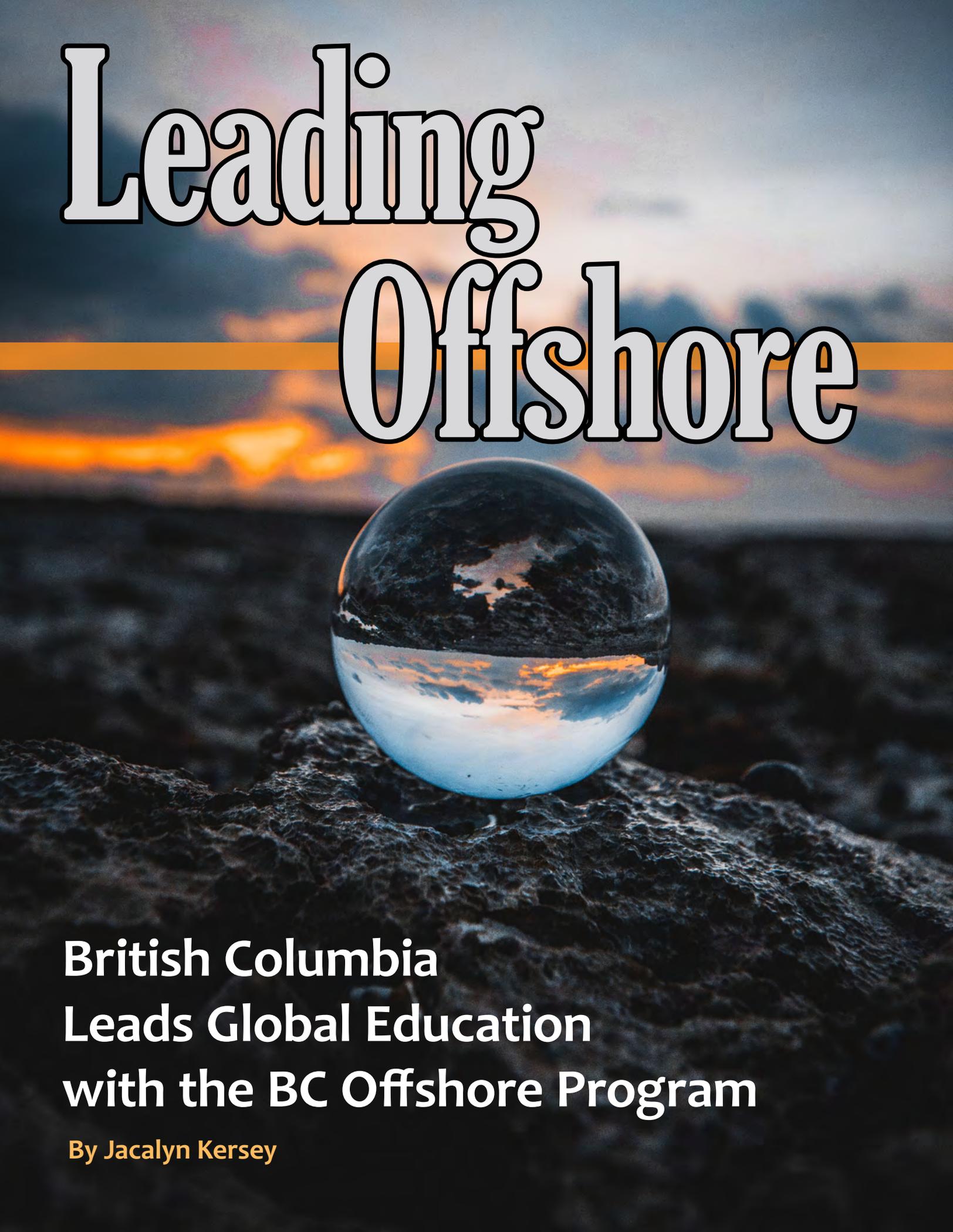


Leading Offshore

A glass sphere sits on a dark, textured rock. The sphere reflects a sunset scene with orange and yellow light against a dark sky. The background of the entire image is a blurred sunset over a dark, rocky landscape.

