

FALL 2016 VOL.18 NO. 3

# OPC Register

THE MAGAZINE FOR ONTARIO'S PRINCIPALS & VICE-PRINCIPALS

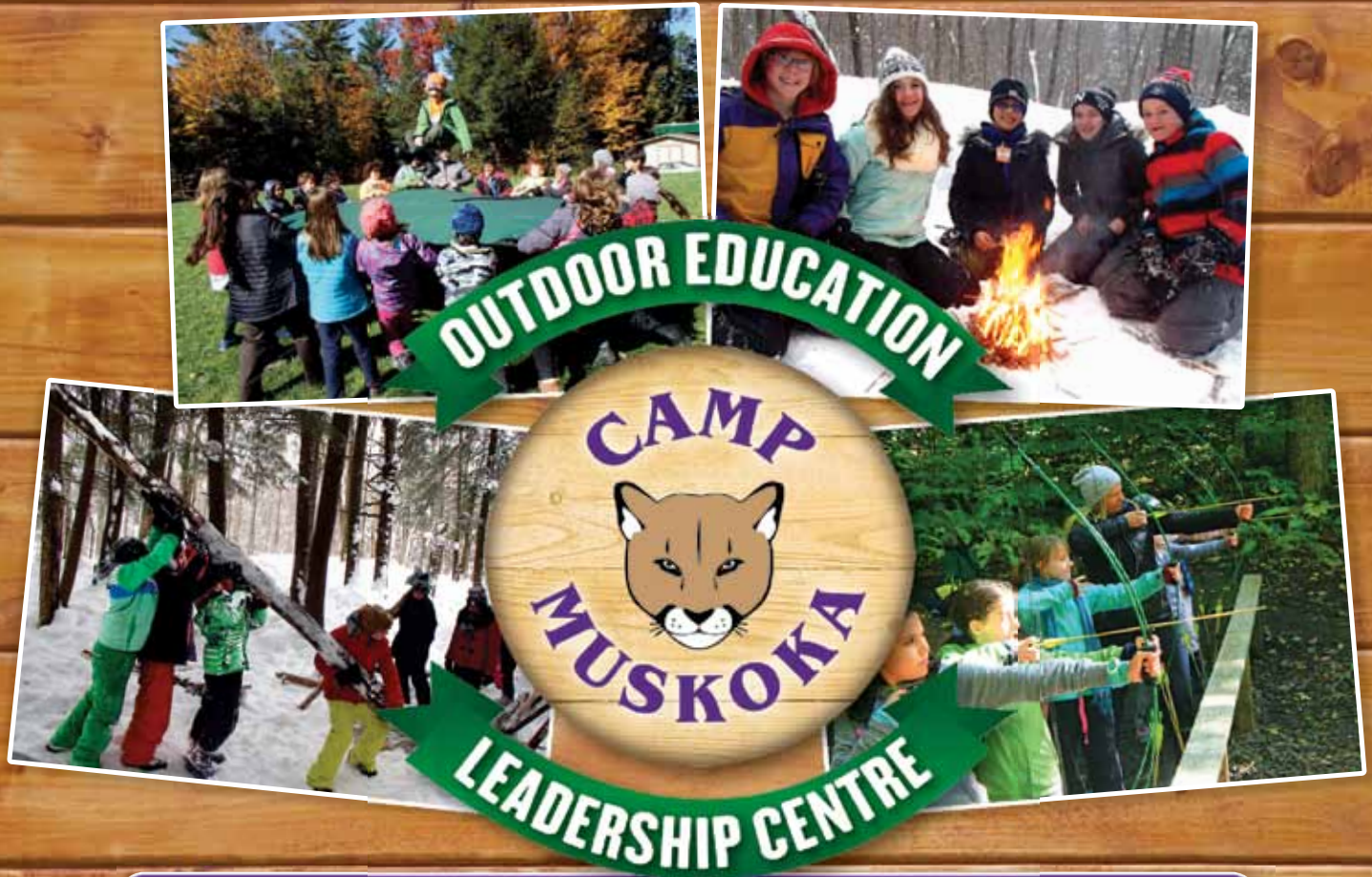


## A Call to Action

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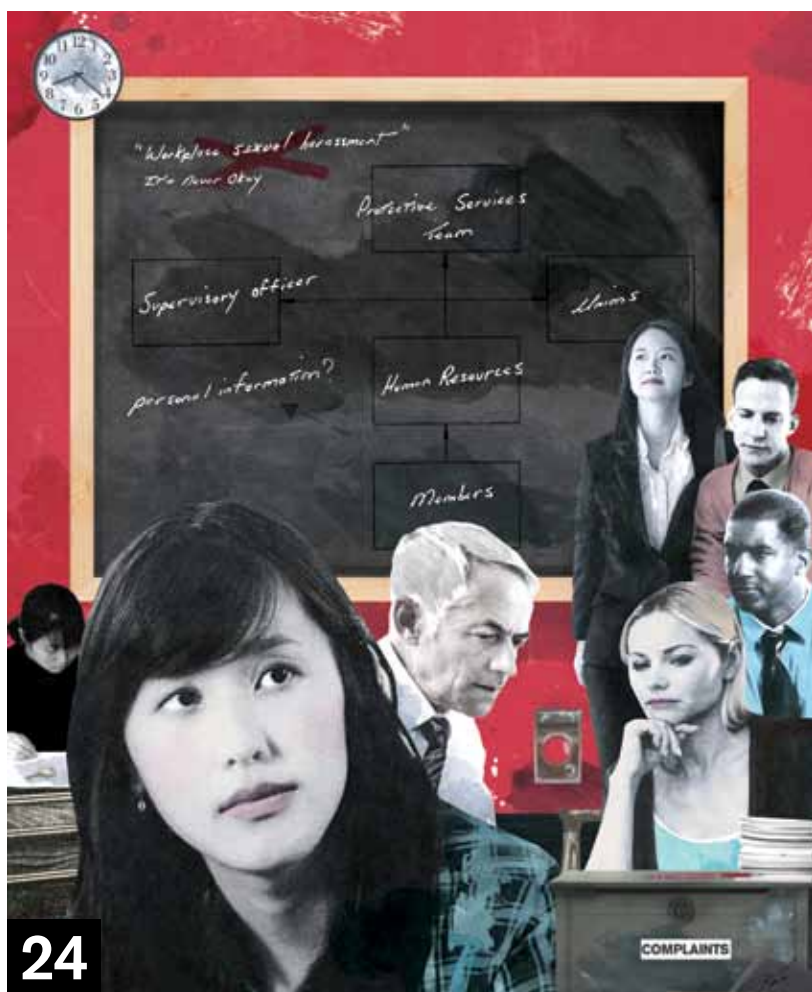
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# High Performance Work

Commonalities between sport and education leadership



The organization of a magazine demands finished copy many weeks ahead of a mail out. As I write, we are in the days just preceding the Rio Olympic Games. In so many ways, your work and development runs parallel to theirs

... but without many of the supports they have. In a simpler time (both for schools and for sport) I had the good fortune of being able to teach in a secondary school *and* have a coaching role with Canada's national and Olympic rowing teams. It has always been my view that our work in education is high performance work. Sport and education share deep complexity, demanding work and accountability for results. I believe, as good learners and leaders, that you can gain a great deal by considering the commonalities between high performance sport and education leadership.

#### Preparation and qualifications

Like the aspiring teachers you were,

our athletes started with passion and good training, and then moved along a pathway of increasing demands and responsibilities, ultimately putting their goals to the tough test of promotions. Then came the ongoing tests of high performance, day-to-day, year-to-year. It's once we find ourselves in the increasingly difficult and, arguably, undoable job that there is value in looking at the ways that our Olympians manage the physical and psychological demands of their performances. One key difference is that athletes are almost always aiming for improvements in just those areas that are individual needs. Our learning leaders tend to be "improved" by

large-scale initiatives, which, however important, leave little room for individual training and growth.

#### Workload

On this topic, Ontario's education system has a great deal to learn. High performance athletes commit to huge amounts of training that is at the very edge of what we know about human performance. The key difference for principals and vice-principals is that our work demands are high but lack the athletic models of very careful management of time and energy. For our Members, the rule seems to be to just press harder for results with no plan for what used to be called "periodization" in carefully managed (with lots of testing, and data!) bouts of volume and intensity of training. What about a similar approach to carefully managed workloads through a school year? Olympians learn how to build up, push limits and then rest, recover, go back at it with well planned "tapers" prior to the most demanding times – competition. In the athletic model you'd take time to recover from extremely busy days or weeks in order to maintain and even enhance your performance.

#### Resilience

It doesn't matter whether failure occurs in training or in competition, it hurts and it's very difficult to move past it. Sound training includes careful learning about how to manage these setbacks. Because it seemed that some athletes

were better “wired” for dealing with adversity, it was generally assumed that resilience is/was a *trait* of great competitors. Research, often with children, reset assumptions claiming that resilience is now thought of as a *process* of overcoming adversity, such as defeat. Ontario is cited globally as one of a handful of “high performance education systems,” but are we supporting and developing our leaders with as much care and development as we do our athletes?

We do our challenging work in smaller, humbler venues than the Rio Olympic sites. Our work is no less difficult, exhausting and even risky. Canadian Olympian results will have come and gone by the time you read this, but there will certainly have been brilliant performances and devastating disappointments. Their athletic road is very tough, just as yours is, but the culture of high performance sport has some developmental advantages. We should be pursuing those on behalf of the students we serve. ▲



**Ian McFarlane**

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# Happenings at OPC ...



This summer we hosted our first Additional Qualification (AQ) Boot Camp, a successful experience engaging participants in four days of concentrated professional learning programs in mentoring and special education.



Authors Beate Planche (left) and Lyn Sharratt (right) at our recent launch of their new book *Leading Collaborative Learning*.



Highlights from the third annual Technology-Enabled Learning and Leading Institute for principals and vice-principals this past August. Keynote speakers Garfield Gini-Newman (right), Isabelle Fontaine (above), Tony Wagner (not shown) and Anita Simpson (not shown) engaged with more than 375 participants from all across Ontario.





