

The Register

THE MAGAZINE FOR ONTARIO'S PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS & VICE-PRINCIPALS

The Equity Quest

Developing inclusive practices in schools



Take us to school with you

Our **Fall issue** is now available to you in **print** and **digitally**.



Phone or Tablet



Print



Computer or Desktop

Stay connected to the issues



@OPCouncil

Join our Twitter Chats using **#OPCchat** or search hot topics with **#OPCLeadLearn**



Stay up to date on current issues and media stories.



Tag us and share pictures of your school community.

Read our...

Lead Learners Blog



Progressive Curricular Designs
Keeping Students at the Forefront

Leading out of Crisis in the Current
and Future Learning Landscape



Scan to read
the Lead
Learners blog



How to connect with a QR Code

1. Open your phone's camera
2. Hold your device over the QR code so it is centred in your image
3. Click the pop-up notification to open the associated web link



Scan to listen
to the Principal's
Voice Podcast

Tune in...

PRINCIPAL'S

Voice

Subscribe on
Apple Podcast
or Podbean



Student Mental Health
with Theresa Kennedy



Destreaming
with Jason To

Contents

THE REGISTER: FALL 2022, VOLUME 25, NUMBER 1

8



Meet Patsy Agard

OPC's new provincial president



Cover Illustration by Doug Pantoni

Features

- 08 **Meet Patsy Agard**
By Peggy Sweeney
- 14 **The Equity Quest**
By Cori Pitre
- 22 **Anti-Oppressive Education**
By Kulbir Singh Dhaliwal
- 28 **The Challenges of Attracting FSL Teachers**
By David Jack, Stefan Merchant and Laura Hermans-Nymark
- 34 **Gearing Up for a Healthy School Year**
By the Protective Services Team

Columns

- 04 Executive Director's Message
- 07 Professional Learning
- 42 Share Your Story

Principals' Picks

- 40 Mark Your Calendar
- 41 Review

Progress. Growth. Evolution.

Preparing for our next 25 years



In 2023, the OPC will celebrate our 25th Anniversary. Over this quarter century much has changed, and yet, at the core, principals and vice-principals continue

to be the “face” of schools, the primary advocate for students and the “glue that binds.”

Our priority as leaders is to focus on student achievement and well-being. However, the safety of students and staff is of the utmost importance, and it is being compromised with the increasing and ongoing staff shortages.

The OPC has evolved in our service mandate. We are delivering a record number of timely, targeted professional learning opportunities from courses for aspiring administrators, to programming for the most experienced vice-principals and principals with decades of experience and a commitment to life-long learning. We're striving to be an organization that challenges oppression, combats racism

and creates space for equity and rights-seeking voices to lead in education. We have deliberately expanded our advocacy, speaking out more frequently and publicly on key issues, bringing the ideas, solutions and advice of our membership to the ministry and Minister and building common messages with other education stakeholders.

Our work supporting individual Members who face professional challenges continues with a focus on strong advocacy, empathetic support and solutions-oriented outcomes. Finally, the transformation from individual contracts of employment to a provincial terms and conditions agreement has been the result of years of persistent and informed advocacy. Check out our

[Strategic Plan](#) to see our key priorities in action. Progress. Growth. Evolution. A remarkable first 25 years. And yet, there is important work ahead.

I have had the privilege of working with principals and vice-principals for 25 years. I have witnessed how the role has changed, becoming more complex and demanding. I see the exponential increase in your volume of work and know that as we look ahead to the next decade, to the next 25 years, that the current expectations, work intensity and volume are not sustainable.

Over the last decade, the operational demands of the role have become consuming, exponentially so during the pandemic. There is simply not enough time to be the “lead learner,” little time to nurture and build positive school culture, to engage with parents except during times of crisis or to make time for personal well-being for family. This is not sustainable. We are seeing increased numbers of retirements, sick leaves and LTD applications. The role needs to be redefined, and we need to reclaim the principalship as a sought-after and personally rewarding career choice. Through our Executive and Provincial Council, we will continue to grapple with these challenges.

