NewsLink

2008 Fall Edition
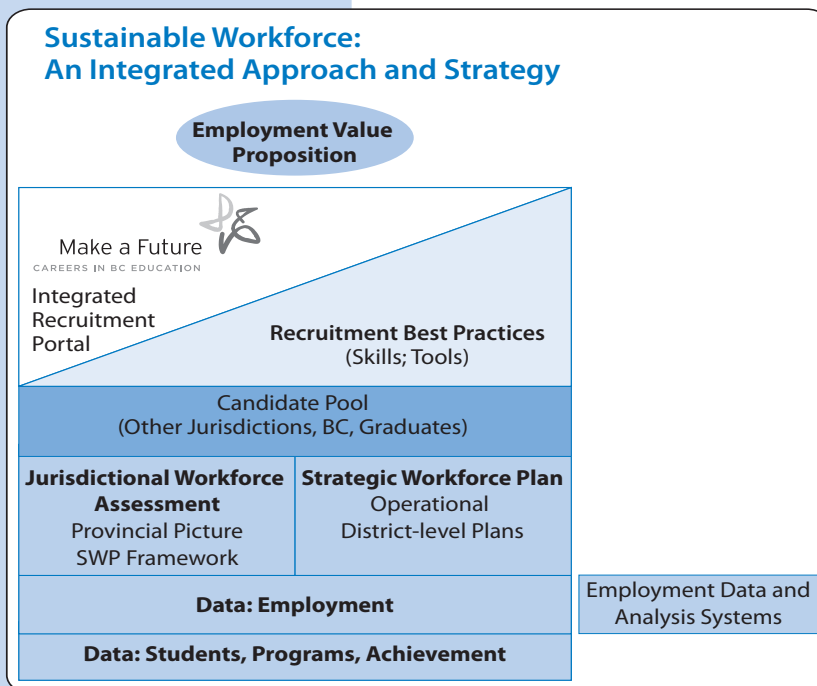
Human Resources Planning for the Future

Increasing Your Ability to Attract, Motivate and Retain Employees

In early 2007, the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) initiated the Public Education Sustainable Workforce Initiative. The project was initiated to position the public education sector to effectively meet the challenges of an ever-changing labour market.

The implications of a number of complex factors – an aging workforce, current and projected labour shortages, specialized skill and talent shortages, declining student enrolment – and the pace of change itself all converged to underline the need for the effective strategic planning of people resources to ensure that school districts have the right people in place to remain responsive to the needs and objectives of the public school system.

BCPSEA developed the following schematic model of the strategic planning process, a comprehensive eight-component approach to workforce planning.

The foundation of the sustainable workforce model[1] consists of two comprehensive data sets. Data: Employment provides a picture of the workforce, its demographics, structure, and compensation details/costs. Based on the picture of the workforce, Data: Students, Programs, Achievement helps answer questions concerning the integration of workforce characteristics and how those characteristics affect student achievement, the core business of public education.

The Jurisdictional Workforce Assessment and Strategic Workforce Plan are the evidence-based planning tools for both macro provincial and micro worksite human resource planning.

The remaining components of the model focus on recruitment, both from the perspective of state of the art tools (the Integrated Recruitment Portal), and skill

Sustainable Workforce: An Integrated Approach and Strategy

Employment Value Proposition

Make a Future
CAREERS IN BC EDUCATION

Integrated Recruitment Portal

Recruitment Best Practices
(Skills; Tools)

Candidate Pool
(Other Jurisdictions, BC, Graduates)

Jurisdictional Workforce Assessment
Provincial Picture
SWP Framework

Strategic Workforce Plan
Operational
District-level Plans

Data: Employment

Employment Data and Analysis Systems

Data: Students, Programs, Achievement

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1   See *NewsLink*, Fall 2007, for a detailed discussion of the Sustainable Workforce Planning Model. http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/access/publications/newslink/2007-fall.pdf

Reflections

*As we look ahead to the next round of collective bargaining with
the BC Teachers' Federation, it is instructive to reflect...*

*It will have been 17 years since the last round of local school
district-local teachers' association bargaining occurred*

It will have been 16 years since the advent of provincial bargaining

*There have been five studies into teacher-employer
bargaining since its advent*

*There have been over 35 pieces of legislation with
employment implications since 2002*

*We will be well into the term of the government elected
in May 2009*

We will be in the run-up to the trustee elections of November 2011

development (Recruitment Best Practices). Taken together, the Portal and the Best Practices suite of resources can assist in growing the Candidate Pool and enhancing employment opportunities.

At the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year, BCPSEA had completed the following work on the Sustainable Workforce project:

- The data project had been conceptualized, plans developed, and the project initiated. The first iteration of data collection through the *Public Education Employment Data and Analysis Systems (EDAS)* will begin in January 2009.
- The Integrated Recruitment Portal, under the banner *Make a Future – Careers in BC Education*, was developed and launched in April 2008 (www.makeafuture.ca).
- A series of recruitment best practices was developed and launched.

Data Project

The foundation element of the sustainable workforce model, Data: Employment, was initiated in early 2007 against a backdrop of recent bargaining experiences in 2005-2006, which were challenged by data limitations both in terms of availability and accuracy. BCPSEA, the Ministry of Education and school districts partnered to establish a new data collection system. The goal of what is now known as EDAS is to improve the access to, and quality of, employment data in the public education sector. The project will establish a common data collection system to collect employment data from public school districts which will improve our ability to make informed management decisions.

EDAS is intended to serve the needs of:

- School districts – to provide workforce management information to support local operations and accurate data to support collective bargaining
- BCPSEA – to support the BCPSEA sustainable workforce initiative, human resources best practices, and collective bargaining for support staff and teachers
- Ministry of Education – to provide employee data required to allocate funding.

The EDAS will allow for more streamlined and efficient data collection by reducing the duplication of requests, and automating the data extraction and transfer process. The expectation is that EDAS will result in better quality data and will be less time consuming for districts.

System development has begun with the establishment, testing and refinement of the base system. Following the successful implementation of the base system, the next phases will be evaluated.

The EDAS project is being led by a Steering Committee as well as a Focus Group of school district representatives.
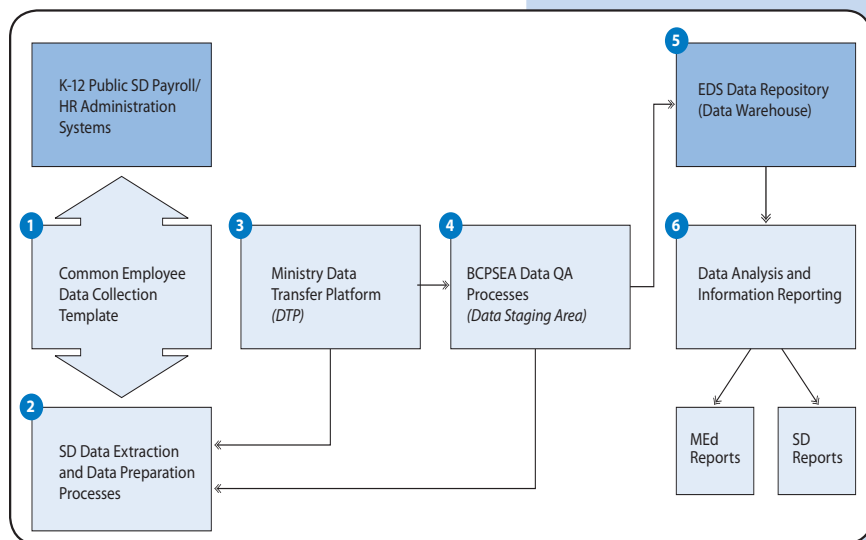
EDAS Project Steering Committee	School District Focus Group
Hugh Finlayson	David Green
Renate Butterfield	Joan Axford
Scott MacDonald	Sterling Olson
Michael Fong	Cameron Dow
Robert D'Angelo	Patti Dundas
Hilary Brown	Ed Tandy
Betty Choy	Joan Vallor
Stephanie Tassin	Jennifer Chohan/Chris Hillis
Ron Pound	Debbie LeBlanc
HB Teo	Sheldon Lee
Ron Dawshka	
Bev Shaw	

Key Milestones to Date

- **Development of Project Charter and Plan:** The *K-12 Employment Data Systems Charter* has been developed and approved by the project sponsors. It provides the basis to communicate the purpose, objectives, scope, deliverables, timelines, and approach for the EDAS initiative to the executive, the project team members, and to internal and external stakeholders. In addition, the project plan has been developed to support the Charter.

- **Determination of Data Elements and Definitions:** The stakeholder groups are working to identify the data elements and establish clear definitions for the elements. The definitions will be reviewed by the School District Focus Group as well as by the Ministry of Education.

- **Development of School District Extraction Tool:** Each of the HRIS/Payroll software vendors that provide services to the public school districts in BC has been interviewed by the BCPSEA data team. Each vendor has begun the process of responding to the *K–12 Public Education Data Collection Manual* in creating a data extraction tool to be used by each school district employing that vendor's software. As each vendor works to create the data report, school districts will be contacted by their vendors and software report testing will be carried out. As vendors complete their task of creating the Data Extraction Report, school districts will be invited to engage in "beta testing" of the unique report and export data to the Ministry of Education Data Transfer Platform (DTP). The DTP is slated for completion in fall 2008.

- **Development of BCPSEA Data Warehouse:** Salus Systems, a Victoria-based Canadian company, has been selected as the system developer and hosting service for the BCPSEA data warehouse. Salus will complete the establishment of the data warehouse in the early fall. Transfer of quality assured data from the DTP will be tested through the fall to ensure that the data stored in the BCPSEA data warehouse are free from error. Once in the data warehouse, regular quarterly reports will be available to school districts, the various ministries, and research facilities.

The target is to complete the first data collection for the period of July 1 – December 31 with a collection mid-January. Testing is currently underway.

Make a Future – Careers in BC Education and the Integrated Recruitment Portal

Make a Future – Careers in BC Education is a proactive, multi-faceted initiative aimed at supporting and improving recruitment of employees to the BC public education sector. There are many facets to the initiative, which includes the Integrated Recruitment Portal.

"Make a future" is a phrase with many meanings, and it was chosen for that very reason. The essence of the *Make a Future* initiative is to make a future for the individual employee while making a future for children. It demonstrates both the impact on a child's life an individual will have – regardless of position – by participating in the BC K-12 public education sector, as well as the bright future (lifestyle, ability to make a difference, stability, salary, etc.) an individual can expect from a career in education.

Janet Stewart, Director, Make a Future – Careers in BC Education, has been working with districts on a number of initiatives to facilitate recruitment.

The following table outlines general areas of support available through Make a Future – Careers in BC Education. We encourage districts to take advantage of the services and assistance available through this initiative.

Make a Future
CAREERS IN BC EDUCATION

Summary of Services Available to Districts	
Area of support	**Example**
Identifying positions that are difficult to fill around the province and working with districts to develop strategies to address these shortages.	Make a Future works with districts to identify where (what association/location) you may want to post your position to maximize success. We can communicate directly with these organizations on your behalf or provide you appropriate contact information if you wish to communicate directly.
Advising on immigration processes for hiring foreign workers and problem solving particular immigration difficulties of certain candidates to expedite/streamline their employment.	The Director is knowledgeable on immigration processes and works with districts to "de-mystify" the process as well as advise and assist the potential employee and district with the paperwork. Research is also underway on foreign locations where there may be access to larger markets of candidates (such as psychologists and SLPs) and how we can facilitate their potential employment in BC.
Providing advice and training in the area of "best practice" for recruitment.	Provision of support and training on the topic of interviewing and making effective selection decisions, including working with with districts to identify areas where recruitment processes might be streamlined for more efficiency.
Providing recruitment advertising support.	Make a Future has been working with Midlyn HR Communications to develop a streamlined, effective and cost effective approach to advertising in print media.

