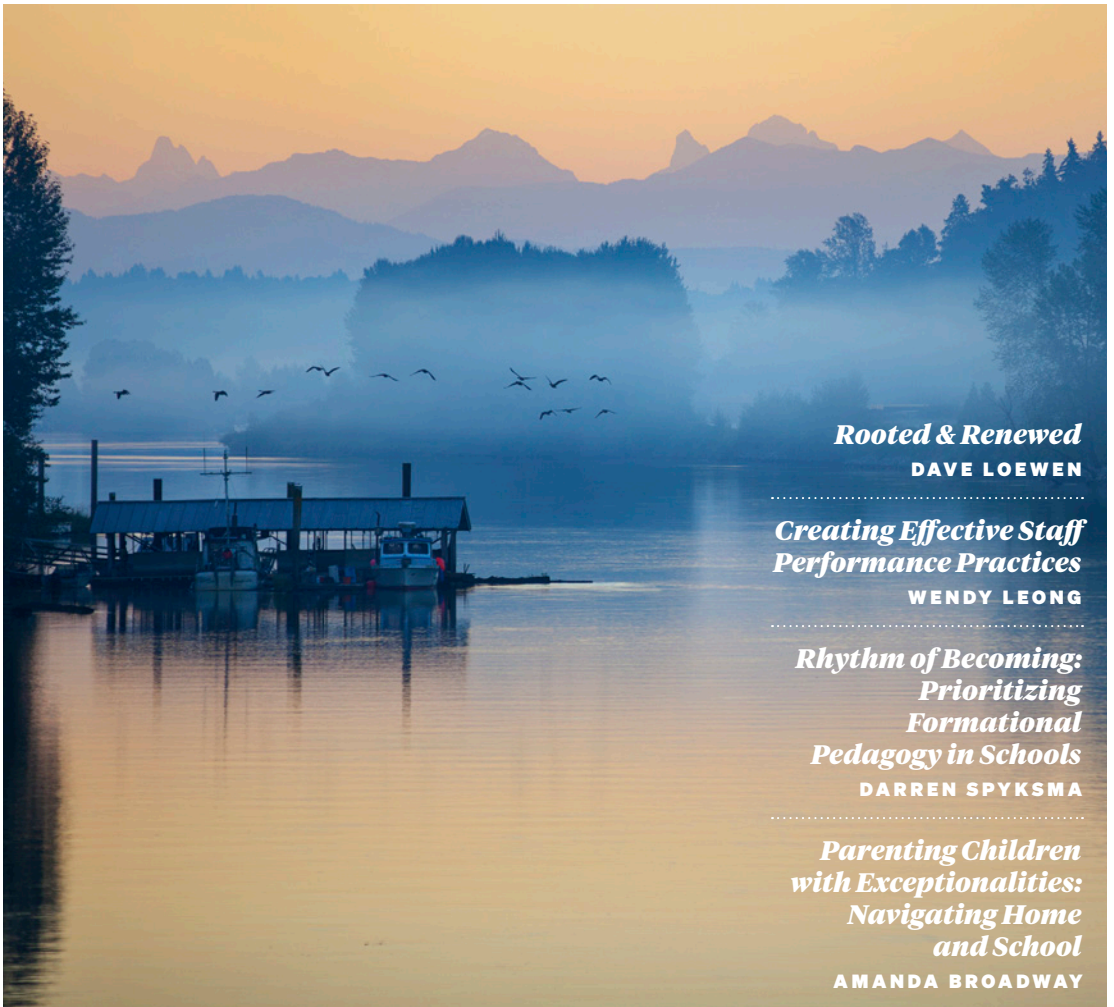


# the link



***Rooted & Renewed***  
**DAVE LOEWEN**

---

***Creating Effective Staff  
Performance Practices***  
**WENDY LEONG**

---

***Rhythm of Becoming:  
Prioritizing  
Formational  
Pedagogy in Schools***  
**DARREN SPYKSMA**

---

***Parenting Children  
with Exceptionalities:  
Navigating Home  
and School***  
**AMANDA BROADWAY**



# ROOTED & RENEWED

*Dave Loewen*

---

# Reflecting on our roots and excited about our future – SCSBC celebrates 50 years of God’s faithfulness



**A**S SCSBC MARKS ITS 50TH YEAR, IT IS FITTING TO PAUSE and reflect on God’s goodness throughout our history. Our story begins well before 1975. In the 1950s, the Southwest British Columbia League of Christian Schools—a loosely organized coalition affiliated with Christian Schools International—brought together teachers committed to developing a distinctly Christian curriculum and rooted in a Reformed theological perspective. Their documents reflected a profound conviction: the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it. Learning, therefore, was not merely academic but a sacramental act.

In 1975, SCSBC was officially incorporated, and soon after, hired its first staff member, Dr. Harro Van Brummelen, as curriculum coordinator. Harro's legacy endures in his call for schools to align their curriculum and pedagogy with biblical norms, ensuring that teaching is anchored in God's story and that students are continually invited into their place within it.

Growth soon followed. By 1982, SCSBC represented 21 schools and 3,400 students. Five years later, 33 schools and more than 5,000 students were part of the organization. By 1992, that number had grown to 39 schools and over 8,200 students. Today, SCSBC supports 40 schools and serves more than 16,000 students.



SCSBC's first employee, Dr. Harro Van Brummelen

This growth was made possible by the vision and commitment of our founding schools—and those who joined along the way—who believed that we are stronger together. For fifty years, schools have shared resources, ideas, and expertise. Teachers and administrators have brought fresh insights as they moved between communities. These countless acts of collaboration have strengthened Christian education across British Columbia.

Equally important has been the work of SCSBC staff members, past and present—curriculum leaders, executive directors, bookkeepers, inclusive education directors, graphic designers, finance leaders, advancement directors, and more. Too many to name, they each contributed faithfully to the flourishing of Christian schools in BC. Today, we gratefully carry on their work, standing on the shoulders of giants.

