

SUMMER 2011 VOL.13 NO.2

# OPC Register

THE MAGAZINE FOR ONTARIO'S PRINCIPALS & VICE-PRINCIPALS

# ICP 2011 WORLD CONVENTION



Publication Mail Agreement # 40033279

► BACK TO THE BEGINNING

► THE GAME CHANGERS

# Where the experts speak to you

## EVENTS 2011



### **Marzano's Building Engaged Schools Institute**

Featuring Robert J. Marzano and Tammy Heflebower

October 31–November 1      Calgary, AB



### **PLC at Work™ Summit: New Insights for Improving Schools**

Featuring Rebecca DuFour, Richard DuFour, Tom Hierck, Wayne Hulley, Anthony Muhammad, Ainsley Rose, and Kenneth Williams

November 16–18      Niagara Falls, ON

### **Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Institute**

Featuring Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Anthony Muhammad, Karen Branscombe, Charlie Coleman, and Greg Kushnir

September 26–28      Regina, SK



### **Eight Big Ideas of Assessment 2-Day Workshop**

Featuring Damian Cooper

October 17–18      Toronto, ON



### **Leading With Trust 2-Day Workshop**

Featuring Susan Stephenson

October 18–19      Toronto, ON

### **Supervision and Instruction Using the Art and Science of Teaching Workshop**

Featuring Robert J. Marzano

September 22–23      Abbotsford, BC



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# High Expectations for Great Innovation



A specific focus has been leveled on the principals and vice-principals in Ontario's education system over the past several years ... that of instructional leader. To say that expectations of those who assume the role of school leader are high is unquestionably an understatement.

As we move diligently forward in system improvement, a new and urgent responsibility presents itself, that of encouraging creativity and innovation in our staff and students alike. Not a moment too soon, we might add.

In the past few months, speakers such as Sir Ken Robinson, Dr. Keri Facer and our own Deputy Minister, Kevin Costante, have expounded on the importance of the role of the principal in helping to guide students through the system to become skilled and confident graduates who are not only responsible, but creative, innovative and prepared for what remains of the 21st century.

In addressing the recipients of Canada's Outstanding Principal Award,

Deputy Minister Costante spoke eloquently to the role of the principal, noting that we are responsible for being "the head teacher, the learning leader, the person who has the vision and commitment to improve student achievement." This translates well into the significant purpose facing today's education leaders.

Dr. Facer, Professor of Education with Manchester Metropolitan University, posits that in the context of rapid change, educators may be losing sight of how we "do" education and what the purpose of education has become. She pushes us to examine the current critical trends for education and to ask ourselves how education today builds capacity for future well-being and employment.

Dr. Facer outlines the international competition for creative roles, which often demands high skills while paying lower wages. She points to the centralization of creativity and autonomy by major multinational companies as one of the new ways of doing business. This has been demonstrated by what she terms the "hollowing out of the middle" in many middle-class roles when companies turn to the Internet for creative ideas and solutions, offering a high fee for the "winner" with the best idea. In turn, for little or no cost, these companies receive a significant number of responses, and have not had to pay a salary or benefits to an employee, but rather simply a one-time only fee. In the face of this type of employment, the need for permanent employees for particular tasks disappears. The need for the development of sustainability and flexibility in our students has clearly taken on greater purpose.

Author and educator Sir Ken Robinson also expresses concern that the education system is out of tune with our world. He argues that this growing issue is rooted in a narrowing of the curriculum and an unrelenting culture of testing. Robinson believes our focus should be on the learner and the teacher. In his view, the things that matter seem to have become distractions, given that most reforms tend to try and make education "teacher-proof."

Robinson submits that many reform movements are "back to front" based and that in fact we must address creativity. In his book *Out of Our Minds*



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(Capstone Publishing Ltd., 2011), he reflects on the need for leaders to create a culture of innovation built on imagination and creativity. “Many leaders do have well-founded anxieties about promoting innovation. The first is that they will have to lead the way by coming up with a constant slew of new ideas. The good news is that the principle role of a creative leader is not to have all the ideas. The second anxiety is that unleashing creativity will lead to chaos and loss of control. The good news is that creativity is not a synonym for anarchy. Creativity and innovation work best when there is a balance between the freedom to experiment and agreed systems of evaluation” (p.221).

Because of these changing times, perhaps as administrators we need to explore what the goals of education should be if factors such as technology, demographics, economics and environmental changes mean that we cannot provide any guarantees for the future for our students. How do we educate children to live in a constantly changing and evolving social culture? As leaders, let us focus on facilitating an education system that is built to being adaptable to change. Developing and encouraging creativity and innovation certainly feels like the right place to start. ▲



**Vicki Shannon**

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# Recent Happenings at OPC ...

## Moving Forward with Online Learning

Kathleen Fraumeni (L), Dr. Joanne Robinson (C) and Mary Barchiesi (R) host the first of the six webinar series on the topic of Supporting Board Leadership Development Plans. These webinars address relevant topics pertaining to board leadership development strategies.



OPC Instructors Joy Reiter and Wendy Fairley lead Toronto District School Board participants in two of the four Special Education for Administrators (SEA) qualification program modules.

## Experiences Take Flight

The 3rd Annual Leap Exchange between Ontario and New South Wales, Australia principals met at OPC for an overview of the program. Since 2009, some 65 Ontario principals/vice-principals/SOs have participated in this professional development program.



Independent education consultant Damian Cooper speaks on the topic of Leading Professional Learning in Assessment at the recent Speaker Series event hosted by the LSA: Networks and Learning project.



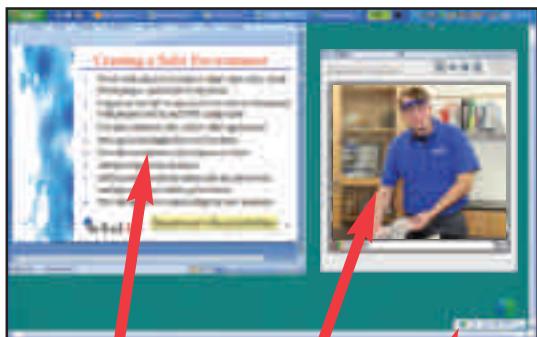
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### 2011 Summer Schedule

#### July

Monday, July 11	Chemistry In-the-Bag Inquiry Activities	12:00pm - 1:00pm
Tuesday, July 12	Teaching Comparative Anatomy using Dissection	9:00am - 10:00am
Tuesday, July 12	Integrating Math & Science using Blood Spatter	11:00am - 12:00pm
Wednesday, July 13	Microscope Cleaning & Troubleshooting	1:00pm - 2:00pm
Thursday, July 14	Introduction to Forensics: Fingerprint Analysis	3:00pm - 4:00pm
Wednesday, July 20	Chemistry In-the-Bag Inquiry Activities	3:30pm - 4:30pm
Thursday, July 21	Teaching Comparative Anatomy using Dissection	3:30pm - 4:30pm
Monday, July 25	Microscope Cleaning & Troubleshooting	2:00pm - 3:00pm
Tuesday, July 26	Chemistry In-the-Bag Inquiry Activities	3:30pm - 4:30pm
Wednesday, July 27	Teaching STEM with Digital Microscopes	1:00pm - 2:00pm

#### August

Tuesday, August 2	Laboratory Safety in the Life Science Classroom	1:00pm - 2:00pm
Tuesday, August 2	Teaching Comparative Anatomy using Dissection	3:30pm - 4:30pm
Thursday, August 4	Introduction to Forensics: Fingerprint Analysis	11:00am - 12:00pm
Tuesday, August 9	Introduction to Laboratory Safety	11:00am - 12:00pm
Thursday, August 11	Blood Spatter	2:00pm - 3:00pm
Tuesday, August 16	Chemistry In-the-Bag Inquiry Activities	11:00am - 12:00pm
Wednesday, August 17	Blood Typing	11:00am - 12:00pm
Thursday, August 18	Teaching Comparative Anatomy using Dissection	3:30pm - 4:30pm
Monday, August 22	Microscope Cleaning & Troubleshooting	1:00pm - 2:00pm
Monday, August 22	Chemistry In-the-Bag Inquiry Activities	3:30pm - 4:30pm
Tuesday, August 23	Laboratory Safety in the Life Science Classroom	2:00pm - 3:00pm

Please Note: All times listed are EST.

Complete workshop schedule and descriptions are available online at:

**boreal.com/academy**

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To register contact **Laurie Enos** at [Laurie\\_Enos@vweducation.com](mailto:Laurie_Enos@vweducation.com)  
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# Back to the Beginning

Examining the re-engagement initiative

By Melanie Parrack

Illustration by Isabelle Cardinal

Sometimes there are students who just slip away. They quietly leave a school and go on with their lives. And yet, they are so close to graduating that one must wonder what could possibly have interfered with the path to attaining that secondary graduation diploma? Often times, these students are within only a semester or two of completing their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). These students have real potential to graduate, and it is these students who are the focus of the current Re-engagement Initiative (12&12+) Next Steps follow-up assessment to the initial initiative. The title (12&12+) was coined to represent those students who have successfully reached their grade 12 year or beyond, but are just short of their graduation requirements. The inclusion of (12&12+) was chosen to remind us that many students in their fourth or fifth year still need support and encouragement to help them continue and complete their studies. The challenges that school and board leaders face are many and varied. In such extraordinarily busy times, challenges that are extremely subtle, low-key, or camouflaged often go undetected. These students, who are choosing to leave school within a semester or two of graduation, often present a low-key profile and do not make any grand announcements that they are leaving. They just go. The challenge of keeping them engaged in school and in learning may, therefore, remain unmet.