During our Queen's Park advocacy week in March 2022, we urged all MPPs to commit to a Royal Commission on Education. We are overdue to rethink our current education system and its structures, still centred around an agrarian, primarily age-based cohort system. The system needs a non-partisan, wholesale

review where no current aspect or program is “off-limits.” If we can look at the system holistically and objectively, there will be room to reimagine the role of school leaders, support students to become their best selves and engage staff who feel valued and able to contribute their best. We’re going to continue our call for this review.

As we prepare to celebrate our 25th Anniversary, it’s an opportunity for us to reflect on the journey and the people who’ve successfully brought us to this milestone. It’s also the perfect time for us to consider, with care and deliberateness, how we want to move forward. What do we want the OPC to look like and be doing 25 years from now? What should the principalship look like in another 25 years and how do we get there? What does the ideal education system look like and how can we support the transformation of our system to this ideal?

The OPC has always been a small organization with bold ideas and aspirations. Let’s commit to harnessing that as we mark the first 25 years and move forward into the next. ▲



Allyson Otten

✉ aotten@principals.ca



Ontario Principals' Council
 20 Queen Street West, 27th Floor
 Toronto, Ontario M5H 3R3
 Tel: 416-322-6600 or 1-800-701-2362
 Fax: 416-322-6618
www.principals.ca
 Email: admin@principals.ca

The Register is published digitally three times a year and printed once each fall by the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC). The views expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the OPC. Reproduction of any part of this publication must be authorized by the editor and credited to the OPC and the authors involved. Letters to the editor and submissions on topics of interest to the profession are welcome. Although paid advertisements appear in this publication, the OPC does not endorse any products, services or companies, nor any of the claims made or opinions expressed in the advertisement.

Peggy Sweeney, editor
Ruth Hanley, proofreader
Allyson Otten, business manager

Art Direction and Design:
[Fresh Art & Design Inc.](#)

Advertising:
[Dovetail Communications Inc.](#)
 905-886-6640

SUBMISSIONS & IDEAS

Would you like to contribute to *The Register*?
 Do you have an article, feedback or ideas?
 Our editorial team would like to hear from you.
 Deadlines for submissions are listed below.

[Go to the OPC website under *The Register*](#) for further submission and writing guidelines and considerations.

Send your articles, reviews, thoughts and ideas to ddina@principals.ca.

All submissions are subject to review and selection by the editorial committee.

Content Due	_____	Edition Release
May 1	_____	October
October 1	_____	February
February 1	_____	May

The Register is the proud recipient of the following awards:



Happenings at the OPC ...

In August, the OPC and CPCO hosted a two-day event. Participants learned and reflected on ideas and perspectives supporting the creation of anti-racist and anti-colonial environments and heard from three districts about how they have brought meaningful student voice to their equity, diversity and inclusion journey.



Keynote speaker Sheila Watt-Clouthier spoke on leadership, and how organizations can fulfill their mandate by understanding how the local connects to the global, and vice versa.



Guest speaker Loretta Ross shared perspectives and experiences in regard to creating a culture of "calling-in."



Fireside Chat with OPC President Patsy Agard (L), Loretta Ross (C) and OPC President-Elect Ralph Nigro (R).



OPC Director of Professional Learning, Nadine Trépanier-Bisson.



The Year Ahead in Professional Learning

Gathering feedback to increase and improve our offerings

Professional Learning (PL) has been expanding in response to Member needs, continuously reviewing our offerings from feedback we receive. That information helps us improve content, delivery and type of learning sessions.

One of the ways we gather information is through participant feedback at the end of each session. These forms are reviewed and used to make changes to existing courses and sessions, or to add to the selection of offerings. In addition, we regularly consult Provincial Council and the PL Focus Group for their advice about new ideas and the identification of needs. Occasionally, Members send their suggestions to the learning@principals.ca inbox or directly to the Director of PL. All of these mechanisms for gathering information are components of our planning process.

We also rely on the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Roster for their expert advice. We endeavour to ensure

that the writing team includes at least one of the Members who are part of the EDI Roster. When that is not possible, a Member of the Roster reviews any course materials before they are finalized. Through this process we receive feedback on language, image use and diversity of resources and sources; this helps us to develop increasingly anti-racist and anti-colonial PL opportunities.