Summary of Services Available to Districts	
Increasing awareness of vacancies in the province of BC and branding of the BC public education sector.	Participation in career fairs to encourage candidates to come to BC to work in the education sector, and providing information to potential applicants about the Make a Future – Careers in BC Education website. Networking with various organizations and post-secondary institutions to ensure awareness of how to access information about available job opportunities. Through online and print advertising, and networking with various associations, raising the profile of BC education as being a great sector in which to work.

Integrated Recruitment Portal
(www.makeafuture.ca)

This new recruitment portal – an integral component of the *Make a Future - Careers in BC Education* initiative – is a joint venture between BC's 60 public boards of education, the BC Ministry of Education, and BCPSEA.

Comprised of an interactive website, web-based resources, and the leading education job search engine operated/managed by *apply*toeducation,[2] www.makeafuture.ca provides a modern and accessible place for potential candidates to discover what it is like to work in BC public education. The site serves three key purposes:

- Creates a high-impact destination for individual school districts to highlight their particular employment and lifestyle advantages and opportunities. It is the marketing face and venue for the province of BC as a place to work.

- Provides a cost effective and state of the art way to feature the myriad of jobs and opportunities employers have available. The online resource is supported by a marketing strategy comprised of print advertisements and website features to promote the province, its diverse regions/communities, and individual employers.

- Is a reliable public education labour market data source. Data drive dialogue, dialogue drives policy decisions. The real-time data that can be derived from districts using the portal will provide the fuel to inform policy decisions concerning employment in the sector.

The *future focus* concept is reinforced in a variety of ways throughout the site. For example, the following passage appears early in the site:

Our futures are not determined simply by what we do but how and why we do it. Jobs in public education offer great opportunities for career advancement while providing real avenues to make a difference in people's lives. So whether you're a teacher, principal, accountant, custodian, or a professional in another field, consider making your future in British Columbia's public schools.

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2 *Apply*toeducation is a web-based electronic job application and document management software system contracted to BCPSEA to power the job posting section of the IRP website. Contractor: Passion Inc. Toronto, Ontario.

BRITISH COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

Improved features on the site

There have been significant changes to the content of the site since its launch in April:

- **Employer login**

    Employers no longer have to log in to post jobs through *apply*toeducation.com. The login can be accessed through the employer section of the makeafuture.ca site.

- **Employer section**

    The new employer section can be accessed by clicking on the bottom right hand button on the site. This section contains new resources and content around recruitment and retention. There is also a "wizard" for immigration issues that you can use if you are considering employing a foreign worker.

- **French translation**

    The site is now available in French. This is crucial in targeting some of our more difficult to fill positions. The French translation also allows us to expand our communication to French-speaking locations

- **Video is available**

    Capability has been built into the site to allow districts to post promotional video and allow job-seekers to learn more about the district. The video will be visible on the green section of the district page and will "pop up" when activated to occupy a large part of the screen. If you have video to post, please contact Make a Future - Careers in BC Education.

New features coming soon

The website is continually evolving and, like most websites, will continue to improve and add features. Following is a summary of future directions for the site as we work to increase interest from potential employees and encourage return visits to the site.
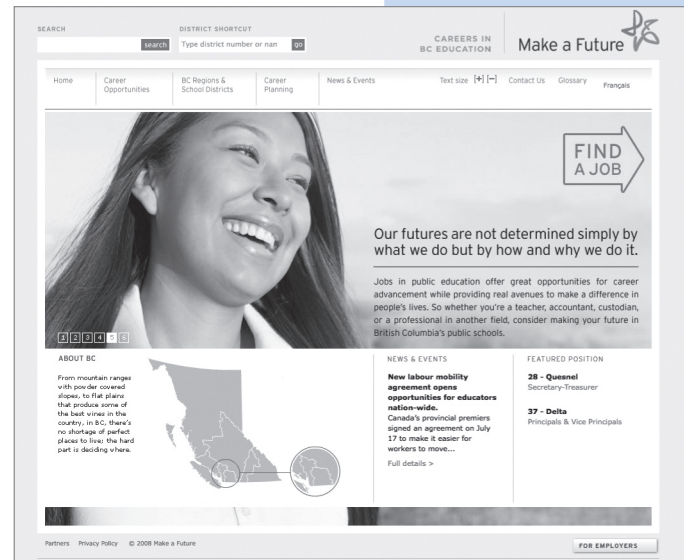
- **Video, video, video!**

    More and more, websites are incorporating video to attract visitors. *Makeafuture.ca* is no different and is planning to use video to educate users about the various career options that are available in public education. We are planning to travel around the province to interview district employees, so you can to share with potential employees the benefits of working in this sector.

    Video will also be used to educate visitors about the province's various geographic areas. We hope to interview school district personnel in various locations so you can explain to visitors why your area of the province is the place to live and work!

- **More content and more interactive features!**

    Much like the immigration "wizard" in the employer section, we are currently developing more interactive features to engage users and allow them to discover more personal and relevant information to their particular situation.

In addition, we are developing enhanced career content so that candidates are able to research online and recognize the strengths of our sector in terms of the variety of positions available and the benefits of working in public education.

- **"My profile"**
  We are currently developing capability for candidates to create their own profile, to save jobs, and communicate more directly with the site.

- **More reporting features**
  We are expanding the reporting capabilities of the site so that we can retrieve valuable information about the quantity and qualifications of candidates who are applying through the site and how successful the site is in assisting with filling vacancies.

Recruitment Best Practices

Complementing the *Make a Future – Careers in BC Education* initiative is recruitment best practices.

If one accepts the proposition that people are our most important asset, then it follows that hiring is the most important skill employers require. Employers and prospective employees face several key issues in the recruiting and job search world. In simple terms, for the organization, recruiting decisions entail where to find candidates (sources and pools of candidates), how best to recruit them (methods, tools, and strategies), and how to judge the results of the effort (assessment).

Recruitment takes place in a larger context, however. An organization must also understand its place in the labour market. It is not simply about size or structure. Your place in the market is also about people's perception of you as an employer.

For current and prospective employees, what Employment Value Proposition (see *Competing for Talent* later in this article for discussion of the EVP) do you offer and, more importantly, how is it perceived by the labour market and your current employees?

Using the EVP conceptual framework as an organizer, what are the attributes that differentiate you as an employer from others? These differentiating factors provide a powerful recruitment advantage. In turn, prospective employees must decide which organizations to apply to and interview with, and so on. Because the EVP is grounded in perception, prospective employees are testing you as much as you are testing them! Having been chosen for an interview, they must also decide how best to market themselves.

As simple as it may sound, the reality is that when it comes to employee recruitment, times have changed! Who you recruit, how, and from where require that you change your recruitment practices, processes, and strategies to remain competitive in this labour market.

But when you get candidates for the job, what next? An overly prepared candidate can be a puzzle. If all your candidates arrive with rehearsed responses to the question on where they see themselves in 10 years, you may be wasting everybody's time by asking that question. There are so many books, magazine articles, and websites that teach applicants not only what questions to expect, but also what answers to give, that it can seem impossible to get a meaningful answer from the person you are interviewing. How do you cut though rehearsed responses and learn more about these candidates?

As part of the Recruitment Best Practices suite of resources, the behavioural-based approach to recruitment has been adopted and refined for public education recruitment. A behavioural interviewing approach holds that you need to develop behavioural, objective, fact-based selection criteria to increase your chance of placing the right person in the right job at the right time. The approach rests on the notion that the best predictor of future successful behaviour is past successful behaviour. It does not rely on what candidates say they can do in the future, but on what they have done well in the past. The questions that you ask candidates in interviews are designed to bring out information about this behaviour.

BCPSEA has developed a comprehensive employee recruitment guide to *Meeting the Recruitment Challenge: A Behavioural Approach.* This 200 page guide is filled with tools, templates and strategies that can be adapted to your specific recruitment challenges. The guide covers the following topics:

- Identifying and Defining Selection Criteria
- Inviting Applications
- Screening Applications
- Planning, Conducting and Evaluating the Interviews
- Other Selection Methods
- Verifying References and Background
- Making Selection Decisions
- Making Employment Offers
- Legal Implications for Recruitment
- Strategic Workforce Planning

For additional information about *Meeting the Recruitment Challenge: A Behavioural Approach,* or behavioural interviewing workshops, e-mail contactus@makeafuture.ca.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYERS'
ASSOCIATION

Meeting the
RECRUITMENT
Challenge

A Behavioural Approach

T. S. TURNER
RONALD E. POUND
HUGH J. FINLAYSON
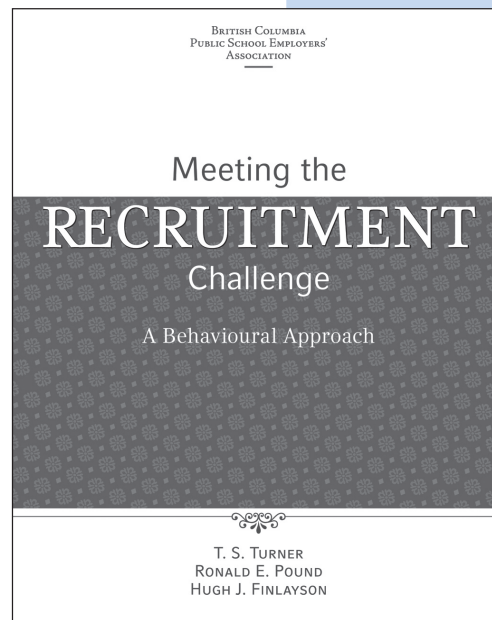
Compared to What?
Making Choices Based on Criteria

One of the central challenges recruiters face is making choices. What's the position we are looking to fill and what's the best match of skills, abilities, experience and training?

As a second element of recruitment best practices, the Position Benchmark tool has been developed. The Position Benchmark tool provides, by position, a profile or points of reference against which candidates can be measured in terms of:

- Work-related abilities
- Interests
- Personality traits.

Each benchmark is customized to the position and is based on characteristics of best performers and/or survey information from supervisors/managers. The application of the tool can be broadened from hiring/job fit to facilitate career planning and employee development initiatives.

Competing for Talent: The Differentiating Factor

The eighth and final component of the sustainable workforce model is the Employment Value Proposition (EVP). The EVP concept was developed by the Corporate Leadership Council.[3] The Council has members from top international companies in a variety of industries and disciplines.

The Council completed a body of research into attraction and retention in response to what they described *as the unique convergence of key labour market and business dynamics – an aging workforce, specialized talent needs, globalization, and growth imperatives.* Borrowing the notion of convergence from the Council's work, BCPSEA has utilized the concepts and principles in its work on recruitment and retention.

The Council observed that leading HR organizations are moving beyond vacancy-driven staffing to exploring proactive management of labour markets as they seek an advantage in access to scarce talent pools. It proceeded to answer three fundamental human resource/organizational questions:

- How can the organization position itself to compete effectively for scarce talent?
- How can the organization compete across multiple talent segments?
- How can the organization position itself to ensure the commitment/engagement and retention of its new hires, as well as tenured employees?