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encouraging





# g inclusion

More all-gender washrooms coming to Toronto schools

By Stephanie Young

In February 2016, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) reported that it intends to open all-gender washrooms in all public schools across the city, as a way of creating a more inclusive school environment for its students. There are already approximately 50 schools in the TDSB that have all-gender washrooms, which any student can use, regardless of their biological sex, gender identity or gender expression.<sup>1</sup>

The Ontario government indicated that it stands behind the board's initiative, and the office of the previous Education Minister Liz Sandals commented:

The *Education Act* requires schools and school boards to provide safe, inclusive and accepting learning environments to support the achievement and well-being of all students, including students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.<sup>2</sup>

Gender identity and gender expression are prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the "*Code*"). The Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity and gender expression*, issued in April 2014, defines gender identity and gender expression as follows:

**Gender identity** is each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex. Gender identity is fundamentally different from a person's sexual orientation.

**Gender expression** is how a person publicly presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender.

Pursuant to the *Code*, school boards have a duty to accommodate individuals, including both employees and students, who require accommodations because of needs related to their gender identity or gender expression, to the point of undue hardship.

In accommodating the needs of students because of their gender identity and/or gender expression, schools should be mindful of the overarching principles of accommodation: respect for dignity, individualization, integration and full participation. The most appropriate accommodation for a trans student will be the one that best respects the student's dignity, meets the student's individual needs based on the circumstances at hand, and promotes the student's inclusion and participation.<sup>3</sup>

The TDSB initiatives around all-gender washrooms will go a long way in promoting inclusion in its schools, and will allow more students to feel comfortable in going to the washroom, without having to consider their gender identity and/or gender expression.

Everyone has the right to use facilities in accordance with their lived gender identity and/or gender expression. A student whose gender identity or gender expression differs from the student's birth sex cannot be forced to use the washroom that corresponds with the student's birth sex. Similarly, if a trans student is not comfortable using a gender-specific washroom, the student should be permitted to use another washroom that is not associated with any one gender. In some cases, schools are permitting students to use staff or principal washrooms as an accommodation, where all-gender student washrooms are not available.

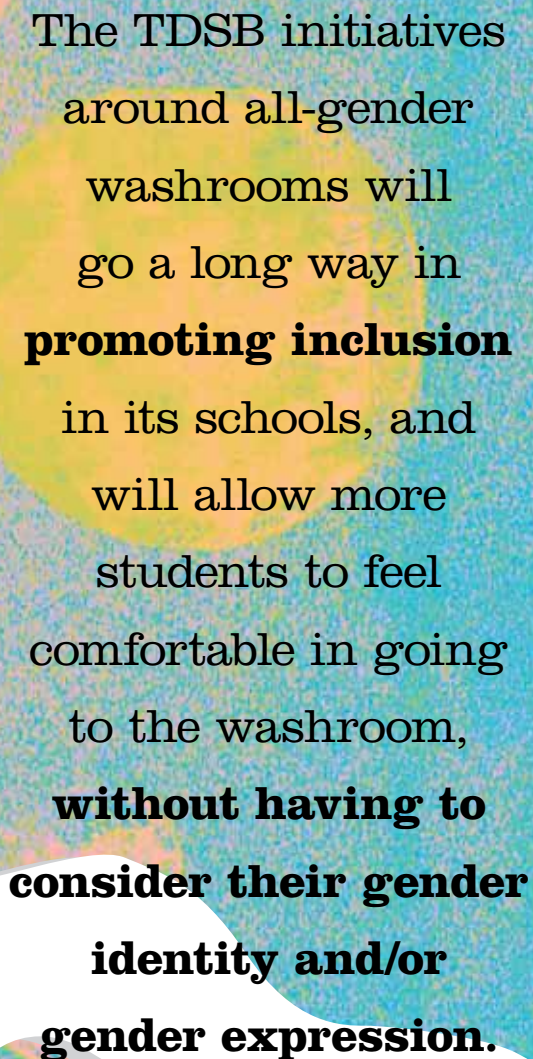
The spirit of the *Code*, as well as the various policies on equity and inclusive education implemented by school boards across the province, is to make students feel accepted and included, regardless of their gender identity or gender expression. As a means of ensuring all students are provided



with inclusive and supportive environments in Ontario's schools, and in light of Ontario human rights law, school boards should consider the following practices and principles when updating their policies and when accommodating/supporting trans students<sup>4</sup>:

- Trans students should be recognized and treated as the gender they live in, whether or not they have undergone sex reassignment surgery, and regardless of whether their identifying documents reflect their gender identity and/or gender expression.
- Trans students can have their names or sex designations changed on class lists, school assignments, identity documents or other records. Unless there is a legal requirement to have the student's legal





The TDSB initiatives around all-gender washrooms will go a long way in **promoting inclusion** in its schools, and will allow more students to feel comfortable in going to the washroom, **without having to consider their gender identity and/or gender expression.**

name on a record or document, a request for this type of change should be accommodated. Special considerations may apply with respect to a student's Ontario School Record (OSR), and school boards should consult with legal counsel if there is a question around changing a student's name on their OSR.

- Dress code policies should be flexible and inclusive. A student should be permitted to wear the uniform that corresponds with their gender identity and/or gender expression, or they should be permitted to wear a more gender-neutral uniform if desired.
- Curriculums should be inclusive and reflective of the student community.

- Students should be able to participate in gym class and on sports teams in accordance with their lived gender identity and/or gender expression.
- Classrooms should be as inclusive and gender-neutral as possible. For instance, games or exercises that divide students into teams based on gender should be avoided.
- Students should be permitted to use the washrooms, change rooms and locker rooms that correspond with their lived gender identity and/or gender expression.
- School boards should review their rules, practices, policies and facilities to remove barriers and avoid negative effects on trans students. Policies and practices should be inclusive of everyone.
- Privacy is key in the accommodation process. Only the necessary information should be exchanged and it must be kept confidential, and shared with school board staff on a need-to-know basis only.
- School boards should always consider the unique needs of each student, and what is sensitive in the circumstances given the student's feelings and unique vulnerabilities.
- Schools are expected to share information only with those needed to accomplish the accommodation unless otherwise directed by the person making the request. Depending on the wishes of the person making the request, the accommodation process could involve the principal, the student's teacher(s), and, depending on the resources available, the school social worker, the board psychologist and members of gender-based violence prevention or gender-specific support teams.
- Board teachers and other staff should be trained in supporting trans students, and school boards should begin discussions with students about gender diversity.

If a school board is presented with an accommodation request from a trans student or their family, and the board is not clear on what steps should be taken to support the student, the board should seek legal advice. It is essential that school boards are aware of and clear on their obligations to accommodate trans students, both for the purposes of ensuring students are provided with an inclusive school environment, and for reducing the risk of legal liability. ▲

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#### FOOTNOTES

1. Dario Balca, "All gender washrooms coming to more Toronto schools: TDSB", (February 16, 2016) CTV News at: <http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/all-gender-washrooms-coming-to-more-toronto-schools-tdsb-1.2780925>>
2. *Ibid.*
3. "Trans or transgender is an umbrella term referring to people with diverse gender identities and expressions that differ from stereotypical gender norms. It includes but is not limited to people who identify as transgender, trans woman (male-to-female), trans man (female-to-male), transsexual, cross-dresser, gender non-conforming, gender variant or gender queer;" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, *Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity and gender expression*, April 2014).
4. These principles and practices have been developed based on the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity and gender expression*, April 2014, as well as the applicable case law.





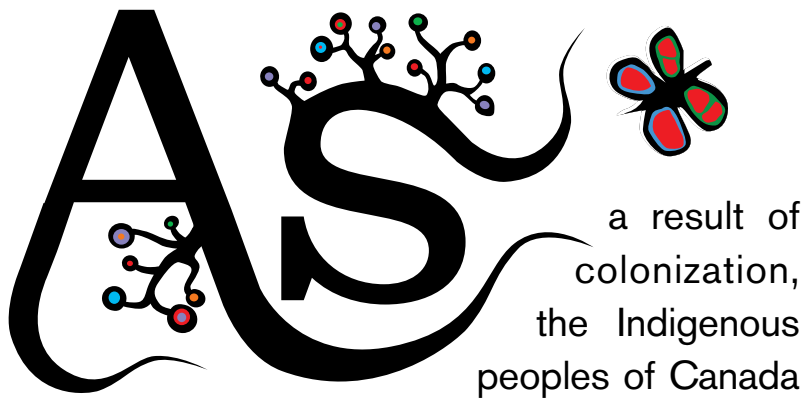
A CALL TO



What school leaders can do  
in response to The Truth and  
Reconciliation Report

By Ken MacKinnon

Illustration by Donald Chretien



a result of colonization, the Indigenous peoples of Canada have largely been denied the opportunity to contribute fully to Canadian society. Our collective history of mistreatment towards Aboriginal peoples in Canada is well documented. It is a brutal history of segregation and abuse. The legacy of residential schools and the Sixties Scoop has had a multi-generational effect on Indigenous children and families. Look at any newspaper today and you will be hard pressed not to find an article about Aboriginal peoples' lack of access to health care, social services, schools and even clean drinking water. These are truths that we as Canadians must face. We have no choice but to act, particularly as educators, for it is *through* education that we can begin to find reconciliation and rebuild our relationship with Indigenous peoples.

Last winter, I had the opportunity to participate in a “blanket exercise” facilitated by staff from the Toronto District School Board’s Aboriginal Education Centre, supported by an Elder from the Aboriginal community. This exercise, created by KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives – an organization representing Canadian churches working to promote peace and justice – walked all participants through the experiences and injustices Aboriginal peoples endured in Canada, from first contact, to residential schools and finally, in present day. It is an interactive experience as participants take on different roles and have an opportunity to reflect upon their experience(s) at the end with support from the Elder.

It remains one of the most powerful experiences of my professional career, and became the impetus for my own personal call to action. The blanket exercise highlighted the injustices our country imposed on Indigenous peoples, and because we were actively engaged in the dramatization of these experiences, we could not help but be immeasurably affected by them.

