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Strategic Partnerships

by Ed Noot

Schools can exist in a state of relative isolation. Although many Christian schools tout a strong connection to church and home, an honest assessment may show that meaningful contact is somewhat limited. Beyond church and home, schools often have a very limited connection with other organizations.

Organizational management studies have decried the effect of *silos* within organizations. Silos make perfect sense for the farmer who does not wish to mix the various grain products on the farm but in an organization they can be crippling.

The Silo Mentality as defined by the Business Dictionary is a *mindset present when certain departments or sectors do not wish to share information with others in the same company. This type of mentality will reduce efficiency in the overall operation, reduce morale, and may contribute to the demise of a productive company culture.*¹

We can also slide into a pattern of operating a silo-like school. Perhaps communication within the organization is excellent, but what about inter-organizational communication? Could the school benefit from additional connections with other schools and other organizations?

Strategic partnerships are formal or informal relationships or agreements that allow organizations to interact in a new, creative and mutually beneficial manner. A successful strategic partnership is truly a win-win.² Strategic partnership can move organizations from mutual exclusivity or even competition to cooperation.

In order to achieve strategic partnerships, organizations need to see a distinct benefit and must be willing to pay whatever price is required in fees, goods, services, time, resources



or intellectual property. Sometimes strategic partnerships are based on an exchange of goods or services rather than cash.

SCSBC has recently entered into a number of significant strategic partnerships. In one agreement, we partner with the Prairie Center for Christian Education (PCCE) to allow Teaching for Transformation to be offered to member schools as an SCSBC service. This agreement increased the scope of Tft training in BC, and reduced the cost of Tft to SCSBC member schools. PCCE gained a measure of recompense for their investment in developing Tft and freed up their main Tft trainers to conduct training in the growing market among American Christian schools.

SCSBC has also entered into a strategic partnership with School District #33 (Chilliwack) and the Fraser Valley Distance Education School (FVDES) to encourage the enrolment of SCSBC and other independent school students into the FVDES work experience and apprenticeship courses. Through this agreement, more students have access to work experience and apprenticeship courses, FVDES gains the opportunity to serve independent schools, participating schools receive a portion of per-course funding for partnering with FVDES, and SCSBC gains external revenue to cover the cost of our work experience consultant thereby offering an additional service to member schools.

Another example of SCSBC's work in developing strategic partnerships is our informal agreement with ACSI which allows schools to be members of both organizations. Each of the two organizations now offers a slight membership fee reduction to accommodate any school that see value in belonging to both SCSBC and ACSI. This partnership arrangement reduces any perceived competition and allows for a more collaborative spirit to emerge and prevail.

Look around your community. Where do you see opportunities for your school to engage in strategic partnerships?

School A is a dwindling elementary school with limited opportunities for growth. They are having a hard time attracting committed teachers and leaders to their community. School B is located in a community 25 kilometres away. They are bursting at the seams at the elementary level but face high student attrition into high school. They are exploring starting a DL school to increase the flexibility of their program offerings. School A and B connect in a strategic partnership that sees School B provide administrative leadership and oversight while School A enrolls students in the DL program offered by School B. The schools work together to support and enhance one another.

School C is located in an urban center with a nearby a conservation area. The municipality is challenged to find the tax dollars to maintain the trail system. The school and conservation center form a strategic partnership that allows teachers and students to access the area for science trips, explorations and experiments and in turn the school maintains the area trail system. Some of this

work is accomplished via classes studying design and building, and some is completed by a voluntary extra-curricular club.

School D has a thriving fine arts program, but limited space for instruction and performance. The local movie theater is threatening to close due to patrons flocking to new theaters on the outskirts of town. The school and theater form a strategic partnership that allows the school to use the theater as a teaching space during the day in exchange for students helping to run the show on weekends when the theater will play classics, foreign films and second run movies at reduced rates. The students "earn" some income to support their school's acquisition of capital items and to help pay for extended tours.

What are the opportunities in your community? Break out of your silo and look around your community to see potential strategic partnerships that can be formed to mutual advantage. In addition to any specific benefit your school receives, you will enjoy the added value of raising your school's profile and of contributing the good of your broader community.

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- 1 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brentgleeson/2013/10/02/the-silo-mentality-how-to-break-down-the-barriers/#48866f028c7e>
- 2 <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/strategic-partner.html>

Used Pizza Boxes

by Bill de Jager

Looking for ways to strengthen your school's learning and teaching?

Of course, you are! Who wouldn't be?

So let's get specific.