In seeking to answer those questions, the Council launched the Competitive Employment Value Proposition Research Initiative, a three-part examination of how organizations can best attract and retain critical talent.

In 2006 the Council released the extensively researched and peer-reviewed first volume, *Attracting and Retaining Critical Talent Segments: Identifying Drivers of Attraction and Commitment in the Global Labour Market.*

With the initiation of development of the sustainable workforce model, BCPSEA reviewed the work of the Council and found the principles and concepts ideally suited for adaptation to the K-12 public education sector in BC and its labour market challenges.

BCPSEA is in the initial stages of broadening understanding of the EVP concept in the management community and developing working resources, tools, templates and evaluative processes to advance the EVP concept. Further refinement is required to effectively design, segment by employment group, and validate the operation and outcomes of EVP initiatives. What follows is the conceptual framework that is used to guide our work. ◈ —

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3   The Corporate Leadership Council is an international membership of senior executives with a shared commitment to steward enterprise-wide human resources management and is a leading provider of best practices research, executive education, and decision-support services for senior executives. (CLC Executive Board: Washington DC; London UK)
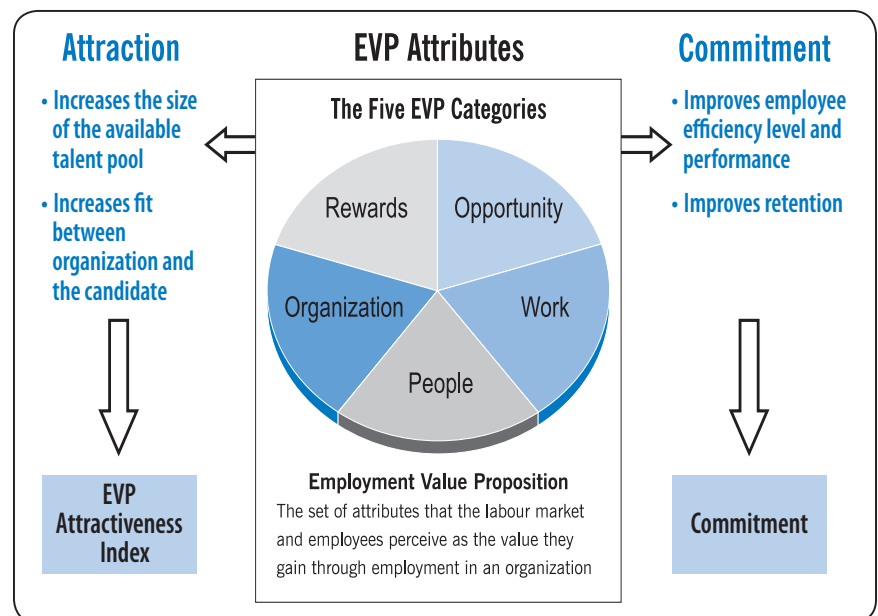
Employment Value Proposition Framework

The Five Dimensions of the EVP

The EVP is defined as the set of attributes that the labour market and employees perceive as the value they gain through employment. Perceived value leads to attraction for prospective employees. The perception of value leads to continuing commitment and engagement once employed. To address talent shortages, employers have increasingly recognized the power of the EVP to better attract and ensure long-term commitment of talent. The five dimensions are:

1. The tangible *rewards* an employee receives for his/her work – (total compensation)
   * Salary and benefits
   * Retirement benefits
   * Annual vacation

2. The *opportunity* a job or organization affords an employee
   * Development opportunities and experiences
   * Future career opportunities
   * Organizational growth rate
   * Meritocracy
   * Organizational stability

3. The nature of *work* itself, the extent to which it matches an employee's interests
   * Travel
   * Innovation
   * Job impact
   * Job-interests alignment
   * Location
   * Recognition
   * Work-life integration (also referred to as work-life balance)

4. The characteristics of the *organization* such as size, structure, and (labour) market position
   * Reputation (client, public)
   * Diversity
   * Empowerment
   * Environmental responsibility
   * Ethics
   * "Best Employer" recognition/designation
   * Industry or sector
   * Brand and brand awareness
   * Market position; product/service quality
   * Respect
   * Risk taking
   * Social responsibility
   * Technology currency/level

5. The characteristics of the organization's *people* such as supervisor/leader quality, nature of colleagues, how people inter-relate/interact
   * Camaraderie
   * Collegial work
   * Co-worker quality
   * Manager/supervisor/team leader quality
   * People management
   * Senior leadership reputation.

Of the eight components of the sustainable workforce model, the EVP

Attraction

• Increases the size of the available talent pool

• Increases fit between organization and the candidate

EVP Attractiveness Index

EVP Attributes

The Five EVP Categories

Rewards · Opportunity · Organization · Work · People

Employment Value Proposition
The set of attributes that the labour market and employees perceive as the value they gain through employment in an organization

Commitment

• Improves employee efficiency level and performance

• Improves retention

Commitment

is the most challenging and difficult to influence. It is also the component that has the greatest impact on attraction and retention. In real human resource initiative and programmatic terms, the EVP influences and has implications for every choice an organization makes.

Consider: Using the five EVP categories as a backdrop, review the following HR program organizational schematic. Note how the five elements are presented and how they are interrelated.

How does your organization build its human resource plan?

Are there generational differences?

3. **Targeted and Customized:** How can a district define an EVP that is relevant to target talent segments, competitively differentiated, and aligned with the district's strategic objectives? Do we target key talent segments and use our experiences to refine our strategies and approach? Review your demographics, the Jurisdictional Workforce Assessment, and your District Strategic Workforce Plan. Do you supplement your strategy with segmentation by generation?
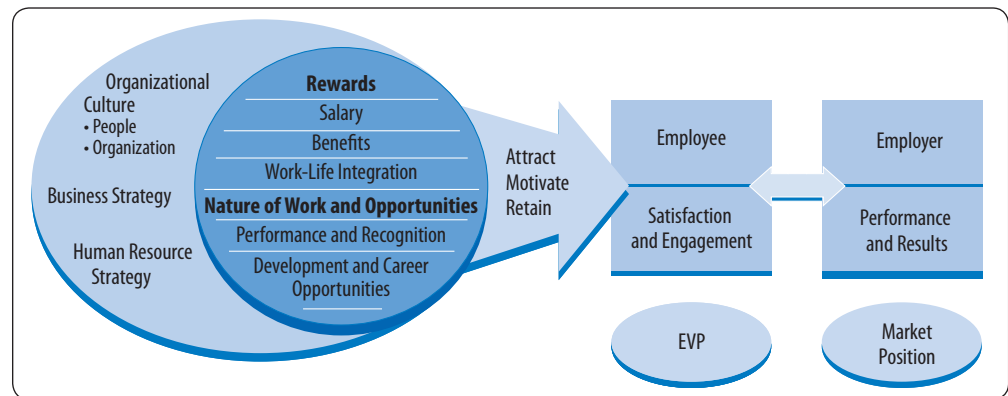
EVP Development Considerations

1. **Get Started:** What do you know about the place you work and the people who work there? Examine the generational mix:

- In specific worksites, departments, teams
- What generations hold what positions?
- What generations hold what level of positions?
- Project the future mix.

How do you evaluate, improve and sustain employee engagement across a multi-generational workforce?

2. **Results are for Learning:** Where are we now? As a starting point, how is our EVP viewed internally across talent segments, and how do you find out?

4. **Sustainable:** What strategies and infrastructure can the district use to manage EVP variations across key talent segments (and based on 1, 2, and 3 above, by generation)? How will we know that what we are doing is yielding improved results?

5. **More Than Words and Good Intentions:** How can the district ensure EVP credibility internally and in the labour market by increasing the believability of communication channels and making advocates of your current employees? It is not enough to say it, create fancy logos, and have events and the like – internal and labour market perceptions have to be identified, validated, be part of the organization's culture and used as leverage to facilitate continuous improvement.

EVP Experiences and Conclusions: Success is in the Data!

An effective EVP provides organizations with three quantifiable benefits:

- **Improved attractiveness:** Organizations with effective EVPs are able to source from a much deeper pool of talent in the labour market. The Council found that top-performing organizations draw candidates from about 60% of the labour market, including "passive" candidates who would otherwise be content to stay with their current job. Lesser-performing organizations are able to source only from the most active 40% of the workforce.

- **Greater employee commitment/ engagement:** Organizations with effective EVPs enjoy higher levels of commitment from their employees. The Council concluded that top-performing organizations have 30-40% of their workforce displaying high levels of commitment/engagement, compared to less than 10% in under-performing organizations.

- **Compensation savings:** Organizations with effective EVPs are able to reduce the compensation premium required to attract new candidates.

Organizations fail to build a strong EVP because of three common pitfalls:

- **Comprised of the wrong attributes:** In the absence of data, organizations risk over-investing in employment attributes that are less important to the workforce, while under-investing in the most critical of the five elements necessary for attracting and retaining talent.

- **Not differentiating from competitors:** The labour market perceives minimal variation in the EVPs offered by different organizations, suggesting that they are not sufficiently differentiating (and communicating) their EVPs.

- **Following the rule – more than words and good intentions:** Talk big and act small – failing to deliver on the EVP. Organizations that fail to deliver on the most significant elements of the EVP see demonstrable declines in the commitment/engagement of their workforce. This decline can begin almost immediately for new hires who feel that their expectations are not met. You only have one chance to do it right! The legacy of failed initiatives and what is perceived as another fad have long-lasting organizational consequences. When you examine the pitfalls, bear in mind the following fundamental truth of organizational life: **Don't start** what you **don't plan** to finish!

The EVP and Your Brand: Bringing Your Differentiating Factors to Life

Talent and brand management are the future of human resources. Your employer brand – the uniform message and image that is communicated to all stakeholders including clients and employees – is inextricably linked to the EVP concept. Just as the EVP is more than words and good intentions, so is your brand. It is about consistency, believability, and *demonstrable authenticity*, something that is felt and experienced by clients and employees. Just because you say it doesn't make it so. Keep in mind that you already have a brand in the eyes of your employees and the labour market. It may not be referred to as that but it exists nonetheless. Brand management represents a strategic shift. It is the conscious, planned, focused, and evaluated strategy to leverage your differentiating factors in support of

Organizations with effective EVPs enjoy higher levels of commitment from their employees

employee recruitment, motivation, and retention.

In a recent article, "In the Battle for Talent, the Better Brand Wins,"[4] author Andrea Southcott provided a perspective on employer branding and recruitment, motivation and retention:

"Any business is only as good as its people. With today's workforce demographics, the challenge of being the first in line for the best and brightest is getting tougher. Every company looks for its own edge in the battle for talent, but a strong brand is likely the sharpest stick you have in your arsenal.

With the traditional corporate ladder holding less appeal for young workers, wanting job satisfaction for mid-career employees and unemployment at record lows, it's a sellers' market.

It takes more to attract employees and, once you've hired them, they need stronger ties to stay. That's where the brand comes in. While benefits, advancement and training have to be competitive, a compelling brand can make the difference in the quest for top talent.

What you say about yourself as a brand to attract customers transfers directly to the opinion that both existing and potential staff have of your company. A strong brand sends a signal about the values and culture employees can expect. If it's not a badge they want to buy, why would they want to work there?