I consider myself an ally of Indigenous peoples of Canada and this article, as a call to action, represents an attempt to encourage and inspire other school leaders to engage with the Aboriginal narrative in Canada in the hope that other principals and vice-principals across our province will begin their own journey and call to action.

#### The Truth and Reconciliation Report: Why is it significant?

In December 2015, the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report* (TRC) was released under the leadership of Justice Murray Sinclair. This report highlights six years of consultation with Canada’s Aboriginal communities, resulting in the creation of 94 Calls to Action under four sections: **child welfare, justice, health and education**. Together, these calls to action challenge all Canadians to re-evaluate our colonial history and actively seek out reparation and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

In a speech in Ottawa on June 2, 2015, Justice Sinclair said, “above all, we must remember that this is a Canadian story, not



... is **through** education that we can begin to **find reconciliation** and **rebuild our relationship** with Indigenous peoples.



an Indigenous one” (Justice Murray Sinclair, 2015). Admittedly, it is difficult to accept this part of Canadian history and yet, it’s necessary in order to move towards understanding and reconciliation. The TRC provides a framework and springboard from which to begin the conversation, and look at what can be done to support, recognize and provide inclusive spaces for our Aboriginal students.

In order to begin to take action, it is helpful to perhaps look at a few pertinent recommendations from the report and consider what might be done to address the need. Most of the report is directed towards various levels of government. However, there are some areas that we can address as educational leaders including:

- improving education attainment levels and success rates
- developing culturally appropriate curricula and
- enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p.2).

To place these calls to action into context, it is critical to note that statistically, Aboriginal children are struggling in our schools. In their article *Beyond the Rhetoric: Moving from exclusion, reaching for inclusion in Canadian schools*, George Sefa Dei and Irma Marcia James refer to the “pushout factor” in reference to Aboriginal youth. “Although significant numbers of students from ‘minoritized’ groups have been

disengaged from their schooling experience, Black and Aboriginal students appear to have been most directly affected by the ‘pushout’ factor” (Dei & James, 2002, p.3). Here, Dei and James refer to exclusionary education practices that result in these students receiving an inferior education than their mainstream counterparts (Dei & James, 2002, p.3).

While schools continually work to improve education attainment levels for all students, it is critical that marginalized students are not forgotten through this process. A step in the right direction might be to recognize the disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and begin to develop curricula that is culturally responsive, particularly to the needs of Indigenous students.

#### Education is Key to Reconciliation

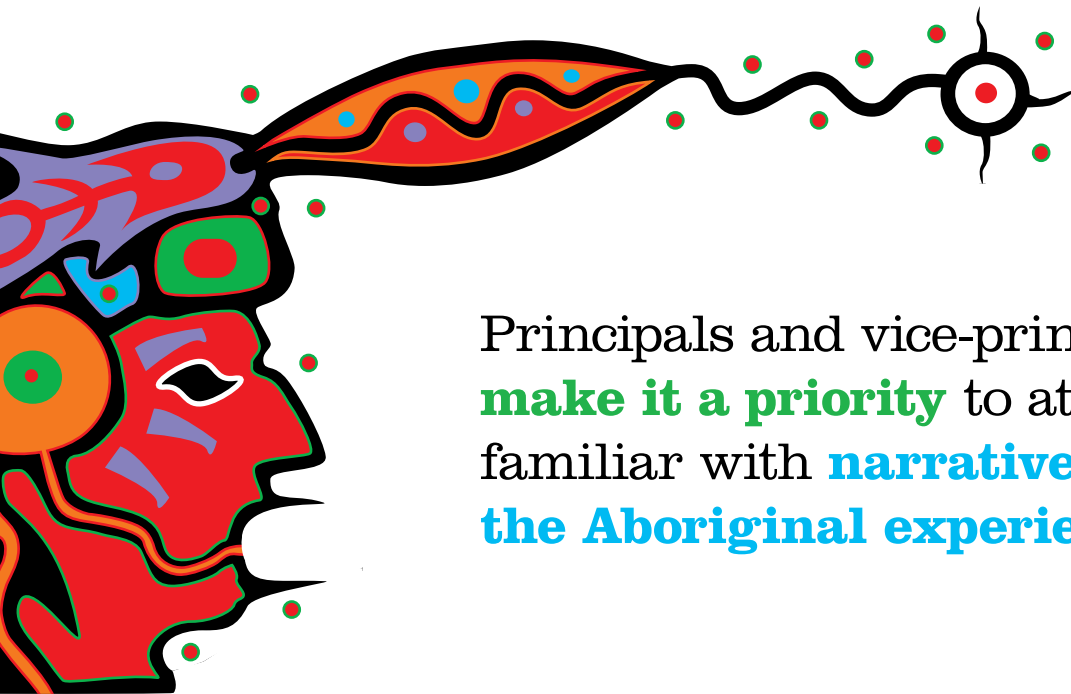
The TRC also makes recommendations that would enable our education systems to begin to make reparation to Canada’s Aboriginal peoples. In the same speech referenced above, Justice Sinclair challenged educators to re-evaluate curricula and examine discriminatory attitudes. “Part of this healing process will involve putting an end to the legacy of discrimination that still informs attitudes in our education system and curricula today” (Justice Murray Sinclair, 2015). We have all seen examples of this whereby we only acknowledge and value the contributions made by the early

settlers in Canada, completely ignoring or negating the negative impacts these settlements had on Aboriginal peoples.

For many of us, this oversight is in no way intentional. However, the existence of the TRC challenges us as we are called to recognize our “true” history and make it known to our students. In the words of Justice Sinclair, “we must remember that at the same time Aboriginal children were made to feel inferior, generation after generation of non-Aboriginal children were exposed to the false belief that their culture was superior” (Justice Murray Sinclair, 2015). Clearly, we owe it to our Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children to address this issue openly in classrooms across Canada.

The TRC report suggests the following pathways within the education system towards reconciliation:

- Developing and implementing kindergarten to grade 12 curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect; and identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above (the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p.7).



Principals and vice-principals need to **make it a priority** to at least become familiar with **narratives surrounding the Aboriginal experience** ...

These calls to action represent no easy task, and many of us might feel ill-equipped to make them a reality in our schools. I suggest, however, that in order to begin to make reparation, we must first recognize that in fact, something must be done to address the issue. As school leaders, we are in a unique position to do just that. I strongly suggest that educators all over the country participate in KAIROS' blanket exercise, or a similar experi-

ence that would provide its participants with unique opportunities to truly grasp the injustices done to Aboriginal peoples. Activities such as these have a powerful and lasting effect on the participants as they promote open and honest dialogue. My personal experience with the blanket exercise forced me to face some of my own biases that were at work and begin to challenge them. Recognizing our own bias is one of the first steps toward reconciliation.

**Role of the Principal/Vice-Principal**

First and foremost, I think it is important to note that educators are charged with the moral purpose to act. We owe it to all of our students to tell the true story of our Aboriginal communities. In their article, Dei and James refer to the power of anti-racist education to make change:

*... we take the position that if schools actively use the idea of an integrative anti-racism discourse in their educational practice to celebrate, affirm, and respond to difference and diversity as strengths, adolescents will at least see that there is an identified problem that adults are working to solve. The affirmation of identities allows students to work with embodied knowledge to resist marginality and exclusion in schools. By acknowledging and responding to difference, educators might not only challenge power and privilege, but they might also enable students to use their individual and collective agencies to work for change that furthers equality, thereby enriching and strengthening social fabric (Dei & James, 2002, p. 17-18).*

By reaching out to Aboriginal communities, to give them voice around how to make their educational experience better, we might begin to make change.

As Dei and James suggest, when marginalized children see educators working on the

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problem, trying to make their experience at school better, it encourages them to take up their own identities and resist marginality. To do this, they need to see that we care. We may not have all the answers, but making the effort to recognize and affirm Aboriginal identities is an important first step.

The following are a few suggestions moving forward for education leaders:

- Recognize and affirm the varying identities of Indigenous peoples of Canada.
- Look at participating in a blanket exercise (or similar) in order to experience first-hand the truth about our Canadian history.
- Look for opportunities to reach out to the Aboriginal families who may be living in your community and engage them in a dialogue around how we can make sure their children are well served, represented and feel included in our schools.
- Consider how Social Studies and History is taught in your school and look for op-

portunities to include the perspective of Aboriginal peoples.

- Listen to the varied voices of our Aboriginal students to understand their experience and work together to promote greater inclusion.

Wab Kinew, the author, journalist and Anishinaabemowin advocate, says it best in his book *The Reason You Walk*, “whether we are young or old, whether our skin is light or dark, whether we are man or woman, we share a common humanity and are all headed for a common destiny. That should bind us together more strongly than divisions can push us apart. So long as anything other than love governs our relationship with others, we have work to do” (Kinew, 2015, p.268).

Principals and vice-principals need to make it a priority to at least become familiar with narratives surrounding the Aboriginal experience in Canada. We have a long way

to go as an education system, but by taking these first few steps towards reconciliation, we ensure that our Aboriginal students can begin to take part in all our system has to offer and flourish in our schools.

Miigwetch! ▲

Ken MacKinnon is a principal with Toronto DSB and a doctoral student in the Social Justice in Education department at OISE/UT.

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KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. Blanket Exercise: Information available at: <http://kairosblanketexercise.org>

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An  
interview  
with  
**Kelly  
Kempel**

Collaboration as the key  
to moving forward

By Peggy Sweeney  
Photography by Ethan Horst Mitchell



Trying to schedule an interview with incoming OPC President Kelly Kempel in June is tough. She's trying to finish up the school year before she starts her one-year release from the board, complete all those end-of-year responsibilities and deal with an ongoing issue that consumes much of her time. "It's incredibly busy and I've got a very complex discipline issue that takes a lot of time. But in the end, hopefully the students benefit, so I'll get it done somehow," she laughs.

It's a good introduction to OPC's new President. Like the Energizer bunny, she always has more on the go than seems possible to manage. But somehow she always does.

Kelly has lived in Kitchener-Waterloo all her life. As a teenager she coached in the community, taught swimming and was a strong student. "I've always had a real strong love of learning. I was one of those students who loved school and have always felt the need to embed some learning in my life." She graduated from Cameron Heights Collegiate and completed two undergraduate science degrees – one from McMaster University and one from the University of Waterloo.