Recently, the Ministry announced that the graduation rate for 2009–10 was 81 per cent, which represents a two-percentage point increase from the 2008–09 school year. The rates are based on a cohort of approximately 150,000 students: in other words, in 2009–10, 121,500 students across Ontario earned their graduation diploma after four or five years of secondary school. This is an increase of 3,000 students from the 2008–09 school year (79 per cent of the cohort).

## Who are these students?



## Graduation Rate Analysis\* 2008–2009

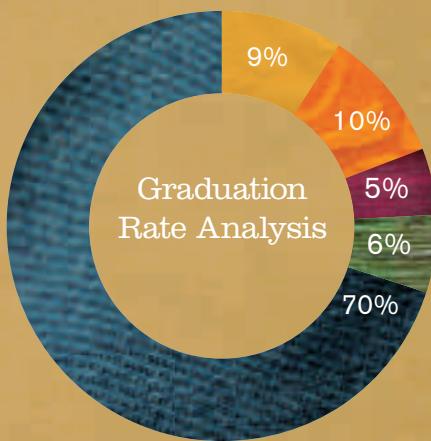
The previous Re-engagement Initiative (12&12+) began in the spring of 2010 with an analysis of the 2008–09 school year student information. It revealed that over 16,000 students in Ontario left school during their grade 12 school year or completed the year but did not return in September, despite the fact that they had not graduated. In most cases, these students were very close to fulfilling the requirements of graduation but, for some reason, made the decision to leave instead of finishing school.

The total number, 16,000, took many people by surprise.

Who are these students? Why did they leave? Where did they go? How can we support them to re-engage? These questions were one of the main reasons why the Re-engagement Initiative (12&12+) was created.

The Initiative provided ministry funding to school boards in 2010/11 to contact late leavers (12&12+) who would be eligible to complete their OSSD on or before June 30, 2011. These students were invited to return to the school system. Schools and boards sought

## Where did they go?



ways to provide a different programming experience for them by offering an educational experience tailored to their learning needs. These participants were then mentored through their re-engagement and provided with additional support and monitoring. Interventions were to be put in place when appropriate.

Board and school leaders were given flexibility for the actual implementation of the Re-engagement Initiative. The strategies and supports employed could be as varied as needed, depending on the circumstances faced by each board and each school. The strategies and supports could also vary, depending on the needs of each individual student.

Schools and boards responded across the province and thousands of students were invited back to school!

Information from the participating boards and schools was then provided regarding the status of the initiative. In total, 11,000 students had been contacted to return to school in the fall of 2010. Of those contacted, 5,000 students were re-engaged through the Initiative and 4,500 students were still enrolled as of October 31, 2010. Additionally, 15,000 credits were being attempted, with 70 per cent of those who returned taking three or more credits.

Of the over 4,500 students contacted who had achieved 25 or more credits, approximately 2,000 returned. In other words, approximately 50 per cent of those who returned needed five or fewer credits to graduate.

The task then became to examine why or what was causing these students to leave.

- Completed year 5 and graduated, 13,500 (9%)
- Completed year 5 but did not graduate, 15,000 (10%)
- Disengaged during grade 12 school year, 7,500 (5%)
- Disengaged during summer after year 4, 9,000 (6%)
- Completed year 4 and graduated, 105,000 (70%)

\* Data based on the 2004–05 cohort of approximately 150,000 students

Were students who were so close to graduation experiencing such overriding situations or powerful life circumstances that they would walk away from the very diploma that could make their futures so much brighter for them and their families?

In an effort to answer these questions, The Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Student Success Learning to 18 Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch, and the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO) began to implement the Re-engagement Initiative (12&12+) Next Steps. This initiative serves to build on the findings and successes of the 2010 Initiative to consolidate the current information with the new findings and to assist in the development of short-term and mid-to longer-term strategies to share and implement. Results will continue to be tracked and best practices will be shared.

This Initiative is different from past engagement and re-engagement initiatives as it focuses on a group of students who are close to graduating yet choose to leave the system rather than complete their OSSD in a relatively short period of time. There has been a great deal of research conducted on student engagement, such as Doug Willms' ongoing work *Tell Them from Me* and the *Early School Leavers: Understanding the lived reality of students disengaged from secondary school*, Final Report prepared by the Community Health Systems Resource Group, The Hospital for Sick Children for the Ontario Ministry of Education, Special Education Branch (May 30, 2005).

We learned a great deal from Tilleczek, Ferguson and Laflamme in their work *Fresh Starts and False Starts: Young people in transition from elementary to secondary school*, Executive Synopsis for Educational Policy and Practice (March 31, 2010).

In addition, this particular group of students is also noted in *Who doesn't go to post-secondary education?* — The Final Report of Findings for the Colleges Ontario Collaborative Research Project by the Social Program

Evaluation Group, Faculty of Education, Queen's University (October 20, 2009).

The findings collected from these pieces of work and others have provided solid footing for much policy change and the implementation of various initiatives across the province in the past few years that have had tremendous impact to date. This related work will be combined with any new findings from the Re-engagement Initiative (12&12+) Next Steps to inform future directions.

However, the mystery prevails with this specific group as to why, from the students' own perspectives, they are technically so near, and yet by their actions so far, from graduation.

The Initiative Next Steps is in the process of unlocking some of the mystery.

While still collecting data, this Initiative is seeking to learn from the individuals impacted in the fall of 2010. Direct input is being sought from many perspectives using a variety of information gathering tools suited to each stakeholder group. Many principals and student success leaders from across the province have been instrumental in facilitating some of the information gathering sessions. The Initiative has reached directors, superintendents, principals/vice-principals, student success teams, students who were re-engaged, students who were not re-engaged, as well as some of the individuals who contacted, mentored and monitored the students upon their return.

Focus sessions held across the province between February and May 2011 gathered input from students who had become re-engaged. These students were asked questions

such as: what were your experiences? why did you originally choose not to return? what can we do better? what are we doing that is positive?

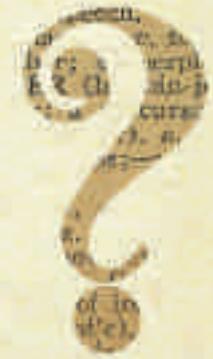
The focus sessions also included a sampling of the staff who contacted, mentored and monitored the students, since they were instrumental in this invitational process. The sharing of their experiences through the re-engagement process will be invaluable.

Web-based focus groups were held in February, 2011 with select principals/vice-principals representing approximately 50 schools across the province. These principals were then joined by their student success teams for the second half of the web focus session. The information gathered will provide important insight into the complexities of matching the circumstances surrounding this particular group of students, their academic needs and the realities of the school system to respond with the agility required.

Some student success leaders were requested to reconnect with a sampling of students who

## How can we support them to re-engage?

Why  
did they  
leave?



did not re-engage, asking these young students a series of specific questions. The young people who are still not in school were asked to share their experiences regarding to whom they spoke before they left school, their reasons for leaving school, and why they still remain out of school even after the invitation to return to a different kind of academic experience. The students were also asked what they would need to return to school, and what advice they would offer to

other students and schools to encourage students to return to school. The responses to these and other questions should prove helpful in better understanding some of the overwhelming obstacles faced by many of our students.

In addition, the student success leaders and superintendents were contacted to collect their reflections on the Initiative through six regional sessions, and information was shared with Directors of Education. A discussion regarding

the Re-engagement Initiative (12&12+) Next Steps also took place with the Minister's Principal Reference Group.

Information and data gathering continue on this Initiative. The results should paint a clearer picture of the phenomenon that has been uncovered that has resulted in thousands of our students quietly leaving school so close to graduation.

As a result of the Initiative, principals took action in many ways. Some solutions were relatively simple to implement, such as helping students obtain a signature verifying completion of Community Involvement Hours. As well, creative individualized timetabling was put in place in many settings. Flexible programming was developed to take advantage of the various student success programs that have emerged over the past few years such as dual credits, OYAP and varying models of co-operative education delivery, including paid co-operative education.

The Re-engagement Initiative (12&12+) Next Steps hopes to help understand the reality in the province as it pertains to this particular group of young people, and to discover and share practices that are working for these school leavers. The results of the Initiative should provide more detail about the young people who are striving to complete their secondary school diplomas and of the schools' efforts in assisting them to accomplish that goal.