To be confident that your brand is working as hard as it can to attract talent:

Ensure your "outside" voice is the same as your "inside" voice

Spend as much time putting the brand voice into internal communications as you do to external communications. More than ever in marketing history, employees and potential employees are examining everything companies do and say for signs of inconsistency in messaging.

Let your values show

Given that in today's employment climate salary and advancement have become table stakes, a company's values can create real differentiation. As consumers put more pressure on companies to police themselves and live up to promises, employees watch carefully for any disconnects. The flip side is that if you live up to your values, you create brand advocates.

Don't underestimate the importance of creative recruitment

Most recruitment ads are unimaginably dull – "looking for 'X' with 'Y' years' experience in 'insert boring task here.'" The time and effort expended in ensuring that your brand voice is likeable, relevant and motivating never seems to make it into the HR department. This is a huge missed opportunity – there aren't many bigger purchases than deciding where to hang your career hat.

How to reach out to potential employees can be as important as what you say to them

If you want to appeal to today's top employees, ensure you are reaching them in a relevant way. If you advertise in traditional sources with traditional messages, you will get traditional employees. Look to tools such as Facebook or LinkedIn[5] to send a signal that you understand where people connect and ensure you know what's being said about you online.

Maintain consistency between your brand experience and your work experience

Using your brand as a magnet to hire

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4 Andrea Southcott, *Globe and Mail*, February 4, 2008

5 LinkedIn.com is a private firm operating an internet web portal to foster the development of social networking for professional development and career enhancement in the business community. http://www.linkedin.com

Talent and brand management are the future of human resources.

and then having new employees find that the experience of working for you is totally different won't have people staying long. One of the best ways to monitor this is to measure how employees are feeling. And, even better, ensure you share the result in a transparent fashion.

Remember that employees are your best brand ambassadors

The first focus for marketers tends to be the "target group," with messages carefully crafted to ensure that any brand communications ultimately encourage the selected demographics to liberate dollars from their wallets. Ensure campaign messages are communicated internally – engage staff, and ensure they know and deliver the brand promise. In many ways your employees are the brand, as they create the brand experience.

Use your brand as a filter

Recruiting is a two-way street – you want your brand to attract the right people but you also want to use the brand to filter out the wrong people. Understanding the brand's values will help potential employees know what's expected in terms of a company's culture and whether or not it feels right for them.

Treat ex-employees as well as you do current ones

One of the easiest and least expensive tools for building your brand reputation with potential employees is to treat those leaving the company well. Whether they have chosen to leave or been let go, treat them with dignity and the word will spread. And, one day, they may be back with you."

The Employment Value Proposition and the *Employer Brand*

The work on the sustainable workforce initiative has drawn school districts'

attention to today's labour market reality. Districts, like employers everywhere, face a challenging set of variables regarding the workforce of the future. Competition for talent is heating up and will intensify as demographic trends make it increasingly difficult for districts to replace valued employees when they retire. In this era of increasing competition for key talent, the "war for talent" literature reveals that organizations are more challenged than ever to distinguish themselves in the marketplace to both attract and retain critically-skilled individuals. To meet this challenge, organizations have shown an increasing interest in employer branding and strategies to differentiate themselves.

The labour market today is much more fluid, with more and better information available to employees than ever before. Talent today has many more choices. The market power currently enjoyed (or perceived) by employees is also exacerbating the need for a compelling employer brand, and employers are coming to view their employment offering or Employment Value Proposition as akin to a consumer product in the marketplace.

Much like a product in the marketplace, what an employer offers must meet the preferences of the consumer (in this case the applicant), be differentiated from competing offers, and have a strong reputation or brand. With the "product" perspective in mind, a number of districts have shown an ever-increasing interest in committing to the concept of employer branding and the steps necessary to create and maintain a robust employer brand in the labour market.

Using lessons and principles of product marketing to build and manage an Employer Brand

A district manages two brands – a

In many ways your employees are the brand, as they create the brand experience.

program/service or district brand in the education sector/general public, and an employer brand in the labour market. Both brands are related and mutually supportive. A strong programs/services brand can play an important role in the strength of the employer brand. The employer brand, in turn, is instrumental in attracting and retaining employees who can add value to the district and its programs/services, thus reinforcing the district brand.

In the tight labour market of today (and the foreseeable future), a well positioned and managed employer brand may be vital to a district's EVP as it will:

- Meet applicant and employee preferences
- Be differentiated from competing offers
- Have a strong reputation or brand image.

Building a strong employer brand can be accomplished in much the same way that companies build strong product brands. Districts should first review the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes related to their education programs and services, recognizing that established brands may serve as a strong foundation for the employer brand. Organizations with recognizable product brands can leverage these images in their employer brands and related media materials such as their web pages, recruitment ads, district information circulars, etc. The integrated recruitment portal (www.makeafuture.ca) provides an ideal venue to tell a compelling story about your district and feature your brand.

Getting Started

The place to start is with understanding! Review the district's corporate strategy and goals and the workforce strategy they drive. What are your labour markets and what are the segments of the workforce you hope to retain or attract? This understanding can be generated through focused research into employee preferences and values especially for the employee groups the district will be targeting. Armed with this information, employers can develop a compelling employment offer, particularly one that provides competitive advantage in the labour market. Once established, employer brand equity is built through effective marketing and management of the offer and the brand over time. This exercise answers and validates the simple question: Why do I work here?

The Successful Employer Brand

A successful brand is comprised of two powerful components: a strong employment offering and compelling employer brand image. The specific employment offering both establishes the details of a district's Employment Value Proposition and underpins the district's employer brand image. The employer brand image is the articulation of the EVP, how the district wishes to be seen and, when tested by individuals and the labour market, how the district is seen. As the district's reputation grows, its emerging brand signals to employees and to targeted labour market segments the type of employee the district hopes to attract and retain.

It is important to remember…it's about results! Employer brand or brand image is established only through the delivery of value in offers of employment and in the continuing employee-employer relationship that is the basis for retention. Just as a product that fails to provide quality or value to consumers will perish, an employment offer that fails to provide value to employees will fail in its effort to build a positive and productive employer

Building a strong employer brand can be accomplished in much the same way that companies build strong product brands.

brand. In the end, an employer brand's image will be based in the consistent delivery of value in a district's employment offer…in a sound EVP. Marketing or branding an offer that is inconsistently delivered or falls short of expectations may cause severe harm to a district's image in the labour market. Conversely, consistently delivering on employment promises will contribute to a strong and enduring brand image.

Caution: Employer Branding isn't the Answer…It's One Strategy in an Integrated Plan!

Employer branding should be approached with caution. It should be considered when you are developing your overall strategic workforce plan. Like it or not, individual employees and the labour market already have perceptions of your district as a place to work! The key to employer branding is understanding those perceptions.

Districts should first identify and analyze any root causes that are driving the need for an employer branding initiative. In doing so, they may better focus and align their efforts with overall strategic or business goals. Consider – is there an organizational:

- Desire to become an employer of choice
- Need to attract better quality candidates
- Need to ensure better self-selection among candidates for particular positions
- Need to provide candidates with a clear representation of corporate culture and work life
- Need to retain critical talent in a competitive labour market
- Need to recruit candidates who are a better cultural fit with the organization

- Need to shorten time to fill vacancies
- Need to reduce recruitment costs?

Positioning the Employer Brand to Create a Meaningful Message

Although brand development and implementation are unique to each organization, there are several guiding principles, according to the Corporate Leadership Council, that can strengthen branding initiatives.

- *Differentiating the organization* – The employer brand should help to differentiate the organization by focusing on the organization's unique aspects
- *Creating a memorable message* – An effective message is one that candidates remember
- *Crafting a persuasive message* – An effective brand must persuade candidates that the organization would be a good employer. In order to be convincing, the message must be based on the employment reality
- *Consistency versus segmentation* – Consistency is paramount in establishing a good brand. However, when the EVP is unique for certain talent segments, the organization should consider tailoring the brand.

Districts have unique perspectives and needs when it comes to positioning themselves in the labour market. The goal for all employers is to attract and retain the best and provide opportunities for employees to grow and develop in a career that is interesting and engaging for them. The *Make A Future - Careers in BC Education* team is working with districts to explore ideas, including employer branding, as a vehicle to increase their ability to recruit, motivate and retain employees.

Employer branding… should be considered when you are developing your overall strategic workforce plan.

Workforce Planning in Context: Critical Environmental Circumstances

Human resource practitioners, organizational leaders, and commentators have identified several environmental conditions, most of which will persist for a few decades to come, that affect an organization's capability to recruit, motivate and retain employees. The most notable conditions are:

Demographics and the labour pool [6]

There is a massive shift in the demographics of the BC population:

- The baby boomers, age 45-60, which constitute 23% of the population, have already begun to retire; this is creating a significant gap in the labour force
- Generation X, age 30-45; and Generation Y, age 20-30, will be responsible for trying to fill that gap even though they only account for 22% and 14% of the population, respectively.

In addition to these generational realities, the population is diminishing as fewer children replace the boomer generation. The fertility rate is well below the replacement level and there are 19% fewer children under the age of 10 today than there were in 1996. In 2005-2006, the student headcount was 665,643 but dropped 1.5% to 655,704 in 2006-2007, and is expected to continue to decline. In addition, between 2006 and 2036, there will be 1.7 million more people (47% growth) and only 900,000 more people entering the labour force. The net BC growth rate of the labour force is declining and, even with high migration rates and increasing participation of the echo boom generation, the growth will drop to 1% by 2020.

Labour shortage

The consequence of the aging population (creating a steady decline of the labour force) and a stable/strong Canadian economy is a critical labour shortage. Unemployment in BC is well below the national average of 5.9% at 4.3%, with 4% being considered full employment. This rate has been declining since 2002 when it averaged 8.5%. Currently, the lowest regional unemployment rate is in the Vancouver Island/Coast region at 4% and the highest rate continues to be experienced in the North Coast and Nechako region at 7.4%.[7]

Structural integrity: Well built, well made...for the past

With the significant changes to the labour environment and the challenges faced by organizations "more complex [now] than they were just five years ago,"[8] organizations can no longer maintain their static practices. Continuing to use the expression, "if it ain't broke don't fix it" to drive changes will have dire consequences for an organization's ability to compete. While organizations have spent many years perfecting different processes and positioning themselves to suit the internal and external conditions of that time, now more than ever the circumstances have changed and, so too, must the processes and positioning.

Employment and life priorities [9]

Employment and life priorities are changing for those who remain in the workforce. While benefits and compensation used to be a high priority for employees of the baby boomer generation

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6 All statistics came from two sources: Andrew Ramlo, Director, Urban Futures Institute. "Workforce and Workplace of the Future," Presentation 2007; and BC Ministry of Education Reporting on K-12 Education, Student Enrolments, <www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/enrol/student.php>
7 BC Stats. Labour Force Statistics, August 2007 http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/lfs/lfs0708.pdf.
8 Corey Criswell & Andre Martin. *10 Trends: A Study of Senior Executives' Views on the Future*. 2007.
9 Patrick Sullivan, President, Workopolis. "Mind the Gap: Employing Generation Next." Presentation, 2007.

and generation X, it now ranks seventh among the top drivers of job satisfaction; working environment/corporate culture is now the number one driver. In addition, the traditionalist baby boomer view of "willing to go the extra mile" may no longer apply. In a 1999 survey, 37% percent of people valued their career as their top life priority compared to 31% who valued family the most; however, in a more recent survey (2006) family was rated the most important priority for 44%, with career coming in second at 31%.

