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**SARAH EDGAR**



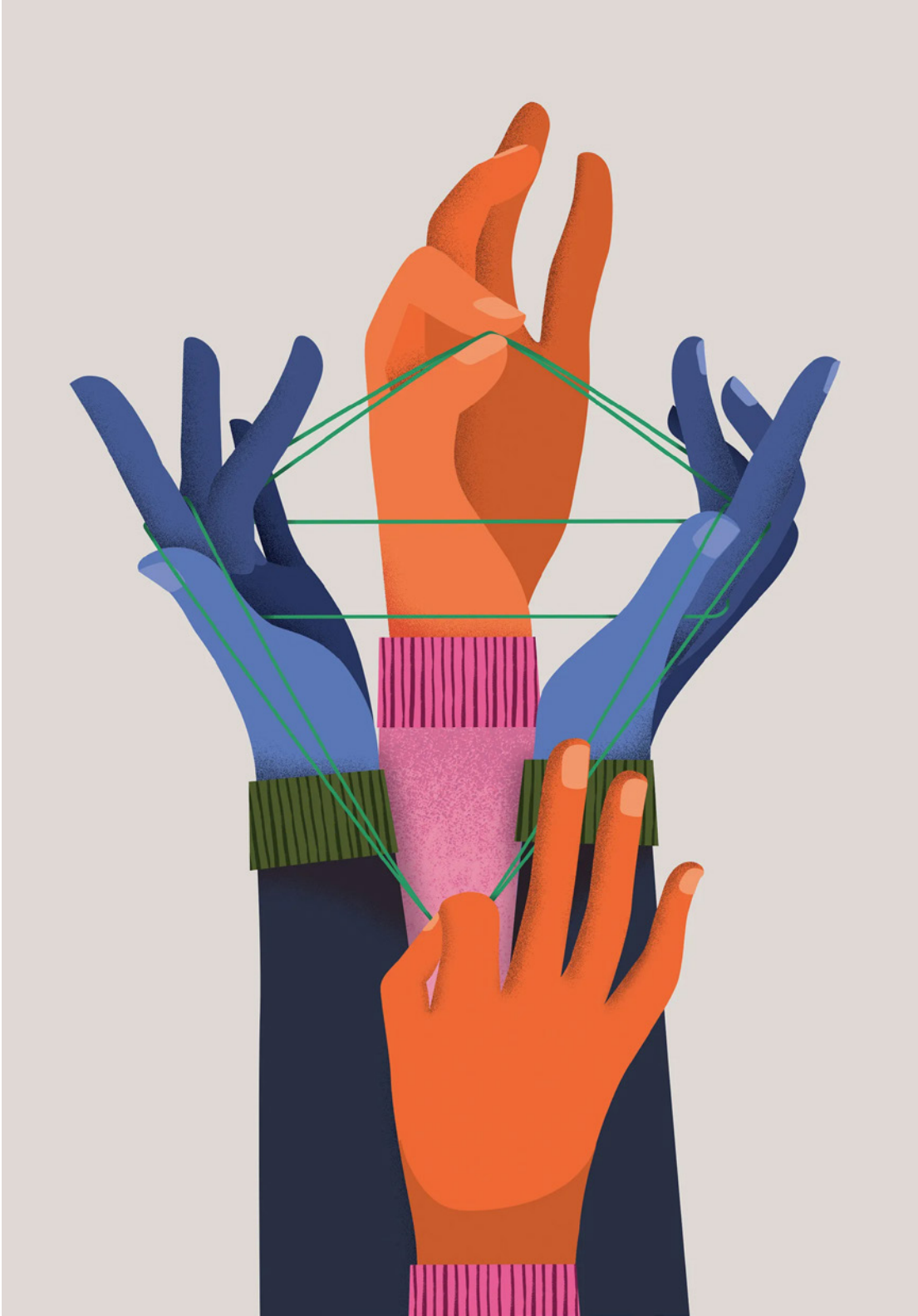


Illustration: Vicki Turner

*Development is more than fundraising—it is a form of ministry rooted in faith, vision, and relationship. This article explores how school leaders can embrace development as a core leadership calling that strengthens mission and invites others into God’s work.*

# DEVELOPMENT: A SHARED LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

**F**OR SCHOOL LEADERS, NURTURING DONOR relationships isn’t an extra task: development is at the heart of your calling. When you see it as a core part of your leadership, the practice of development transforms you, your donors, and your schools. Read on to find out more about what development is, what it isn’t, and how other school leaders do it effectively.