In an upcoming issue of *The Register*, some of the findings of the Re-engagement Initiative (12&12+) Next Steps will be examined. By sharing the realities, successes and creativity of school leaders, we can continue to reach every student in a way that makes the most sense for that student.

The hope is that we reach these young people before they quietly slip away, that we can help each of these potential graduates overcome some of the barriers to the graduation diploma, thereby opening the door to a much brighter future. ▲

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Melanie Parrack, a former Executive Superintendent, Student Success, Program and School Services with the Toronto District School Board, is the OPC Project Lead for The Re-engagement Initiative (12&12+) Next Steps.

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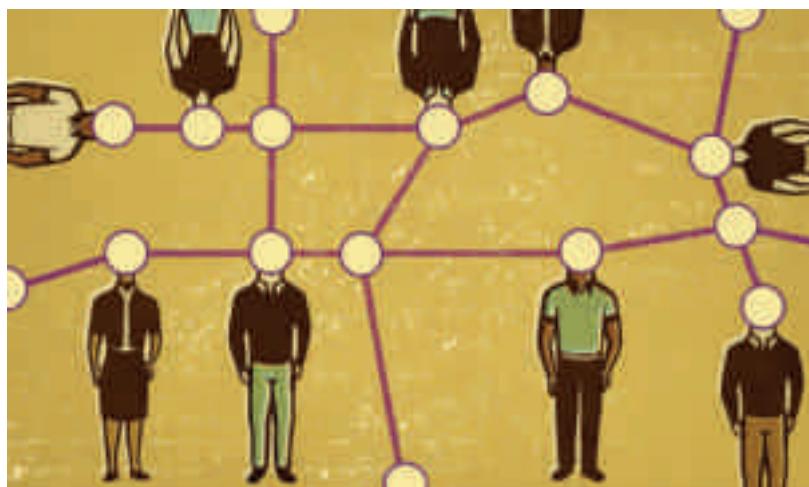
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The first part of the program develops an awareness towards a variety of thinking styles and provides participants with a personal assessment (Rhodes' Thinking-Intentions Profile i.e., TIP) detailing their preferred styles. Participants learn the three driving forces of thinking, the six frames of mind and the 21 thinking intentions. This information is then applied to develop effective thinking skills that lead to the improved performance of an individual, staff and system. A key objective is that "effective thinking drives high performance

management and leadership actions."

Two other key aspects of the program are the provision of the Desktop Tool Kit

Participants in this program will gain an understanding of the Key Mind Frames, Core Thinking Intentions and the Key Dimensions of Emotional Power® needed to build on their strengths and improve their performance as leaders. The application to the Framework is invaluable to personal development.



and the Emotional Power® Development Report. The Desktop Tool Kit explores methods of dealing with a variety of people and relationships, making effective decisions and resolving conflict. The Emotional Power® Development Report focuses on three dimensions – reflecting on self, relating to others and responding to the world. It allows for the development of emotional power that increases one's ability to manage modern day realities and expectations more effectively.

The program also includes the application of this new learning to the Five Practices and Competencies found in the Ontario Leadership Framework.

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**i**  
"There is a causal relationship between how and what we think with what we actually perceive and do. Our inner world of thoughts and feelings drive and influence our actions, decisions and subsequent results."

— Brett Richards

Bob Jackson is a member of the Leading and Learning in the 21st Century Connective Intelligence® planning team.

**Bob Jackson**

elc@principals.ca



electronic communications  
continue to

# Generate Attention

By the OPC Professional Services Team

Illustration by Joe Morse

Electronic communications and the appropriate use of technology continue to be the subject of a great deal of attention within the education world. Two recent events have attracted media attention and clarify the degree of care with which educators must engage in electronic communications and technology use. The first event was an Ontario Court of Appeal decision in a case involving a teacher's decision to copy nude pictures of a student onto the hard drive of his board-issued computer, resulting in criminal charges. The second event was the Ontario College of Teachers' (OCT) Professional Advisory, only the third in its 15-year history, directing educators to be extremely vigilant and rigorously professional in their use of social media when communicating with students. So, what does this mean for administrators? In short, they must be very careful to maintain their professional persona in all electronic communications, and assume that their employer boards could, at any time, become lawfully aware of all of their computer activities on the board network or its equipment.



**“To ensure the safety of the students and to provide them with the orderly environment so necessary to encourage learning, reasonable rules of conduct must be in place and enforced at schools.”**

In the above-noted case of *R. v. Cole*<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cole taught communications technology at a secondary school and was tasked with monitoring and policing a student laptop program, giving him administration rights to the board's computer network. During his monitoring, he accessed a student's email account and discovered nude photos of a Grade 10 female student. He then copied them onto the hard drive of his board-issued laptop.

Mr. Cole, like all employees of his board, was subject to a policy that stated that “all data and messages generated on or handled by board equipment are considered to be the property of the board and not the property of the users of the technology.” However, there was also a

policy expressly permitting employees' personal use of the computers provided there was no inappropriate and/or sexual content.

During regular maintenance, a board technician noticed significant activity between Mr. Cole's laptop and board server. The technician accessed Mr. Cole's computer to perform a virus scan and assess the integrity of the system. In so doing, the technician accessed a hidden folder on the hard drive containing sexually explicit pictures of a young woman. He took screen shots to preserve the information saving them to a disc. Once he confirmed that the pictures were of a student, he advised the principal. The principal asked Mr. Cole to turn over his computer and provide his password. Board technicians then

searched the laptop more fully and copied pornographic, temporary internet files, to another disc. The laptop and discs were turned over to the police to evaluate whether they constituted child pornography. Mr. Cole was arrested. The police then sent the laptop for analysis, although they did not obtain a search warrant.

The key findings issued by the Ontario Court of Appeal include:

- Where personal, exclusive use of a work computer is permitted by the employer, the employee has a reasonable expectation of privacy unless there is a clear policy to the contrary.
- An employee's reasonable expectation of privacy in respect of a work computer is limited. The employer board could access employees' personal information to maintain the integrity of its network, a safe school environment and students' privacy. The Court held that that the technician accessed the laptop legitimately for the specific purpose of network maintenance. After discovering a file of concern, he acted reasonably to secure the evidence and inform the principal. His actions did not, therefore, breach Mr. Cole's Charter rights.
- The principals' actions (searching laptop, confirming student's identity, seizing evidence and the laptop in furtherance of internal discipline) were also sanctioned by s. 265 of the *Education Act*, which implies an authority to conduct reasonable search and seizures within the school and without prior, judicial authorization. As such, the principal did not violate Mr. Cole's Charter right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure (s. 8).
- The board's further search of Mr. Cole's laptop without a warrant was also deemed reasonable. The Court of Appeal relied on the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in M.R.M., “*Teachers and those in charge of our schools are entrusted with the care and education of our children ... To ensure the safety of the students and to provide them with the orderly environment so necessary to encourage learning, reasonable rules of conduct must be in place and enforced at schools.*” The Court of Appeal then concluded, “*with this in mind, the court noted ... that the search of a student by a principal is reasonable if the principal has reasonable*

*grounds to believe that school regulations have been breached and that a search would reveal evidence of that breach. Although that case dealt with the conduct and search of a student, it would apply with equal force to the conduct and search of a teacher (involving a school computer and the school network) that threatened the well-being of students. On the basis of the record in this case, I am satisfied that this further search and seizure by the school board was authorized and reasonable.”*

- The fact that the discs and laptop were lawfully seized by the principal and school board and delivered to the police did not affect Mr. Cole’s continuing privacy expectations. The police must meet the stringent standard of obtaining judicial authorization to conduct a search based on reasonable and probable grounds. Because they did not obtain a warrant in this case, the police search of the laptop and discs with temporary Internet files was determined to be unreasonable and therefore inadmissible. The disc with photos of the nude student was, however, deemed admissible because the photos were taken from the board’s network, using the school computer, and were pictures in regard to which the student, rather than Mr. Cole, had a privacy interest.

Ultimately this case has been referred back to trial subject to the evidentiary ruling on admissibility – only the single disc will be admissible in the criminal trial. Had the police obtained a warrant, all evidence would have been admissible and the conviction upheld. The board’s search of Mr. Cole’s laptop was deemed lawful by the court and it ultimately will have the ability to rely on the fruits of its search in any discipline proceeding against him. Moreover, the board’s course of conduct, in turning the laptop over to police, was entirely predictable and appropriate.