- How about increasing your students' **exposure to other children** around the world?
- Or providing occasions for your students and teachers to **grow in cultural intelligence**?
- How about increasing your school's understanding of **the global body of Christ**?
- Or reinforcing your school's appreciation for **Christ-centered schools internationally**?

It's easy to see that these four ways complement your vision and application of Christian education at your school, don't you think? They probably are close to the core of what you hope for in your students and teachers.

Agencies and Agreements

by Marlene Bylenga

In the last few years, British Columbia's K-12 schools have seen significant growth in international student enrolment. As spaces become limited in some of the larger urban areas and agents become more knowledgeable about the educational options in British Columbia, many schools that previously had challenges recruiting students are now being approached by agencies or agents to enroll students. Although there are many reputable agents who provide excellent services, school leaders should make careful considerations before signing with an agent or agencies.

It is very important that boards and school leaders view international students and parents as an integral part of the school community, and that these parents meet the same enrolment criteria as domestic families. When working with agents, it is imperative that they understand your school's mission and vision and are able to communicate the vision to the parents of the students who are hoping to enroll in your school.

Be cautious when signing agent agreements. Signing an exclusive agreement is generally not a good idea since it limits you as you grow your program. Read the contract very carefully, remembering that your international program is another expression of the mission and vision of your school and therefore any contract should reflect the character of your school.

Reputable agents will understand the BC education system and will be able to explain to overseas applicants the requirements for graduation in BC. They will be able to screen students

and determine which students will be able to flourish in an educational environment that may be different from what they are accustomed to. Unfortunately, some of the documentation provided may not be credible. Requiring the results of an ITEP Slate score or an IELTS score as a part of your application package is one way to determine the English proficiency of the student. Being deliberate about the admissions and screening process is extremely important for the health of your school's program.

Even though agents are able to provide many support services, it is important that your school have your own established guidelines and policies in place. Ultimately, your school is responsible for the students in your care and it is wise to ensure that you have established policies. The BC government published a Homestay Guidelines document in 2015. Take the time to review this document to see if your program complies with the guidelines. It can be found online at www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/internationaleducation/home_stay_guidelines.pdf. In addition, SCSBC has developed an International Program portal with many resources and policies for member schools to access and use in their programs.

Please do not hesitate to contact SCSBC with any questions or concerns you may have about agents and agencies.

Marlene Bylenga (ieprogram@scsbc.ca) is the SCSBC International Education Coordinator

as School Desks?

So let's get even more specific.

- Imagine the lasting impact of building a long-term relationship between your students and staff with a "sister school" elsewhere in the world.
- Picture the learning power of sending a team of your students and teachers to assist with a school construction project. What an incredible opportunity for them to learn about another culture, develop meaningful relationships, and interact with another Christian school community!
- Consider the lessons learned about your Christian school's abundance and your support for less fortunate Christian schools when your school participates in various modes of adaptable and manageable fundraising.
- Think about the enduring benefits for your classrooms, when your teachers return from a ten-day summer "class trip", interacting with, learning from, and encouraging Christian school teachers in a developing nation.

EduDeo Ministries can strengthen your school's learning and teaching. It offers beneficial educational programs for your students and teachers: edudeo.com/canadian-christian-schools. And if you are curious about EduDeo Ministries' vision and work (beyond its offerings to Canadian Christian schools), explore further at edudeo.com/get-involved.

It sounds interesting, doesn't it?

If you would like to hear more about the life-changing work of EduDeo and its impact that it can have with your students and teachers, I am available to come to your school to talk more about these EduDeo programs. Just email me at bdejager@edudeo.com.

By the way. Wondering about the title? When I come over to your school, have I got a story for you!

Bill de Jager has been an educator at three Christian schools in North America and an SCSBC Director of Learning prior to his recent retirement. Currently, he is a volunteer EduDeo ambassador and participates in the EduDeo Walking Together program as a learning leader.

Learning and Self-Assessment:

I'd like to ask you a question. After you read it in the next paragraph, would you take a moment to pause and consider your answer before you read further?

*During your academic career as a student, did you ever reach the conclusion that various engagements in school amounted to jumping through **hoops** or **playing the game of schooling**? If so, what experiences brought you to taking that perspective?*



I have yet to encounter an educator, or anyone else for that matter, who does not recall some schooling phenomenon that caused them to consider aspects of their education as a game or a hoop. Most often, when this question is floated, there is no shortage of storytelling and associated outbursts about learned components of the game, jumping through hoops, or assertions of how some school experiences amounted simply to a joke. Some tell of how they learned to size up instructors so that they could produce what the teacher wanted to hear to receive good grades. Others spin yarns about how making a good impression with early assignments was the key to receiving subsequent high grades by instructors who grade by intuition, or worse, by name. And, others talk about making calculated judgements on what to hand in, or what to not bother handing in, based on arithmetic weighting and the effect it might have on their final grade.