In 2022–23, we will continue to welcome Member suggestions through feedback forms, Council and the PL Focus Group. In addition, we will work more closely with the Protective Services Team (PST) and the Director of EDI to develop offerings that may proactively address situations frequently faced by Members. We will continue to use our usual planning and development processes, including relying on the EDI Roster.

We will also continue our work with l'Association des directions et des directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO) and the Catholic Prin-

cipals' Council of Ontario (CPCO), as well as the [Global Network](#), to provide Members with varied opportunities. For example, through the Global Network, we are offering an Amplification series for experienced principals and vice-principals. We also plan to continue our work with researchers to develop more resources such as the advocacy paper that was launched earlier this fall.

There are a number of new offerings through the 2022–23 school year, including some micro-credentialed self-directed courses and plans for the OPC's 25th Anniversary celebrations. Consult the [PL landing page](#) on our website for more about our offerings. If you have any questions or suggestions, send them to us at learning@principals.ca. If you do not yet receive our weekly PL Bulletin, which features upcoming learning opportunities, you can sign up to get it on our [website](#). ▲

✉ ntrepanier@principals.ca



Meet

PATSY AGARD

OPC's new
provincial president

By Peggy Sweeney Photography by Stef + Ethan

On July 1, Patsy Agard began her term as the OPC's provincial president. Patsy has been seconded from the Ottawa-Carleton DSB from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 to take on this position full-time. She will work out of the OPC's office in Toronto.

Patsy Agard grew up in Mississauga, attending school in the Clarkson area of the city. In high school, she wanted to be a guidance counsellor. "I always liked school, liked interactions and working with people, including kids. I always volunteered at school and at Sunday school. To me, counselling was a natural progression and the right career choice." She talked to the guidance counsellor at her school, who suggested Patsy study social work and then pursue a teaching degree.

So after high school, Patsy moved to Thunder Bay to attend Lakehead University, where she obtained her B.A. in History and Sociology and her B.Ed. She then earned another Honours B.A. in History at McMaster. After starting her Master's degree in Educational Leadership at Brock University, she finished it at Charles Sturt University.

Over 12 years, Patsy taught in numerous schools, starting as an occasional teacher in Peel and then moving to the Toronto DSB. She taught law, history, social science and physical education. Her move to administration came at Oakwood Collegiate in Toronto as a vice-principal, and five years later as the principal.

A personal move then took her to Ottawa, where as principal she opened the board's first 7–12 school. Prior to her secondment to the OPC, she had

been at Lisgar Collegiate, the oldest school in eastern Ontario at 179 years, for seven years. She has now spent over 30 years in education.

When she moved to Ottawa, Patsy was approached to take on the role of co-chair in the OPC-Bytown local association. While she didn't know much about the OPC at the time, a colleague thought she would be a good fit and that they would benefit from her experience in Toronto.

"He was right. It was a great experience to be on the inside, understanding the big picture, connecting with colleagues that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to meet otherwise. Many administrators tend to stick with their own panel when attending meetings, so my local role allowed me to meet lots of people from the elementary panel as well as help out, volunteer and learn more about the association as a whole."

Patsy then had the opportunity to represent her local district on Provincial Council. "I really enjoyed my five years on Council. It was a great way to find out what was going on around the province, get insight into what was coming, advocate for our local Members and schools and share best strategies from other areas of the province. I also really enjoyed the advocacy work on behalf of all school leaders.

"And as I became more comfortable on Council, I was approached by some of my colleagues to put my name forth for the Executive. They thought my 7-12 school background and having worked in two large boards would add to discussions at that table. And they did. My time as an executive member gave me further opportunities to meet school leaders from across Ontario and work with senior staff at the OPC office. It gave me a better understanding of the organization and allowed me to make more contributions to it."

She then considered running for president. "My contributions and commitment to the OPC were increasing and I wanted to contribute on a larger scale."

Patsy has several goals for the year ahead. She'd like to continue work on increasing the recognition of the OPC – who we are, who our





“

My PHILOSOPHY has always been to leave more leaders behind than what I found when I arrived.”