Development is a shared expression of faith and vision. In his book *A Spirituality of Fundraising*, theologian Henri Nouwen encourages us to see development not as a response to a crisis but “first and foremost as a form of ministry.”\* Done well, development impacts your school’s long-term mission sustainability through visionary planning that invites donors into a space where they are known as authentic and valued partners in your school’s story.

Board members and heads of school play both a real and symbolic leadership role in development, says Dave Loewen, SCSBC Executive Director. Your ‘real’ role is to connect with potential donors, to tell the story of the school in the community, and to be a strong advocate for development. Your ‘symbolic’ role involves keeping development on the radar with staff—encouraging them to support the work in their own professional conversations and assisting when invited.

#### **The Role of Leadership: Moving the Vision Forward**

Adam Woelders, Head of School at Langley Christian, reflects that when it comes to development, “the biggest obstacle is that we let the present cir-

\* Nouwen, Henri. *A Spirituality of Fundraising*. Upper Room Books. 2010.

## HOW DEVELOPMENT WORK CHANGES US

“My learning in development has been one of the greatest blessings of my 27-year career in education. It has probably been the tool that God has used the most to change my heart and my perspective on empathy for others and shape my character in life-changing ways. I’ve had opportunities through this work to sit with amazing people who are inspiring in their vision, generosity, and desire to see God’s kingdom built here on earth through Christian schools.”

— **Adam Woelders**  
*Head of School*  
Langley Christian School

“Involving myself more intentionally in VCS’s development work has resulted in the deepening of my own relationships and appreciation for those who show their love and care for this community through their giving. It’s also built trust, a critical element in development work, between donors and the school.”

— **Jeremy Tinsley**  
*Superintendent*  
Vancouver Christian School

“I always leave meetings with donors or prospective donors feeling energized and thankful for seeing God’s faithfulness on display.”

— **Karen Currie**  
*Head of School*  
Kamloops Christian School

circumstances shape what we think God’s big vision is. God isn’t limited by our present circumstances.” When you actively invite donors, staff, and families into the development plan, you allow the strategic vision to rise above immediate constraints. “Our school wouldn’t be what it is today without the influence, generosity, and input of these stakeholders,” notes Woelders.

So, how can you practically lead in the work of development?

**Champion Your Mission** As a school leader, you have a front-row seat to the mission’s impact. As you build relationships with donors, tell them how you see God working in the lives of students. “The work of building relationships and sharing our school’s vision can be done in scheduled, for-

mal ways,” explains Jeremy Tinsley, Superintendent at Vancouver Christian School. “But it can also be done informally during the spare moments a school leader might have to chat with parents and grandparents after school, during a volleyball game, or at a band recital.”

**Model and Cultivate Generosity** Leaders model what they hope to cultivate. If we hope to grow engagement, we must be engaged ourselves. By personally investing in the school’s development plan, your enthusiasm becomes contagious. “We try to ask for gifts in thoughtful ways, without over-asking. People are usually excited by these conversations,” notes Tinsley. “It doesn’t have to be intimidating.”

**Empower Staff** Teaching and support staff rarely view donor relations as part of their role,

yet this is critical to the mission. You can provide staff with regular development updates and encourage them to share stories of mission impact with the community. Equipping staff with clarity and excitement helps transform development into a school-wide endeavour.

**Thank, Report, Ask, Follow-Up** Development leaders practice a cycle of thanking, reporting, asking, and following up. As a school leader, you play a vital role here. “We’re focused on building engagement, thanking supporters, sharing the impact of their gifts, and listening to their feedback,” says Tinsley. Few things empower a donor relationship as much as a personal “thank you” call from a principal or an impact report from a board member.

### Guiding the Work:

#### The Development Leader's Role

While you champion the vision, you do not walk this path alone. The development leader walks with heads of school and board members as a strategic guide. Together, you identify key supporters, build meaningful connections, and invite others to partner in ways that align with the school's vision and goals.

#### Share Strategic Information

You need to know who the school's biggest fans are: giving partners, volunteers, alumni, alumni parents, and others. Development staff can equip you with this information and work alongside you in inviting core supporters into partnership. As a team, heads of school and development leaders create a development plan—aligned with the school's strategic goals—that maps out how and when to connect with these key audiences.