From the physical to the online world[10]

With technological advancements over the past decade and the growth of web 2.0,[11] people have shifted the way in which they access information and communicate with one another. Canadians now spend 20% more time online than the next most "wired" country (an average of 40.8 hours online per visitor per month compared to 29.6 in the US). In addition, online career category traffic in Canada has exploded since 2002, averaging a 71% annual growth rate in visitors.

So What?

What are the implications of these critical environmental circumstances on human resources practices, processes, systems, and initiatives associated with attracting, motivating and retaining employees?

Each environmental circumstance creates implications and the need for human resources to adapt. Several themes associated with the environmental circumstances emerge as to the best way to approach this new workforce.

Technologically savvy[12]

As the internet grows so, too, does the technological savvy of the labour force. Consider:

- In 2006, 63% of job seekers in BC thought the best way to find a job was through online search media compared to 20% and 13% of job seekers who thought the best place was the newspaper and recruitment agencies.
- Currently, while 89% of employers are still posting employment ads in the newspaper, job seekers are creating personalized job wanted postings on sites such as LinkedIn.

When there is a significant disconnect between where potential employees are searching for jobs and where employers are posting them, employers are not reaching their target audience.

Communication and working style

Employees want to be in control of their learning and communicating, which means using online tools such as wikis,[13] blogs and instant messaging. There are currently more than 70 million blogs – this rate has been doubling every six months for the past three years. These types of tools enable employees to access and consume only the information that is important to them at that particular moment. They can update and share their knowledge quickly and easily so they can continue to be subject matter experts even though the information is rapidly changing. Linear and hierarchical methods are giving way to a focus on processes and tools that foster teamwork and collaboration.

Each environmental circumstance creates implications and the need for human resources to adapt.

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9 Patrick Sullivan, President, Workopolis. "Mind the Gap: Employing Generation Next." Presentation, 2007.
10 Ibid.
11 The term web 2.0 does not mean a new version of the web but rather, the use of the internet as a platform – changes in the ways software developers and end-users use the web (e.g., social networks, wikis).
12 Ibid.
13 A wiki is software that allows users to create, edit, and link web pages easily. Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community websites.

Work ethic and motivators [14]

The values of the boomer generation – including career paths, security, loyalty to the organization, a priority on status, and being willing to "go the extra mile" – are diminishing as boomers retire and are replaced by the values of generations X and Y.

Both the generation X and Y values differ significantly, in that:

- Generation X's are more cynical about work contracts and view themselves as "free agents," have little to no loyalty to work, and focus on "what's in it for me."
- Generation Y's are technologically skilled, have strong ties with the community, have little loyalty, and put a premium on work-life balance

The decreasing loyalty of both generations X and Y is evident. In a 2006 study:

- 30% of Canadians expected to change jobs within the year
- 70% of Canadians would be willing to relocate if an attractive job offer presented itself within the same province, and
- 49% would be willing to relocate outside the province but within Canada.

With respect to compensation structures, the 2006 study found that altering employees' pay and bonus structure will no longer impact performance, as generations X and Y are driven by intrinsic motivators, fairness, and equity. As the values of the generations change, human resources practices and processes need to adapt with them.

This analysis leads one to determine the old assumption that the employee needs the organization more than the organization needs the employee no longer rings true, now that employees know they can find other opportunities and have the confidence and mobility to leave. While an organization's adaptability needs to be immediate, no short-term changes will create a solution for the long-term structural shift that is occurring.

Now What?
Conclusions and Considerations

A review of these environmental circumstances, the organization's workforce, and how best to lead and manage human resources, gives evidence of opportunities to move from personnel management or "traditional" HR to state of the art people practices focused on best practices and innovative ways to attract, motivate and retain employees. These include:

Leveraging resources and expertise

The various aspects of human resources management and leadership – decisions and activities involving individuals or groups of individuals that are designed to influence the effectiveness of employees and the organization – are growing in complexity and require a degree of expertise that is not readily resident in many employers. There are a variety of resources, service providers, and human resource organizations that can be accessed and incorporated into the structure of the human resource function in your organization.

The goal of leveraging resources and expertise is to allow the provision of human resource services in each of the HR service areas to a similar degree to the services provided in leading organizations (whether public or private). This allows an organization to take advantage of the

As the values of the generations change, human resources practices and processes need to adapt with them.

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14 Patrick Sullivan, President, Workopolis. "Mind the Gap: Employing Generation Next." Presentation, 2007.

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economies of scale, scope, and focused expertise to get the job done faster, better, and more economically.

Large, medium and small employers will leverage resources and seek other expertise differently, depending on their respective operating structures, availability and currency of internal resources, and the general needs of the organization.

It is important to stress that an approach to leveraging resources/services to maximize human resource effectiveness is not a series of ad hoc attempts at engaging consultants, other organizations and the like to see if something works. It is a deliberate organizational review of human resource systems, resources, and expertise, resulting in development of a plan fully integrated with the needs of the organization and consistent with its culture.

Take a personalized approach

Organizations need to move from a "one size fits all" approach to a more personalized method tailored to each employee's specific motivators.[15] This can be accomplished by offering flexible and customized employment packages for employee benefits, hours of work, work location, autonomy, etc.[16] In addition, organizations could consider providing employees with more options for addressing higher education opportunities, family and spousal issues, or other personal issues that arise.

Talent management techniques

Every organization is built upon and achieves success through the energy, creativity, and expertise of the people who work there. There needs to be renewed focus on developing better talent management techniques.

Hiring from within for executive positions by identifying leaders and high value employees early on will be an asset for talent retention. It is also important to create mentorship opportunities, not only for succession planning and continuous learning, but also to keep employees aware of potential career paths.

It is crucial that employers streamline processes by utilizing tools to determine where successful candidates are coming from and basing hiring decisions not only on skills but also on attitude and personal fit with the organization. With the increasing need for a workforce that will be able to solve problems quickly and adapt to change, organizations need to identify current and future skill needs and invest in further skill development. Training not only sends the message that employees are important enough to invest in, but the more training that takes place the more employees feel their co-workers are knowledgeable, serious contributors.[17]

As employees are no longer considered "disposable," it is incredibly important that organizations take steps to maximize the contribution of each person.[18]

Engage and reward employees

The concept of employee engagement is defined as:

"A positive, two-way relationship between employees and their organization. Both parties are aware of their own and the other's needs, and the way they support each other to fulfill these needs. Engaged employees and organizations will "go the extra mile" for each

Every organization is built upon and achieves success through the energy, creativity, and expertise of the people who work there.

15 Lynda Gratton. "HR Strategy: A Wider, Younger World." *HR Executive Forecast 2008*. Page 13.
16 Collective agreements in unionized workplaces present unique challenges. A broader discussion with unions on the workforce and the need to "modernize" regulatory provisions born of another age is necessary. Collectively we can't be a competitive, contemporary workplace with collective agreement provisions of the 70s, 80s and 90s.
17 Richard Worzel. *Who Owns Tomorrow: 7 Secrets for the Future of Business*. 2003, page 20.
18 Ibid, page 8.

other because they see the mutual benefits of investing in their relationship."[19]

Engagement has been described in terms of the nature of the engagement,[20] specifically:

- **Engaged:** Employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their work and the organization. They drive innovation and move the organization forward.
- **Not engaged:** Employees have "checked-out" and "presenteeism" has set in – employees are physically there but not actively. They "put in time" rather than energy and creativity into their work.
- **Actively disengaged:** Employees aren't just unhappy at work; they act out their unhappiness. These employees may attempt to undermine their engaged colleagues and what they are seeking to accomplish.

Despite the many definitions, at the root of the concept is that real employee engagement is about the belief among employees that they are treated well and their work is making a difference.

Employees, now more than ever, need to feel engaged, involved, and recognized. It is important for organizations to align the values and culture of the organization with the needs of their employees. This can be done by understanding the priorities of employees and pursuing a strategy of being recognized as an employer of choice. While everything else in an organization can change, it is the steady, strong values and vision of an organization that give employees the feeling they are working for more than a pay cheque.[21]

The level and nature of employee engagement is central to an employer's true competitive advantage in a challenging labour market. The *Employment Value Proposition* provides the foundation for a conceptual framework and consequent strategies to develop the set of attributes necessary to differentiate one employer from another as a recruitment advantage.

Another factor that helps to foster and maintain an employee's involvement and interaction is the ability to have information at their fingertips. By offering easy to use interactive online tools and pertinent resources, employees will be empowered to make their own decisions. In addition, organizations must develop a meaningful performance management and development process.

Employees who have incentives and feel rewarded will remain involved and satisfied with their employment.

Adapt to utilize online methods

Organizations need to adapt to utilize online forms of recruiting, training, and communication. They need to "institute processes, technologies and change-management strategies to provide tools so everyone can co-create, become a subject matter expert, extend networking and collaboration within and outside the organization, and develop learning at a modular level"[22] that can be easily accessible.

Sharing information with employees, consumers, and other knowledgeable individuals by utilizing wikis, podcasts, and blogs will allow for faster communication and greater access to expertise in a variety of areas; these same social

Employees, now more than ever, need to feel engaged, involved, and recognized.

19 The definition of engagement adopted by the British multi-disciplinary human resource consultancy Chiumento (2004).
20 Hugh Finlayson, "Engagement in a Unionized Environment." BCHRMA, June 2006.
21 Richard Worzel. *Who Owns Tomorrow: 7 Secrets for the Future of Business.* 2003, page 16.
22 Jeanne Meister. "Web-Based Corporate Learning Takes Off." *HR Executive Forecast 2008*, page 15.

networks could be used as a new method of continuous learning and training.

As labour shortages occur and employers need to look outside their region for candidates, using websites to recruit, and using video conferencing to interview (depending on the nature of the position), will be much more effective and efficient than the historical tangible ways of completing these functions.[23]

As discussed previously, the Integrated Recruitment Portal (*www.makeafuture. ca*) provides an example of how public education in BC can take advantage of state of the art recruitment resources to not only broaden the candidate pool, but also provide real time data on the challenges of recruitment including the identification of what skills are in demand, and where. These data can fuel policy discussions and, ultimately, policy decisions regarding the evolution of public education and the employment imperatives.

Build future-focused human resource management/leadership capacity[24]

Given the volatile environmental circumstances, the human resources function will need to undergo several changes. There will be a need to shift away from the transactional – where many practitioners are comfortable and there is always plenty of work to be done – to the strategic, requiring rigorous analysis and planning resulting in coherent, results-oriented plans. This is not to say there should be focus on the strategic to the detriment of day to day work, but rather, transactional excellence that allows for focus on strategic initiatives.

HR will increasingly assume a more strategic role and professionals will need to be able to articulate the value of HR on the bottom line. The HR department will need to focus on talent and brand management in order to retain and bridge the gap of expertise and to create a uniform and attractive message to all stakeholders. HR can and must take the lead role in defining and refining the Employment Value Proposition as your competitive advantage in recruiting, motivating and retaining the right people for the right positions at the right time.

The human resource function is an organizational service and specialized resource that understands and supports the organization's core business.[25] To assist in facilitating an effective and efficient workplace, HR will need to take the lead in designing and implementing new work systems that include more empowered and collaborative work teams and assignments. As mentioned previously, the HR department will also need to monitor and consider changes to current rewards strategies to ensure they align with employees' needs.