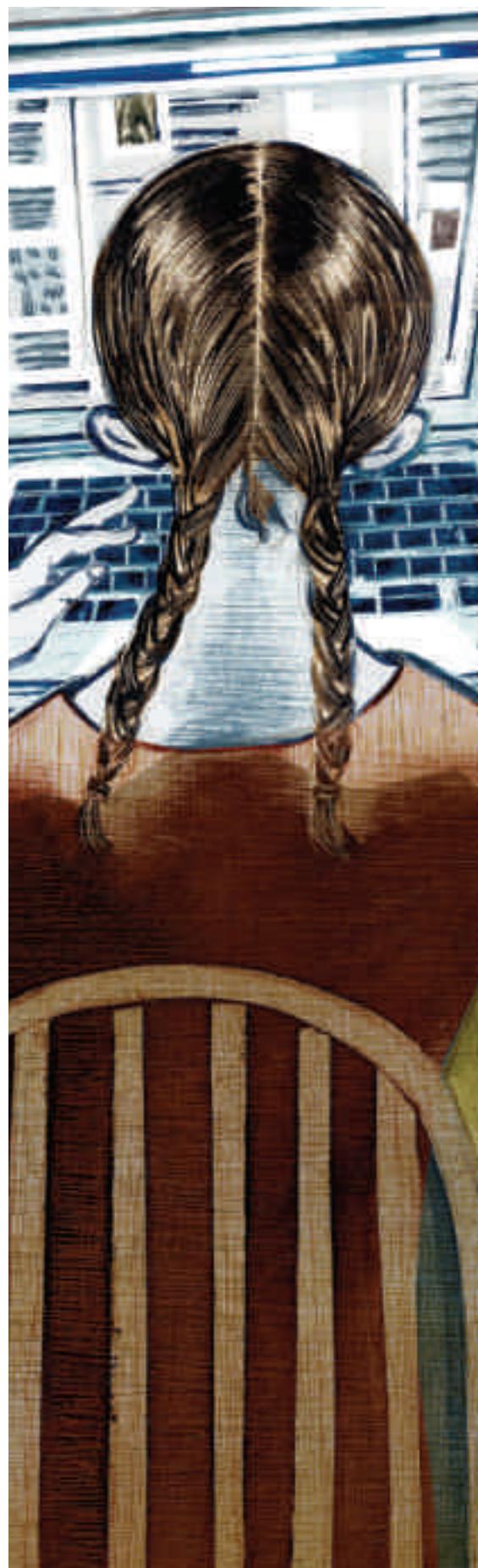
Educators are advised to resist any illegal or inappropriate use of board computer equipment, and to safeguard the equipment in their care. Boards may, upon reasonable grounds or simply due to routine network maintenance and monitoring, search the equipment. The results of such searches may be provided to police, the OCT and/or used in the board’s

own disciplinary action against the employee. The safest course of action will always remain the complete separation of personal and business electronics.

Furthermore, this case emphasizes that principals, in accordance with their duties under s. 265 of the *Education Act*, have the authority to conduct searches necessary to maintain a safe school environment. While searches of students have been done with some regularity across the province, school leaders also have the ability to take steps, where necessary, to protect students from staff and other adults who pose a risk to the safety of the school environment. In some cases, this will require conducting a search of a person (student or adult), place or thing (backpack, briefcase or computer), if they have reasonable grounds to suspect the breach of a school rule or conduct. OPC Members should consult with their Supervisory Officer, board legal counsel and/or the OPC Professional Services Team for guidance and support whenever they are in doubt about whether they have reasonable grounds to conduct a search, prior to commencing the search. We recognize that in an emergency involving a weapon, this may not be possible or appropriate.

Like the *Cole* case, the OCT’s Professional Advisory on the use of electronic communication and social media is an important reminder that professional personas ought to permeate any and all communications and use of technology that may be (or become) visible to students, parents, their employer or members of the public. The Advisory is designed to ensure that members, when interacting electronically with students, in particular, meet professional standards. It also reinforces the prevailing legal principle that educators are expected to be professional even outside of the classroom and beyond school-related activities.

The Advisory triggers two levels of responsibilities for principals and vice-principals: individual and supervisory. First, it renders College members responsible for their online reputation and identity such that a failure to abide by its guidelines could lead to complaints of professional misconduct. Second, principals and vice-principals have a supervisory role to play.



# Members are also reminded that inappropriate social media communication with students may attract a *Child and Family Services Act* investigation and could also result in an employment-based investigation and possible consequences.

Not only have administrators been identified as possible resources for teachers who have questions about the Advisory, but in addition, and from time to time, they may be directed by their boards to undertake investigations where concerns arise with regard to compliance by teachers. For these reasons it is important that administrators have carefully read and understand the Advisory and how to operationalize its guidelines.

## **Highlights of the Advisory are available on the OPC website and include:**

- Communicate with students electronically at appropriate times of the day and through established education platforms only.
- Maintain a formal, courteous and professional tone at all times.
- Avoid exchanging private texts, phone numbers, personal email addresses or personal photos with students.
- Do not accept or initiate “friend” requests on Facebook with students.
- Notify parents before using social networks for classroom activities.
- Regularly monitor and manage privacy and security settings on social media accounts.
- Understand that any information posted can be accessed, altered or forwarded to others without your knowledge or consent.
- Do not allow students to view or post any text or photos to your social media accounts.
- Do not allow others to “tag” you on any photos without your permission.
- Use your true professional identity at all times.
- Avoid online criticism about students, colleagues, employers or others within your school community.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of student information.
- Follow all your employer’s policies related to social media.
- Do not utilize electronic communication methods to establish a more personal connection with students.
- Don’t share information with students online that you would not willingly and appropriately share in a school or school-related setting.
- Understand that the *Ontario College of Teachers Act* and the *Student Protection Act* include behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature by a Member, toward a student, in the definition of sexual abuse

Members are also reminded that inappropriate social media communication with students may attract a *Child and Family Services Act* investigation and could also result in an employment-based investigation and possible consequences.

Going forward we encourage all Members to:

- Read and review this Advisory;
- Ask your board for specific direction about whether and how the Advisory will be incorporated into policy and practice and share this with your staff;
- Determine what board resources will be available to assist employees to bring their current practices into alignment with the Advisory, including how to “de-friend” students on Facebook;
- Ask whether specific hours will be identified by the board as being appropriate for teacher-student communications beyond school hours;
- Review your own privacy settings for all social media accounts;
- Monitor your online persona and advise your board immediately if a third party negatively impacts this persona, and,
- Actively reach out to the OPC if you have any questions about the Advisory and/or its application, at which point we will share our best advice and reach out to the College for clarification where necessary.

At our May Council meeting, OCT Registrar Michael Salvatori spoke directly to OPC Councillors and answered questions about the Advisory. A summary of that conversation has been posted on the OPC website. ▲

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<sup>1</sup>[2011] O.J. No. 1213 (QL)



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# REGISTER REPORT

## Mentoring and Coaching School Leaders

A qualitative study of adaptive expertise for school administrators

By Dr. Joanne Robinson

Schools are complex institutions requiring a high level of performance from the individuals who lead them. The role of the principal is increasingly demanding and multi-faceted. While certification and preparatory programs required for teachers moving into administration are valuable, it is only through experience and time in the position that administrators can gain the leadership qualities that help raise performance to expert levels.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has recognized that mentoring and coaching programs are the best way to support newly appointed administrators. Support during the early years of practice – through mentoring from colleagues who bring a breadth and depth of experience – can help minimize frustrating and challenging situations that detract from a leader's development and growth. A qualitative study of the changes in practice and competencies by participants of the

MentoringCoaching experience has led to valuable information for school boards across Ontario, as the expectation for establishing a mentoring program has increased.

Leadership expertise in Ontario is a learning continuum across five domains of *The Ontario Leadership Framework* that can be accelerated through a MentoringCoaching program. A look at the features of a mentoring program that support the development of practices and competencies required in complex school environments has, therefore, revealed interesting results.

Dr. Ken Leithwood (OISE/UofT), and his colleagues have identified school leadership as second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors contributing to student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004), yet the process for developing and refining expertise in school leadership remains unclear. In *Development and Adaptation of Expertise: The role of self-regulatory processes and beliefs*, Barry Zimmerman claimed, "the attainment of expertise in diverse fields requires more than nascent talent, initial task interest, and high-quality instruction; it also involves personal initiative, diligence, and especially practice" (2006, p.705).

The intent of the study was to identify ways of developing and refining expertise in school leaders through the use of MentoringCoaching.

Fink and Resnick (2001) asserted that despite an espoused commitment to instructional leadership, most principals are generic managers with little time for such leadership. School leaders must be adaptive experts, and an inquiry to establish the relationship between MentoringCoaching and adaptive expertise was worth initiating. Essential to the study was the determination of features around MentoringCoaching programs that support tri-level leadership capacity with a focus on powerful instruction and student learning. The prediction was that MentoringCoaching programs would help provide assistance and support growth along the expertise continuum in school leadership, and that relationships that formed would allow participants to explore ideas, discuss potential advantages and disadvantages of a decision, give and receive guidance and benefit from others' experience and expertise. A focus on relationships may help to move a district beyond the sink-or-swim treatment of newly-appointed leaders to a culture of support and a community of learners.

The following questions formed the guidelines for the interviews and self-reflection questionnaires:

1. What aspects of MentoringCoaching programs influence school leaders' growth and expertise in the domains of setting direction, building relationships and developing people, developing the organization, leading the instructional program and securing accountability?
2. How does a MentoringCoaching relationship benefit the expertise of mentors, the mentees and a school system as a whole?
3. What features of a MentoringCoaching program in a school district are viewed as building tri-level leadership capacity that focuses on powerful instruction and student learning?