**British Columbia
Leads Global Education
with the BC Offshore Program**

By Jacalyn Kersey

In 1993 Dr. Sherman Jen, a successful businessman from Hong Kong who immigrated to Canada to provide his children with a western education, approached the Province of British Columbia with a bold and innovative idea. Dr. Jen found the education his children received in BC to be profoundly different from education in China. Children were challenged to engage in their learning, to question, to express their opinions and to be actively involved in their learning. BC held top-ranks worldwide in student outcomes in English-speaking countries and had the best student outcomes in Canada. He wanted to offer this type of education to students in China.

In 1995 Dr. Jen opened a school in Dalian, China with 14 students. In 1998 Maple Leaf International School – Dalian was inspected and certified as British Columbia's first Offshore School.

Today, the BC Offshore School Program (BCOS) is the largest in Canada, with 45 schools in 7 countries that include China — which boasts 39 schools — Japan, Thailand, Qatar, Egypt, France and Colombia. There are currently 12,000 students enrolled in BC Offshore Schools.

BC-certified Offshore Schools are located outside of Canada and are authorized to offer the BC curriculum. The Ministry of Education certifies, inspects and regulates Offshore Schools, and ensures that they meet BC education standards. Offshore Schools are rigorously inspected annually by teams of experienced BC educators including Superintendents and Principals from both the public and independent education sectors in BC. Maintaining the quality of the BC brand is extremely important, and well monitored.

The BCOS gives students the opportunity to study in BC-certified schools without leaving their home country. The BC Dogwood diploma is recognized worldwide, and helps students to achieve their dreams of attending

BC Offshore School Program

Quick Facts

45
schools

7
countries

12,000
students

Largest
program in Canada

750
BC-certified teachers/
administrators

2,000
graduates annually

2016 / 2017
graduate pathways

Canada
58
institutions in
10 provinces

United States
108
universities & colleges

World
54
institutions in
14 countries

post secondary institutions across the globe. An English immersion program that is focused on real-world skills and taught by BC-certified teachers is an opportunity of a lifetime for Offshore students.

There are currently approximately 750 BC Offshore teachers, Vice-Principals and Principals working in the BCOS, and all are certified by the BC Teacher Regulation Branch. These adventuresome educators choose to work abroad for various reasons, including the chance to travel, career advancement and the experience of a very different work environment. Many return to British Columbia or Canada after a short stint overseas. Some choose international education as a lifelong career.

BC Vice-Principals and Principals receive support from the BCOS through professional development opportunities that include a yearly

BC Offshore Leaders Conference and access to a BCPVPA Leadership Development Program.

In March 2019, 65 Offshore leaders gathered at the annual conference in Shanghai, China, for a program that included presentations by the Ministry of Education, and by BCPVPA Executive Director Kevin Reimer and President David DeRosa. Kevin and David provided information about the new BCPVPA Offshore Association, an exciting opportunity for BC educators who are leading BC schools outside of BC to be part of the BCPVPA.

The support for development of leaders in the BCOS has reached new heights and is reflective of the growth and quality of the BCOS.

Visit:

www.gov.bc.ca/OffshoreSchoolProgram

Thailand -1-

France -1-

Qatar -1- China -39- Egypt -1-

Colombia -1-

Japan -1-



internationally was when Les Dukowski gave a Professional Development event over Skype. Les was Principal of the Maple Leaf International School – Dalian at the time. Mark’s interest in working overseas was piqued, but the timing was not right. He moved to the Principal role at Chatelech Secondary School where his own kids — both now teachers — attended, and remained there until he was able to retire from SD 46 (Sunshine Coast).

Retirement did not mean that he was ready to give up working, however.

A position in the BC Offshore Program provided the opportunity to experience the adventure of life abroad, but still remain within the BC Program. In August of 2018, Mark became the Principal of Maple Leaf International School – Tianjin TEDA, China.

Mark Heidebrecht, BA, BED, MA

**Principal, Maple Leaf International School
Tianjin, China**

Mark Heidebrecht began his teaching career in BC in the early 1990’s in Quesnel, and went on to work as a Counselor and Alternative Program teacher on the Sunshine Coast. He moved into administration as the Vice-Principal of Elphinstone Secondary School and went on to be Principal of Gibson Elementary, then Pender Harbour Secondary.