Another option, referenced earlier, that has the potential to provide several benefits to organizations is the outsourcing of HR functions as part of a strategy to leverage expertise. It allows organizations the ability to "[take] advantage of the economies of scale, scope, and focused expertise to get the job done faster, better, and more economically."[26] Outsourcing often results in HR becoming a more strategic part of the organization and allows the internal HR department to focus on the critical functions they do best – those that have the greatest effect on the EVP. Further, in an exponentially changing work environment, it will be

23 Cathy Fyock. "Streamlining the Process." *HR Executive Forecast 2008*, pp. 48-49.
24 Larry Phillips. "HR 2017: Where Are We Going and How Do We Get There?" October 6, 2007, http://www.hr.com.
25 The core business is, put simply, the organization's reason for being.
26 Cathy Fyock. "Streamlining the Process." *HR Executive Forecast 2008*, pp. 48-49.

necessary for HR to maintain a close eye on legislative, health, safety, and security changes and issues, as it can become an organizational leader in this area or identify what can best be done internally and where best to leverage resources.

Promote innovation, learn from results, and focus on continuous improvement [27]

As the environment changes, "organizations will continually be asked to do even more with less and [to] respond even faster to changes in their industry and economy." [28] Organizations need to be constantly adapting, recalculating, and improving in order to succeed. To stay one step ahead of the next organization, the creation of processes to foster innovation must become a priority. This can include, for example, "establishing task forces, cross-functional innovation teams, off-site innovation programs, and stage-gate processes." [29] By providing "office hours" specifically for new ideas, or an idea list for employees to suggest or comment on ideas, employees will not only be thinking creatively but they will be taking an active role in the growth of the organization.

If people are the most important asset, then hiring is the most important skill [30]

As referenced earlier, it is crucial that an organization hire not only for the skill set an employee holds but also for their personal fit with the company. "Skills can be taught. Attitudes come with the individual, and individuals whose attitudes don't fit with the company's values are not going to be as happy or as productive as those whose attitudes do." [31] Recruiting should be the most important

task in your organization. "If you accept that great companies are great because they have great people, then a company's most critical decisions relate to the people it hires and keeps." [32]

Systematic systemic planning

Within school districts today, any workforce planning carried out is generally short-term in nature – usually for one year only – and is completed primarily for financial, budgeting and annual staffing purposes. Limited data about the current workforce and a lack of resources and/or expertise on the part of district human resources staff has contributed to the adoption of this approach. Given historically sufficient numbers of employees, a belief has emerged that, while important, long-term planning is not imperative. This prevailing sectoral frame of reference [33] concerning human resource planning needs to change.

Workforce demographics and the labour pool necessitate an integrated approach and strategy if a qualified contemporary workforce is to be maintained. The sustainable workforce model is a comprehensive approach to workforce analysis and planning.

27 Corey Criswell & Andre Martin. *10 Trends: A Study of Senior Executives' Views on the Future.* 2007.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Richard Worzel. *Who Owns Tomorrow: 7 Secrets for the Future of Business.* Page 18, 2003.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Frame of reference: the context, viewpoint, or set of presuppositions or evaluative criteria within which a person's perception and thinking seem always to occur, and which constrains selectively the course and outcomes of these activities.

Perspectives on Human Resources and the Future

Too often, HR practitioners and senior organizational leaders grab on to the next exciting idea or program. FAD surfing[35] is a perilous venture!

FAD surfing (n): the practice of riding the crest of the latest management panacea and then paddling out again just in time to ride the next one; always absorbing for managers and lucrative for consultants; frequently disastrous for organizations.

Human resources and a future focused on increasing your ability to attract, motivate and retain employees is a value proposition. Adding value that serves to facilitate organizational success needs to be a way of life for HR practitioners, grounded in strategies to improve organizational effectiveness through sound people practices.

There are both strategic and transactional elements to the human resource function – the set of decisions and activities that influence the effectiveness of employees and, in turn, the organization.

The strategic elements are the means to achieve a long term objective or objectives – the detailed plan of action to achieve a goal or a purpose. This includes choices about which functions the organization will perform, which products and services it will provide, and the clients it will serve to meet its mandate/mission and achieve the vision of what the organization can and should be.

In contrast, the transactional elements can be described as the activities necessary to operate the enterprise. These activities have an operational focus as opposed to a future or strategic focus. Whether by virtue of time, resources or expertise, the reality in most organizations, including school districts, is that human resource practitioners gravitate towards the *transactional stuff* – the most immediate and, when faced with resource/time pressures, necessary focus.

The transactional focus also becomes the norm in the absence of plans to do otherwise and a sustained organizational commitment to consider the *big picture* and the employment implications of organizational life in a larger context.

When examining workplace/student demographics, societal pressures, emerging technologies and economic realities, one is inevitably drawn to the conclusion that we are, as some have suggested, in a transformative period. Neither the rate of change nor its nature has been experienced in public education before. This period of transformation has profound employment implications. As we have outlined, it is an organizational imperative that we plan the way forward in a purposeful, data-based and informed manner.

The Three Roles Every Modern, Strategic Talent Management Function Must Have provides a perspective on the changing roles of human resources given the present and increasing labour market and talent pressures. It is an instructive perspective as school districts seek to proactively address key labour market and sectoral dynamics. The article speaks to many of the concepts and ideas identified in the BCPSEA sustainable workforce model. The article doesn't provide the answer, but the three roles the author identifies

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35 FAD surfing is a term coined by Eileen Shapiro in her 1995 book *FAD Surfing in the Boardroom* (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Reading, Mass.)

have application to school districts and the shifting human resource focus from traditional human resource matters to the attraction of talent and the motivation and retention of employees.

Three Roles Every Modern, Strategic Talent Management Function Must Have

The human resources profession is one often perceived by those outside the function as a bureaucratic, compliance-driven, administrative function that is reactive versus proactive and that changes at the speed of a rock.

In most organizations, that perception is one well-earned, since most HR processes and policies are developed in response to a significant event and are intended to limit certain behaviors instead of enabling others. HR has become the function known for saying "you can't do that" as opposed to the function known for saying "this is how we can accomplish that." However, a few leading organizations are breaking with tradition – at least when it comes to talent management – establishing new functional structures that account for current labor market realities, and adding new proactive activities to the stable of HR services.

A growing number of organizations are leveraging the visibility currently being placed on the impending talent shortage/crisis by corporate leaders and growing the scope of talent management activities to include formalized processes, programs, and departments focused on proactive management of the employment brand, retention, and workforce planning.

These groundbreaking organizations are tearing down massive walls that years of political infighting have created between HR functions in order to develop entirely new HR structures where all deliverables are integrated to "strategically" manage the portfolio of talent that the organization can use to call upon to achieve both short- and long-term objectives.

No longer does the training and development function devise and offer training programs for skill sets that can more readily be acquired through recruitment at a lower cost. No longer do key employees leave the organization because a bad manager kept them from advancing or learning. No longer do offers made to top candidates get rejected because compensation cannot adequately assess the market value of talent. Sound too good to be true? It isn't, but getting there isn't easy; lots of archaic thinking gets in the way!

Driving Change: Three New Roles Defined

While breaking down the barriers between the existing HR functions that impact talent management is in itself a profound success, leading organizations are also formalizing a number of proactive activities that add true strategic power to talent management.

By creating a formal workforce planning role, organizations are empowering staffing departments, training departments, and operations departments to take the guesswork out of how it will happen, and they are managing using robust forecasts that scientifically demonstrate the correlation between workforce utilization/composition and organizational capability and capacity.

To further support strategic talent management, workforce planning is coming online with two other proactive roles. Employment branding is becoming more mainstream as organizations

recognize the need to make themselves more visible and attractive to top talent, and to motivate existing employees. Retention efforts are formalizing not just to stave off the need for hard-to-find replacement talent, but also to support knowledge management and knowledge transfer between several generations of talent. Each of these new roles is outlined here:

Vice President/Director/Manager of Workforce Planning

This role will be responsible for developing systems that ensure that the organization has an adequate supply of talent to support planned business objectives in both existing and new markets. (Note the emphasis here is not to run statistics and create reports, but rather to ensure an adequate supply of talent.)

Specific responsibilities for this role include:

- Overseeing the creation and management of all strategic HR goals, management practices, organizational policies, and talent management systems to ensure the organization has the capability and capacity to secure an adequate workforce when needed.
- Participating in organization-wide strategic planning and operations-planning sessions to provide input on workforce-related touch points.
- Projecting the organization's supply and demand for talent on a moving one-, three-, or five-year basis (timing dependent upon industry).
- Identifying gaps in projected supply and demand for talent and developing strategic and tactical plans to acquire the labor needed to meet objectives.
- Marshaling the cooperation and integration of HR deliverables.
- Establishing and maintaining the

business case for organizational change needed to retain a position as the "employer of choice" among key internal and external talent constituencies.
- Analyzing data from all internal functions to determine the relationship between talent availability or utilization and productivity, or the occurrence of sentinel events. (A sentinel event is any unexpected occurrence that results in a severely negative outcome.)

Vice President/Director/Manager of Employment Branding

This role will be responsible for developing systems that identify and manage how the organization is perceived by both internal and external key talent constituencies to ensure that the organization develops and maintains a dominant position in relevant labor markets as the employer of choice. (Note that the emphasis of this new role is not on employment advertising but on understanding and managing perception among key constituents.)

Specific responsibilities for this role include:

- Developing and implementing an employment branding strategy that ensures key constituents continue to perceive the organization as an employer of choice, thereby simplifying talent retention, motivation, and attraction.
- Marshaling internal management practices and people programs to ensure that the employment experience delivered is one capable of sustaining projected talent needs.
- Overseeing the creation and integration of employment branding messages in all public relations, media relations, marketing communica-

tions, community relations, special events, and recruitment advertising campaigns.

- Identifying and developing storylines around company management practices that can be repeated internally and externally through employee referral campaigns, public speeches by executives/managers, news stories, and select awards program applications.
- Periodically assessing employment brand internally and externally to ensure alignment between current strategy and labor market conditions.
- Establishing and maintaining the business case for organizational change needed to develop the required employment brand.

Vice President/Director/Manager of Retention

This role will be responsible for developing systems that identify mission-critical talent stores within the organization and a stable of tools and approaches that can be used on a one-to-one basis to retain them. (Note the emphasis here is not to develop organization-wide approaches that treat employees equally, but rather to provide differentiated treatment to top performers in key roles that have been characterized as critical to the success/failure of organizational objectives.)

Specific responsibilities for this role include:

- Overseeing the development and implementation of talent management methodologies to identify mission-critical roles within the organization based on objective assessment versus speculation.
- Overseeing the creation and deployment of tools and approaches on a case-by-case basis to ensure the retention of key employees.

- Analyzing internal data from all functions to identify relationships between organizational practices/events and turnover.
- Developing and administering knowledge management and transition processes for planned turnover.
- Developing and maintaining systems that monitor and report on managers' abilities to develop and retain top performers.
- Establishing and maintaining the business case for organizational change needed to drive retention efforts.

Conclusion

It's a brave new world, one with few barriers to competition, which is why barriers to strategic talent management must be removed. Existing barriers include isolated HR functions, lack of strategic mindset, and lack of infrastructure to power true strategic talent management. Removing these barriers isn't easy, but is a necessity for survival in a global economy. Many professionals in HR are not adequately equipped and will not survive in a modern HR function. Organizations cannot let those incapable of transitioning become barriers themselves.