## METHODOLOGY

Data came from participants' views of their experience and expertise in school leadership acquired through the MentoringCoaching program, collected through individual interviews, focus group discussions and individual self-reflection questionnaires. The interviews were clustered according to type of participant: mentor, mentee or steering committee. The groupings were based on participants' views of leadership practices and competencies (expertise)

adapted through the participation in the program. The influence of the program was distinctly different for the participants, depending on the perspective through which they were assessing their participation – mentor, mentee or district steering committee member.

The final step involved the creation of a rich description (Moustakas, 1994) for each participant, clarifying results of their MentoringCoaching experience. The invariant constituents and themes, drawn from the rich "textural-structural" (Moustakas, 1994, p.121) accounts, comprised the composite meanings and essences of the group as a whole.

## FINDINGS FROM THE MENTORS' PERSPECTIVE

A key benefit of the program for mentors was the coaching training and embedded practice, using new listening and questioning skills in conversations with mentees. All mentors shifted from traditional mentor and 'problem solver' to coach and guide, using active listening and thought-provoking questions. The Framework permitted the mentors to make the paradigm shift from experienced expert to co-learner with ease.

The process for matching mentors with mentees was based on reflection and self-identified areas of strength and growth, according to the Framework. Mentors and mentees went through the exercise independently, and were paired to effectively maximize the learning experience and growth. The structure of the MentoringCoaching program supported the opportunity for both parties to reflect, monitor and refine their performance (Feltovich et al., 2006, p.62). Mentors benefited from self-awareness and self-analysis of their own leadership capacity through the reflective process and the intentional support they were able to offer their mentees, based on a clearer understanding of their own expertise. The calculated process for matching participants built a culture of trust and commitment to professional growth that can be adapted by all school districts to maximize learning.

Educational leadership development is often perceived as something that is done "by" the district "to" leaders and aspiring leaders. In the Ontario study, mentors had the opportunity to meet with mentees, colleagues, learning teams and lead mentors, continually bringing an enhanced level of expertise related to their professional practice through socialization and "the personal networks [that] play an important role and enhance the development of individual competence" (Mieg, 2006, p.757). The networking and

### FACT

The calculated process for matching participants built a culture of trust and commitment to professional growth ...

opportunity to layer and learn interactively from and with colleagues showed positive results. The principal's job can be perceived as isolated and remote, but the opportunities to meet, collaborate and share expertise emerged as a strong conclusive benefit of the program.

The focus on instructional leadership expertise motivated experienced principals who were also on steep learning curves with new system initiatives. While mentors maintained their role as "developmental guides" (Daresh, 2007, p.25), the learning was definitely reciprocal. School districts that provided opportunities for principals and vice-principals to

**A program that combines formal mentoring as a district initiative with coaching training for mentors will have a broad impact on the leadership capacity of the experienced mentors, since mentors trained as coaches are more effective leaders in their schools and their communities.**

experience the socialization advantage of their profession, benefit from an enhanced and accelerated level of expertise among all leaders.

The mentors' ability to listen attentively and ask insightful, probing questions was a transferable skill that carried over to other relationships (i.e., parents, teachers, support staff, students). A program that combines formal mentoring as a district initiative with coaching training for mentors will have a broad impact on the leadership capacity of the experienced mentors, since mentors trained as coaches are more effective leaders in their schools and their communities. The study revealed that setting direction was the most influenced domain of the MentoringCoaching experience.

The benefits to mentors include an increased level of job satisfaction and renewed motivation, along with pride in seeing the school system for which they feel ownership left in the hands of a new generation (Daresh, 2004, p.505). School districts that strategically identify and train experienced leaders will motivate them to feel ownership for future succession planning efforts and embrace the opportunity to influence and nurture new leaders. A system that provides supportive learning environments for new leadership is more likely to have a wealth of talented individuals wishing to come forward.

## FINDINGS FROM THE MENTEES' PERSPECTIVE

Hunt (2006) revealed that becoming an expert is hard work and requires social support and encouragement in the early phases (p.14). Paired relationships and group activities provided the opportunity for shared learning that raised mentees' confidence and acquisition of expertise. Effective mentoring programs embed goal-setting and measurement of progress into the relationship between the mentor and mentee (Zachary, 2009, p.31). In the Ontario study, the mentees' goals were required to be aligned with provincial and district priorities. Regardless of the size of the district, school leaders can learn to work in teams/pairs to receive common messages and reflect, revise and plan for improvement. The more school leaders work together, the quicker the pace of adapting recognized expertise to mentees will be accelerated. Like the mentors, the mentees revealed that expertise in setting direction was the domain most influenced. Prior to a role in school administration, the novice leaders had little exposure to this task in the district or the school. The capacity to ensure a clearly articulated vision requiring action was a steep learning curve for mentees.

The study of adaptive expertise through MentoringCoaching offers a glimpse into understanding "the social and motivational factors that push and pull people to persevere" (Feltovich et al., 2006, p.62). Defining expert performance and providing support through coaching and insights are successful strategies that can be applied by school districts universally. The mentees were more confident in their professional practice, had a deeper understanding of implementing theory into practice, benefited from regular interaction on an array of common issues, learned some best practices and knew there was concern for their well-being (Daresh, 2007, p.504). One conclusive result of the study is that a formal MentoringCoaching program, such as the one provided through the OPC, is an effective training method allowing individual mentees to acquire levels of performance and expertise that can be accelerated by the experience.

## FINDINGS FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS' PERSPECTIVE

The steering committee members identified setting direction as most strongly impacted by participation in the Mentoring-Coaching program. The distinction expressed by committee members relative to their unique role in the program was the responsibility they felt for developing the organization. The domain of leadership expertise developed for the province, entitled *Developing the Organization* identified skills and competencies such as building a collaborative culture,

# The certified professional coaching and training provided to all of the mentors and many of the mentees comprised the pivotal element that inspired a genuine change in leadership practice for mentors, mentees and the steering committee members.

collaborating and networking and understanding models of effective partnerships. The committee described elevation in professional conversations among participants as a major cultural shift within their district. Using the Framework as the foundation of the program confirms that defining standards and performance criteria in a profession can address issues of public confidence and trust in expert services (Mieg, 2006). Setting goals and measuring progress against the defined standards of expertise also built internal confidence among participants.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings demonstrate that mentoring programs, which clearly articulate skills and competencies have a heightened level of exchange between mentors and mentees, focusing on adapting the educational expertise associated with effective practice. In Ontario, there are many new initiatives relative to leading the instructional program, but experience is not necessarily synonymous with expertise. Mentors benefited from the MentoringCoaching experience as equal partners with the mentees. Furthermore, by uniquely

layering coaching with the concept of mentoring and associating it with expertise, a platform for accelerated leadership development was formed. Additionally, the opportunity to learn with colleagues about effective strategies for setting direction within the context of numerous new initiatives was recorded as an unmistakable benefit of participation.

The certified professional coaching and training provided to all of the mentors and many of the mentees comprised the pivotal element that inspired a genuine change in leadership practice for mentors, mentees and the steering committee members. Reflective practice, active listening, thought-provoking questioning and deliberate humility were the competencies that participants highlighted and believed accounted for the positive influence of the program. The effect was not solely directed toward the MentoringCoaching relationships, but toward the leadership expertise that was adapted and utilized in daily practice, both inside and outside the school environment. ▲

Dr. Robinson is the Director of Professional Learning for Education Leadership Canada, with the OPC. Joanne has been instrumental in bringing MentoringCoaching programs to school districts across the province.

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## FACT

Setting goals and measuring progress against defined standards of expertise built confidence among participants.

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# Financial Responsibilities of School Leaders

**T**he *Education Act* spells out the financial responsibilities of principals, and school boards have policies and procedures in place to enforce and clarify the intent of the legislation. Principals have control over the school funds allocated from the overall board budget, as well as supplementary funds raised locally. It is your responsibility to ensure that funds are monitored and used appropriately.

- Principals are responsible for the adequate supervision of all funds — this responsibility cannot be abdicated to another staff person.
- Conflicts of interest need to be avoided. Don't purchase school materials from a relative/friend without an open competitive purchasing process, or "sell" personal property to the school.
- Non-board funds are those raised or collected from sources other than the operating or capital budgets of the board (donations, fundraising, vending machines, student fees, student or school council funds, team fees and gifts). Whether school or parent-administered, the principal is responsible for monitoring them — they must be collected and expended appropriately and within board guidelines.
- Schools should have a bank account separate from petty cash or other school accounts; a requirement for two signatures on the cheques; bank reconciliations; and a proper filing of source documents.
- An annual report should be submitted to the board's business office, which may be subject to audit.

- Don't buy items directly, unless they are small purchases for which discretionary funds can be used. Boards have purchasing departments to obtain the best pricing through bulk buying and an open competitive process.
- Petty cash or cash advance funds provide a small sum of money to schools to buy small items directly. If cash is collected, keep accurate counts, store securely in a safe and deposit as soon as is practicable.
- Fundraising activities may be conducted by school councils as long as they are in accordance with board policies and guidelines, and the funds raised are used for a purpose approved by the board. Funds raised

thefts of resources from the school as soon as they are discovered. Be transparent about your practices and conduct yourself as though an audit could occur at any time, because it could!