**Foster Opportunities for Relationships** Development leaders cultivate relationships by fostering opportunities for donors to have meaningful access to leadership. This often looks like arranging one-on-one meetings for the head of school to share and hear stories of God's faithfulness or to seek advice on future plans.

"It has been a joy to meet with donors to hear their stories and learn about their connection with the school," says Karen Currie, Head of School at Kamloops Christian. "Initially I was worried about the time commitment, but I have been amazed by how 'bucket filling' it is to meet with people who have a heart for Christian education. It is exciting to share how God is working through the school."

**Facilitate Giving** The number one reason people don't give is that they were never asked. Development leaders are tasked with the role of asking,

### WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

"Development is the fuel that moves you forward. It is the discipline of growing real relationships with people, helping them to see what God is doing in the lives of the people you serve, and challenging them to have the impact that only they can have."

— Zach Clark

Founder of Development and Leadership Coaching

but they include school leaders in that process—whether asking for time, talent, resources, or prayer. The 'ask' is only one part of the giving cycle for you to get involved in, but it is the one where you can have the greatest impact.

Langley Christian's Adam Woelders urges school leaders to be courageous as they step into this aspect of leadership. "We need the courage to ask others if they're willing to partner and use their resources to do something bigger than any one person could do alone," says Woelders. "When asked that way, people rarely say no. Don't let your fear of a 'no' get

in the way of a 'yes' that could fuel your mission in a really big way."

### A Shared Invitation to Faithfulness

When everyone embraces their role, development becomes more than about giving. It becomes a testimony of God's provision and a foundation for future generations. Dave Loewen clearly articulates this:

"Board members and heads of school need to see development as part of their portfolio—to realize they play a role in development initiatives, to give and speak publicly about giving, and to meet with donors to discuss giving opportunities. It is about sharing God's faithfulness to the school over time and inviting people into the beauty of that."

When leaders model generosity, tell their school's story with passion, and boldly invite others to partner in the journey, they are building a community rooted in gratitude and focused on the flourishing of every student. 🌱

**Cathy Kits**, SCSBC Director of Advancement; **Tom Grasmeyer**, Bulkley Valley Christian School Director of Advancement; and **Jamie Moore**, Nanaimo Christian School Director of Development

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## Lessons from a 51-Year-Old Primary Student

# Little People, Big Questions

One of the joys of my job is to visit classrooms. I was recently invited into circle time in a Kindergarten class. The students sat relatively quietly, putting in a lot of effort to keep their wiggly bottoms in “their spot” as they listened to each other share answers to the question, “What is one thing you are looking forward to after school today?” When the stick came to me, I shared that I might get home before dark, and I was looking forward to walking along the beach before dinner. As I passed the stick along, the youngster beside me whispered, “I live by the beach too, I like walking on the beach too.” With a connection made, as circle time ended, my new friend invited me to join her at a self-directed literacy centre as part of the morning learning rotation.

Heading with purpose to one corner of the classroom, I was introduced to the “Book Wall”. On the wall was a web of learning activities all oriented around the cover of a children’s book called “The Storm”. Each activity was connected back to a question below the book using a length of bright red yarn. I could not help myself; aside from the learning task, we began a conversation about the “Book Wall”.

As I connected each question back to the learning activity, I was moved by this young student’s answer to the second question: What types of storms are there? In mere seconds, we had moved through rain, wind, and lightning, and she looked at me and said, “Do you know that I have storms inside of me too?” I nodded respectfully, caught off guard by this beautiful moment. She quickly followed up, “Those are the hardest ones.” Not wanting to pry too much, yet longing to see where our conversation was going, I asked her what she does when she has a storm inside. “My teacher and my parents help me. I get time to be quiet, I focus on breathing in and out, and my daddy takes me to the beach.” Not wanting the moment to end, I responded, “I go to the beach too when I have a storm inside.” With a quick smile and nod, the sacred moment was gone as quickly as it came. Other students joined us to participate in the learning task.

