

Adapting The Spirit of Leadership Discussion Papers for BCPVPA Competencies

Acknowledgements

The concept for this work originated as an opportunity for collaboration emerged through summer professional learning activities. SD67 (Okanagan-Skaha) School District is looking at how to revision their Professional Growth Plan practice for principals and vice-principals using the new BCPVPA Leadership Competencies titled “Being in the Canoe” as part of their preparation for the 2025/26 school year. As SD67 was beginning this work, the BCSSA was also preparing Discussion Papers on The Spirit of Leadership for their annual conference. The opportunity emerged to bring these two processes together by adapting the BCSSA Discussion Papers for the BCPVPA Competencies. The BCSSA would like to extend our appreciation to Todd Manuel, Superintendent of Okanagan-Skaha and their district team including principals and vice-principals for allowing BCSSA to share and extend this work.



Purpose of the Work

This intent of this paper is to show how the BCSSA series of leadership discussion papers—originally written to explore The Spirit of Leadership can be adapted to support the new leadership competencies introduced by the BCPVPA in their Being in the Canoe framework.

While the BCSSA competencies focus on district-level system leadership, the BCPVPA competencies are tailored to the school-based leadership context of principals and vice-principals. Our goal was to maintain a strong alignment between the two frameworks while respecting the distinct language, scope, and emphasis of the BCPVPA model.

Guiding Principles

This adaptation was guided by three commitments:

1. Alignment with Intent – Honour the original meaning, tone, and moral grounding of the BCSSA Spirit of Leadership papers while ensuring they reflect the lived realities of school leaders.
2. Contextual Relevance – Using our existing Discussion Papers which were created for our Summery Gathering conference, we replaced district-wide, system-level language with school-based examples, responsibilities, and relationships.
3. Respect for the BCPVPA Framework – Integrate the BCPVPA competency architecture, specifically:
 - Self and Community as core dimensions of each competency.

- Recognition of Agency as a component of the principal and vice-principal role.
- Inclusion of the separate BCPVPA competency Bridging Policy and Practice, which has no direct equivalent in the BCSSA framework.
- Acknowledgement that the BCPVPA framework does not have a competency parallel to BCSSA's "Aligning Systems and Structures," requiring a more interpretive alignment to related BCPVPA standards.

The Adaptation Process

The work followed a consistent methodology:

1. Review of Original Papers
 - a. Each Spirit of Leadership discussion paper was analyzed to identify its key themes, reflective questions, and underlying values.
2. Mapping to BCPVPA Competencies
 - a. The Spirit of Leadership BCSSA competencies were cross-referenced with the closest BCPVPA equivalent. Where no direct parallel existed—such as with Aligning Systems and Structures—content was reinterpreted to align as closely as possible with related BCPVPA descriptors, while maintaining fidelity to the original intent.
3. Language and Scope Shift
 - a. All district-level terminology (e.g., "strategic plan," "district operations," "system improvement") was reframed for the school context (e.g., "school growth plan," "school operations," "school improvement").
4. Integration of Self and Community
 - a. Each adapted paper was restructured into two sections:
 - Self – Reflecting the personal mindset, learning, and leadership stance of the principal or vice-principal.
 - Community – Capturing the collaborative, relational, and culturally responsive leadership work within the school community.
5. Inclusion of Agency
 - a. In competencies where agency was a significant element (e.g., Contextual Literacy and Agency), language was added to reflect the empowerment of principals and vice-principals to make informed, values-driven decisions.
6. Creation of a New Paper
 - a. For Bridging Policy and Practice, a new discussion paper was written entirely from scratch to match the tone and intent of the original BCSSA set, ensuring coherence across the series.

7. Reflective Questions

Each paper concludes with a common reflective question:

“How do you translate these aspirational statements to a practical professional growth plan goal?”

This closing prompt reinforces the papers’ original intentions which are both as a conversation starter and as a tool for personal reflection and professional growth creation.

Outcome

The final product is a six-paper series that:

- Retains the moral and relational grounding of The Spirit of Leadership.
- Speaks directly to the roles, responsibilities, and contexts of principals and vice-principals.
- Aligns structurally with the BCPVPA Being in the Canoe framework.
- Supports coherence across system and school leadership frameworks while respecting their unique perspectives.
- Provides thoughtful adaptations where direct competency parallels did not exist, ensuring each paper remains relevant and supportive to the intended audience.

These adapted papers now serve as a bridge—honouring the original BCSSA Spirit of Leadership while providing principals and vice-principals with resources that reflect their competencies, context, and leadership agency.