As we celebrate the past, we also look to the future. The question before us is how to remain faithful to our founding vision while engaging today's realities. 2025 is not 1975. Our schools continue to root student learning in the grand story of God's world, but now in a context shaped by social media, artificial intelligence, increasing cultural and denominational diversity, greater material resources, and a society marked by political and religious fragmentation. The task is to discern together what faithfulness looks like in this moment.

To that end, the SCSBC board and leadership





team entered a discernment process this past spring. Guided by your feedback through surveys—naming what is working well, what needs improvement, and what should be set aside—we spent two days clarifying our focus and the direction of our resources for the next three to five years. We are deeply grateful for the thoughtful input you provided, which has shaped this process. As a result of this process, two key outcomes occurred. First, we reaffirmed our mission statement, which rests on our four key pillars: strengthening Christian schools through service, community, advocacy, and vision. And second, we discerned four core areas of focus for the next three to five years. They are:

**Christian Distinctiveness** – strengthening the Biblical roots and Gospel identity of each member school.

**Leadership Development** – Establishing leadership pathways to nurture Christ-centred leaders.

**Nurturing Thriving in a Complex Environment** – Equipping schools to be proactive regarding emerging opportunities and mitigating threats, ensuring long-term flourishing.

**Refining our Identity as a Christian Service Organization** – Clarifying who we are, who we serve, and our role in advancing Christian education.

These four key areas of focus come together to create a vision for the next few years, rooted in Christ, responsive to change, and resolute in equipping Christian schools to flourish.

We are eager to delve more deeply into our four areas of focus—setting goals, establishing timelines, and realigning both human and financial resources to achieve them. This work is not ours alone; it is shared across our community of Christian schools. Each school is unique in its location, mission, history, and community. Yet we are united in a common calling: to help students discover their place in God’s story.

As SCSBC steps into its next fifty years, our prayer is that we remain faithful to our founding vision while staying attentive and relevant to today’s context. We invite you to pray with us—that we, like the men of Issachar, would “understand the times and know what to do,” and that, together, we would equip our schools to do the same for the sake of God’s Kingdom. 🌱

**DAVE LOEWEN**  
*SCSBC Executive Director*



# CREATING STAFF

**T**he start of a new school year is an exciting time: staff energy levels are at an all-time high after a restorative summer break, students look forward to seeing their friends again, and parents are relieved to return to a more structured routine.