It is time to step up to the plate. It is time to embrace new proactive activities. It is time to stop talking about being strategic and actually be strategic! Enjoy the future – it's your turn to be the corporate hero.

ER Daily, April 24, 2007. Dr. John Sullivan is a frequent speaker and advisor to Fortune 500 and Silicon Valley firms. Formerly the chief talent officer for Agilent Technologies (the 43,000-employee HP spin-off), he is now a professor of management at San Francisco State University. He was called the "Michael Jordan of Hiring" by *Fast Company* magazine. Dr. Sullivan is also the editor of *VP of HR*, an e-newsletter providing "out of the box" solutions for senior HR managers.

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It is time to stop talking about being strategic and actually be strategic!

Compensation Administration:
Same Challenges, New Strategies?

Regardless of which study you read on employee retention, compensation is an issue. But interestingly, compensation is not the number one issue employees cite as their reason for leaving their current employer.

One of the most comprehensive studies reported on employee retention explored the roots of employee disengagement. The Saratoga Institute collected 19,700 exit surveys and almost 4,000 verbatim comments that had been gathered from employees of U.S. companies in 17 different industries.[36] A review of their findings determined that "88% of employees leave jobs for reasons other than pay, and yet, in one survey, 89% of managers believe employees leave mainly for pay-related reasons!"[37]

So what are the primary reasons employees leave? Employee-retention expert Leigh Branham identified seven themes:[38]

1: The job or workplace was not as expected
2: The mismatch between job and person
3: Too little coaching and feedback
4: Too few growth and advancement opportunities
5: Feeling devalued and unrecognized
6: Stress from overwork and work-life imbalance
7: Loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders.

Understanding and acting upon the underlying reasons employees leave the organization is important if employers are going to effectively address the issue of employee retention in a competitive labour market. Consideration of the *Employment Value Proposition* (EVP) as discussed earlier in this issue, and its integration with the district's exempt compensation approach and structure, are key factors in the retention (and recruitment) of qualified personnel.

Like many organizations, the K-12 sector has traditionally viewed compensation as a combination of salary, allowances, and health and welfare benefits. In promoting an integrated view of compensation and rewards, BCPSEA advocates a total rewards model – not only traditional, quantifiable elements but also more intangible elements such as career opportunities, learning and career development, work challenge, and supportive culture – that further integrates with the district's strategic workforce plan.

As part of their EVP discussions, K-12 employers, like other employers, need to ensure that their exempt compensation philosophy, design, delivery and decisions are data-driven, fair, focused, defensible, and understood. BCPSEA encourages practices that enable public school employers to recruit, retain, incent, and reward their employees.

For market comparison purposes, contemporary compensation practices consider:

Specific job duties/ responsibilities (job match)

Employer annual operating budget

School district student full time equivalent enrolment

Geographic region

Full time equivalent employees

District-specific structural considerations

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36 The Saratoga Institute, a service offering of PricewaterhouseCoopers, is a global leader in human capital management. The Institute teams with executives and HR departments to help them measure, manage and maximize the value of their workforce. www.saratogainstitute.com <http://www.saratogainstitute.com>

37 Leigh Branham. *The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave: How to Read the Subtle Signs and Act Before It's Too Late.* AMACOM Books, 2005.

38 Ibid.

In working with districts to address both the real and perceived problems associated with exempt staff compensation and to ensure consistent compensation practices in the sector, we promote a common understanding of:

- The specific compensation administration system in the K-12 public education sector
- Industry-standard approaches to compensation structure development and review
- The consequences for the sector arising from individual employer compensation decisions
- The reality that exempt staff compensation development and review operate within the context of a highly political environment, both at the local board of education level and at the provincial level.

Legislative Change

On May 29, 2008, the provincial government enacted amendments to the *Public Sector Employers Act* (contained in Bill 33 *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act*, 2008) that resulted in changes to the sectoral approach to compensation administration.

The position of Superintendent was removed from the statutory sectoral administration system. Responsibility for determination of Superintendent compensation now rests solely with the board of education. This position is treated the same as CEOs in the public sector for public compensation disclosure purposes, and approval of the compensation package is therefore the responsibility of the board.

Although the legislative amendments remove the position of Superintendent from the sectoral compensation administration system, it is important to note that the amendments do not alter the need for boards, like other employers, to follow proper human resources practices with respect to executive and exempt staff compensation. The board should develop/maintain a comprehensive exempt staff compensation approach and structure, which is grounded in relevant labour market data and links all exempt positions – including the Superintendent position – to the structure.

The legislative amendments also introduced enhanced executive disclosure requirements. These were described in an accompanying Ministry of Finance news release:

"The changes will help bring public sector compensation reporting to best practice standards and provide the public with far more detail on the underlying compensation philosophy of an organization and how that compensation relates to performance…

The amendments will allow the government to require public sector organizations to proactively disclose the major elements of compensation, including base salary, benefits, employer pension contributions, and performance payments. The enhanced disclosure requirements will apply to chief executive officers and the next four highest paid executives, where these positions hold an annual base salary of $125,000 or more."

Even where the Superintendent does not earn an annual salary of $125,000 or more, there is still a requirement to file a disclosure report for that position.

The public sector, including the K-12 sector, has now completed the first executive disclosure under the legislation. Other public sector organizations were required to file by June 30, 2008. As the

fiscal year for the public education sector runs from July 1 to June 30, boards of education were not required to report until August 30, 2008.

The disclosure forms have been posted to the Public Sector Employers' Council website at <http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/psec/execcompdisclosure/>. Organizations are also required to post their district's executive disclosure on their own website.

In planning for compensation disclosure for 2008-2009, boards will want to review their 2007-2008 report in the context of the government reporting guidelines to ensure that their report accurately reflects compensation philosophy and practice in the district.

Total Compensation Survey

Current and relevant data are the foundation of any compensation administration system that may be in place from time to time. While we continue to be governed by the current statutory framework for administration of exempt staff compensation, the data serve to assist BCPSEA and boards of education in benchmarking the elements of total compensation for executive and exempt staff and support submissions that are brought forward to the employers' association and to PSEC.

On a triennial basis, BCPSEA surveys the total compensation paid to exempt benchmark positions in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan (new to the survey this year), and Ontario. Based on the number of requests and feedback we receive, the *Report on Total Compensation Paid to Exempt Employees* (the Report) is a highly utilized document by school districts.

The snapshot date for the most recent survey was July 1, 2007. However, several initiatives occurred shortly after the snapshot date that affected the BC data:

- The revised salary ranges for the positions of Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer as approved by the Minister of Finance early in the 2007-2008 school year
- The 2006-2007 exempt staff labour market adjustment allocations under the *Public Education Negotiating Framework Compensation Plan – Exempt Staff* (PENFCP), which rolled out in the middle of the 2007-2008 school year
- The 2007-2008 exempt staff labour market adjustment allocations under the PENFCP, which rolled out late in the 2007-2008 school year
- The removal of the position of Superintendent from the statutory sectoral compensation administration system late in the 2007-2008 school year.

As the BC salary data initially collected were rendered obsolete by these initiatives, and in order to ensure currency of the data, BCPSEA re-surveyed school districts to collect updated data. Responses have now been received from 59 of 60 districts. We are proceeding to finalize the Report and anticipate distribution to districts around late November.

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Porting of Seniority, Sick Leave

Since the porting of sick leave and seniority language came into effect with the 2006-2011 Provincial Collective Agreement between BCPSEA and the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF), several issues have arisen concerning the interpretation and application of Articles C.2.2 and G.1 of the agreement. These issues have, over the past two years, resulted in arbitration awards, Letters of Understanding, creation of forms, and clarification discussions between BCPSEA and the BCTF.

On September 30, BCPSEA distributed *Teacher Collective Agreement Administration Bulletin* No. 19, which included:

- Joint communication from BCPSEA and the BCTF
- Updated BCPSEA *Teacher Collective Agreement Administration (TCAA) Manual* content for C.2.2 and G.1
- Flow chart to assist in the administration of Articles C.2.2 and G.1
- Updated verification forms for porting seniority and sick leave
- Letter of Understanding No. 15: Article C.2 – Porting of Seniority – Separate Seniority Lists for insertion into the Letters of Understanding section of the *TCAA Manual*.
- Letter of Understanding No. 16: Article C.2 and G.1 – Simultaneously Holding Part-Time Appointments in Two Different Districts for insertion into the Letters of Understanding section of the *TCAA Manual*. All of these document can also be found on the BCPSEA website at http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/access/publications/tcaab/tcaabulletin.html.

It is important for districts to ensure that the appropriate sections of the *TCAA Manual* are updated. In addition, districts should also ensure that their processes and forms are updated to reflect these changes, which include the porting of seniority with respect to Adult Education, porting while teachers are on leave, automatic conversions, new forms, etc.

Further, consistent with Irene Holden's previous awards on porting, implementation of these clarifications and applications is meant to be on a prospective basis from the date of the joint communication and is not intended to undo any previous staffing decisions. This is with the understanding that should there be anomalies, these anomalies could be discussed and considered at the provincial labour-management committee meetings.

Should you require assistance or wish to discuss this issue further, please contact your BCPSEA labour relations liaison.

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Freedom of Expression

There have now been two awards rendered with respect to the issue of freedom of expression for teachers to communicate with parents on matters pertaining to the education of students.

The first award was a BC Court of Appeal decision (*BCPSEA v. BCTF* (2005), 141 LAC (4th) 385), which was an appeal from an arbitration award of Donald Munroe (*BCPSEA v. BCTF* (2004), 129 LAC (4th) 245) concerning teachers' right to discuss class size issues with parents during parent–teacher interviews. The second award was a decision dated May 2, 2008 from arbitrator John Kinzie concerning teachers' right to distribute (through grade 4 and 7 students in a sealed envelope addressed to parents) union information regarding Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA). Both of these awards involved the interpretation of sections 1 and 2(b) of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

BCPSEA has now reviewed these awards. Our *@issue* bulletin No. 2008-13, dated September 30, 2008 (on the web at http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/access/publications/aissue/2008/ai2008-13.pdf) provides districts the criteria and suggested processes and procedures for determining which union materials can be distributed by teachers to parents, either directly or through students. It must be noted that neither of the decisions involved off duty conduct or "expressions" concerning employer policies or actions. The decisions provide us with general legal principles concerning public expressions by teachers.

Each case will have to be assessed on its individual merits. While the above-noted cases provide specific guidance for teacher activity at the workplace involving government policy and legislation issues (class size/FSA), and the use of students as couriers, future issues concerning teacher activity outside the workplace or issues regarding a teacher/union speaking out about a school district's decisions, policies and/or actions, will need to be reviewed and assessed based on their individual merits, the application of the legal concepts from the above-noted cases, and other case law.

Should you encounter the issue of distribution of union material (on or off school property), please contact your BCPSEA labour relations liaison for discussion.

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Public Sector Employers' Council Changes

The government cabinet shuffle in June 2008 also saw some changes to ministry responsibilities. The Public Sector Employers' Council was moved from the auspices of the Ministry of Finance to the re-named Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. As part of this change in responsibility, in October the Minister, Murray Coell, appointed Tom Vincent, Vice President of the PSEC Secretariat, as a Government member to the BCPSEA Board of Directors. The Board is pleased to welcome Tom and his extensive knowledge of government policies, programs and perspectives.

Working Documents
Process and Update

Background

BCPSEA is working with school districts, local teachers' unions, and the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) to complete the 2001-2004 and 2006-2011 working documents for each school district.