## Don't purchase school materials from a relative/friend without an open competitive purchasing process, or "sell" personal property to the school.

- All financial activity of the school is subject to audit by board business staff or by the board auditor. Ensure that proper procedures and record-keeping are maintained.
- Get a thorough briefing on school credit cards and purchasing cards (P-cards). Purchases on the P-card are charged to the school budget, and the principal is responsible for controls over the usage and safeguarding of the card. P-cards may not be used for personal items. Misuse can have serious consequences, including dismissal and/or criminal charges.
- Ensure that you can show that you spent all money as advertised. Track all resources coming into the school and make certain you can account for their whereabouts. Report any
- by the school council and assets purchased with those funds belong, legally, to the board. All fundraising activities conducted by the school council are to be included in the council's annual report.
- When transferring from one school to another, or retiring, leave the school in good financial order for the new principal, including a reconciled bank account and the transfer of signing authorities on any school bank account(s).
- When unsure, seek direction from the board for issues related to funding, aspects where a policy is silent or non-existent, or where you are unclear or uncertain about policy provisions. ▲



### Sources:

*School Council: A Guide for Members* (Ontario Ministry of Education Revised 2002) and the *OPC Handbook for School Leaders*: 2010

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By Peggy Sweeney

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Sir Michael Barber

OPC Members are very familiar with **Michael Fullan**, Professor Emeritus of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Recognized as a worldwide authority on educational reform, Michael is engaged in training, consulting,

and evaluating change projects around the world, and his books have been published in many languages. He is currently Special Advisor to the Premier and

Minister of Education in Ontario.

**Andy Hargreaves** is the Thomas More Brennan Chair in Education at the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. His teaching and research concentrates on educational change, performing beyond expectations, sustainable leadership and the emotions of teaching. A former teacher and university professor in England, Andy moved to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto where he co-founded and directed the International Centre for Educational Change.



Andy Hargreaves

**Jennifer James** is a cultural anthropologist, lecturer, writer and commentator, known to audiences around the world for her innovative ideas. She works on an international

level with corporations and associations helping people to meet the challenges of today's transitions. Her speeches and seminars

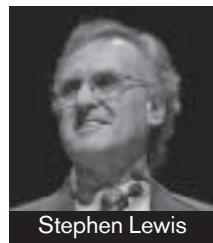
deal with the human face of technological change and the development of cultural intelligence. Jennifer is a specialist in areas of cultural change, diversity and marketing intelligence.



Jennifer James

Former Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa to then United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Stephen Lewis, a Canadian icon, is Chair of the Stephen Lewis Foundation in Canada, Distinguished Visiting Professor at Ryerson University in Toronto, and Co-director of AIDS-Free World, an international AIDS advocacy organization based in the United States. He also serves as

a Commissioner on the Global Commission on HIV and the Law. Stephen Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF and Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations. Politically, he is a former Ontario MPP and served as leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party.



Stephen Lewis

An inspiring example of the power in each of us to make a difference, **Lesra Martin** was once an inner city kid dismissed by society, yet his heart carried hope and courage. He effected profound change in the lives of many, including his own. His heart-rending story has mesmerized and in-

spired millions through the major Hollywood feature "The Hurricane." Lesra has spoken at the United Nations and before world leaders, giving impassioned

speeches about the devastating effects of literacy and poverty. He has been featured on countless television and radio shows, and dozens of newspaper and magazines articles have chronicled aspects of his life.



Lesra Martin

**Roger Martin** is the Dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto. He holds the Premier's Chair in Competitiveness

and Productivity and is Director of the AIC Institute for Corporate Citizenship. Previously, he was a Director of Monitor Company, a global strategy consulting firm based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Roger's research work is in Integrative Thinking, Business Design, Corporate Social Responsibility and Country Competitiveness. He has been honoured as one of the 10 most influential business professors in the world, named one of seven 'Innovation Gurus' and won the Marshall McLuhan Visionary Leadership Award.

## EIGHT FEATURED SPEAKERS

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College of Alberta School Superintendents and the Canadian Association of School Administrators, Jim is on

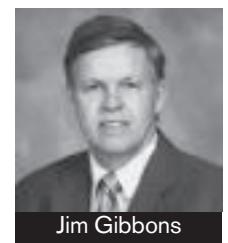
the governing board of the American Superintendents' Association. He has been an Associate Faculty member for San Diego State, Royal Roads and the University of Alberta Masters' programs, as well as a trainer/facilitator for Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Jim was awarded the Alberta Centennial Medal and the EXL award for his leadership in education.

A former Ontario educator, **Dr. Avis Glaze** has

had a distinguished career. She has served as Ontario's Education Commissioner and Senior Adviser to the Minister of Education, and was Ontario's first Chief Student Achievement Officer and CEO of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. A highly respected leader and mentor, Avis has worked in several school districts, both rural and urban, and has been a supervisory officer and director of



Roger Martin



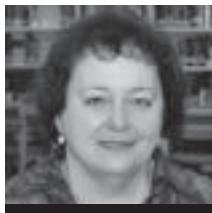
Jim Gibbons



Dr. Avis Glaze

education. She has extensive experience in system and school improvement. She travelled to South Africa on behalf of the Canadian government to assist with education reform and national reconstruction. As a tireless advocate for equity of outcomes for all students, Avis has won numerous awards for her outstanding contribution to education, including the Order of Ontario.

As a teacher, **Dr. Elena Lenskaya** piloted a new curriculum developed by the Russian Academy of Education. She led the mass introduction of English into primary schools and wrote a series of textbooks that are still among the most widely used in Russia. She was part of the team created to plan a comprehensive reform of Russian education. As the personal advisor to the Minister and then as the head of International Co-operation Department of the Ministry, Elena helped launch and implement more than 100 international projects in education, some of which have



Dr. Elena Lenskaya

introduced dramatic changes into the Russian educational system. She was one of the first non-British assistant directors for Education and English Language teaching,

working to pilot educational innovations in Russia and a systemic reform of English Language teaching across the country. Major innovations such as the first standardized exams in English, the compulsory teaching of English in primary grades, first school governance bodies, and competence-based curriculum for secondary schools were introduced in Russia with Elena's participation and leadership.



Juliette Powell

Social networking is growing daily, affecting our personal and professional lives. ICP delegates will have the opportunity to hear **Juliette Powell**, a media entrepreneur, community catalyst and author of *33 Million People in the Room: How to create, influence and run a successful business with social networking*. Juliette is a social media expert and co-founder of The Gathering Think Tank, an

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innovation forum that connects technology, media, entertainment and business communities. She writes about the patterns and practices of successful business leaders who bank on social networking to win. Her background includes a decade of experience in broadcast television as well as in interactive/new media content and formats, and a lifelong interest in people and community-building. With her deep knowledge of people and technologies at the forefront of social media Juliette has gained a solid reputation for discovering the latest developments and distilling their social and business implications.

**Pasi Sahlberg** is Director General of the Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation

in Helsinki, Finland. He is also an educator, researcher and school improvement activist. Pasi has experience in educational reforms, training teachers and leaders, coaching schools to change



Pasi Sahlberg

and advising education policy-makers around the world. He has worked in schools, universities, state-level administration (Ministry of Education in Finland) and international development organizations (World Bank, OECD, European Union). His main areas of interest are educational change, school improvement, cooperative learning and global education policies.

**Dr. Chris Spence** is the Director of Education for the Toronto District School Board. He has been widely recognized for his leadership work within the broader educational community to manage issues, develop policy and promote causes that benefit students. Chris has been recognized for his outstanding contributions to education and the community, including receiving the Canadian Black Achievement Award for Professional Achievement and Community Leadership and being acknowledged by the City of Toronto for best practices in education.



Dr. Chris Spence

Delegates will have the opportunity to hear from two educators from China. **Professor Chen Yukun** is currently Director of the National Training Centre for Secondary School Principals, Ministry of Education in China. He also acts as



Chen Yukun

Director of the National Experts Committee for Educational Leadership Training, serves as National Educational Inspector, is a member of the Evaluation Group for Public Management

  
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of the State Council and is Chief Editor of the *Journal of East China Normal University* (Education Science). Professor Chen has served as Dean of the School of Public Administration and School of Education in East China Normal University in Shanghai. His research areas include Education Management, Education Evaluation and Principal Training.

**Dr. JunHua Zhang** teaches undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as training secondary school principals. He offers courses in Educational Leadership and Management, Research Methods and International Comparative Education.



Dr. JunHua Zhang

He has special research interests in educational leadership and school culture. Dr. Zhang has also conducted research projects in secondary schools and consults in schools. He has published books and papers in referred journals in Chinese and English.