Whatever the stories that unify people around the impression that aspects of schooling and coursework amounted to hoop jumping, I have never heard a teacher suggest that they wanted their students to come to this perspective. Most educators desire deep learning experiences for their students through authentic curricular engagements. Yet in spite of educators' desires for authenticity, so many students

come to the belief that hoop jumping is a matter-of-fact component of school. Why is this?

One way of looking at this is to consider that the notion of hoop jumping might well be the opposite of authentic learning. Activities or elements of *being educated* that lack connection with the learning a student considers germane quickly contribute to a negative perspective of what one might call the personal gamification of school, which breeds disconnect. Disconnect grows when learning is not authentic, when a concept or content engagement is not perceived as relevant or is incongruent with an individual's conceptual system of understanding knowledge – of how knowledge is represented and how it is used – or when assessments do not align with learning targets.

Stating that an educator's goal should centre on facilitating authentic student learning is nothing new and is referenced time and time again in the tomes of educational research literature written during the past 150 years. Despite this acknowledged and embraced near universal goal being held by educators, the common narrative of school presenting a series of hoops students must jump through persists. So how might we, now, do better in aligning our goal for authentic learning with classroom practice?

First, we have to acknowledge that learning is an inherently human, and unique, enterprise. New learning is entirely contingent upon one's previous understandings and conceptual constructs for how information is related. Making connections between discrete bits of information is as unique to the individual as snowflakes are to the snow storm, and these connections necessarily affect how that individual further organizes and builds knowledge and understanding. But this is not a comforting thought for most educators. When we acknowledge the uniqueness of how students learn, we quickly realize that methods for helping students learn will not be one-size-fits-all. Orchestrating a single learning activity will not, in any way, guarantee that all students learn because we simply cannot take into account all students' unique learning needs and personal frameworks. Instead, where authentic learning engagements are the goal, teachers must embrace the diverse ways students learn and find ways to empower students to intentionally develop and increase their personal understanding of their unique and specific learning competency strengths. Eisner says it this way, allowing students "to play to their strengths fly in the face of assumptions about uniformity . . . The good school . . . does not diminish individual differences; it increases them. It raises the mean and increases the variance."¹

The difficulty with a directive stating that teachers must embrace all learning differences is that, while trumpeting an obvious educational utopia, it does little to provide any

Hoops or Authenticity?

by Greg Gerber

clarity around practice; and here lies a significant strength in the requirement for student reflection and self-assessment within the modernized BC education plan.

Personal reflection and assessment within a greater context of being aware of what proficiency or competency looks like are fundamental aspects of authentic learning. To facilitate effective reflective practice in a competency domain, the teacher plays an instrumental role in helping students increase their awareness and ability to articulate what it means to be competent in the given learning area. By building a common language and conceptual understanding of what increased proficiency and the progressions toward increased proficiency look like (shared among teachers and students), students are better able to gauge their own skills and abilities within the domain of competency. Then, in turn, students are better equipped to articulate clear performance targets for themselves following accurate consideration of their current proficiency attainment.

Where the Core Competencies are concerned a teacher has no role in, nor responsibility for, assessing students. Instead, teachers should focus on encouraging students to consider what it looks like to validate a personal assessment of competency and acknowledge that students will not grow in all competency areas at the same time or rate. Consistent with how people learn, students will grow their competencies uniquely and should be encouraged to report on areas where they see and can point to evidence of growth in a Core

Competency area. Schools should not assume that students will grow significantly in each area every year and as such, should not require students to self-assess and report on all of the competency areas.

Think about this. If a student does not feel that they grew significantly in a certain core competency area but is then required to report on personal growth, what might the outcome be? Most probably, the student will meet the school requirement by writing something, but the process would lack authenticity and inevitably yield another unintended academic hoop.

Educators in BC have been presented with an educational architecture that supports and encourages increased authentic learning and reflection as facilitated by the requirement for students to self-assess on their growth in the Core Competency domains. As we embrace this requirement, it is imperative that we continuously evaluate the structures and processes we put in place for how our students interact with the call to self-assess on the Core Competency areas to determine if they promote hoop jumping or authenticity.