During her stint at Waterloo, she was also a Teaching Assistant. Working with students in labs and on course work, Kelly realized that teaching was what she wanted to pursue. "Through my teens and throughout my work at university, I realized that what I enjoyed the most was coaching and supporting the learning of others. As I was finishing my degree at Waterloo, that's when it all sort of came together. I realized that teaching was the perfect step for me."

After earning her teaching degree from the University of Western Ontario, she headed back to Waterloo for her first teaching job. While teaching, she earned her Master of Science degree part-time. Following 11 years teaching biology and chemistry in four high schools, she moved into the role of vice-principal for five years, and just completed her 13th year as a secondary principal.

"During my time as a principal, one of the highlights for me has been working with some incredible vice-principals and mentoring them to become principals. Program-wise, I started an I.B. program at one of my schools to meet the needs of the school community, and to support innovation and creation, and creativity. I have loved all of it."

In 2009, Kelly became a facilitator for local student success web conferences, a joint initiative between the three principal associations, the ministry and Curriculum Services Canada. "I worked with a number of principals to plan the conferences, discussing best practices and ideas. We ran the web conferences for admin teams across Ontario.

From the planning to delivering to the conference itself, I realized the power of the collaborative process for principals and vice-principals, who often feel somewhat isolated in our role. Through that collaboration, I saw the impact that the OPC can have on people as they develop their capacity as school leaders."

Kelly then became involved in presenting Teacher Performance Appraisal workshops. "Travelling around the province, I recognized that the issues that administrators experience don't vary tremendously by panel or by geography. When we got together to talk about and share ideas and practice, it was incredibly motivating and supporting. In some of the more geographically diverse boards, I gained an appreciation for how difficult it is for people to be able to get together because they sometimes have to travel three to four hours just for a meeting. It's a real challenge."

After her experiences with the web conferences and TPA workshops, Kelly wanted to become more involved with the OPC. She became one of the Provincial Councillors for Waterloo and served for three years. "I remember walking into Council the first time. It was incredibly empowering to connect with other school leaders who understand the role and whose goals and motivation are to support one another, enhance the role, learn from one another, and connect to provincial OPC and what it was to offer.

"Based on my experiences and through the role as Councillor, I felt that I could represent the interests of principals and vice-principals in a larger way, so I ran to become a member of the Executive. I was hoping to work with the Executive to influence and support our Members with other stakeholders. And that was another very positive learning opportunity. I wanted to build on the strength of the organization by listening to other people, collaborating with Members, and trying to be responsive to the needs of our membership for professional learning, service support, protective services and advocacy."

In 2015, Kelly was elected as the Provincial President. "I was drawn to the role through working with the talent on the Executive, working with the senior staff, and connecting with Councillors to communi-





“

In our roles,  
if done well,  
we lead from  
behind, not  
out front.

Not everybody  
understands the  
sophistication  
of the leadership  
to make that  
happen.

”

cate how principals and vice-principals operate and what really drives them in terms of the role. That is what creates the environment for supporting students in their learning, supporting staff in their professional capacity and their journey. Through the experiences of my own personal career journey, I think I can support others in their professional capacities through mentoring and role modeling, through truly reciprocal and collaborative discussions.”

As always, there are lots of issues on the plate as a new school year begins. Despite provincial agreements being reached with teachers and support staff, many boards are still experiencing labour unrest due to the absence of local deals. And that unrest – with the refusal of teachers and support staff to complete certain tasks – almost always falls directly at the feet of principals and vice-principals.

“The difficulty for administrators is that there are such diverse circumstances. So while many might be ‘back to normal,’ others are still experiencing significant interruption in their ability to manage their schools. Provincially, we need to make sure we are hearing from our Members about how things are operating – or not – and continue to advocate to get things running smoothly. We need to keep talking to the ministry and our stakeholder partners so they understand the impact those disruptions are having in our schools, for the students. Our primary goal has to be supporting the teaching and the learning in the school. We’ve spent far too much time working under labour strife – it needs to stop.

“During the upcoming year, I’m looking forward to meeting with Members from across the province, particularly in those areas where disruptions continue, to get a better understanding of what we can do to help them.

“I also know that Regulation 274 continues to be a barrier for our Members for hiring the best teacher. We’ve raised our concerns many times with the ministry and will continue to do so.

“Another challenge continues to be advocacy for the role of the principal and vice-principal and helping our stakeholder partners, parents, students and school communities to understand the significant impact that principal leadership has on student learning. In our roles, if done well, we lead from behind, not out front. Not everybody understands the sophistication of the leadership to make that happen. So we have to be more vocal in our advocacy for ourselves.”

One of Kelly’s goals over the coming year is to ensure the membership feels more connected to their local association and to the provincial OPC. “Locally I want to hear directly from our Members so I can understand their concerns and try to help address them. In response to what’s happening for people in their schools, we can then focus our

attention during Provincial Council meetings on some best practices, sharing ideas and providing resources for districts on how to improve people’s ability or capacity to do their job.

“I’d like to see a strong connection between individuals and their local and provincial OPC associations. I know that for some people, their connection to OPC provincial often only surfaces when they are in need of protective services. But I want all our Members to know that there are lots of resources, whether it’s through professional learning or educational leadership, that they can access to feel connected to the OPC. It’s important that Members feel connected. That’s the best way we can advocate for all principals and vice-principals.”

Away from school, Kelly’s family is her main focus. Married for 22 years to Stewart, a corporate lawyer, she has two children; 20-year-old Jessica is in her third year at the University of Guelph studying bio-chemistry, 18-year-old Sam has just started at McMaster University in Engineering. Clearly, they’ve both inherited their mom’s science genes. She is also the mom of a dog and a cat. No word yet on how they will fare in science.

“Like most working parents, my family is my greatest hobby. My kids have always been involved in sports and I have spent many hours in arenas, at ball diamonds and on volleyball courts cheering them on. And I have been in a book club for over 20 years with the same group of friends. We meet every month and it’s an important activity and outlet for us.”

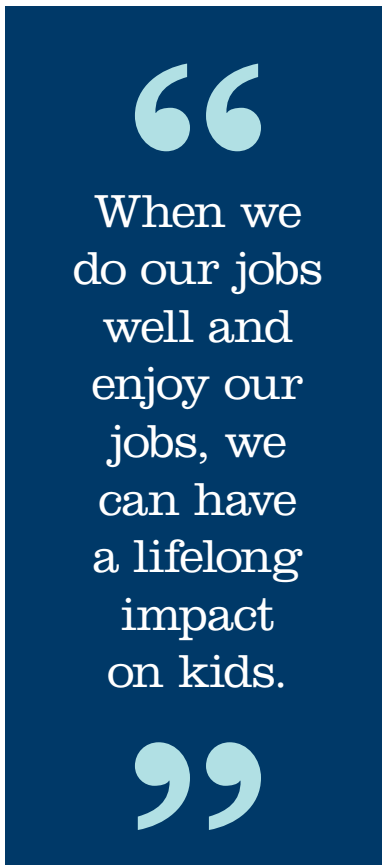
To recharge her batteries, Kelly spends as much time as possible at her cottage, swimming, playing tennis, paddle boarding, golfing and kayaking. “I’m not great at anything, but I will be. I’ll try anything,” she laughs.

“I have really enjoyed being a principal because I truly believe that when I’m in a school

connecting with kids, teachers, staff and parents, that I can really impact students and their opportunities. I know that as kids’ brains grow, the environment that we create and the opportunities that we provide for them really, truly get hardwired in their brain. When we do our jobs well and enjoy our jobs, we can have a lifelong impact on kids.

“Handing out commencement diplomas is one of my favourite jobs – I feel so honored to have been a part of that impact. And I don’t think that it’s a cursory or minimal impact. I think it is actually a hugely significant impact on a kid’s life.”

It’s an impact she is also hoping to have this year on the OPC and our Members. With her skill, tireless work effort and commitment, she’s sure to be successful with that goal as well. ▲



# Reshaping Development

## Improving learning and leading

Ontario's *21st Century Competencies: Foundation document for discussion* (Kathleen Cushman, 2016) supports the need for today's students to engage in "deeper learning" to develop 21st century competencies. An overarching question that has guided the Ministry's investigation is, how can we best prepare educators, leaders, parents and partners in education for the transformations that may be needed to bring a focus on the competencies into instruction and learning?

Kathleen Cushman's study on what motivates our students includes social learning with others, links to students' own interests, cultural connections, physical activity, relevance to the larger world, competition, element of choice and sheer curiosity, and intriguing puzzles.

To ensure we continue to meet the needs of the 21st century learners, our new accredited Principal's Development Course (PDC) Additional Qualification – previously known as our Experienced Principal's Development Course (EPDC) – now provides education leaders with opportunities to investigate, collaborate and share innovative craft knowledge that leads to meaningful change in supporting 21st century learning and leading.

Learning leaders understand that schools improve when both students and adults learn. Our PDC program is designed for proactive, reflective and collaborative learning leaders to explore, in depth, essential dimensions for increasing leadership capacity in a complex world.

Candidates will begin to nurture changes in pedagogical design and practice through self-reflection while exploring the complex issues in schools today. We know that self-reflection can illuminate the ways in which principals can support adult growth and learning that has been explicitly connected to

refining professional judgment and generating new craft knowledge for use in their learning practice. The modules include Principal Legal Duties and Liabilities; Instructional Leadership for School Improvement; Leading an Equitable and Inclusive School; Mentoring Coaching and School Leadership; and Collab-

Learning leaders understand that schools improve when both students and adults learn.

improved instruction and student improvement. The PDC considers ways to support genuine growth so that you can better meet and manage the adaptive challenges faced today.

This new qualification program provides opportunities to explore creation of cultures of professional growth and authentic learning by digging deeper into what you do, what your students need and what research says in a public and collaborative forum.

Through sharing lived experience, participating candidates will engage in critical inquiry, the co-construction of knowledge as it applies to complex school issues and cultures and the exploration of various ethical dimensions to create professional growth to enhance learning and well-being.