**Little People, Big Questions:  
Lessons From a 51-Year-Old Primary Student**



**Lesson 1**

**Explore Big Questions and Big Ideas with Young Students.**

**It was evident in our short**

conversation that this student's teacher had done a masterful job of using a weather unit to scaffold engaging learning. From literacy connections, including vocabulary and printing, to Science content, and ADST (imagine Kindergarten students and bottles used to create tornadoes), student engagement was obviously at the forefront. But it did not stop there in this classroom. This classroom teacher respected the five-year-olds in her care enough to explore big topics like having storms inside. When educators caringly explore big questions and big ideas, young learners begin to develop crucial aptitudes, such as self-awareness and acceptance of others' differences. And it is a gentle reminder that each person in the room is on their own journey. Learning also relevant to adults such as exploration of self in relation to others is best started when we are young.

Cutting paper with scissors is a complex task. You need to hold the flimsy paper still in one hand while using your opposable fingers on the other hand to work in tandem, all while keeping the cut line straight. Something we may take for granted as adults, cutting out shapes can

be a challenging task for young learners. Sitting in grade one, resisting the urge to take over, I watched a young boy struggle to cut out a tree. His teacher had given the students the option: draw your own tree or use one of the provided templates. Together, the class was creating a forest that represented both the diversity of a forest and the diversity of the classroom. Again, shaped around a delightful children's text, the class was replicating illustrations as they integrated Art, Language Arts, Science, and fine motor skill development during my morning visit. The planning was solid, but what struck me most was the beautiful interaction between the teacher and this young boy. Lower lip quivering, struggling to cut out the simplest template provided, this young student was coming face-to-face with his current limitations. His confidence wavered as his miscuts were turning his tree into kindling. Even as the rest of the class was moving to the carpet, the young teacher saw the distress and slid past, providing another template onto the table and said, "I know this is tough, you can do it, why don't you listen from your seat while you keep working at it." He looked around and noticed he

was not the only one who was not moving to the carpet. "And this nice man can start or finish a few of the cuts for you if you think you need some help." This teacher's response, though simple, guided my involvement. She did not do the task for the student; she did not give him a pass. She created the space and the knowledge of support if needed, while allowing him to drive his own success. It would have been far easier for her to choose efficiency. But instead of efficiency, she prioritised learning and adapted to the student's needs, enabling this young student to accomplish the learning task alongside his peers.

**"When educators caringly explore big questions and big ideas, young learners begin to develop self-awareness, empathy, and resilience."**

**Little People, Big Questions:  
Lessons From a 51-Year-Old Primary Student**



**Lesson 2  
Struggle Creates the Space for Grace and Resilience.**

**Is it possible that part of** the reason students are not flourishing socially is that we are not giving them ample practice to develop these essential skills? It is not uncommon to hear adults say, “They’re too young to...” Finishing up my day in Primary, I got to enjoy the end-of-day routine in one of the classrooms. Like many classrooms, there’s a song to gather the students before they engage in the standard organising and clean up that I even remember from my own childhood. As I reviewed the weekly job list, I noticed a small difference: the first few jobs were the same: “General Helper”. Having met Sam earlier in the afternoon, and seeing her name beside this title, I asked a clarifying question: “What do General Helpers do?”



**Lesson 3  
Scaffolding and Support Help  
Young Students Surprise Us.**

“It’s our job to see which of the other jobs are big and we need to help the people who have more to do than others.” There was an instant challenge from one of the chair stackers: “I can do it myself.” Seeing the conflict, the teacher bounced over to intervene. Drawing on previous experience, the conflict was quickly resolved through a conversation, reminding both students that receiving help can be hard and that we have to get used to accepting the gift of help from others. A lesson that many adults need to hear is being developed in the primary classroom by a brilliant young teacher who understands that not all the important learning being done in her classroom is focused on literacy and numeracy.

**Students are up for the task** if they understand how their involvement has purpose and their learning community is rooted in relationships. Are the classrooms in your school expecting the most out of their students? Are they ensuring success through the scaffolding of life skills? Children can do more than we give them credit for. Let’s ensure that our schools set high expectations and provide thoughtful levels of support that honour students as capable image bearers of a loving God.

**And the next time you need a reminder of why you do the hard work of Christian leadership, spend a day in primary. It will feed your soul.** 🌱

**Darren Spyksma**  
SCSBC Associate  
Executive Director

**“Developmentally appropriate struggle creates the space where grace and resilience can take root.”**



**“Children can do more than we give them credit for when high expectations are matched with thoughtful support.”**



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# ENTER THE MATRIX

Best Practices  
for Board Nomination,  
Selection, and Makeup

**I**T IS NO SECRET that the work of a board of directors of a Christian school is much more sophisticated than it was 50, 30, or even ten years ago. Many current boards navigate issues that require professional legal support, work hard to maintain school community unity amid a smorgasbord of contentious and divisive issues both within and outside the church, and respond to steadily rising expectations of what a “good” school looks like for families.