*Greg Gerber (greg.gerber@scsbc.ca)
is an SCSBC Director of Learning*

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- 1 Elliot W. Eisner in "The Uses and Limits of Performance Assessment," 1999



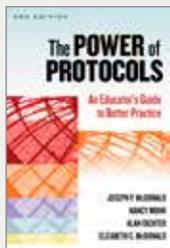
Recommended!

Check out these resources ...

The Power of Protocols: An Educator's Guide to Better Practice

By Joseph McDonald, Nancy Mohr, Alan Dichter and Elizabeth McDonald

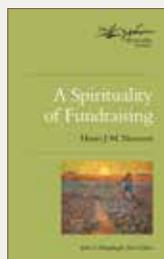
Now in its third edition, this bestseller features substantial updates that take into account recent developments in the field of facilitative leadership. The authors have also added 11 totally new protocols, including "Peer Review Protocol" and "Looking at Student Work with Equity in Mind." This essential teaching and professional development tool includes: step-by-step descriptions of how educators can use protocols to study together, work on problems of practice, teach well, and explore students' work; explanations of the particular purpose for each protocol, discussions of the value that educators have found in using them, and helpful tips for facilitators.



A Spirituality of Fundraising

by Henri J. M. Nouwen, edited by John S. Mogabgab

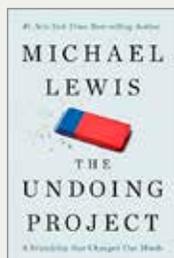
Have you ever raised funds for your church, another organization, or a mission trip? Maybe you felt uncomfortable about asking people to donate money. Is it time to change the way you view this important task? Reading this short book of Nouwen's insights, compiled by John Mogabgab, may help. "Fundraising is, first and foremost, a ministry," renowned author and teacher Henri Nouwen writes in the introduction. Nouwen approaches fundraising from a position of strength rather than weakness, seeing it as spiritual work. "Fundraising is precisely the opposite of begging," he points out. "The core of fundraising is casting a compelling vision that people want to be part of."



The Undoing Project: A Friendship That Changed Our Minds

by Michael Lewis

How did a pair of Israeli psychologists come to have so much to say about matters of the human mind that they more or less anticipated a book about American baseball written decades in the future? What possessed two guys in the Middle East to sit down and figure out what the mind was doing when it tried to judge a baseball player, or an investment, or a presidential candidate? And how on earth does a psychologist win a Nobel Prize in economics? Forty years ago, Israeli psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky wrote a series of breathtakingly original studies undoing our assumptions about the decision-making process. This story about the workings of the human mind is explored through the personalities of two fascinating individuals so fundamentally different from each other that they seem unlikely friends or colleagues.



— recommended by *The Link* guest author and former SCSBC Director of Learning, Bill de Jager

Rebuilding a

For many families in the early years of Christian education in Canada, giving priorities centred around the church and the Christian school. In fact, many of our schools' founders established the Christian school before buying their homes. It was the *right thing to do*. However, the Christian school landscape has changed and while much of this change has been positive, along the way we lost that ethos of sacrificial giving. How can we begin to rebuild a culture of generous giving in our school communities?

At the outset, we need to understand that, increasingly, people are giving when they are offered a compelling vision that resonates with them, and when they have a clear understanding of the impact their gift will have. "When charities fail to offer people both a compelling, specific case and the knowledge of what was accomplished with their gifts, the giver is less likely to give generously in the future."¹ This is a cultural shift, one that has moved giving from *organization centric* to *donor centric*.

In our present society, fundraising is about how donors can live out their values through your organization. People will ultimately give generously if *their* values align with *your* mission and vision. When you meet with potential supporters and speak from your own passion for the mission and vision of your school and the impact it is having on transforming the lives of children, you speak into the hearts of those who share your values. Appealing to people on the basis of a shared mission, not simply the need for funds, is one of the keys to successful, sustainable fund development.

Most importantly, however, are the genuine relationships you build. These have the greatest capacity to grow a culture of generous giving in your school, responsibility to actively support and promote the mission and vision of your school and are intentional about having personal and meaningful relationships with supporters and potential supporters because it's developing a culture of giving that is about relationships, not just money.² People give to people, and they often give because they are asked by people they know and trust. While "events can be great entry points to invite people in, they are a one-time deal, lacking in actual relational development."³ They don't lead to donor retention. "Without personal relationships, you're creating a never-ending treadmill of bringing donors in the front door and watching them exit the back door almost as quickly as they came."⁴

Fundraising cannot be separated from relationship, and this is especially true in the Christian context. "Philanthropy for Christians is first about people rather than about money, the possibility of relationship rather than resources. We must stand against anything that turns persons into wallets or friends into banks."⁵ Organizations rob us of our humanity when they use people for their ends rather than for flourishing people.⁶

Culture of Generous Giving by Cathy Kits

Martin Buber, a Jewish theologian, wrote about human connections as being either I-It or I-Thou. In the former, we interact with each other through purpose-oriented materialistic-based transactions. However, in the I-Thou relationship, we actively seek bonds with each other, experiencing the other's uniqueness and mystery.⁷ When we develop authentic relationships, we have the ability to respond and care for people appropriately. My challenge to you is that you define your fundraising efforts by a commitment to embody Gospel values, caring for and stewarding people, focusing on transformational giving rather than transactional giving.