Process

In constructing the documents, the general approach has been to complete a 2001-2004 document for a district and then move to the 2006-2011 document. The process for completing the 2001-2004 document involves amending previous local language to include:

- any approved changes flowing from local matters bargaining
- any Mid-Contract Modifications
- any interface language flowing from negotiations
- any amendments to provincial language.

Using a completed 2001-2004 working document as a base, the same process is followed to generate a draft 2006-2011 working document. When a draft has been completed, it is reviewed by the district and, once acceptable, it is reviewed by the local.

Letter of Understanding No. 8: Process

At this stage, the parties are in a position to engage in the Letter of Understanding No. 8 updating process if they choose to do so. The process is not mandatory for either party and either party can decide not to participate.

If the parties agree to engage in the process, we recommend you consult with your BCPSEA labour relations liaison about any changes you are considering advancing, to confirm that they are appropriate for the Letter of Understanding No. 8 process. Second, we recommend you consult with your BCPSEA liaison before agreeing to any amendments proposed by your local.

This process only applies to provincial matters that were previously negotiated at the school district level and does not apply to provincially negotiated language.

This is an administrative process that does not entail either party gaining on substantive issues as would be the case in bargaining.

The only criteria for approval are for one of the following purposes:

- The elimination of out-of-date references to terms, dates, or other matters (e.g., change to the name of an Act – *Human Rights Code* instead of Human Rights Act)
- Updating of collective agreement language that is either no longer relevant or functional (e.g., change in legislation leading to the elimination of a term – Administrative Officer; school district restructuring (e.g., school closure, elimination of a program cited in the collective agreement, additional staff requiring changes to job titles)
- The resolution of internal inconsistencies and incongruities within individual agreements (e.g., competing collective agreement language such as layoff/recall provisions giving vacancy preference to an employee on layoff at the same time as a posting provi-

sion that gives priority to a continuing teacher or a teacher returning from leave over a laid off employee) OR conflicting language in the collective agreement with legislation (timing of a leave in a collective agreement may be inconsistent with the legislation (e.g., maternity/parental leave).

Interface

BCPSEA and the BCTF have worked jointly to develop provincial interface language for each school district. In many cases, the provincial parties reached agreement on interface language. Notwithstanding this agreement, the BCTF has held off providing its formal approval until such time as a local is satisfied with the interface language.

Not all interface language was agreed to by the provincial parties and discussions are ongoing with respect to a process to resolve outstanding disputes. Where there is a disagreement over interface or other working document language, the provincial parties are developing an agreement that would set out who would arbitrate a dispute, timing for the process, and determining criteria to guide the arbitrator. Conclusion of this process will likely be delayed until such time as each draft working document has been completed and all outstanding issues are known to the parties.

Legal Status of the Working Documents

BCPSEA and the BCTF have engaged in discussions at labour-management meetings to deal with a related issue. The issue concerns the legal status of the completed working document. In the past, the parties have used the working documents as reference documents and have relied on other source documents (those used to construct the working documents) as the legal documents applicable in the event of a dispute regarding the wording in the working document.

Consideration is being given to using the working documents as the legal document. This would have the effect of having a single document applicable to a school district and its BCTF local. While not legally a collective agreement, it would be applied on a day to day basis in the same manner. As this is a new approach, the parties are still working through the legal implications of moving forward in this manner.

At this stage, the BCTF is not willing to sign off on the documents and give them primary status as the legal documents applicable in the event of a dispute.

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BCPSEA Learning Opportunities

2008 SYMPOSIUM
INSIGHT AND OPPORTUNITIES
Human Resources in Education

Symposium 2008, Insight & Opportunities: Human Resources in Education, is scheduled for November 6-7, 2008 at the Four Seasons Hotel, Vancouver, BC. Sessions of note at this year's Symposium include:

- *Social Media* with broadcaster and internationally recognized social media strategist Tod Maffin
- *Engaging the Generations* with HR consultant and strategist Barbara Adams
- Guest speaker Vaughn Palmer, noted political commentator and columnist.

New Trustees Orientation

Thursday, January 22, 2009
Program details and registration TBA.

Annual General Meeting

The fifteenth Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia Public School Employers' Association will be held January 23-24, 2009 at the Coast Plaza Hotel and Suites in Vancouver. Watch the BCPSEA website for program information and online registration.

Professional Development Programs

BCPSEA has developed a series of innovative, accessible, high-quality learning opportunities to meet districts' needs in the dynamic area of human resources/labour relations. Following are sessions scheduled for 2008-2009. BCPSEA offers a variety of learning opportunities for both human resources practitioners and trustees throughout the year. Check out the Events section on our website at www.bcpsea.bc.ca for up to date information and registration details.

Productive Workplace Conversations Level 1

November 4 AND 5, 2008; December 4 AND 5. 2008
January 22 AND 23, 2009; February 23 AND 24, 2009; March 30 AND 31, 2009

The ability to communicate with respect, sensitivity and assertion is key to achieving outcomes that work for you and your colleagues. Effective communication can be especially difficult to maintain in conflict situations where the tendency may be to overreact or sell yourself short. In this session, you will acquire useful concepts and skills, from a brain research perspective, to assist in a variety of challenging situations while you practice improving and maintaining respectful communication under pressure.

Productive Workplace Conversations Level 2

April 2 and 3, 2009

Productive conversations are essential in daily interactions with others to help individuals get what they need. This course builds on Productive Workplace Conversations Level 1 and provides the foundational framework of a collaborative model for everyday interactions. The collaborative approach to resolution aims for agreements that respond to the needs of all people involved to the greatest extent possible.

Harassment Investigator Training: Initial Program

December 9 and 10, 2008

March 3 and 4, 2009

This program approaches the investigation of harassment complaints from a number of perspectives: the employer's responsibilities under the collective agreement and *Human Rights Act*, the essential elements of a fair and thorough investigation, and the role of education leaders in dealing with harassment matters. There is a significant focus on report writing, including report structure, content and reasoning, and identifying common mistakes made by investigators. The program will also include an update on outstanding issues, recent decisions, and the Dorsey report disclosure process.

Harassment Investigator Training: Advanced Level

December 11 and 12. 2008

March 5 and 6, 2009

In concert with Learning Works, BCPSEA offers a hands-on program focusing on skill development in the following critical areas: assessing credibility, dealing with conflicting evidence or testimony, and finding ways to corroborate or refute allegations in the absence of witnesses and/or where the stories conflict. This program is intended for previously trained investigators who wish to enhance their investigative skills and who wish to be updated on the application and interpretation of the collective agreement arising from arbitration decisions, accepted practices, and other jurisprudence.

Train-the-Trainer: Harassment Awareness Training

December 8, 2008

March 2, 2009

The provisions of Article E.2 of the Provincial Collective Agreement between the BC Public School Employers' Association and the BC Teachers' Federation require that harassment awareness training be provided to all new employees, and contemplates that such training will be offered annually or as necessary to provide training to new employees.

This one day workshop provides individuals with the knowledge and materials to present a Harassment Awareness Program of 1.5 to 2.0 hours in length to meet the requirements of Article E.2.

Behavioural Interviewing

To Be Announced

Behavioural interviewing was originally developed on the premise that the best

predictor of future performance is past performance. Behaviour-based interviews allow the interviewer to gather information about what candidates have done in the past to predict how they will act in the future.

Employers have found they can get a better picture of a candidate's work style by causing them to relate to specific past experiences, rather than allowing them to respond with vague generalizations about what they would do in a hypothetical situation.

Managing and the Collective Agreement

February 5 AND 6, 2009

April 20 AND 21, 2009

Whether referred to as the law of the workplace, the parties' rules, or the agreement, the collective agreement – negotiated periodically to define and redefine the rewards employees receive for their services, and the conditions under which these services are rendered – is the cornerstone of our labour relations system

In this session you will explore the legal framework that governs employment in a unionized setting and those features you must be particularly mindful of and understand. You will acquire a framework for thinking about managing and the collective agreement, as well as useful tools/resources.

Influencing Employee Behaviour

To Be Announced

The term "difficult employee" is typically used to refer to a worker who fails to conduct him or herself in a responsible and/or professional manner in the workplace. Effectively dealing with such employees can be among the greatest challenges that face employers. Few relish the prospect of criticizing or disciplining others in the work environment; however, when difficult employees become an issue, their failings must be addressed respectfully and decisively lest morale and efficiency become eroded.

In this session, we will identify some common errors and help you to formulate an approach to "influence employee behaviour" based on sound principles.

Dispute Resolution and the Collective Agreement

May 4 AND 5, 2009

Grievances that lead to arbitration are not only financially draining, but the results of the arbitration can have a significant impact on the morale and operations of the school district. In some situations, the win or loss of an arbitration can completely change the culture and "perceived" rights of either management or the union. Consequently, it is in the best interests of both parties to resolve disputes as quickly as possible. If this is not realistic, then you must be prepared to make your case at arbitration.

Learn how to make the most productive use of the grievance process to gather information, analyze matters at issue, develop settlement options and, if necessary, be in a position to prevail at arbitration.

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Have an HR Issue?
Your Employers' Association Can Help!

By phone, e-mail, or fax…assistance from your employers' association is available at your fingertips.

In addition to our statutory mandate, a major area of BCPSEA focus is the development, coordination, and facilitation of human resources best practices in the public education sector.

So whether you have a question about collective agreement interpretation, employment contract language, compensation administration, workplace safety, or any other human resources issue, let us know how we can help you.

CEO Hugh Finlayson

Labour Relations

Brian Chutter	Rob D'Angelo
Renzo Del Negro	Sue Ferguson
Jacquie Griffiths	Sherida Harris
Laura Parks	Stephanie Tassin

Exempt Staff Human Resources
Deborah Stewart

Legal Services
Jennifer Devins (Jennifer Jamieson on maternity leave to April 2009)

Seconded Director Human Resources
Georgina Johnson   Ron Pound

Health, Safety and Wellness
Mark Grabas

Research Services
Michelle Cehak   Hanna Park

Administration

Dora Eng	Kristi Furtney
Nancy Hill	Racquel Parris
Silvana Sam	

Education Data and Analysis Systems
Hilary Brown

Make a Future – Careers in BC Education
Janet Stewart

www.bcpsea.bc.ca

www.makeafuture.ca

Best Employer 2009

2009
BC's Top 50 Employers

The Board of Directors is pleased to advise that the British Columbia Public School Employers' Association has been selected as one of British Columbia's Top 50 Employers for 2009. The annual *BC's Top Employers* competition, in its fifth year, is organized by the editors of *Canada's Top 100 Employers*. The designation as a top employer in BC recognizes "employers that lead their industries in offering exceptional places to work."

This year's winners were announced by the competition's editorial partners, the *Victoria Times-Colonist*, *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province* in special newspaper sections in mid-October. The BC Human Resources Management Association is a research partner to the project.

Employers are evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

• Physical Workspace
• Work Atmosphere and Social
• Health, Financial and Family Benefits
• Vacation and Time Off
• Employee Communications
• Performance Management
• Training, Skills Development
• Community Involvement

Employers are compared to other organizations in their field to determine which offers the most progressive and forward-thinking programs. BCPSEA's selection was based on information from our application to the competition, as well as independent research conducted by the competition's selection committee.

*O*ur mission is to develop and maintain human resource pracices that maximize the benefit for students in our public education system through the effective use of resources and fair terms of employment.