#### WORKSHOPS

In addition to these keynote and featured speakers, delegates will also have the choice of selecting from over 100 workshops. These workshops include sessions on topics such as inclusive education, special education, anti-bullying initiatives, leading student achievement, supporting and engaging teachers, schools in a digital age, aboriginal education, instructional leadership, 21st century learning, parent engagement, MentoringCoaching, TPAAs and many more.

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If you have not already done so, register now at [www.icp2011.ca](http://www.icp2011.ca). The full program is available for viewing online.

We look forward to seeing all of you at this event in August! ▲



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# The Game Changers

Agents in the transformation of school culture

By Philippe Porée-Kurrer

Illustration by Devon Bowman

The Program for Applied Leadership aims to reinforce the five core leadership capacities established as part of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Headed by the Institute's Francophone committee, the program also includes the Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO), the Association des gestionnaires de l'éducation franco-ontarienne (AGÉFO), the Conseil ontarien des directrices et directeurs de l'éducation de langue française (CODELF) and the Direction des politiques et programmes d'éducation en langue française de l'Ontario (DPPÉLF). It also aims to create a professional learning community that can support its decisions with facts and encourages a relationship of trust between school leaders. The keynote speaker at this past year's Program for Applied Leadership provincial conference for participating school boards was Dr. Anthony Muhammad.



As a school principal who made a huge impact in a number of “difficult” schools, most notably at Levey Middle School in Southfield, a Detroit suburb, Dr. Muhammad is without a doubt the best person to motivate an audience at the launch of a program that itself aims to demonstrate the benefits of educational leadership in action.

Cultural change must always come before structural change. Using the example of the sinking ocean liner the Titanic, Dr. Muhammad surmises that it would have been absurd, for example, to try to modify the ship’s organization (structural change) after having struck the iceberg. The only goal would have been to make sure all passengers left the boat

When structural changes are used as a means of improving results rather than conditions, they only help to hide a lack of professionalism. It is much easier, for example, to establish norms and protocols or to rearrange schedules than it is to encourage people to work together and in the same direction – for and with students (as for this last point, the lecturer

**“In order to lead staff, neither the carrot nor the stick are solutions; the art of leadership consists in encouraging each person to adopt the values and beliefs that lead to effective leadership – because belief must make its way into practice.”**

– Dr. Muhammad

Right away, without sparing his audience, he confirms that the main difficulty in the continuous pursuit of success for all students is not so much in the interaction with students as in the work of the educators amongst themselves.

Paraphrasing Albert Einstein, Dr. Muhammad reminds us that we can’t improve results by repeating the same actions that led to the results we are trying to change. Instead, it is the culture that produces these actions that must be changed. We must keep in mind that in order to truly change the culture, we must change the type of language we use. He focuses on the word “culture” because, as he explains it, there are two means of change:

- 1. structural (technical) change**
- 2. cultural change**

as quickly as possible. This did not happen because, regardless of the facts, a foundationless optimism reigned, resulting in a culture unwilling to believe that the ship could sink. In order for all the passengers to leave the liner safely, the culture would have had to change beforehand. This change would have to be based on an analysis of maritime statistics, resulting in the implementation of a suitable safety infrastructure.

There’s a difference, notes Dr. Muhammad, when a culture changes even before thoughts of reshaping the structure or the organization are present. As an example, he talks of socially and economically underprivileged schools in the United States, which succeed over and above their neighbouring schools whose students come from more privileged backgrounds.

points out that it is the student’s responsibility to learn, and the educator’s responsibility to ably give him or her this message).

In order to lead staff, neither the carrot nor the stick are solutions; the art of leadership consists of encouraging each person to adopt the values and beliefs that lead to effective leadership – because belief must make its way into practice. The lecturer adds that often it is not the strategies that are at fault, but rather the spirit with which people apply these strategies. It is obvious he is talking about the Pygmalion effect, or the “Rosenthal effect,” whereby you influence a student’s journey simply by prophesying his or her scholastic future.

Changing the culture consists, above all, of eliminating what the lecturer calls “toxic culture.” For a principal, an example of toxic

culture occurs when, in a situation of failure, he blames others (government, administration, etc.). When a leader spends time trying to determine who, other than himself, is responsible for what went wrong, he is likely in a “toxic culture” environment. In reality, having reached this point, the leader is in a state of frustration. Without verbalizing it,

forgotten or pushed aside because they generally do not portray matters in the best light, but rather highlight weaknesses.

The second control consists of boarding the “right people” onto the “bus of success” and placing them in the seat that best suits them.

An effective leader is always using these two controls wisely. The latter is particularly

2. The **believers** are those who have personal convictions and want to put them into practice. They are motivated, flexible with students and connected to both the school and community missions. They are not opposed to change, but rather encourage it. They are the key to students’ success. The principal must reinforce their educational skills.



he becomes aware of his inability to set out rules, procedures and practices, and so he attributes the responsibility to hierarchical levels over which he has no control.

The same is true for staff members; if results don’t correspond with expectations, it is easier to blame the school administration, the school board or the entire system, than it is to question oneself.

In order to establish a culture that promotes the success of all students and takes into account that there is always room for improvement, a principal has two controls available to him.

The first control consists of researching and finding the “disruptive elements,” those that have a negative impact on success (for example, toxic culture). Such elements are often

useful, since staff is constantly changing, either the people themselves or their attitudes.

According to Dr. Muhammad, these attitudes are what make it possible to group staff members into four main categories:

1. The **teenagers** are most often those who have recently arrived on a team and are trying to find their place. They are likely detached from the local school’s mission and idealize the school’s character. They do not have much daily practice or strategy, do not consider school board policies to be important and follow the “perfect teacher’s manual” to the letter. Experience leads them to any of the categories described below. The principal must support them closely and make sure they don’t end up as *survivors* or *fundamentalists*.

3. The **fundamentalists** are those who have come to look at changes skeptically or even cynically, and who by omission or deliberate action put the brakes on all attempts for change. They don’t believe all students can succeed, think educational reforms are a waste of time and want to work without supervision. The principal must “convert” them.

4. The **survivors** are those who adopt a low profile in order to avoid confrontation in any storm. They are barely or not at all inspired, and have an agreement with students that “if you leave me alone, I’ll leave you alone.” Their professional practices are minimal, they often prefer to do something other than teach and are always waiting for the next weekend or the next day off. Personal goals are placed higher than those of the organization.

The school principal must see to it that at the slightest change in character, skeptical *survivors* are distanced from the path of the students.

It is obvious, then, that the task of the educational leader – the principal – is to lead the tweeners, fundamentalists and survivors to become believers, once more or for the first time,

the cost, the knowledge that will allow them to take their appropriate place in society – which in turn will allow society to continue to evolve. Therefore, the indulgence or livelihood of people must never get in the way of this mission.

The skeptics are rare, of course. More often than not, each person has, to varying degrees,

personal interests over those of students, and later be required to exercise the necessary authority to keep them focused in a direction that goes against their expectations? This point alone should be the focus of a deeper reflection.

The lecturer delivers a clear message without making concessions: each person is fully responsible for the results, and the principal is

**“On the tracks that lead to the success of all students, the school principal not only drives the train, but also ensures that each person, whether student or educator, is sitting in the seat best suited to them.”**

– Dr. Muhammad



and to give the believers the means to perfect their skills as educators.

Dr. Muhammad identifies four steps in the conversion of fundamentalists:

1. Be up front and clear that a change in attitude is expected
2. Develop a courteous professional relationship that does not ostracize
3. Increase their skills, according to the context
4. Constantly supervise

If, despite everything, it seems the fundamentalist is rooted in his determination to resist, and that the motto remains “not with me” or “only the good students can succeed,” then it is important to consider him a skeptical *survivor*. On that point, Dr. Muhammad reminds us that the only true mission of a school is to transmit to students, no matter

behaviours that can be placed in each of the four described categories. A principal must always think and act with nuance. He must work on the strong trends and be wary of categorizing people empirically. The lecturer reminds us that the worst form of leadership is one in which the leader does nothing more than command and evaluate.

A principal must regularly self-evaluate in regards to these four categories, and must work upon him- or herself as required.

As for staff relations, Dr. Muhammad believes that during a principal’s first two years at a school, he or she must refrain from participating in recreational and social events with staff, and even abstain from informal activities. How, he asks, can a leader take part in karaoke on Friday night with staff members who prioritize

responsible for making sure they assume that responsibility. Throughout his speech, Dr. Muhammad uses a school bus metaphor, yet his ideas lend themselves more to a train analogy. From Dr. Muhammad’s experience, we gather that the profession of principal involves not only directing, but also – perhaps above all – leading. On the tracks that lead to the success of all students, the school principal not only drives the train, but also ensures that each person, whether student or educator, is sitting in the seat best suited to them. The school principal is the locomotive that pulls all the wagons. ▲

---

Born in Fécamp, France, Philippe Porée-Kurrer, Managing Editor of Les Éditions Sivori, is also a novelist with nine books published in France and Canada. Since 2001, he has worked in Ontario as a writer-researcher of educational materials.