Our PDC modules are responsive to the evolving nature of the principalship in Ontario. Our goal is that through these explorations, leaders will strengthen their professional efficacy by gaining in-depth knowledge and understanding,

refining professional judgment and generating new craft knowledge for use in their learning practice. The modules include Principal Legal Duties and Liabilities; Instructional Leadership for School Improvement; Leading an Equitable and Inclusive School; Mentoring Coaching and School Leadership; and Collaborative Leadership Inquiry/ Developing Your Digital Leadership Portfolio.

Further modules in the development stage include Understanding the Kindergarten Leadership Stance; Leading in the Digital Age; Professional Conversations; Environmental Stewardship and LGBTQ.

This program is open to candidates who hold principal's qualifications, with a minimum of two years of successful experience as a principal or vice-principal. It is available in blended and online delivery formats with a focus on a variety of digital tools to enhance learning.

Participants in the PDC will experience and model collaborative inquiry, an openness to learn from and have respect for diverse perspectives, and a willingness to take risks. The program enables administrators to share leadership craft knowledge, strengthen relationships across the province, help manage change and support personal learning. ▲

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**i** Download a copy of the (2016) 21st Century Competencies: Foundation document at [www.edugains.ca](http://www.edugains.ca) > Ministry Developed Resources > 21st Century Learning





~~"Workplace sexual harassment"~~

*It's never okay*

Protective Services  
Team

Supervisory officer

Unions

*personal information?*

Human Resources

Members



# Workplace Sexual Harassment

New responsibilities for school leaders under OHSA

On March 6, 2015, the Government of Ontario announced “It’s Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment.” Bill 132 is part of this Action Plan and amends various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters. Of particular relevance for school leaders are amendments to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* which, among other things, expands the definition of “workplace harassment” to include “workplace sexual harassment.”

By Protective Services Team  
Illustrated by Tara Hardy

In April 2010, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* was amended to include definitions of workplace violence and workplace harassment. The *Act* applies to all workplaces, including schools. Under Bill 132 and as of September 8, 2016, the *OHS*'s definition of "workplace harassment" will be expanded to include a definition of "workplace sexual harassment," incorporating language from the *Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)*, as follows:

- (a) engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, or
- (b) making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.

## School leaders are frequently the target of complaints of workplace harassment by workers under their supervision.

These amendments give workers another venue for complaining about workplace sexual harassment, and put more pressure on employers to address and prevent workplace sexual harassment. If someone in a position of authority to confer or deny a benefit expresses interest in an employee they supervise, this alone may well constitute workplace sexual harassment. The reality is that schools are workplaces like any other, where relationships among employees may evolve; however, we would strongly urge school leader, to refrain from taking even preliminary steps to explore a personal relationship with someone under their supervision. The reality is that the school leader's perception that their overtures are welcome may still not be "safe territory" since perspectives can change and initial feelings sour. We have also dealt with cases where the subordinate pursued a relationship with one of our Members (as evidenced by email and text exchanges), but the subordinate nevertheless later complained of sexual harassment. Principals and vice-principals should work to maintain a professional distance at all times and to disclose any possible vulnerabilities to allegations of sexual harassment to their Superintendent at the earliest opportunity.

Not only are principals and vice-principals "workers" under the *OHS* and entitled to its protections, they are also "supervisors" under the *Act*, and must therefore be well versed with their board's revised policies and programs designed to incorporate their Bill 132 and *OHS* obligations. To protect a

worker from workplace harassment, an employer shall ensure that

- (a) an investigation is conducted into incidents and complaints of workplace harassment that is appropriate in the circumstances and
- (b) the worker who has allegedly experienced workplace harassment and the alleged harasser, if he or she is a worker of the employer, are informed in writing of the results of the investigation and of any corrective action that has been taken or that will be taken as a result of the investigation.

This new duty will be more onerous for school leaders. One can anticipate that with the obligation to investigate both "incidents and complaints," principals will be asked to 'take the lead' on an increased number of investigations. In addition, principals will now be faced with the duty to provide information to one party that will inevitably be perceived by the other as a violation of their privacy. If the school leader investigates an incident or complaint of workplace harassment, they must not only inform the parties of the results of the investigation (any allegations that were substantiated), but must also inform the complainant of any corrective action taken (discipline, training, workplace immunity).

Similarly, if the school leader is alleged to have engaged in workplace harassment and those allegations are subsequently investigated and substantiated, they must expect the employer to inform the complainant of both the outcome and corrective action(s) taken. Previously, this information was considered "personal information" under privacy laws and was kept in strict confidence, but under the new legislative amendments, it will now be made known to the alleged victim (and the union representative) and will arguably have the potential to become known to others within the building and beyond.

School leaders are frequently the target of complaints of workplace harassment by workers under their supervision. Many of these complaints are frivolous or vexatious in nature. Simply by virtue of their supervisory position, a school leader is statistically subjected to a disproportionate number of complaints. The good news is that Section 1 of the *OHS* is amended by adding the following subsection:

"A reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the workplace is not workplace harassment."

While every employee of a district school board has the right to file a formal complaint, many of those filed by staff members against school leaders, even if true, would not constitute workplace harassment because the alleged comment or conduct constitutes a reasonable exercise of supervision; indeed in many instances the school leader is performing the work the board expects of them in terms of staff assessment and management. It is hoped that this new legislation, which contains specific, clear language about what is *not* workplace harassment, will help boards to resolve these complaints.

Consider for example, a male vice-principal who has been contacted by human resources about a female Child Youth Worker (CYW) who has made a workplace sexual harassment complaint against him. The CYW is new to both the school and board and has been off for the last



**... school leaders have to be constantly aware of interactions between and among staff in their buildings and respond accordingly to both ‘incidents and complaints.’**



few weeks on a medical leave of absence. The vice-principal spent a fair amount of time in the classroom where the CYW was working because there was a new student with very unique special needs and the teacher was struggling. The CYW believes the vice-principal was watching her and alleges that he frequented the classroom primarily because of his attraction towards her. In this case, if the vice-principal can demonstrate that his classroom visits were appropriate and necessary to provide support for the teacher and the needy student, the visits would be considered a ‘reasonable managerial action.’

The intersection of this new legislation for school leaders goes beyond their concerns over potential complaints against them. School leaders are reminded by this legislation of the need to focus their attention squarely on their role as ‘members of the management team.’ In this context, school leaders have to be constantly aware of interactions between and among staff in their buildings and respond accordingly to both ‘incidents and complaints.’

Consider the scenario where a principal enters the staff room prior to the start of the school day where several collegial staff members have gathered faithfully for years. Among the social attractions is the daily humour of one senior teacher who has won the hearts of others with her jokes and banter, most of which are “benign” but on occasion are of a sexual nature and “edgy.” Many staff appear to enjoy the humour and those who don’t leave or simply don’t come into the staff room in the morning. The principal cannot simply overlook the teacher’s comments and behaviour, but should address the ‘incident’ whether someone chooses to file a complaint or not.

The very fact that the principal witnessed the incident and that others are aware of her having witnessed it, means the principal must, at the very least, take steps to address the teacher’s conduct with her directly. It may be that a conversation with the teacher and union representative will be sufficient to bring about a change in behaviour. Otherwise, if the behaviour continues or the principal receives one or more complaints about it, an investigation will be required. The reality is that a failure to address an incident of sexual harassment – whether or not it becomes the subject of a formal complaint – is an expectation not only imposed by the legislative amendments in the *OHSA*, but is also an expectation delineated in the *OHRC*. These amendments are merely a good reminder of this duty.

As representatives of ‘the board,’ school leaders have always needed to respond appropriately to complaints and incidents of workplace harassment. There is always the potential for an allegation that the school leader failed to investigate an incident that they clearly observed. It will be the case that, in the face of a perceived ‘victim’ who elects not to file a complaint of workplace sexual harassment, the school leader nonetheless must investigate the observed incident. In the example above, the principal has a duty to investigate regardless of whether the apparent victim or target of the inappropriate humour chooses to file a complaint. Similarly, despite an individual’s decision not to file a complaint, their respective union may elect to do so without their involvement. Since the new legislation places the onus on school leaders to investigate ‘incidents,’ a union may take the position the behaviour was offensive to its members in general or that the perceived victim has a right to be free from work-

**... an anonymous complaint will trigger the employer's responsibility to at least investigate as long as the anonymous complaint provides sufficient detail.**



place sexual harassment even though he chose not to file a complaint.

Finally, school leaders must now take seriously and investigate anonymous complaints. The Protective Services Team (PST) has always been strong proponents that anonymous complaints ought not to be investigated. Without the identification of a specific complainant or alleged victim, the complaint could not reasonably be investigated. This new reality, however, will mean that an anonymous complaint will trigger the employer's responsibility to at least investigate as long as the anonymous complaint provides sufficient detail. If there is not enough information and obviously no ability to follow up with the source to obtain more, then no investigation is possible, and the duty under, *OHSA* is discharged.

Returning to our staff room example above, suppose the principal was not a direct witness to the morning staff gathering but later received an anonymous letter from a staff member claiming that the teacher's comments and/or conduct was offensive to some and constituted workplace sexual harassment. Assuming that the anonymous complaint contained details (dates, times, words spoken, identity of the speaker) the principal would be compelled to conduct an investigation.

The OPC Protective Services Team supports its Members who are respondents to complaints of workplace harassment. A senior consultant, together with the support of legal counsel, will represent the Member through the complaint response process and any ensuing processes as warranted. School leaders are often the subject of complaints by staff members under their direct supervision, or those who, despite not being under their

direct supervision, may find fault with the school leader's comments, behaviours or decisions made.

When a complaint is filed against a school leader, there are processes prescribed in the respective board procedure that afford the respondent (in most cases) the right to know the identity of the complainant and the nature of the allegations; an opportunity to respond, with support from the OPC PST; and a fair, impartial investigation. In the overwhelming majority of cases, an independent investigation finds the allegations brought against Members to be unsubstantiated.

Despite the relatively few complaints that, on a balance of probabilities, result in adverse findings against OPC Members, complaints continue to be filed in increasing numbers nonetheless. Having been made aware of a complaint in and of itself, regardless of the outcome, can often be a source of stress and anxiety for our Members. This trend will arguably be made worse by the introduction of legislation that brings 'workplace sexual harassment' into the workplace complaint landscape.

