

The Voices of BC: Leadership Modules

Module 6: Stewardship for the Future of All Children

Video Introduction (11:30): District leaders have an enduring focus on the future for all children. They strive to create places of belonging and care not only for self, and others, but for all students, staff, and members of the community.

Leaders have an eternal purpose that addresses the challenges ahead and they continually work to create a future that is inclusive, just, and sustainable. The work requires a collaboratively and widely held vision and the courage to lead alongside, in front, and behind.

Stewardship for the Future of All Children  **YouTube**

Stewardship for the Future of All Children

System leaders have a responsibility for a quality education for all children and for the future that education empowers. A quality education, and educational systems that nurture powerful learning, must foster a future in which children feel confident and secure not only in their identity, but in their relationships with others and with the environment. The district should, in other words, both teach about and help enact a more just and sustainable society.

Questions to consider as you read the Big Idea of Stewardship for the Future of All Children

- How are you embracing the responsibility for a quality education for all learners?
- What is your personal vision for the future that education empowers?
- How do the culture and practices in your schools and district help all learners feel confident and secure in their identity – in who they are as individuals and members of society?
- How are you taking steps to educate not only a care for self, for others, but for the land, water, air and planet?
- How is your district leading to a more inclusive and just society?

Indigenous Perspectives and Considerations

- Respect for all things; teachings come from the interconnectedness of self, land, sea, and sky.

- Be intentional with your actions, words, and thoughts; heart and spirit energy effects all things.
- Reach back to connect to the teachings of the ancestors and embody them and to share them with those who are still to come.
- Care for self and others by lifting each other up.

Questions to consider on Indigenous Perspectives:

- How are your classrooms teaching about, or providing experiences for students to learn a respect for all things and the interconnectedness of self to the land, sea, and sky?
- What steps are you taking to be reflexive in your practice – not just reflecting on experiences, but understanding how your actions influence others, how others influence your actions, and how context shapes who you are as a leader?
- In what ways do you honour and acknowledge those who came before you and tap into the teachings and learnings of elders and ancestors?
- How do you actively lift others up in their daily work?

The Voices of BC: Video Module

In this video, leaders explored creating places of belonging, caring for the environment, and summoning courage to lead. As they discuss these concepts, several themes emerge and are presented below. Following up on those themes, and while listening to the video, please consider the suggested questions to explore. Not all questions need to be considered, choose the questions that best fit the context in which the leadership work unfolds in your district, schools and communities.

In creating the video vignettes, leaders were asked the following questions:

1. What are your beliefs about how district leaders create and sustain places of belonging and care for all children?
2. What are your beliefs about how this care extends to the land and to the environment?
3. What does courage mean to you in the context of educational leadership and how is it linked to inclusion and justice?

1. Creating places of belonging and care for all children

- Leaders spoke to:
 - the importance of recognizing and celebrating diversity as a path to a better future for everyone;
 - recognizing and addressing the systemic inequities that exist in the system;
 - creating space for student voice and agency;
 - the importance of humanity in our leadership work;
 - leaders demonstrating that they are actually in the work, doing the work alongside others;
 - the importance of including Indigenous perspectives and knowledge;

- beginning with an awareness of oneself as an individual; and
- creating spaces where people feel safe, valued, heard, and understood.

Coaching/Reflective Questions to Consider

- How are you recognizing and addressing the systemic inequities that exist in the system?
- In your work with student voice, it is creating the conditions (and actions) for necessary change, or is it just listening to students?
- How are you including Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into your work?
- How are you building an awareness of who you are as a leader and how your leadership influences the actions of those around you?

2. Extending that culture of care to the land and environment

- Leaders spoke to:
 - creating a sense of belonging not only in schools but in the world;
 - stewardship and reciprocity and fostering a strong connection between oneself and the environment;
 - recognizing our own lived experiences and how this contributes to our own biases;
 - identifying these biases and unpacking them;
 - the position of privilege that we all find ourselves in as leaders;
 - considering how our actions impact the planet and nature.

Coaching/Reflective Questions to Consider

- How are you creating a sense of belonging not only in schools but in the world?
- How do you model, or identify, your leadership and its connection with the environment?
- In what ways do your lived experiences contribute to your own biases?
- If you have identified your own biases, how have you unpacked them and considered the impact on those around you?

4. Finding the courage to lead with inclusion and justice at the heart

- Leaders spoke to:
 - how to demonstrate tenacity and determination;
 - centering our practices in an ethos of respect, care, and compassion;
 - keeping children and youth at the centre of adult conversations;

- speaking up and challenging norms and decisions;
- having evidence to support courageous decisions;
- demonstrating humility;
- the importance of listening to students and elevating their voices;
- the concept of relentless incrementalism; and
- ensuring that while leading with courage you also take time to listen to others.

Coaching/Reflective Questions to Consider

- What steps can you take to demonstrate tenacity and determination without damaging relationships or decision-making structures and processes?
- What does a balance of determination and tenacity look like in practice when balanced with compassion and care?
- How are your practices in elevating student voice resulting in action and change that is demonstrable to them?
- How are you intentionally creating space for, and honouring, disparate voices that may not align with your leadership and direction as a district?

These themes and the subsequent questions are intended to engage participants in a meaningful discussion about these leadership topics all under the umbrella of Stewardship for the Future of All Children. The intention is to use the materials as a means of reflecting on how to apply these insights to improve leadership practices in districts.

There are many possible uses for the BCSSA Modules. Suggested uses include:

- Personally, for development of your own professional learning;
- Locally in district with either district/senior teams or principals and vice-principals;
- In Chapter meetings to facilitate table conversations and introductions to professional learning;
- In District to reflect upon the structures, strategies and practices that leadership teams should be considering; and
- Both in Chapters and locally to consider how you are structuring your district leadership opportunities to create both alignment and coherence.

We hope that you enjoy these materials, and we also welcome your feedback for other leadership modules to be considered, or for additional uses and explorations. For more information, please contact us through the BCSSA where our Leadership Competency Advisory Group will continue to refine and create additional learning opportunities and materials.