"In many respects, a relational approach to fundraising is an invitation to the donor not just to give money, but to participate in the community they are supporting."⁸ It is also an invitation for *everyone* to actively participate in growing a community of givers by actively supporting and promoting the mission and vision of your school, and intentionally developing meaningful relationships with supporters and potential supporters. After all, a healthy culture of giving is about relationships...not just money.⁹

To assist you, here are some guidelines to assist you in rebuilding a culture of generous giving in your school.¹⁰

- Establish clear lines of expectation and communication between development staff, heads of school and the board.
- Cover them all with prayer and an abundance of grace – this is hard work.

- Develop a clear, honest, compelling case that demonstrates impact.
- Create strategies to connect people to your vision.
- Set goals for meeting with current givers, past givers and potential givers.
- Begin connecting with people.
- Provide a variety of ways for people to be engaged and to give.
- Establish a communications plan that encompasses the following: thanking, asking, reporting and follow-up.¹¹
- Set up an efficient method of tracking donor engagement.
- Ensure you have the internal capacity to implement your plan
- Pray for wisdom and discernment.
- Praise God for the outcome.

As you begin rebuilding a culture of generous giving in your school, focus on developing genuine relationships with the people God has given you, creating opportunities to connect them with your mission and vision. And remember, cultural transformation takes time. This is a lifelong journey, not a sprint!

*Cathy Kits (cathy.kits@scsbc.ca) is the
SCSBC Director of Development*

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- 3 Zach Clark, Development and Leadership Coaching, "Growing a Culture of Giving"
- 4 Jay Love, *Stay Together: How to Encourage a Lifetime of Donor Loyalty*
- 5 Peter Harris & Rod Wilson, *Keeping Faith in Fundraising*
- 6 Andy Crouch, Christian Schools Canada Conference 2016
- 7 Adam L. Clevenger, CFRE, "The Metaphysics of Asking"
- 8 Peter Harris & Rod Wilson, *ibid*
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- 10 John R. Frank & R. Scott Rodin, *Development 101*
- 11 Zach Clark, Development and Leadership Coaching



NEWS AND EVENTS

New Director of Finance Hired

We are pleased to announce that Tracey Yan has been hired as the new SCSBC Director of Finance. Tracey is a Chartered Professional Accountant whose main experience as a senior manager in public practice centred on not-for-profits, local government and utilities. Tracey has a Bachelor of Commerce from UBC.

Tracey has been a member of the SCSBC board for the past two years. She also has served at John Knox Christian School in Burnaby, first as their board treasurer, and more recently as their business manager. Tracey also sits on the development committee at Carver Christian High School. Tracey's involvement with Christian schools dates back to her attendance at Duncan Christian School. She has children attending Carver and Trinity Western University.

Tracey brings excellent training and experience to this position, along with a passionate commitment to Christian education. She is looking forward to serving our schools as a part of the SCSBC staff team.



Building Projects Are Underway

White Rock Christian Academy's ground breaking ceremony on March 27 marked the beginning of Phase 1 of the campus redevelopment plan. Construction of a new school wing, designed for 21st century learning, is expected to commence by month end and be completed in time for the start of school in September 2018.



Construction has begun in earnest on the new Vancouver Christian School building on Mons Drive, starting with the excavation and concrete pouring necessary for the primary gym and underground parking. The old, at-capacity, elementary school will be replaced by a state-of-the-art K-12 facility.



Demolition of the former Calvary Worship Centre church in New Westminster is complete, and John Knox Christian School is set to begin construction of a new high school building this May. The high school is scheduled to open in September 2018, and will house 450 students.



Exciting times!

SAVE THE DATE

November 4, 2017

SCSBC Leadership Conference and Annual General Meeting at Surrey Christian School

Keynote Speaker: Zach Clark

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March 6-7, 2018

SCSBC Business and Development Conference at Cedar Springs, Sumas

Plenary Speaker: Rod Wilson

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