In light of this, we urge Members to review their local policies, consult with the supervisory officer and appropriate human resources personnel and seek direction accordingly. In addition, the Protective Services Team recommends that Members contact us immediately upon being made aware of a complaint of workplace harassment or workplace sexual harassment against them for advice, support and representation. ▲

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The Ontario Principals' Council held our annual Silent Auction at our Provincial Council Meeting on May 6, 2016. The auction was a huge success, raising over \$7,000, which was donated to Kids Help Phone.



## *Silent Auction*

# THANK YOU

We would like to thank the school districts that donated items for the auction, as well as the following contributing organizations:

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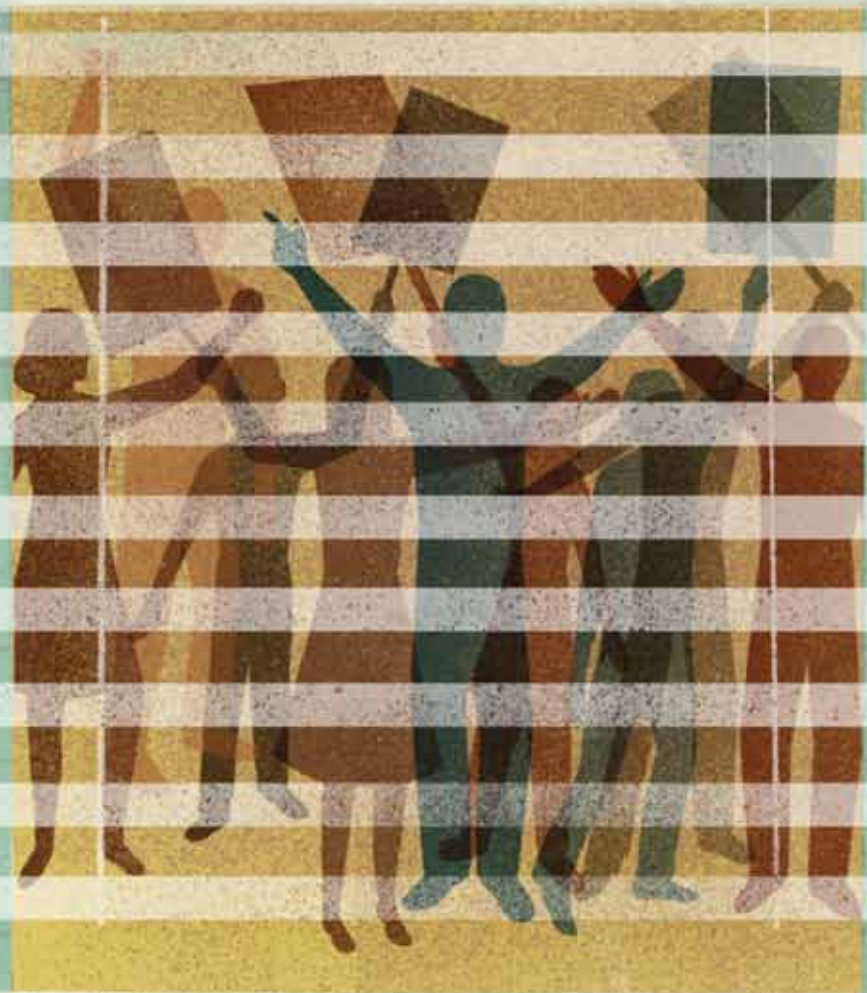
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# DIVIDING

## A personal perspective on the sex-ed controversy

When the Revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum was introduced in February 2015, there was some controversy around the province. At my school, Thorncliffe Park PS in Toronto, the protest was unprecedented.

Thorncliffe Park PS is one of the largest elementary schools in Canada with 1,350 students in Grades 1–5. The surrounding area includes over 30,000 residents. Our school community is comprised mainly of new immigrants to Canada, with the vast majority observing the Muslim faith.

Our school has always enjoyed a good relationship with our families. There is a high degree of respect shown towards the school by both parents and students, with rarely any complaints or unreasonable demands. The one area that has always been of concern, though, is the Health Curriculum. Parents have told us that in their faith and culture, discussions

regarding puberty and sex are the responsibility of parents. Sex is regarded as a sacred bond between a husband and wife (abstinence is required, promiscuity forbidden) and they want to ensure that they provide this message to their children.

Using the Toronto DSB's (TDSB) Religious Accommodations Guidelines, we have offered accommodated lessons for requesting parents, and this partnership has worked well for many years.

Following the unveiling of the revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum in 2015, we held our regularly scheduled school council meeting, with twice as many parents in attendance.

By Jeffery Crane Illustrated by Sandra Dionisi

# LINES



It became apparent that they wanted to talk about their concerns with the proposed changes. I informed them that it had just been released and we were not ready to discuss it, but suggested that the Council take a look at it and bring their questions and concerns to the next meeting.

Over the next two weeks we held two Council meetings to discuss the updated curriculum. The main concerns expressed by parents were:

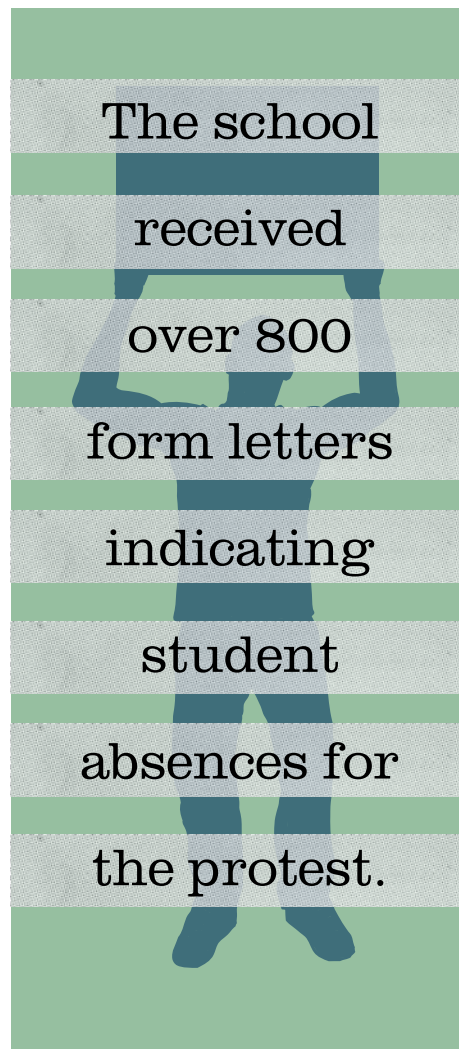
- The age appropriateness of certain expectations (Grade 1 students learning the proper names of their genitalia. Grade 3 students learning that invisible differences in people included gender identity issues. Grade 5 students learning the parts of the reproductive system).
- Encouraging students to speak to “trusted adults,” not just parents, about relationships and issues involving sex and sexuality.
- We were appreciative to the Council for the input and told the parents that the school would continue to offer accommodations, where applicable. I felt confident that we would be able to quell the fears of our parents, and that they would trust the school to hear and respect their point of view.

In the days following that meeting, flyers were distributed in the neighbourhood from a new organization called the Thorncliffe Parents’ Association. It advertised information meetings on the “hidden agenda” behind the new “sex-ed” curriculum. The flyers also gave distorted perspectives of the revised curriculum expectations including:

- Teaching students the proper names of genitalia by showing pictures of genitalia, students showing each other their genitalia, and learning about sex.
- Teaching students that people have visible and invisible differences by encouraging students to question their gender identity by cross dressing, learning about homosexuality and how gay people have sex.
- Teaching students the process of spermatogenesis and menstruation by showing students pornography and encouraging students to have sex.
- Teaching students that all people go through changes in puberty and develop at their own

rates by teaching students how to masturbate.

- Discouraging students from all sexual activity until they are all older by teaching students how to have oral and anal sex with demonstrations and videos.



The group organized rallies to protest the curriculum, including a public march in the community with hundreds of people shouting, “we say no!”

A month later, the group arranged a rally at Queen’s Park, organized a protest in front of the Premier’s office, held a candlelight vigil to “save our children from this dirty curriculum” and set up a Facebook page that posted information about upcoming protests and misinformation about the curriculum.

On April 8, 2015 we recognized Pink Day and discovered that there were an unusual number of absences, with over 200 students away. We then found out that the Thorncliffe Parents’ As-

sociation had communicated the following:

“Pink Day – a day parents MUST keep their kids at home ... If you send them, they will be forced to listen to LGBTQ issues all day. The Day of Pink is not about anti bullying at all. It’s about promoting an agenda. Pink Day deceptively aligns those who believe in traditional marriage and relationships as equal to bigots and bullies ... Pink Day promotes homosexuality and cross dressing as being normal, safe and good ... Keep your kids away from school – doing anything else will be more beneficial ...”

My staff and I were shocked and surprised that anyone would believe this group or agree with its blatant homophobia.

The Canadian Family Alliance began organizing a student strike for May 2, 2015 and the Thorncliffe Parents’ Association promoted the event on its Facebook page and by handing out flyers. A form letter was created for parents to give to the school explaining their children’s absence due to the protest. Letters were distributed directly to homes, at mosques and on and off school property.

A regularly scheduled Council meeting was held a few days before the protest date and a large crowd turned out, including the leaders of the Thorncliffe Parents’ Association. I made an effort to clarify the curriculum misunderstandings and identify distorted messaging that the group was communicating. However, the group leaders would not listen and were convinced that there was a hidden agenda by the government to sexualize children, make them homosexual and encourage them to rebel against their parents and religion. The school received over 800 form letters indicating student absences for the protest.

The stress on the staff was mounting. Many had been following the Facebook page and were upset and angered by its content. They were perplexed when students told them that they were staying home because the school was going to teach them “bad things.” There was great concern about the number of people who might attend the upcoming student strike, since notice of the event had now been broadcast to the entire Greater Toronto Area.



Our safe schools department ensured that both TDSB security and police were notified so that the proper safety measures could be put in place.