Just as the new school year provides students with a fresh canvas to demonstrate learning, growth, and achievements, the new school year is also an opportunity for staff to set new professional growth and performance goals. Just as administrators and teachers plan educational targets and set goals for student growth,

there is great value and benefit in setting goals and expectations for staff that support performance, professional growth, communication, and feedback.

Most employers know it is good practice to set employee goals, monitor performance, and have a formal evaluation discussion at least once a year. In many organizations, the outcomes of these performance reviews dictate bonus entitlements, salary increases, and promotions, so a lot of design and thought is given to setting performance targets and measures.

However, through my years of experience working in large and small organizations, I can

unequivocally state that the performance appraisal process is likely the most dreaded and unpopular process for leaders and employees. Leaders find it time-consuming and often have difficulty identifying meaningful performance targets that can be quantifiably measured. Leaders often expect employees to come up with their own targets and measures, a challenging task for them. Both parties find the review meeting at the end of the year superficial and sometimes irrelevant, as performance targets set at the beginning of the year often do not capture the reality of what the organization and the employee experienced

# EFFECTIVE



# PERFORMANCE

# PRACTICES

*Just as students begin the year with fresh notebooks and new goals, staff too deserve space for growth, feedback, and encouragement that keeps their work meaningful.*

## Creating Effective Staff Performance Practices



over the course of the year. In fact, surveys show that annual performance review meetings are a significant source of stress and discomfort for all parties involved. Worse, these processes did not significantly improve performance.

So, is the solution to do away with performance setting and reviews in their entirety? The answer is a definitive “no.” We just need to rethink how we measure and provide feedback on employee performance.

Extensive research into employee engagement consistently shows several factors that create high levels of employee engagement. These factors include mutual trust and confidence in leadership, feeling cared for by the organization, performing fulfilling work that supports a mission and vision that aligns with their values, receiving feedback and recognition and finally, the opportunity for growth. In schools, particularly where there still exists an acute shortage of educators, ensuring employees remain engaged is

---

***An effective performance and development process not only builds trust and transparency, but also connects daily work to the larger mission of the school, offering feedback and recognition that sustain professional growth.***

critical to retaining existing staff and attracting new staff.

An effective performance and development process supports employee engagement by creating transparent communication between staff and their managers, focusing everyone on the school's mission, and providing an opportunity for employees to receive meaningful feedback and recognition that supports their professional growth. The following are some good practices that schools may want to consider, particularly at the beginning of the school year.

### **Setting and communicating performance standards and expectations**

I sat in a classroom last week listening to my daughter's grade 6 teacher talk about her hopes for her students for this year. She articulated her expectations for student behaviour and the milestones to be reached by the end of the year, how those milestones will be assessed and the support she will provide to support the students' achievements. This teacher also stated that things will occur during the school year that will create challenges and opportunities for her students and expects to be able to adjust those expectations accordingly. This excellent example of a process that supports individual performance and growth can be applied to adults in a work environment in specific ways.

## Creating Effective Staff Performance Practices



- Whether individually or in a team with the same expected outcomes (for example the teaching team for a grade 6 cohort), sit down with your staff member or team and talk about each other's hopes and expectations for the year. Share relevant objectives from the operational plan and identify the contributions or impact your staff member can have in supporting achieving those goals. Employees feel their efforts are important and impactful when their individual goals are linked to those of the organization, and this helps sustain staff when they face challenges in their day-to-day jobs.
- Performance goals and expectations should ideally encompass tangible, concrete deliverables as well as more subjective behavioural goals that contribute to a collaborative, supportive work environment.
- Consider articulating where you want to be at the end of

the year and then set priorities or goals with a shorter timeframe, like a school term, so that review discussions are more timely and relevant to what's actually happening. Setting goals with a shorter time frame also allows for greater agility for adjustments when priorities change which also applies to professional development and learning goals.