All of this takes place in the context of fluctuating economies, changing local and state/provincial political landscapes, and an increasingly consumer-oriented mentality among prospective parents—often during challenging financial times. Taken together, these realities point to a clear need for boards that are high-functioning and effective.

## Enter the Matrix: Best Practices for Board Nomination, Selection, and Makeup

### Why Board Composition Matters

One of the goals of SCSBC is to support the achievement of that reality. One key measure of a high-functioning and effective board is its makeup: who is on the board, what skills and dispositions they bring to the table, and how well they represent the richness and depth of the community they serve.

### Diversity as a Strength—and a Discipline

High-functioning boards are diverse. As “iron sharpens iron,” a board with diverse ideas and perspectives creates the opportunity for strong decision-making. I say “create the opportunity” intentionally, because diversity can derail a board if members are not fully united around the school’s mission and vision and committed to filtering all decisions through those shared commitments.

In fact, the word ‘diversity’ should really be ‘diversities’. The first diversity focus is on ensuring that a strong board includes members with varying skills and abilities.

### SKILL-BASED DIVERSITY: BUILDING A WELL-ROUNDED BOARD

There should be members skilled in human and social processes—such as counselors or therapists—who can manage difficult interpersonal dynamics and ensure a fair process. There should be entrepreneurial-minded members who think outside the box about financial management, marketing, school growth, and program change. Boards also benefit from members well-versed in financial management who can track fiduciary risks and opportunities with skill and care.

In addition, there should be members serving in ministry roles who can provide spiritual leadership and help the board remain sensitive to the realities of not-for-profit service. Members with legal backgrounds can assist the board in avoiding unnecessary risk and ensuring compliance with local, state/provincial, and federal requirements. Some members should genuinely enjoy policy work and be willing to review and improve board policies.

There should be more than one person capable

of leading the board—individuals who can chair effective meetings, set purposeful agendas in collaboration with the head of school, and address the community publicly with poise and confidence. Boards also need strong advocates for students and student learning, as well as passionate parents committed to student success. Members with experience in non-profit governance can help keep the board aligned with best practices in policy, procedure, and accountability.

Most boards will not have all of these attributes represented at once, but ideally, they will pursue them intentionally over time.

### REPRESENTING THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

The second diversity pertains directly to the community the school serves. Who are the various church constituent groups, and do the board members include representatives of those perspectives?

These board members are not present to vote in allegiance with their church membership or pastor, but rather to bring insight into the experiences and viewpoints of those groups. While decisions are not made to please everyone, they should be made with a clear understanding of how different communities may be affected and how they might respond.

### GENDER AND ETHNICITY IN BOARD LEADERSHIP

The third diversity focuses on gender and ethnicity. It is important that staff members and students can see themselves reflected in their leadership. If a school community is primarily made up of three or four ethnic groups, it is ideal for the board to reflect that reality.

Our diverse ethnic and cultural heritages bring different perspectives to complex issues, enrich board conversations, and strengthen final decisions. Gender balance also matters. Without diving into a sociological study of gendered discourse norms, boards with balanced gender representation often experience healthier discussion, stronger listening practices, and greater trust—especially in the face of disagreement.

## Appendix A: Board Member Matrix

(to be used as a snapshot of current board members and a blank template for future board members)

	Term 1 or Term 2	↓ Expertise/Skill	Ministry	Non-profit Governance	Business Management	Education	Policy & Procedure Writing	Legal Expertise	Human Resource Management	Land Development Real Estate	Marketing	Entrepreneur	Finance/Advancement	Gender
David Chen	1		●	●										M
Elena García	2											●	●	F
Samuel K. Mensah	2				●									M
Hans Schmidt	1			●							●	●		M
Priya Patel	1		●				●							F
Aisha Rahman	2					●			●				●	F
María Isabel Torres	1							●						F
Jonathan Williams	2									●	●			M

### Using Matrices to Assess and Plan Board Strength

That is a lot to keep in mind as a board seeks to remain strong and capable moving forward. The most effective way to track all of this is to use two board matrices.