Members are and what we do. As we come up to our 25th Anniversary in 2023, she'd like to see us highlight and promote the organization. "People may know us as principals, but do they know we were teachers first? Do they know we are a professional association and not a union? Do they know we are THE organization representing principals and vice-principals in public schools across Ontario? Do they know we advocate for our Members, but we also advocate for students and for public education?"

As a practising principal, Patsy is in a unique position. Like all OPC Members, she has just finished living and working through 2 ½ years of pandemic teaching and learning. Now that we are all (we hope!) starting a year in which kids will be in school full-time, she can advocate from a position of front-line experience as she represents school leaders with the government, media and other education stakeholder groups about what we need to do to make sure kids are re-engaged and are where they should be in their post-pandemic learning journey.

"While we're hearing a lot about the term 'new normal,' I prefer 'next normal.' The pandemic did not create all the issues we are seeing in schools with students and staff. But it did make them more visible and highlighted their severity – things like the need for more mental health supports, the inequity among socio-economic challenged and racialized communities, the range of learning styles and staff burnout. It exacerbated what we had already been seeing. We didn't deal with some of those issues to the extent we should have. And now we have to.

"To me, a big piece of learning is social and emotional. It's not all curriculum-based. Yes, we have to teach students how to learn, but we also have to teach them to cope. In the first six months of this year, the students in my school had to deal with the pandemic, returning to virtual learning, the trucker protest on Parliament Hill, the war in Ukraine, and the very real effects of climate change through a storm that caused a great deal of damage in Ottawa and left many people without access to hydro for over a week. It was one thing after another and they all impacted students.

"And it's not just about being resilient – it's more than that. How do we teach them to cope? How do we teach them to adjust, to get through things instead of getting bogged down with problems, or being roadblocked with issues? How do we help them build a strength of character? One of the ways is to build a community within our schools where people can come together and support each other.

"So I see social and emotional elements of learning as often more important than academic ones. I want us to be teaching students how to think, problem solve and work together. This isn't just about the curriculum – it's about building the skill set within students as individuals so they can be productive members of society."

Following the death of George Floyd in 2020, Patsy recognized that schools and the education system would finally be putting a bigger focus on equity. "During that time, I realized that there would be a greater examination of the anti-Black racism that has existed in our system. We needed to consider how we can de-colonize our school system, give voice to students who don't have a voice and assist our communities so every student can reach their full potential. We need to support de-streaming as a way to equalize and ensure opportunities are available for all students and we aren't cutting them off at the knees with fewer opportunities as soon as they enter high school." Patsy has always had equity at the forefront of her work as an administrator, and has contributed to breaking down the barriers and addressing the inequities that exist in our schools.

Following the June provincial election, we will be working with the Ford government again. Throughout the past four years, the OPC has worked hard to develop a productive working relationship with the ministers. We'll now continue that work with Minister Lecce. "Last spring, our Executive and Council spent considerable time drafting [our election policy paper](#). We shared it with MPPs from all parties during our Queen's Park advocacy week and released it publicly during the election. It highlights the conditions we feel are necessary for students to be successful and for everyone to be safe.

"We'll be reminding this government of that paper, and the recommendations contained within it. They are still important to ensuring a positive, productive, safe environment in our schools. We believe they are recommendations that everyone can buy into. And we plan to keep advocating for those issues.

"The key one is the need for an overall review of our entire system, taking a comprehensive look to see what we can do to make things better for everyone. We know that student and staff well-being is a huge issue, so how do we address that? We know there have been and are likely to continue to be staff short-

ages. How do we deal with that? What we have been doing so far is not working – they have only been temporary solutions. How will we fill roles when there is a labour shortage across the country? And while we know there is a nursing shortage, the solution is not to download their jobs and responsibilities onto educators. That's not practical or responsible, and it's not good for kids.

"We have to ensure we are looking after the well-being of students and staff, and ensuring students are getting the quality education that they deserve. We need to continue to advocate for equitable access and outcomes for all students. We'll continue to seek out opportunities to meet with the Minister to help him understand our perspective."