### Reviewing performance

Research and experience show that continuous feedback provides a much better experience for both employee and leader and leads to more relevant, engaging, and productive conversations than one or two formal performance evaluations each year. Shorter, more frequent conversations require less preparation, are a more efficient use of time, and provide a chance for more immediate recognition of performance. Consider using the following strategies:

- Set up a monthly check-in meeting to review progress towards achieving that term's performance and development goals. The employee should consider "What am I doing that I should keep doing and what am I doing that I should change?"
- Even a short check-in is better than no check-in. As a leader, it is essential to commit to attending these meetings

when they are scheduled. Frequent cancellations and postponements communicate to employee that they are not a priority.

- With more frequent conversations occurring during the year, the importance and necessity for an individual annual review meeting is lessened, but there is still value to wrapping up in June with a conversation that focuses on the achievements of the year. Some organizations may do this as a team or department rather than individual meetings. Still, organizations should recognize the achievement of personal and organizational priorities.

Effective performance and review processes can make all the difference to an individual's and an organization's success. At the heart of it, these steps are all about creating opportunities for connection, exchanging important information, and demonstrating recognition and care for staff. The majority of your school's staff are there because they believe in your mission and they come to school each day wanting to contribute and do good work. Effective performance processes help ensure they know that work is meaningful. 🌟

**Wendy Leong, CPHR**  
SCSBC Human  
Resources Consultant



# RHYTHM OF

## Prioritizing Formational Pedagogy

*Faith formation is not limited to chapels, devotions, or Bible classes. In the ordinary rhythms of teaching—seating charts, attendance, classroom jobs, group work, and even discipline—Christian educators are shaping how students see themselves, others, and God. When made thoughtfully, these daily choices become small but powerful acts of discipleship that teach belonging, responsibility, grace, and community.*



# BECOMING

## in Schools

*Darren Spyksma*

**T**ALKING ABOUT FAITH FORMATION in schools often focuses on chapels, devotions, or Bible classes. These are important moments where faith is explicitly named and practiced. Yet, as Christian educators, we know that formation is not limited to the “spiritual” parts of the school day. Pedagogy—the everyday choices teachers make in the classroom—plays

a quiet but influential role in shaping how students understand themselves, others, and God.

Faith is not only taught; it is practiced through daily rhythms, interactions, and relationships. Seating charts, attendance routines, and even classroom jobs may look like mere management strategies, but they carry deep theological weight. They tell students what we believe about belong-

## Rhythm of Becoming: Prioritizing Intentionally Formational Pedagogy in Schools

ing, dignity, and responsibility. When practiced thoughtfully, these decisions become small liturgies—repeated habits that orient students toward Christlike living and connect them to the broader Christian community, reflecting Christ to everyone they meet.

### Seating Arrangements: Belonging and Learning

Where a student is seated tells them something about their place in the community. Thoughtful seating arrangements can create opportunities for inclusion, collaboration, and mutual support. By intentionally mixing abilities, personalities, and backgrounds, teachers signal that everyone has a role, and no one is on the margins. This practice cultivates empathy and reminds students that they are members of one body, designed to learn, develop, and grow together. Students grow up experiencing that learning and belonging are factors of their development best done in community where all members look out for others' best interest.

#### Reflection Questions for Staff

When I make a seating chart, what story am I telling students about who belongs and how they are valued?

How might I use seating to foster community and mutual care, rather than only classroom order?

How might I create processes in class for seating to change based on the type of learning taking place in the classroom?

### Attendance and Seeing Each Student

Taking attendance is often treated as a bureaucratic necessity; more importantly it can be an act of recognition. Each called name is an affirmation: *You are here. You matter. You are part of us.* When teachers greet students personally at the start of class, the practice becomes pastoral—an echo of how God knows and calls each of us by name. Whether a teacher takes attendance with a “would

you rather” question or as part of “name, game, frame” in an opening circle, students are seen and known by their teacher and their peers.

#### Reflection Questions for Staff

How do I take attendance in a way that communicates belonging rather than obligation?

In what ways do I personally recognize each student at the beginning of the day or class?