On May 2, 2015, 1,200 of my 1,350 students did not come to school. The protest rally began later in the morning. A few hundred people showed up and the organizers proudly announced that they had “emptied Thorncliffe Park PS today!”

To my dismay, the 1,200 students remained absent for the entire week. I wondered if there was anything else I could have done – held parent meetings or refuted every Facebook post and flyer by writing explanatory letters? I never imagined that the protest would reach this level.

the park” that the parents had set up close by as an alternate learning environment. Many media outlets reported on the protest and the parents’ concerns. I took part in many interviews, trying to correct the misconceptions and encouraging all students to return to school. The next day, “shame on you” graffiti had been scrawled on our school walls. Our board communications department organized a news conference where I spoke of our anger and frustration with the protest. The graffiti had greatly upset our staff and there were growing concerns as to what the protesters might do next, which made staff feel unsafe. As a result, TDSB security were on hand during entry and dismissal times to ensure that protesters stayed

that the families of Thorncliffe Park PS were caring parents who only wanted to ensure their children were learning the appropriate things at school, and that not all of our families supported or agreed with the intolerance of the protesting group.

Throughout September, parents slowly started sending their children back to school, but our attendance was still down by almost 100 students. As a result, two teachers were declared surplus. Despite the unprecedented circumstances, the staff carried on with their teaching duties as normally as possible.

On October 1, 2015, we assembled police and TDSB security for a third time. Approximately 700 hundred students did not come



The fear mongering and constant barrage of misinformation was having a negative impact on the community.

An opportunity presented itself later in the week when we went ahead with our scheduled afternoon spring concert. About 50 parents came to our modified show, so I took the opportunity to speak to them about the curriculum and answer their specific questions.

It was clearly evident that the fear mongering and constant barrage of misinformation was having a negative impact on the community.

Over the summer, the Parents’ Association encouraged parents not to send their children to school for the month of September. When school returned approximately 750 students did not attend. Some opted for the “school in

off school property.

Media reports generated a huge response from the public. I received emails and phone messages from people as far away as England, California, Calgary and Halifax. Although many people offered support and praise, others were hateful and racist.

The reputation of our community was being ruined by a small but influential group.

With the permission and guidance of TDSB senior staff and the communications department, I started having regular contact with the media, doing TV and radio interviews. It was important to me that we let the public know

to school during this next protest. Thankfully, this rally ended quickly and there were no more protests after that.

Although things had settled down and 1,260 students were attending the school regularly, I felt that our parents needed clarification on the health curriculum. For the remainder of the Fall, I held parent meetings during the school day, three times a week, inviting three classes of parents at a time. The meetings were purposely small so that parents could ask questions in a controlled and safe environment.

In 10 weeks, I met with over 650 parents.

All who came were respectful and appreciative of the opportunity to listen and gain perspective. Not all were satisfied with my overview of the curriculum, but the overwhelming sentiment was that they simply cared about their children and wanted to ensure that they were being appropriately taught at school.

I listened to their stories about sacrifices, challenges moving to Canada, giving up respected jobs and status, and their struggles with cultural differences all so they could provide their children with a better life. Many had come from countries that did not condone open and publicly discussed topics of sex and sexuality, and now they were hearing from community leaders that these themes were entering the school system and would corrupt their children.

Many also shared stories of the pressure, intimidation and open shaming they endured among neighbours to participate in the protests. “We know that this has been difficult for you, but you have no idea how hard this has been for us,” said one parent. As a result, many parents had kept their children at home just to avoid conflict.

In the Spring of 2016, we implemented the revised curriculum and I wrote letters to the parents informing them when the les-

sons in the Human Development and Sexual Health strand would occur and the content of the lessons for each grade.

Our school used the TDSB Religious Accommodations Guidelines, combined with considering the reasonable concerns in the community, to make decisions regarding accommodations. If the expectations covered sexual organs, body parts and changes in your body, parents were given the opportunity to request an accommodated lesson.

Our main goal was to regain the trust of the community. We wanted to show them that this curriculum could be taught in a manner that was sensitive to parental concerns, values and beliefs.

For almost two weeks after, there were editorials in the newspapers about whether or not our school’s accommodations were appropriate. Some argued that we were putting children at risk, while others applauded the compromise and acknowledged that children were in school and the parents’ concerns were respected.

I’ve had some time to reflect on the past 16 months and what occurred in my community. I don’t recall another time in the history of Ontario, or even Canada, where a school went through such mass protest and

scrutiny. Needless to say, I dealt with several challenges that I never thought I would encounter during my career as an elementary school principal.

I have learned how critical it was to have a supportive network of colleagues, friends and family. During this difficult time, I relied heavily on the expertise of consultants in the TDSB’s Health and Physical Education, Safe Schools and Communications Department to navigate through the many facets of the protest. My Superintendent, Kathleen Garner, was my lifeline, providing the advice and encouragement I needed to get through each new challenge.

This experience has made me even more aware that my role as school leader is an impactful and influential one. Parents, staff, TDSB senior team, Ministry representatives and even the media all sought my perspective. The importance of taking care of my staff during this challenging time was vital. In addition to the protests, we also dealt with the death of two staff members and work-to-rule uncertainty. I made it a priority to meet with them often and to update them on current events.

By far the most challenging task was trying to understand the dynamics of our school community. As I watched the protests and listened to the homophobic messages, it was easy to generalize that the entire community felt this way. After speaking to many parents though, I realized that this was not the case: the protesting groups did not reflect the beliefs of everyone.

We continue to go forward, confident that Thorncliffe Park PS and our local community will be able to move constructively to re-establish the positive and respectful relationship that we greatly valued with our community in the past. ▲

Jeffery Crane is principal of Thorncliffe Park PS in the Toronto DSB.

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For additional insight on this topic read our previous *Register* articles: *What Does It Really Entail? Health and Physical Education Administrators’ Toolkit helps clear up the questions*, by Mary Linton (Winter 2016, Vol.18 No.1) and *What You Need To Know: The revised health and physical education curriculum*, by Eric Roher (Fall 2016, Vol.17 No.3).



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# Head's Up

## Rowan's Law and reinforcing concussion safety

In the spring of 2013, following the tragic and sudden passing of 17-year-old Rowan Stringer, captain of the John McCrae Secondary School rugby team who suffered brain injury due to a concussion, the Ontario government

assembled an advisory panel to assess and implement 49 recommendations following the Coroner's Inquest into Rowan's death. The recommendations outlined a number of proposals for concussion awareness and treatment including

- concussion awareness in the curriculum
- promotion of a Brain Day awareness campaign and
- tools for coaches and players to identify and treat concussions.

Student safety is always of utmost importance to any school. Sharing insightful strategies for concussion prevention at the beginning of the year with your students and staff is one way to raise awareness and establish protocols. While a small bump on the head might not seem serious in the moment, it's vital to ensure the individual is monitored for unseen health concerns.

Whether it be sports or playground-related injuries, students and staff need to be vigilant of the key signs and symptoms of concussions, and about where to find accessible and reliable resources to educate themselves, the students and their guardians.

### How does it occur?

A concussion is any form of physical trauma to the head or the body that forces the brain to move rapidly with-

in the skull and can interrupt the normal function of the brain. This form of trauma can lead to changes in how the brain functions resulting in mild to severe, or even permanent, brain damage. Injuries can occur due to a simple playground fall, or as an accidental head-on collision with another student during a sport.

### What are the symptoms of a concussion?

General symptoms following an incident can include, but not be limited to

- headache
- dizziness
- nausea or vomiting
- drowsiness
- difficulty concentrating or confusion and
- sudden swings in one's mood.

Here is a list of reliable sources that provide significant insights on what to look for, proper concussion management, infographics with helpful school resources available for download and useful tip sheets to share with parents, educators and coaches.

- **Ophea – Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines**  
<http://safety.ophea.net/concussion-protocols>
- **The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care**  
[\[public/programs/concussions\]\(http://public/programs/concussions\)](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/</a></li>
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- **Parachute**

<http://www.parachutecanada.org/active-and-safe/item/welcome>

- **Sick Kids Hospital**

<http://www.sickkids.ca/AboutSick-Kids/Newsroom/Past-News/2015/bump-on-head-concern.html>

- **Concussions Ontario**

<http://concussionsontario.org>

- **Coaches' Association of Ontario**

<http://www.coachesontario.ca>

- **Sport 4 Ontario**

<http://www.sport4ontario.ca>

- **Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation**

<http://onf.org/our-programs/acquired-brain-injury/concussion-mild-tbi>

Post-concussion symptoms can last for days or even months, and the healing process can take just as long. It is vital that if a student shows warning signs of a concussion, parents/guardians are immediately notified and the student seeks proper medical attention. Be sure to check with your local school board for specific policies, guidelines and/or recommendations.

Following a hit or head contact, the individual may feel fine or want to jump back into participating. However, it is imperative that, once diagnosed as a concussion, the proper amount of healing time be strictly followed as per medical instruction, to ensure a full and safe recovery. If you are unsure, follow this guideline – when in doubt, sit it out. ▲



Sources:  
[rowanslaw.ca](http://rowanslaw.ca);  
[www.aboutkidshealth.ca](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca)

✉ [lromanese@principals.ca](mailto:lromanese@principals.ca)



# Mark Your Calendar

## PDC Fall/Winter

Module 1 – November 6 –

December 10, 2016

Module 2 – January 16 –

February 18, 2017

Module 3 – March 26 – April 8, 2017

Module 4 – April 16 – May 20, 2017

Module 5 – July 10 – July 28, 2017

Register By: **October 31, 2016**

Online delivery is through OPC's NEW advanced learning management system.

## Speaker Series

Leading Collaborative Learning with Lyn Sharratt & Beate Planche

**November 8, 2016**

Hilton Toronto Airport Hotel & Suites

## ASLP Sessions

The Aspiring School Leaders' Program (ASLP) is intended to support individuals and boards in the development of skills, attitudes, knowledge and practices understood to be threshold competencies for school administrators. Visit a list of all current ASLP workshops by visiting [www.principals.ca](http://www.principals.ca) → Professional Development → Professional Learning Opportunities. For additional information email [aslprogram@principals.ca](mailto:aslprogram@principals.ca).