Patsy recognizes that one of the biggest challenges for school leaders this year will be the potential for labour unrest. "We are already running as fast as we can, doing as much as we can. There is just no more room on our plates. Our Members are burnt out. We've been trying to ensure learning is taking place, schools are safe and people are coping. But it's taken a toll. Labour unrest could potentially decimate a lot of the progress we've made in the past year. We are all

hopeful that the government will handle it in a fair and appropriate manner.

"While the government talks a lot about front-line workers, we have to recognize that teachers have been front-line workers for 2 ½ years. They are essential to our schools and our communities. We need to ensure they are paid and treated appropriately."

When Patsy looks back on her year, she hopes that people will have a better understanding of what principals and vice-principals do. "We are passionate about our roles. I've always loved my job and working directly with students. When I've been asked why I don't want to be a superintendent, it's because I don't want to be away from kids. I'd also like to see improvements for our Members – both in their working conditions and their compensation."


There's another side to Patsy away from school. She's a theatre and a travel buff, and she and her partner, Brian, always try to take in shows when they travel. She finds gardening peaceful and loves to read. She loves spending time with her nieces and nephew, and is looking forward to being able to see more of her dad, who lives near Toronto, while she is here for a year. Patsy is also looking forward to reconnecting with the many friends she made during her early teaching days in Toronto.

For those OPC Members who have not yet met her, Patsy wants you to know, "I'm here for you. I'm an introvert, so I usually engage in more one-on-one conversations. But you can approach me at any time. I'm always willing to listen. I'm really looking forward to meeting many Members from across the province next year, meeting our new Councillors, having productive conversations and hearing about what's going on in their schools.


"My philosophy has always been to leave more leaders behind than what I found when I arrived. That's been my goal in every school I have been in, and it's my goal now. I want to lead, but I also want to inspire other people to consider taking on these leadership roles." ▲

Patsy can be reached at president@principals.ca.

✉ psweeney@principals.ca




Social Emotional Learning *for Every Age*



From Preschool to High School Our Programs Can Help:

- ✓ Strengthen relationships in the classroom
- ✓ Create a sense of emotional safety so students can focus on learning
- ✓ Support educator well-being and reduce burnout



Download an SEL Readiness Checklist
pathsprogram.com/OPC
Or Call +1 877-717-2847

Grow your expertise



Earn certification in **STEM-based** education

Participate in a **professional learning** journey that merges STEM across the curriculum and connects science and technology to our changing world, including digital literacy and the environment.

ACT NOW



let's talk  science

Learning Pathways

Transforming STEM **teaching and learning** in the modern classroom.





The EQUITY QUEST

Developing inclusive practices in schools

As a school administrator, what does it mean to detect and disrupt systems of oppression in daily life? The answer lies in the lens through which we see the world. An anti-oppressive lens allows us to “understand how systems of oppression such as colonialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism and ableism can result in individual discriminatory actions and structural/systemic inequalities for certain groups in society” ([ETFO 2022](#)). Additionally, our lens must take into account the intersectionality of those with whom we interact.

I think that we can all agree that we are the sum of our intersecting identities and experiences. Each of us is more than our behaviour or the first characteristic that we notice about each other. To address the pervasive systems of oppression, we must sport our wide-angle embrace lenses and see people for all that they are – dismantling the barriers that prevent them from being all that they can be.

Let’s start with an honest look at who is succeeding in our schools and who is not, and what systems are in place that support this dichotomy. If you are in a district that collects demographic data, you have that qualitative data to correlate with achievement, attendance, suspension, credit-accumulation and graduation statistics. There is no end to the questions you can ask of such data.

The focus of this article, however, is on the qualitative data you collect as you travel through the halls and classrooms, genuinely present in those spaces with students and staff. This is where you will authentically learn who is succeeding and what you might do to remove barriers for those who are not.

By Cori Pitre

Illustration
by Doug Panton

Notes: In this article, the words ‘walk’ and ‘walk about’ are used metaphorically, as we recognize that not everyone has the same type of mobility.

This article also contains some words that some readers may find triggering or unacceptable. They are used in relation to a report that specifically asked about certain issues/terms/words.