### Classroom Jobs and Shared Responsibility

Assigning jobs to students may seem like a way to keep the classroom running smoothly, but it also teaches responsibility, service, and stewardship. When a child cares for plants, hands out supplies, or leads a line, they learn to take responsibility for the well-being of others. When one of the classroom jobs is to look around the room for those that need help or have a larger job than others, students are learning awareness of others and are invited to be the hands and feet of Jesus in small ways that impact the heart of a young believer over time. These small acts of service model what it means to live as disciples—those who use their gifts to bless others and care for God's world.

#### Reflection Questions for Staff

Do classroom jobs emphasize efficiency or formation—or both?

How do I connect classroom responsibilities with the deeper call to serve others?

How can I use classroom jobs as a tool for awareness that invites students to be others-centred throughout the day?

### Group Work and Collaboration

How we structure group work can either encourage competition or foster cooperation. When group tasks are designed so students must rely on each other's strengths, they learn that their gifts matter for the good of the whole. This models the interde-

## Rhythm of Becoming: Prioritizing Intentionally Formational Pedagogy in Schools

pendence of the body of Christ. When the work we have students do at school matters beyond personal achievement, group work and collaboration become a necessity rather than a perceived barrier getting in the way of the “A student” getting 100%. By ensuring that work has meaning beyond the classroom, achievement becomes a byproduct of important work that the students get to do.

### Reflection Questions for Staff

How do I design group learning to help students practice generosity, patience, empathy, and reliance on one another?

How do I ensure that the value of the work being done in class extends beyond the classroom to support needs and people in the world today?

### Classroom Routines and Rituals

Simple routines—lining up, transitioning between activities, or closing the day—can be opportunities for formation. Repetition in our bodies supports shaping our minds and desires as humans. Humans don’t always think their way into doing; often, actions have more impact on thinking than we care to recognize as Christians. Practicing gratitude consistently at the end of the day, or pausing to recognize beauty in a student’s work, teaches attentiveness to God’s presence in the ordinary.

### Reflection Questions for Staff

What daily classroom liturgies could be reimaged as moments of worship?

Where are our routines emphasizing prioritizing self over collective celebration? What changes can we make to demonstrate celebration of others’ successes?

### The Way We Handle Mistakes

Discipline and correction are profoundly formative. When teachers address relational problems in love, demonstrating grace in how they interact and truth in understanding natural consequences, students learn that failure is not final and that restoration

is possible. When classrooms are places where academic mistakes are expected, not penalized, but instead used for further development, students understand that mistakes do not define them and that Christian communities model that God loves them as they are with their foibles and follies. This mirrors God’s redemptive love and invites students into a community shaped by forgiveness.

### Reflection Questions for Staff

How does the way I handle mistakes reflect the character of Christ?

How do discipline processes in my class show grace and empathy to the developing brains of the students in my classroom?

The power of pedagogy is that it transforms ordinary moments into formative ones. A seating chart becomes a lesson in hospitality. Attendance becomes an act of recognition. Classroom jobs become training in discipleship. Group work becomes a rehearsal of community. Discipline becomes a practice in grace. These seemingly small decisions are not neutral; they shape students’ imaginations. They show that following Jesus is not just about grand gestures of faith but also about daily practices of love, service, and community.

Leaders have the unique opportunity to remind teachers that their pedagogy is not just about efficiency or classroom control. It is ministry. By encouraging reflection on these everyday choices, teachers see how their classrooms are already spaces of faith formation.

Faith formation is not confined to explicitly religious moments; it is woven through every pedagogical choice. When teachers see their routines as opportunities for formation, they invite students to learn content and practice reflecting the Creator as they learn to live faithfully in the world. 🌈