#### BOARD MATRIX #1: UNDERSTANDING THE PRESENT

Board Matrix #1 is a snapshot of the current board (see Appendix A, above). Board members identify their skills and abilities, gender, ethnicity, church affiliation, and the number of years remaining in their term. This process highlights both strengths and gaps, helping the board understand where its collective capacity is strong and where it needs development.

#### BOARD MATRIX #2: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Board Matrix #2 (the same as Matrix #1 but filled with potential rather than current names) focuses

on future board members. This chart outlines *desired* skills and abilities, gender, ethnicity, and church affiliation for potential candidates and serves as a guide for recruitment and nomination.

The goal is to populate this second matrix with multiple names in each category. Ideally, a board committee—often called the governance or nomination & recruitment committee—oversees this work in collaboration with the head of school.

This group brainstorms potential candidates from the community, seeking individuals who can meet both current and anticipated board needs. While this work is ongoing, it typically intensifies every three years as the committee makes a concerted effort to build a robust future board matrix.

This process includes interviewing potential candidates, discussing their support for the school's mission and vision, exploring the skills they would bring to the board, and considering how they would collaborate with fellow board members and the head

**Enter the Matrix: Best Practices for Board Nomination, Selection, and Makeup**

	Primary	Secondary	Alum	Church Affiliation	Race/Ethnicity
		●		Alliance	Chinese
	●			Pentecostal	White
	●			Salvation Army	Black
		●		Lutheran	White
			●	Mennonite	Indian
		●	●	Presbyterian	Middle Eastern
	●			Baptist	Latin American
		●		Anglican	White

***“One key measure of a high-functioning and effective board is its makeup: who is on the board, what skills and dispositions they bring, and how well they represent the community they serve.”***

of school. Candidates are also asked to review key documents such as the trustee commitment letter, community standards, strategic plan, and budget, and to reflect on whether they can support and endorse the school’s direction.

A strong Board Matrix #2 includes multiple candidates in each category, with each person having consented to have their name stand for possible board service within the next one to four years. This intentionality reduces risk and supports long-term governance health.

**From Nomination to Community Affirmation**

Finally, from this future matrix, the board selects a slate of candidates equal to the number of available board positions and asks the community to affirm the recommendation. Running candidates against one another often weakens the board, as those not elected frequently decline to stand again, resulting in the loss of strong potential trustees.

That said, a process of affirmation demands full transparency. If a board is perceived as limiting the slate to advance a particular ideological agenda, trust erodes, and the process can quickly stall.

**Investing the Time for Strong Governance**

A rigorous board selection and election process requires time and energy. However, our schools deserve the strongest boards possible—boards capable of making wise, faithful decisions that advance the school’s mission and vision for the long term. 🌟

**DAVE LOEWEN**  
SCSBC Executive Director



**I**NTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS and homestay experiences have been a crucial part of our schools' programs across this province for more than 30 years. They offer valuable learning opportunities beyond the classroom while also providing rich layers of experience in which our families are intertwined with churches and the broader community. At the heart of our Christian schools, we remain grounded in God's presence and trust in Him; yet another shared common thread in our school culture is that we look out for one another.

#### **Rooted in Relationship and Trust**

This past November, I co-led a group of 30 domestic students on a two-week Japanese Exchange trip with PCS. Planned more than a year in advance, the trip emphasized the relational cultural exchange by partnering with our two sister schools. Students spent more time with Japanese students and families and engaged with individuals, not just as a collective, as a visiting group on a tour. By providing structured opportunities for students to have unique experiences within a very different cultural setting, immersed in a foreign language, students were able

*Sarah Edgar*



*What does it look like to practice Christian hospitality in a global context? Through homestay programs, schools extend learning beyond the classroom, inviting students and families into relationships marked by trust, care, and shared faith.*

to stretch their comfort zones and build a stronger sense of compassion and empathy for students in other parts of the world. In this case, our domestic students had already generously welcomed students from these schools into their homes earlier this year, so it was time for our students to be brave, take risks, and build trust with their homestay families.

### **Learning That Begins in the Home**

There is nothing quite like the excitement and anticipation I feel when the students are leaving with their new homestays for their first night away (at home

or abroad), dispersing into neighbourhoods across the city and having parallel yet unique experiences. Sleep often eludes me as I worry about them, even as I feel an overwhelming joy at the learning that happens for both students and families. I look forward to their return the next morning, as it is like watching a movie unfold: listening to students as they reunite and sharing, with tired excitement, about their homes, activities, meals, and unexpected nightly routines. Homestay families, too, are just as hopeful and nervous to share their lives and their homes so generously.