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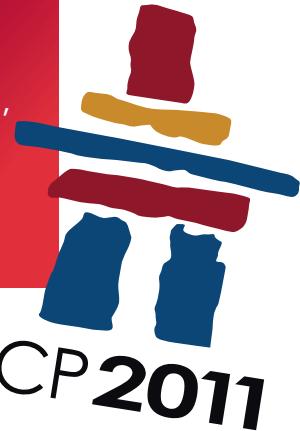
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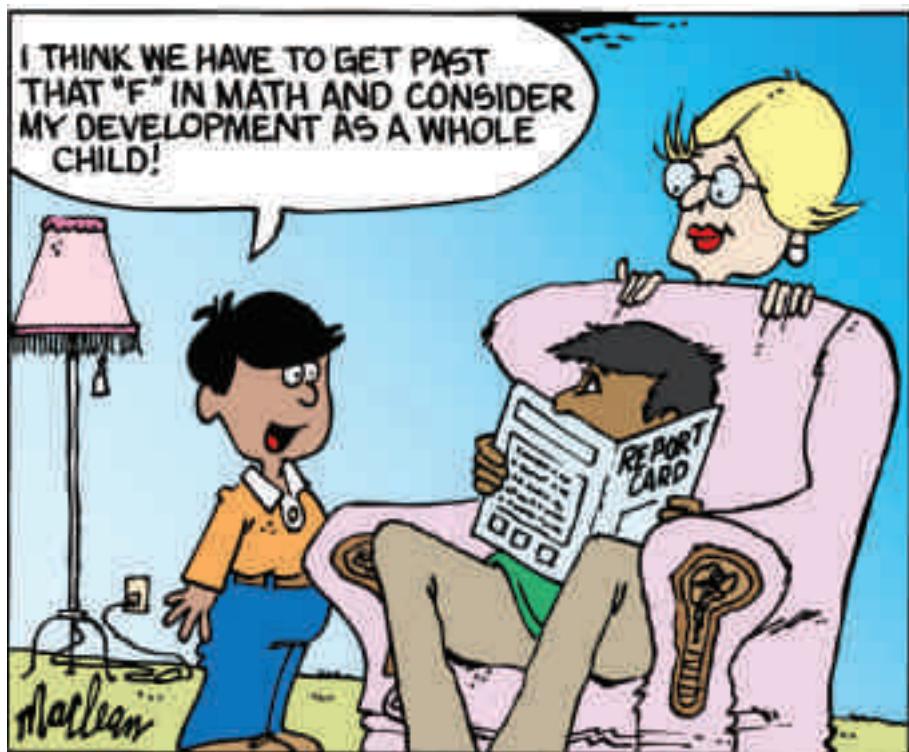


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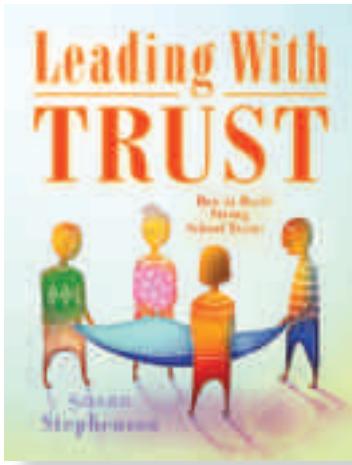
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For more information or submissions, contact Assistant Editor  
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The editorial board will consider all submissions based on their relevancy, timeliness, readability, originality and overall interest.



# Leading With Trust – How to Build Strong School Teams

By: Susan Stephenson  
 Solution Tree  
 ISBN 978-1-934009-46-8  
 Reviewed by Ardeth Staz

Are you struggling to improve student achievement data? Facilitating a new group and want them to gel quickly into a smoothly functioning team? Trying to build trusting relationships among your staff or make your school culture more positive?

Then Susan Stephenson's latest book, *Leading With Trust – How to Build Strong School Teams* is a great read. Susan takes her many years as educator, administrator and staff developer and combines them with current research in this very practical volume to provide strategies and activities to build trust.

The book is divided into three main sections/stages set in the context of what she calls the Trust Glass: first confronting distrust, then beginning to develop early trust and finally, creating a high-trust culture. Each section has a chapter summarizing current research for that particular stage followed by a chapter with sequenced strategies and accompanying activities. The research is fascinating, incorporating relevant findings from the education sector and the corporate world. Readers can choose from the practical and clearly explained strategies to match their own personal situation. In addition, there are also free reproducible online resources that can be shared with staff members.

In the book, Susan explains that too often, leaders jump in and use high-risk strategies that assume higher levels of

trust, which can fail to have any sustained effect. Participants give these leaders lip-service at best, or balk at entirely, at worst. Instead, what is really needed in low-trust cultures are low-risk strategies. One of the premises in the book is that growth in trust levels, achieved by removing the barriers to trust in schools and groups, directly correlates to increases in student achievement and staff commitment.

The book invites us to tackle head-on 'distrust' in our organization and outlines five major barriers to examine. Susan's work on barriers to trust provides real food for thought about what might be at the root of low levels of trust in current school cultures, and what areas can become addressed to be proactive. Just sharing this section of the book with your staff will lead to productive conversations. Without trusting relationships in place, any attempted change or improvement will be wasted time, effort and money. Susan argues that most schools hover around levels of distrust or early trust at best, while others move on to developing stages of trust and a few special schools achieve the highest levels of mature trust.

It is interesting how Susan has included happiness and humour as part of her Circle of Trust and woven this into trust-building strategies. Trusting cultures also have fun together and are more optimistic about their futures.

Susan also addresses strategies for building personal self-trust as well as interpersonal team-trust. Readers may be tempted to skip over these self-trust strategies, but they are more than 'self-help' activities — they truly make us examine our own willingness to trust others and have the confidence to trust ourselves more deeply.

Other topics the book touches on include change, conflict resolution and decision-making in the context of a proven action-planning model. A case study, built on some of her own experiences as an administrator, helps to describe the journey a school might take towards being a stronger team.

The appendix and online reproducible resources round out this very helpful book. Readers will also find additional connections with instructional coaching, mentoring and character education initiatives. Susan believes we all need to find the courage to make trust a discussable topic to build relationships, staff commitment and teamwork for the benefit of student success. ▲



**Ardeth Staz** is a former Superintendent with the District School Board of Niagara.

# Meeting More, in an Age of Meeting Less

**T**hroughout my career, both in schools and the board office, the issue of meetings has been contentiously debated. With responsibilities for many meetings, I thought I had a solid grasp of various effective models. However, my recent teaching exchange in New Zealand has significantly altered my views.

At Tauranga Boys' College, an all-boys public secondary school southeast of Auckland, while 1,800 teenagers begin lining up outside their classrooms at 8:35 a.m., teachers are typically finishing their daily staff briefing with administration. Briefings last 10 minutes three mornings a week, leaving the other two mornings for professional development and bi-weekly department meetings.

Before my exchange, I was accustomed to being in my classroom when the bell rang, finalizing preparations and greeting students. So, this routine of morning staff briefings lasting until first bell initially seemed to add that extra bit of insanity to my frantic adjustments to a new system. In those first weeks, I shook my head more than a few times on my way across the school grounds for the staff briefing. It was initially a resisted and frenzied start to my day.

With my recent return to Ontario, staff briefings are actually one of the things I miss most, as much was accomplished in those meetings. While the administrative information was also often distributed through email, it would be overwhelming in a busy school of 1,800 students if everything were communicated only that way.

Moreover, Tauranga Boys' College Principal Robert Mangan explains

that the staff briefing "has to be more than just information ... It has to be a recognition of achievement." Briefings also highlighted undertakings and accomplishments of various students

the staff briefings and it was uncommon for people to miss them.

Mangan attributes this to a delicate balance: "People are busy and don't want to be dragged in just for the sake

*"The picture has to be positive, moving forward, that we're enthusiastic about what's ahead of us. And it's about giving a sense [that] there may be these issues, but we're going to deal with them. You're giving reassurance to staff. You grow credibility."*

and school groups as an important positive start to the day. It was never an easy day in the classrooms of Tauranga Boys' College; the energy level of the boys was invigorating and engaging, but also demanded equally high energy levels from their teachers at all times. When dismissed from a staff briefing with the usual "Let's have a good day everyone," we left believing we would have a good day, and that together we were contributing to the success of our students. The camaraderie in the room provided an empowering start, usually with a laugh and a smile as we headed to class.

Occasionally, briefings were more sombre, such as the report from the coach of the rugby team about their experience being caught in the first Christchurch earthquake last September. Over the year, we celebrated and commiserated together. But we were always together. Interestingly, no one complained about

of it ... The picture has to be positive, moving forward, that we're enthusiastic about what's ahead of us. And it's about giving a sense [that] there may be these issues, but we're going to deal with them. You're giving reassurance to staff. You grow credibility."

I understand that most Ontario principals would have a difficult time convincing their staff that they should meet every morning before class; but I would encourage principals not to underestimate the benefits of bringing everyone together on a regular basis, even for short meetings. It builds community and commitment in a school, and with time can become a valued part of a school's culture. ▲

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