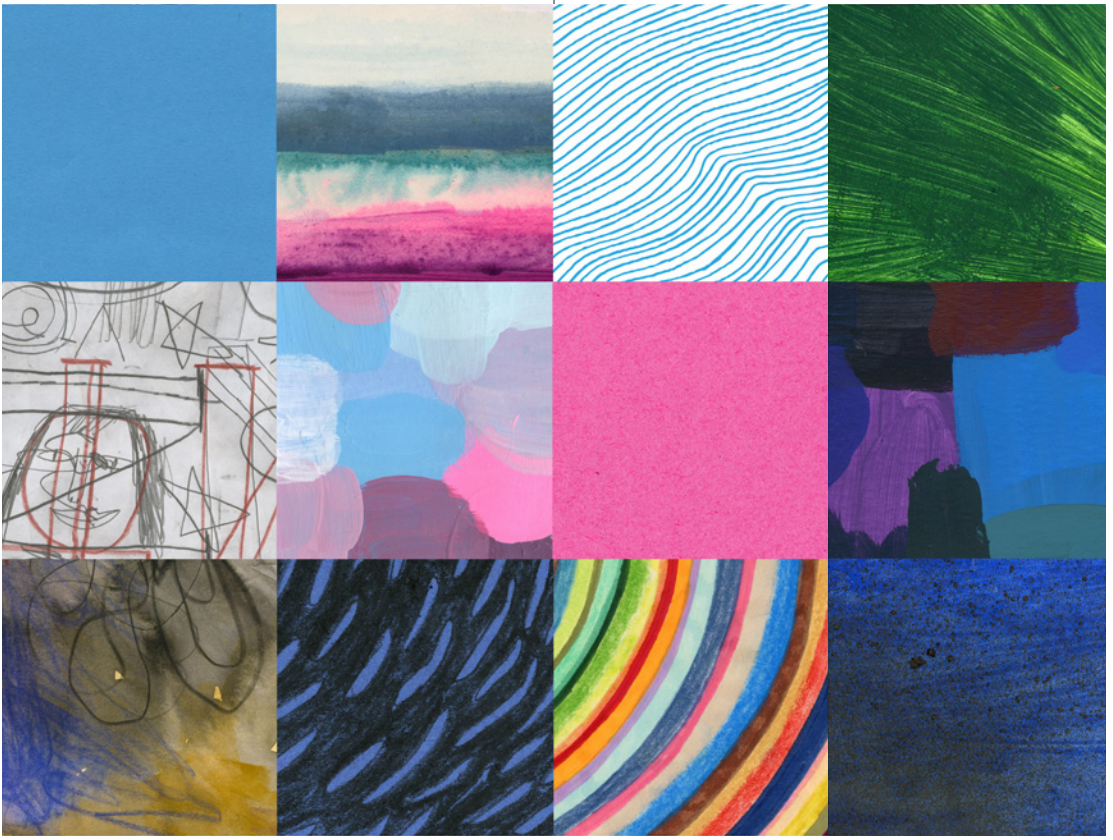
**DARREN SPYKSMA**

*SCSBC Associate Executive Director*



*Amanda Broadway*

# Parenting Children with Exceptionalities: Navigating Home & School



*For families raising children with autism, ADHD, or developmental delays, daily life is a test of resilience. Between medical needs, behavioural challenges, and social stigma, parents carry heavy loads—but schools, community, and faith can offer vital strength and hope.*

**A**S THE CELL PHONE ALARM SOUNDS, a parent walks into the kitchen, ready to orchestrate the morning routine with the precision of a conductor. Their two children—one with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the other with ADHD and a mild developmental delay—are to be woken up. The clock races toward 8:15 a.m., the school bus deadline. This daily ritual demands high cognitive focus: one misstep risks a forgotten lunch, mismatched clothes, or an unsigned permission slip, which can shift a calm day toward chaos at school.

The parent checks the older child's outfit, ensuring tag-free, sensory-friendly fabrics. Rain is in the forecast, but the preferred hoodie is in the wash, due to last night's meltdown. Meanwhile, the younger child, a burst of energy, scatters crayons while searching for a favourite backpack, and is distracted by fridge magnets. Lunches are packed with care—gluten-free for one, star-shaped apple slices for the other. A missed inhaler or field trip money could mean a school call, a reminder of the fragility of this routine. By 8:10, the parent herds them to the door, backpacks checked for medications

## Parenting Children with Exceptionalities: Navigating Home & School

and homework. As the bus pulls away, exhaustion settles in, with a full workday ahead, leaning into Philippians 4:13: “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