Mark was a member of the BCPVPA for more than 10 years, serving as Chapter Council Rep, Chapter President, BCPVPA Contract Advisory Committee member and BCPVPA Budget Committee member.

His first exposure to the possibility of working

**“I loved my job in BC
but I also I love my job
in BC Offshore”.**

Some of the highlights for Mark have been experiencing a new culture, mentoring young administrators and leading the learning in his school by keeping learning fun and exciting.

The experience has been enjoyable for his wife as well. Travel opportunities during holidays have been fantastic, taking them to Sanya, China, Vietnam and Jeju Island, South Korea. Best of all, he feels rejuvenated by the move: “I loved my job in BC but I also I love my job in BC Offshore”.



Becky took a position as BC Principal in 2015 with CINEC Education, and became the youngest female BC Principal in China. She completed her Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Management degree at Royal Roads University while working full-time in Jiaxing and put theory into practice with her new learning. During her four years in Jiaxing, she implemented a successful oral English campaign for students that she presented at the Beijing Ministry of Education Conference in 2016. She also shared the program with fellow BC Offshore leaders and it is now used in more than a dozen BC Offshore Schools around China.

Becky Block

**Principal, Shanghai Nanyang Model Private High School
Shanghai, China**

“I’m still learning” – Michelangelo at age 87

After graduating with two Bachelor degrees from the University of Victoria (Arts, Major in Women’s Studies, and Education, Secondary Specialization including an Indigenous Education Summer Institute), Becky travelled to the Far East where she knew her comfort zone would be stretched.

Her British Columbia teaching career quickly took root in China, and she was fast-tracked into administration at the Vice-Principal level where she served at two different BC Offshore Schools in Hefei, Anhui Province, and Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province. Her administrative roles kept her on her toes as she worked through the personal challenges of living abroad and navigated the cross-cultural barriers that often confronted her. Rather than intimidating her, these challenges motivated her further growth as a professional BC educator.

Becky currently serves the students at Shanghai Nanyang Model Private High School in Shanghai, China, as BC Principal. As she explores the largest city in the world, and continues her journey of professional and cross-cultural growth, it is her goal to learn from each challenge that presents itself and to celebrate every tiny victory along the way.

Her favorite experience this year has been making genuine connections with new students through coaching soccer or providing academic support. As John C. Maxwell said, “[L]eadership is not about titles, positions, or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another.” As her growth continues, she hopes to influence staff and students in positive and healthy ways.



Brett Syer BA, BEd, MA

**Principal, Shanghai United International School
Jiaoke, Shanghai, China**

Brett spent four years teaching a variety of subjects and coaching basketball in and around Stratford for the Avon-Maitland District School Board in Ontario. After experiencing challenges securing a full-time position, he decided to explore the international teaching market, and looked at opportunities in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe before joining Maple Leaf International School – Dalian in August of 2011.

Now in his eighth year in China, Brett is the Principal of Shanghai United International School – Jiaoke, a 335-student BC Offshore School in Shanghai's Minhang District, and Xiehe Education Group's only BC Offshore School. He was the Vice-Principal of

SUIS-JK for 2 years, working closely with former Principals Kevin Harrison and Kas Angelski. Brett spent 5 years at MLIS-Dalian as a teacher, academic coordinator, and Deputy Principal.

Brett recently chaired the BC Offshore Schools Principals' Conference Committee for the 2018-2019 school year (offshoreschools.com/bc-offshore-schools-leadership-conference), working alongside Jackie Kersey (MLES), Lee Smith (SIPFLS), and Darren Larson (GCA-Jiaxing) to deliver professional development and networking for 65 Offshore administrators.

He was a 5-year member of the Dalian Ice Dragons Hockey Club, and is a current Executive Member of the Shanghai Hockey Club (SHC). (shanghaihockeyclub.com)

JACALYN KERSEY has been a BC educator for 25 years. She was a teacher and administrator in Dawson Creek and Vernon, and is currently the Assistant Superintendent for Maple Leaf Educational Systems in Dalian, China.