Walk About

A “Walk About” is not without intention. The goal is to be present, in a way that is not evaluative, throughout the classrooms, hallways, playgrounds and gym; being aware of what is happening in the school. The intention is not to follow up classroom visits with “helpful” feedback. We do not want disingenuous moments

when we enter a room. However, I may occasionally follow up with a suggestion for a good read-aloud or resource, for example, if I noticed it might complement what is being taught. A conversation might look something like, “Oh, Ms. Rome, I noticed that you were reading *Ada Byron Lovelace and the Thinking Machine*. We just purchased *Grace Hopper:*

Queen of Computer Code. Your students might enjoy that too.”

This simple act of consistently wandering through classrooms will provide insight into all aspects of the discourse (including topics being discussed), seating arrangements, displays on the walls, who is participating (and not participating), who the teacher does and does not interact with, classroom management strategies and much more.

Being Present in the Halls

Being present in the halls can highlight the existence of a hierarchy of acceptance, wherein some students succeed socially, while others face either explicit or veiled barriers to inclusion. This provides an opportunity to notice how staff interact with students during these moments of “unstructured” time, allowing you to take note of who staff engage with, and what behaviours and language they choose to address. The [2019 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools](#) provides keen insight into the experience of marginalized youth. For example, almost all (98.8 per cent) of the LGBTQ+ students heard the term “gay” used negatively, and over 95 per cent reported hearing phrases like “homo,” “dyke” and/or “faggot.”

More alarmingly, 52.4 per cent of students reported hearing homophobic remarks from their teachers or other school staff, and 66.7 per cent reported hearing negative remarks about gender expression. Less than one-fifth of LGBTQ+ students reported that school staff consistently intervened when hearing homophobic or transphobic remarks. Perhaps not surprisingly given the frequency of pejoratives used by school staff, 56.6 per cent of LGBTQ+ students who were harassed or assaulted did not report the incident because they did not trust school administrators to effectively address the issue.

Consequently, LGBTQ+ students are nearly three times more likely to miss school, more likely to have lower grade point averages, nearly twice as likely to forgo post-secondary education and overall to have a lower sense of self-esteem and school belonging and higher levels of depression.

RAINBOW DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Dealing Directly with Language

D

DIRECT

Address the disrespectful comment

“Let’s talk about what I just heard you say.” “That is not okay.”

I

IDENTIFY

Clarify why the language is disrespectful

For example, whenever a comment defines someone by an ability, we need to rethink our language. Instead of saying “a special needs student,” say, “a student with special needs.”

R

RESTATE

Reinforce the use of appropriate language

The language we use to talk with one another must reflect this belief.

E

EDUCATION

Explain who is being hurt by the comment

For example, if the comment was homophobic, you might say, “When you use the word gay like that, you are discriminating against people who are gay or lesbian. You are also hurting people who may have parents or friends who are gay.”

C

COMMUNICATE

Emphasize the use of appropriate language

“Rather than saying a song is gay, say you don’t like the song.”

T

THANK

Act as a role model and say, “Thank you for listening”

We are role models in building inclusive schools and workplaces.

Source: rainbowschools.ca

Students in this survey were also asked about other types of biased language commonplace in their schools. They reported hearing sexist comments even more frequently than homophobic comments, and negative remarks about students' abilities, weight and body size, race, religion and immigration status.

As administrators, we can address these issues by sharing the information from this report with staff and encouraging them to be in student spaces, such as the hallways, playgrounds and gymnasiums.

The presence of staff and their willingness to interrupt language and behaviour used to oppress is critical for the well-being and academic achievement of our youth from marginalized groups. The Rainbow District School Board distributes "Dealing Directly with Language" cards throughout the system and provides professional development to support their implementation.

I created these cards for the board more than 10 years ago in response to a staff survey that identified homophobia as the most problematic issue in schools. While talking about this, I emphasize that the key is to interrupt – and to be seen interrupting – language that is causing harm. This may involve the use of proximity (moving toward the problematic interaction), "a teacher look" (signalling with eye contact that you have heard and do not condone such language), or a comment such as, "That's not okay" or "We do not talk like that."