This scene encapsulates the life of parents raising children with disabilities and neurodiversity: a never-ending task of monitoring and adapting. Approximately 17% of Canadian children are diagnosed with developmental disabilities, including ASD and ADHD, shaping the daily realities of countless families (Statistics Canada, 2023). As a parent myself of children with disabilities and neurodiversities, I believe fully in 1 Corinthians 10:13, which states God is faithful, will not test us beyond our ability, and provides a means to endure. My lifeline is described in 1 Peter 5:7 as “cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

Medical demands consume significant time. Monthly appointments—neurologists, occupational therapists, pediatricians—fill calendars, addressing

seizures, motor skills, or heightened illness risks. Children with ASD face 2–3 times higher rates of gastrointestinal infections, often complicated by sensory aversions to treatments (Velikonja et al., 2021). Illnesses can manifest as behavioural disruptions, derailing family schedules.

Behavioural challenges add complexity. One child’s sensory-driven meltdowns require time spent de-escalating; the other’s impulsivity leads to elopement or mealtime refusals. These aren’t defiance but neurological realities, yet they drain emotional reserves. Approximately 55% of parents of children with disabilities report stress at clinically relevant levels, with 65% in the child-related domain, risking burnout and mental health

struggles (Hayes & Watson, 2022). In these moments, leaning on Jesus is critical, offering peace and respite.

Stigma compounds the burden. Parents are often in defence mode as they have most likely heard from someone well-meaning—“Why can’t they behave?” A grocery store outburst draws stares, reinforcing

***Parenting children with disabilities is a constant balancing act of exhaustion and love—yet in Christ we find rest, renewed strength, and the courage to carry on.***



## Parenting Children with Exceptionalities: Navigating Home & School

how society often misunderstands neurodiversity. Staying rooted in Christ's unconditional love is an excellent way to foster resilience and anchor identity in His grace.

Marital strain is another reality. Parents of children with disabilities face divorce rates 10-15% higher than the general population (Gau et al., 2024). Chronic stress and unequal caregiving erode partnerships, replacing intimacy with logistics. A strong support network is vital for these families including strong collaborative support from schools, community resources, and church groups.

Schools play a pivotal role through empathetic collaboration. A child arriving without a jacket could be because the child continues to leave the jacket on the playground. The parent is done with buying new jackets and tells the child to look for one in the lost and found. During IEP meetings, parents may arrive on their last thread, anticipating having to do another task. Teachers and coordinators can focus on what is going well for the

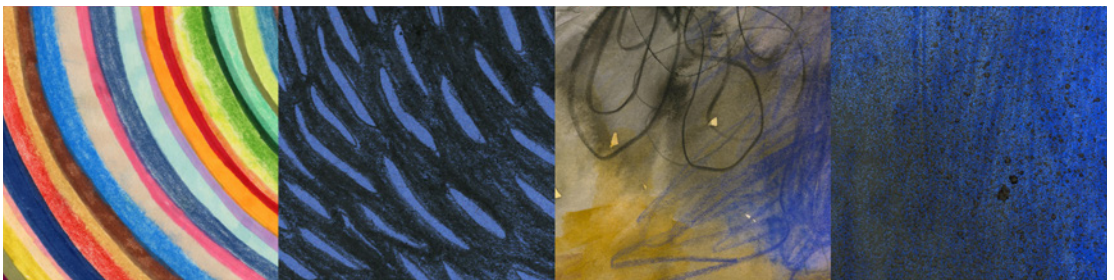
child and what they have accomplished, then send the draft IEP home for review when the parent has more cognitive and emotional availability to process the goals and objectives.