## Strengthening International Homestay Programs: Extended Learning & Rooted in Care

It requires an incredibly complex blend of vulnerability, risk, trust, excitement, and openness on both sides. It is also completely unique from the day-to-day school programming that domestic students experience, walking down the very same hallways. It is a rich, valuable, and transformational act that aims to curb “othering” in positive ways and encourages healthy ways of finding common ground in otherwise very different global circumstances. I often comment, “Now imagine trying to focus and learn at school today, knowing that as an international student you would be in that home for months, miles away from your own home.” When students return to our schools here in B.C., they have a deeper appreciation for international students studying in our schools, having had the opportunity to identify commonalities and differences between our education systems.

When exploring different countries for new school partnerships or sister-school opportunities, I look first for alignment in core values, visions or goals, and academic programming. Homestay programs often mirror the broader school system

by reflecting a school’s vision, guiding principles, sense of belonging, and commitment to individual care. For this reason, having students stay with families within the school community can deeply inform our understanding of the school’s culture, creating valuable opportunities for critical reflection on our own school homestay practices and policies.

### Homestay as an Extension of School Culture

As of July 2024, approximately 217,600 international students were enrolled in secondary and post-secondary institutions across B.C. (almost half in private institutions) (Heslop, 2025). 46% of international permit holders in B.C. are classified as students. In the K-12 education sector, international students represent approximately 1% of the student body population (Heslop, 2025). In 2023, 6% of high school graduates were classified as international students (Heslop, 2025). Students who are travelling alone in grades 8 to 12 are placed in B.C. homes by schools or agencies. Homestay-student family relationships are the backbone of robust, enriching, and healthy international programs. It does not take much to



## **Strengthening International Homestay Programs: Extended Learning & Rooted in Care**

connect the value of a firm foundation provided to high school exchange students with the success stories they have continued to have in Canadian post-secondary institutions. Homestays can have an incredible, lasting, and profound impact on kids, as some end up in B.C. for a wide variety of reasons.

### **A Growing and Complex Landscape**

Within a B.C. context, there are a variety of additional layers for consideration when selecting potential homestay families—it is our job to ensure that families are doing what is best for the students. Given this reality, it is imperative to be rooted in a relational approach to programming, emphasizing the value of dialogue, reflection, and care. Intentional conversations can help address potential bias, underrepresentation, and access issues, making schools more welcoming and diverse through practices such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL). International students can face many barriers while studying abroad, including issues related to inclusion, studying, the study permit application, reapplication, and the immigration process itself; these can also cause heightened levels of stress and anxiety, compounded by pressures from home (Harden-Wolfson & Zhang, 2025). As such, homestay families and school staff play a critical role in creating safe spaces and opportunities for students to share their experiences, thereby broadening awareness of the signs of homesickness and of mental health and wellness initiatives.

### **From Policy to Practice: Strengthening Homestay Programs**

Homestay programs function as extensions of in-school programming, bridging macro-level to micro-level policies. They can be transformative, offering stability for students within an ever-changing industry. Schools have a duty to support both the student and the homestay family to ensure they are appropriately cared for. International students are often vulnerable to a wide range of difficulties and barriers that go beyond language or cultural differences. Homestays can create a safe space in their

homes for our students to share their feelings and build confidence. Guided conversations within the home can foster mutual understanding and allow families and students to learn about each other's lived experiences, commonalities, boundaries, and concerns while also acknowledging areas of intersectionality.

### **Learning Together Across the Province**

For decades, the International Networking Group at SCSBC has collaborated to identify common trends, values, and concerns across homestay programs. In 2015, a team of International Program and Homestay Coordinators came together and created the Homestay Handbook to support families and students across the province. This resource provides guidance on topics from daily life and common expectations to tough conversations. It evolved into what is now referred to as the Homestay Guide, and later this year, a new interactive manual will be available that aligns with Ministry guidelines, language, and protocols for best practice. This new manual will integrate policy, guidance, and resources as we continue to find new ways to support staff, families, and students through cross-cultural exchanges and opportunities for our community to gather and work together on this crucial component of our programming. 🌍

**SARAH EDGAR**

*SCSBC International  
Student Program Coordinator*

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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





*Use the QR code to view more photos from the 2025 Leadership Conference.*

# EMERGING LEADERS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE ELDI 2026/27

## DISCERNING YOUR CALL TO LEADERSHIP

### GOAL

*To encourage and guide participants in discerning their calling to Christian school leadership.*

Participants in the **Emerging Leaders Development Institute** form a network of future leaders in Christian education while learning about relational servant leadership and effective management and governance.