For more information on the events and courses listed above visit [www.principals.ca](http://www.principals.ca) or email [elc@principals.ca](mailto:elc@principals.ca).

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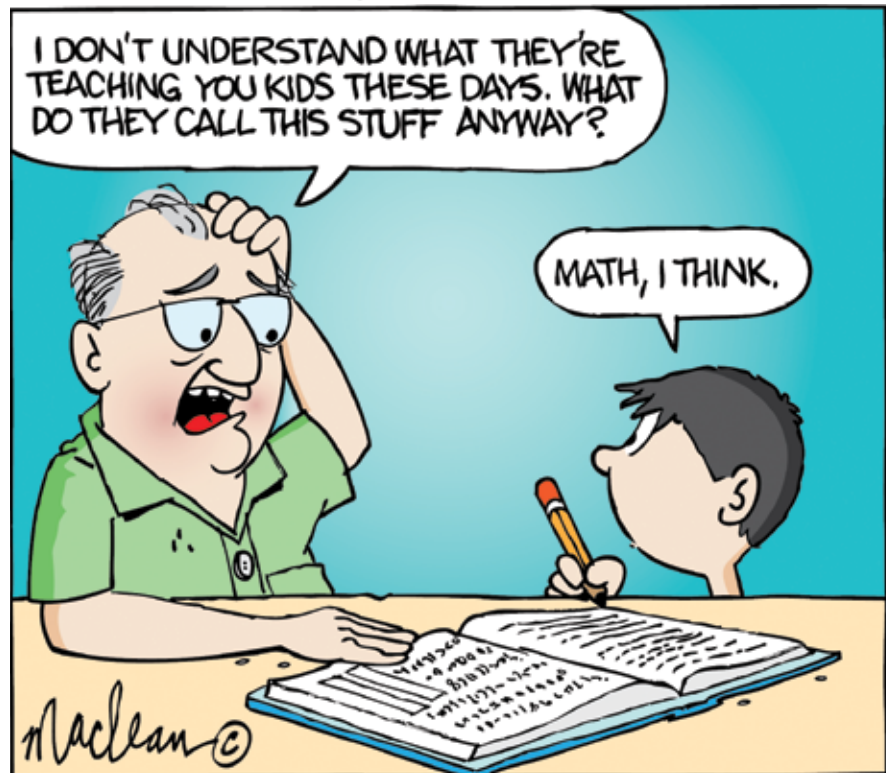


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# Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts and systems

By Michael Fullan and Joanne Quinn

Publisher: Corwin Press & Ontario Principals' Council

ISBN 978-1-4833-6495-7

Reviewed by Donnie Straker

Michael Fullan and Joanne Quinn's *Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts and systems*, is a must read for all educators and system leaders. Fullan and Quinn present the “right drivers” in a clear, concise format

that provides the guidelines necessary to implement positive action for any school, district and system improvement.

Beginning with what is *Coherence* instead of what it is not, Fullan and Quinn delve into the necessary drivers needed to create the mindset required for solution-based improvement. The specific identified drivers they see as necessary for positive action to occur include Focusing Direction, Cultivating a Collaborative Culture, Deepening Learning and Securing Accountability. However, the effectiveness of the framework is in its simplicity and its ability to be implemented at any level of leadership with a key message being that collaborative leadership is essential for each of these drivers to work effectively for positive action.

For all school leaders, the basics required to achieve greater coherence are outlined through easily understood common sense steps. The authors start with useful discussions of the drivers, followed by defining “Goals that Impact” as being those delineated by transparency, built collaboratively, developed with clear strategy and ones

that will cultivate engagement. While reading it becomes clearly evident that there is an interdependence of these drivers – a cultivation of a collaborative culture that focuses on growth, learning leadership and capacity building as the key component in moving, shaping and changing the behaviours needed to move an organization towards coherence and maximizing learning.

The deepening of learning is established through the clarity of goals, the precision of pedagogies and the shift of practice through the building of capacity. The shift to a deeper understanding of the process of learning requires knowledge building partnerships for engagement of all. Following the final driver of Securing Accountability, Fullan and Quinn discuss ways to develop conditions needed to maximize what is identified as “internal accountability” – ways to improve the likelihood that people will hold themselves accountable. The focus here is the importance of coming full circle, tying back to the first three drivers that are key to the establishment of “internal accountability” that

is then connected with an organization's external accountability.

The authors have successfully developed a working framework, not a delineated step-by-step path, that is to be implemented for positive action. The book speaks specifically to the “right drivers” needed to instill positive changes for students. It is a must read for teachers, school administrators, superintendents and Directors. Fullan and Quinn provide useful concrete examples of how the *Coherence* framework at the school, district and system levels has been effectively implemented throughout North America.

On a more personal level, the book speaks to the very core of being a lifelong learner and the value of learning along with others in order to see positive changes for student success. At a time of labour unrest in Ontario, the *Coherence* framework provides a call to action that builds trust and capacity. It is worthwhile to take the time to read this book, as the road map outlined provides the essential tools for effective leadership. ▲

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Donnie Straker is an OPC Provincial Councillor, past chair of the Toronto School Administrator's Association and is currently a vice-principal at Woburn Collegiate Institute in the Toronto DSB.

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**i** Check out the newly released companion piece workbook by Fullan on our website under Resources.



# The Third Age

## A new roadmap for retiring principals

**T**he prospect of retirement from the principalship brings with it a strange juxtaposition of emotions – elation and anticipation on the one hand (‘free at last’) and anxiety and apprehension on the other (‘how will I fill my days?’) Principals have recently indicated quite strongly that it is the fear/reality of social and professional isolation, the loss of identity and purpose and loss of intellectual stimulation that makes the prospect

of retirement daunting. It is the emotional rather than financial or health issues that are major challenges in transitioning to retirement.

of retirement daunting. It is the emotional rather than financial or health issues that are major challenges in transitioning to retirement. Welcome to what is now being deemed the “Third Age.” The First Age (childhood-adolescence) has traditionally consisted of education and preparation for the workforce and adulthood. The Second Age (adulthood)

*In the first five years (after 60) I found doing some part-time work quite rewarding. I think mentally it helps you adjust to retirement, gives you time to set yourself up for the social aspects of retirement. - Elementary principal*

pect of retirement daunting. It is the emotional rather than financial or health issues that are major challenges in transitioning to retirement.

The increasing life expectancy, now getting closer to 90 years, is further complicating the retirement scenario as there may well be 30+ years in the post-principalship phase – far too long for many to simply golf, lunch, travel and play Lego with the grandchildren. With greater longevity has come a greater emphasis on fitness,

has been characterized by work and family, which tended to fade off in the later years to something loosely termed “retirement.” Now there is a Third Age, one potentially as distinctive, active and career-orientated as the Second Age. The old retirement model no longer meets the needs or wants of principals retiring into the Third Age.

This new model involves “refocusing” into other work. In fact, work in retirement, or refocusing, was recommended by recently retired principals as a

very effective mechanism for avoiding/overcoming previously identified social and emotional pitfalls inherent in the “old retirement.”

Whatever the motivation may be, whether it is professional, intellectual, social, altruistic or financial, an ongoing connection to the workforce is being adopted by retired principals as a deliberate component of what is increasingly known as “portfolio retirement.”

A portfolio retirement lifestyle is one that has a variety of ingredients (investments) to make retirement a very stimulating, active and fulfilling phase of life. One of those ingredients is refocusing into work. A typical Third Age retirement might include items such as: voluntary contributions to community, local and international travel, part-time work and new learning.

With knowledge, based on research into societal trends in retirement, and with good planning and the right attitude, retiring principals may well be comfortable to leave school and be able to look forward to some of the “best of times” in the The Third Age phase of their lives. ▲

Mark Warren is a retired principal in New South Wales, Australia. He is a part-time lecturer at the University of Melbourne and Director of LEAP (Leading Educators Around the Planet).

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# How to plan for a worry-free retirement (at any age)

by Jim Grieve, Executive Director, RTO/ERO



Retirement planning is:

- important at any age
- about the journey, not just the destination
- more fun and more successful when part of a group

Whatever your stage in life, here are a few handy tips to help you achieve a happy, worry-free retirement.

## Time is an asset for Gen Y

Believe it or not, our youngest RTO/ERO member is in his 20s. It goes to show that it's never too early to start thinking about retirement. As a Millennial, you're starting out your career, but this is also a great time to start saving, because you have time on your side.

Even if you're paying off student loans and saving for other important life goals, putting a small percentage of your income toward retirement savings will really pay off. Because you have decades until retirement, your investment will grow over the years.

This is also a good time to find a financial advisor, if you don't already have one — so you have sound fiscal advice in the years ahead.

## For Gen X, knowledge is power

A study shows that only 12 per cent of Gen Xers have estimated their retirement needs. Attending a retirement planning workshop, like those hosted by RTO/ERO, is one great way to calculate retirement needs and access tips and tools.

For Gen X, caught in the squeeze of paying the mortgage, saving for children's post-secondary education and trying to save for retirement, the strategy is to save as much as you can, as early as you can. Many Gen Xers put off planning until they're closer to retirement — not realizing the benefits of planning early. It also helps to talk to retired colleagues to find out what they would have done differently. This kind of advice is priceless.

## Baby Boomers can still 'catch up' on retirement savings

For Baby Boomers who are within five to 10 years of retirement, it's not too late to make up for "lost time" and create a plan that meets your needs for the next stage of your life journey. Here are some ways to make that happen:

- Attend one or more retirement planning workshops, to make sure you have the information you need. To find a workshop near you, visit [www.rto-ero.org/join-us/retirement-planning-workshops](http://www.rto-ero.org/join-us/retirement-planning-workshops).
- Prioritize your own retirement needs and accelerate your retirement savings.
- Prepare for the transition to retirement by connecting with new communities. Joining a membership group such as RTO/ERO is one good example.

RTO/ERO is the trusted voice of the broader education community. All teachers, school board employees and former employees, those in early years and post-secondary and others in the education community are eligible to join — whether you are actively employed or about to retire. Learn more: [www.rto-ero.org/education-community](http://www.rto-ero.org/education-community).

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