

Compassionate Systems BC Strategic Plan

Context

Across British Columbia, education systems are responding to rising complexity in student wellbeing, mental health, equity, and belonging. The BC Ministry of Education and Child Care's Mental Health in Schools Strategy (2020) affirms that wellbeing is foundational to learning, and the BC Performance Standards for Social Responsibility emphasize belonging, contribution, empathy, and respect as core outcomes.

BC's curriculum embeds these commitments through the First Peoples' Principles of Learning, which affirm that learning is holistic, relational, reflective, experiential, and connected to place and identity. Together, these frameworks recognize that wellbeing extends beyond the individual to family, community, land, and future generations.

Compassionate Systems BC is a systems change initiative operating within this context. We support school districts and communities to strengthen relational and systemic conditions that enable students and adults to thrive. Our work advances mental health, inclusion, social responsibility, and holistic learning in alignment with Indigenous-informed and place-responsive commitments. It is grounded in a commitment to deep, ongoing transformation of the structures and patterns shaping public education in BC.

Strategic Framing

Vision

A compassionate and cohesive BC public education system supporting all learners to belong and flourish.

Mission

To cultivate interconnected compassionate systems practice that advances systems change across BC's public education system.

Principles

1. **Compassion as Practice:** We practise compassion as a disciplined way of strengthening personal awareness and responsibility in how we learn and lead.
2. **Systems Before Symptoms:** We focus on underlying structures, patterns, and conditions rather than responding only to individual behaviour or short-term fixes.
3. **Learning With Others:** We understand change as fundamentally relational, grounded in reciprocal relationships and shared responsibility.
4. **Grounded in Place:** We honour place, land, and culture as central to identity, belonging, and learning, including learning from and with the land.
5. **Indigenous Relationships:** We cultivate ongoing, respectful relationships with Indigenous students, families, caregivers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and communities, grounded in reciprocity and the First Peoples' Principles of Learning.

What we mean by Compassionate Systems

Compassionate Systems is an approach to sustained educational transformation that strengthens interconnected capacities: awareness of self, relational leadership, and systems thinking.

It supports educators, students, and communities to respond to complexity with compassion, equity, and shared responsibility. It recognizes the deep interconnectedness of individuals, relationships, communities, and systems, and strengthens the capacity to act with that awareness.

What We Do at Compassionate Systems BC

We work with school districts and communities across BC to grow compassionate systems capacity by strengthening awareness, relationships, and shared responsibility.

Through research-informed learning, facilitation, coaching, and communities of practice, we support leaders and educators to:

- Deepen awareness of self, relationships, and systems
- Strengthen relational leadership practices
- Embed student agency in shaping learning and change
- Integrate wellbeing and belonging into daily practice
- Adapt approaches to local contexts

We do not offer one-size-fits-all solutions. We work with local leaders and learners to amplify what is already working and adapt practices to their communities.

Who We Work With

We collaborate across the education ecosystem to advance sustained systems change and ongoing transformation within and beyond schools. Our work centres children and youth and engages the adults, organizations, and systems that shape their learning and wellbeing.

We collaborate with:

- Students
- School districts and schools (early years through secondary)
- Educators, leaders, and instructional support staff
- Families, caregivers, and community partners
- Researchers and institutions aligned with child and youth wellbeing
- Local First Nations, Metis and Indigenous associations
- Associations representing public education stakeholders
- Organizations advancing ongoing education system transformation

2026-2029 Strategic Priorities

Over the next three years, Compassionate Systems BC will build on existing strengths and lay the foundations for lasting impact through four strategic priorities:

Student Agency & Inclusive Participation

Goal: Student participation meaningfully shapes learning and system change across BC education communities.

Objectives

- Centre student agency within learning and facilitation models.
- Co-design learning and change initiatives in partnership with students.
- Cultivate student capacity for addressing systemic issues.
- Sustain structures that enable meaningful student participation in decision-making.
- Affirm the equal dignity, shared responsibility, and contributions of students and adults in shaping learning and systems change.

Measures of Success

- Increased number of initiatives co-designed or co-led by students.
- Documented examples of student input influencing school or district decisions.
- Students report meaningful participation in shaping learning and change efforts.

Indigenous Relationships & Place-Based Practice

Goal: Learning and governance are grounded in local First Nations contexts, including land, culture, and community.

Objectives

- Strengthen shared decision-making structures with local First Nations.
- Integrate local Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and learning into programming, governance, and evaluation.
- Partner with districts to ground Compassionate Systems practice in local histories, lands, and community realities.
- Embed learning from and with the land as a core element of place-based practice.

Measures of Success

- Local Indigenous participants report relationships as respectful, reciprocal, and influential.
- Governance structures formally include Indigenous leadership.
- Documented examples of locally grounded, land-connected, and culturally responsive practice across regions.
- District leaders report that implementation reflects local context and priorities.

Professional Learning & Equitable Access

Goal: Professional learning expands equitable access to Compassionate Systems practice across BC through invitation and engagement.

Objectives

- Embed Compassionate Systems concepts into professional development and district professional learning pathways.
- Reduce barriers to participation for rural, remote, northern, and under-resourced communities.
- Create opportunities for students and adults to learn and practice Compassionate Systems together.
- Facilitate cross-regional learning to strengthen connection, coherence, and shared practice across BC.

Measures of Success

- Compassionate Systems practices are reflected in district professional learning plans.
- Increased participation from rural, remote, and northern districts.
- Participant feedback indicates reduced barriers to access.
- Increased cross-regional collaboration and shared practice across districts.

Sustainable Governance & Infrastructure

Goal: Governance, funding, and evaluation structures sustain accountability, learning, and long-term impact.

Objectives

- Establish transparent governance and decision-making processes with defined roles and accountability mechanisms.
- Diversify funding and partnership models.
- Embed structured evaluation and reflection cycles to inform continuous improvement.
- Ensure governance reflects shared accountability, including Indigenous leadership.

Measures of Success

- Governance roles and processes are documented and functioning.
- Increase in the type and source of funding.
- Regular evaluation cycles result in documented strategic adjustments.
- Governance includes sustained Indigenous leadership and shared decision-making practices.