### PROGRAMMING

**Part 1: Setting the Foundation: in-person at The Shack Christian Retreat and Conference Center in White Cloud, Michigan**

- July 7–11, 2026

**Part 2: Diving Deeper into the Key Roles of School Leaders**

- Meet 6 times virtually throughout the school year  
Dates to be determined

**Part 3: Glimpses into the Work and Life of Leaders**

- Participants will meet one-on-one or in small groups with two current school leaders

**Part 4: One-on-One Meeting with an ELDI Facilitator**

- Debrief the meetings with school leaders and the ELDI experience

### REGISTRATION

Up to 40 participants

### COST

**\$750 USD**

**Participant from a Christian Schools Canada or Christian Schools International school**

**\$1800 USD**

**Participant for non-CSC/CSI schools**

Schools will be responsible for travel costs and costs associated with releasing their staff member to attend sessions (e.g. substitute teacher costs).

### DATES

April 1

**Deadline for applications**

April 8

**Applicants will be notified of their status**

May 1

**Registration payment due for selected applicants**

July 7

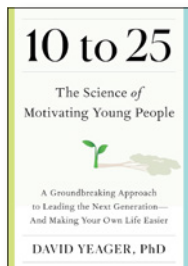
**Programming begins**

### REGISTER TODAY!

Visit [christianschoolscanada.com](https://christianschoolscanada.com) for registration and reference forms.



# Recommended Resources

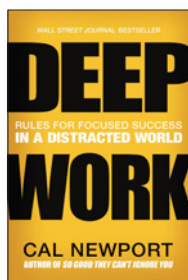


## **10 to 25: The Science of Motivating Young People**

David Yeager

*10 to 25: The Science of Motivating Young People* seeks to reshape our understanding of motivation during adolescence and early adulthood. Yeager uses advances in neuroscience and psychology to explain how motivation is shaped by brain development, identity formation, relationships, and a growing desire for autonomy and purpose. His approach challenges the stereotypical view of young people as disengaged, difficult, or simply lacking a fully developed prefrontal cortex. Along the way, he questions our overreliance on external rewards and consequences, offering evidence-based strategies that foster intrinsic motivation through trust, meaning, and connection.

Yeager's insights have important implications for educators in their work with young people, as well as for administrators hiring and supporting early-career teachers and educational assistants. Many new educators fall within this developmental window, bringing passion and creativity alongside a strong need for mentorship, belonging, and meaningful voice. The book provides useful tools for school leaders who wish to attract, develop, and retain young staff while nurturing an environment where students and educators can grow and thrive together.



## **Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World**

Cal Newport

*Deep Work* argues that the ability to focus deeply, without distraction, has become one of the most valuable—and rare—skills in modern life. Cal Newport contrasts “deep work,” which produces meaningful, high-quality outcomes, with “shallow work,” the constant busyness of emails, meetings, and multitasking that fragments attention without lasting impact. Drawing on research and practical examples, the book makes a compelling case that sustained concentration leads not only to greater productivity but also to a deeper sense of purpose and satisfaction.

For Christian educators, *Deep Work* offers timely wisdom. Schools are increasingly shaped by digital noise and urgent demands, yet formation—intellectual, spiritual, and moral—requires space for attentiveness and reflection. Newport's call aligns closely with Christian practices of Sabbath, contemplation, and faithful stewardship of time. For educators and leaders, cultivating deep work can mean protecting time for lesson preparation, prayerful discernment, and thoughtful engagement with students—modeling a countercultural commitment to depth, presence, and meaningful learning.



REGISTER TODAY!

NAVIGATE  
CONFERENCE

13-14 APRIL 2026

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VISIT [SCSBC.CA](http://SCSBC.CA) FOR  
MORE INFORMATION

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**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)

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**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:**

Editor/graphic designer: Kevin van der Leek

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

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**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)

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Cover photo (red-breasted sapsucker) by Kevin van der Leek



celebrating 50 years  
of God's faithfulness

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