Above all, schools can offer parents hope and encouragement through Jesus Christ. Teachers can pray with the parent for strength and energy. As Isaiah 40:31 declares, "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Likewise, Psalm 55:22 reminds us: "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken." Leaning on Jesus and abiding in Him provides rest, renewed fortitude, and clarity, offering the only true path forward when parenting challenges feel overwhelming. 🌱

***When parents arrive weary, schools have the opportunity to offer not just support plans, but hope, encouragement, and the reminder that they are not alone.***

**AMANDA BROADWAY**

*SCSBC Associate Director of Learning /  
Inclusive Education*



### References

- Gau, S. S., Lee, C. M., & Chang, J. C. (2024). Understanding the divorce rate among families with autism. *Blossom ABA Therapy Review*. <https://www.blossomingbehavior.com/post/understanding-the-divorce-rate-among-families-with-autism>
- Hayes, S. A., & Watson, S. L. (2022). The impact of parenting stress: A meta-analysis of studies comparing the experience of parenting stress in parents of children with and without autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 54(1), 114–123. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-012-1604-y>
- Statistics Canada. (2023). Canadian Survey on Disability: Key findings. <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/survey/household/3250>
- Velikonja, T., Fombonne, E., & Sagoo, M. G. (2021). Autism medical comorbidities. *World Journal of Psychiatry*, 11(5), 169–184. <https://doi.org/10.5498/wjp.v11.i5.169>



## **Residency 2025 was remarkable in many ways.**

■ Though our smallest group yet, it was also one of our most geographically diverse, with participants from every region of the province. ■ For the second year, we welcomed educators on a letter of permission for Christian Teaching 101, and for the first time, we offered a course for new Inclusive Education Coordinators. ■ The result was a rich week of learning and connection, launching a year of continued support and collaboration.

# Residency

A PLACE FOR CHRISTIAN DEEPER LEARNING





# Residency 2025

**“The calm and encouraging way that all the instructors presented information, answered questions, and supported our learning. The specific information and topics themselves were all useful but could have been so overwhelming without these qualities.”**

**“The course helped me see connections between different skills and knowledge and how I can apply them in my new position. I really appreciated the opportunity to learn from people (both coaches and participants) who have actual experience in Inclusive Education.”**

**“Having a whole week to talk with facilitators and colleagues and not being distracted with the day-to-day duties at the school.”**

**“I am so grateful for this opportunity to learn and grow as a part of a cohort of teachers that know and love God. You are providing an invaluable service to the schools and teachers you partner with.”**



Register Today! 25 October 2025



CHRISTIAN  
EDUCATION,  
COMPASSION,  
& CRITICAL  
THINKING

WHAT SKILL SET  
DO LEARNERS,  
LEADERS, AND  
BOARD MEMBERS  
NEED FOR TODAY?

SCSBC 26TH ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

with **Beth Green**, Provost & Chief Academic Officer  
at Tyndale University, Toronto

[scsbc.ca/scsbc-leadership-conference-2025/](http://scsbc.ca/scsbc-leadership-conference-2025/)

SAVE THE DATE!

NAVIGATE  
CONFERENCE

13-14 APRIL 2026

COAST TSAWWASSEN INN

VISIT [SCSBC.CA](http://SCSBC.CA) FOR  
UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

*The Link* is the publication of

**Society of Christian Schools  
in British Columbia**

22500 University Drive  
Langley BC V2Y 1Y1

604 888 6366 telephone

Visit our website: [scsbc.ca](http://scsbc.ca)

All contents © copyright 2025; no part of the  
magazine may be reproduced in whole or in  
part without express permission.

**Letters to the Editor**

We invite questions, comments, as well as  
any general feedback you may have about  
*The Link* to [contact@scsbc.ca](mailto:contact@scsbc.ca)

***The Link* is produced by:**

Graphic designer: Kevin van der Leek

Editorial team: Amanda Broadway,  
Cathy Kits, Dave Loewen, Shaelah Scholz,  
Darren Spyksma, Kristie Spyksma,  
Kevin van der Leek, Tracey Yan

Printed in Canada: Print It Group

**Send all address changes to:**

Circulation Manager, *The Link*  
c/o SCSBC  
22500 University Blvd  
Langley BC V2Y 1Y1

[kevin.vanderleek@scsbc.ca](mailto:kevin.vanderleek@scsbc.ca)

ISSN 2563-1616

Online ISSN 2563-1624



Cover photo by Kevin van der Leek



celebrating 50 years  
of God's faithfulness

FOLLOW US!