Examine the Walls

As important as it is to monitor behaviour and language in student spaces, it is also vital that we ensure visible representations of marginalized groups throughout the school. Not only are these lived experiences often minimized in curriculum, they are also forgotten in the hidden curriculum of schools. In the [National School Climate Survey](#), 66.8 per cent of students reported that their classrooms did not include representations of LGBTQ+ people, history or events.

These same students commented on the meaningfulness of visible support signs, such as safe space posters or stickers.

As a principal, I am acutely aware of the power of visual representation. This was rein-




66.8%

of students reported that their classrooms did not include representations of LGBTQ+ people, history or events.

forced early in my own teaching career during a boys' literacy project where I talked to boys about their reading. I will never forget what one Grade 8 boy said in response to a question about what he liked to read: "Your

posters, Miss. I read them." This should not have shocked me as much as it did. I appreciated the aesthetic value of the work displayed on my classroom walls and hoped that it might miraculously impact students sub-



To address the pervasive systems of oppression, we must sport our wide-angle **EMBRACIVE LENSES** and see people for all that they are ...

consciously. Until that moment, it had not occurred to me that students were actually reading what I posted.

Today, when I walk down the halls of my school, I see a display of Black History Month, Women's History Month, "A Lot of Literacy" featuring Women's History read-alouds, a series of Embrace Diversity equity posters and so on. This takes intentionality, and even with the voice of that young man resonating in my head, I catch myself needing to think more critically about our "hidden" curriculum.

Recently I was working on a bulletin board of "Amazing Authors" in the library when I realized that everyone in my display was white. Needless to say, it was back to the drawing board to ensure that all of the messages we send in our school are intentional and inclusive.

Peruse the Shelves

While in classrooms and the library, it is imperative that we take a moment to scan our shelves to understand what texts are present. We need to ask ourselves three simple questions: "Whose reality is being represented? Whose is not? What can we do about it?" The National Climate Survey states that only one-fifth of the LGBTQ+ students reported that LGBTQ+-related topics were included in assigned reading, only 8.2 per cent reported being able to find resources in their school libraries, and, for some, even their access to LGBTQ+-related information on school computers was significantly limited.

Ensuring a diverse representation in our school's literature collections effectively makes visible the commitment to creating an inclusive and safe learning environment. While we strive to ensure representation of diversity, we can also encourage the development of critical thinking skills by asking questions about who is in the text and who is not, and how the outcome of the text might differ should a marginalized group member be featured over a majority group member. It is important to regularly review the materials, ensuring that they have not become outdated in their use of language and



**CALL US NOW FOR YOUR
2022-2023 YEARBOOK**

LAURENTIEN.CA

To learn more about us, go to page 43!



LAURENTIEN

Manon Marquis, Ottawa

1-888-875-3290 | 4407
819-962-7840
mmarquis@laurentien.ca

James Aymar, Toronto

1-888-875-3290 | 4233
437-421-0641
jaymar@laurentien.ca



Responsible environmental
practices

social conventions. While there might be opportunities for these to become teachable moments, this should not be done at the expense of the well-being of students from marginalized groups. Ensuring that the learning resources are inclusive with diverse representation and engaging in critical thinking activities allow staff and students to begin to sport their own wide-angle embracive lenses.

Walk the Talk

Most importantly, as administrators we need to “walk the talk.” It is imperative that our commitment to creating safe spaces and dismantling systemic barriers not begin after our morning coffee and end with the final bell. Walking the talk begins with identifying the components of our own social identity.

Promoting Equity and Inclusive Education in Schools: A teacher’s guide by the Centre Ontarien de Prévention des Agressions offers some

helpful starting points, including, “Who am I? How do I identify? What are my privileges?” From there, we can begin to identify how we are situated in the world and move to decentre ourselves, making room for conversations with others to understand how they see themselves within the learning community.

As we walk the talk, we need to consistently model the use of respectful and inclusive language. This includes when we are talking with colleagues in the hallway or on the phone. There is nothing quite as damaging to school climate as when staff and students intuit contradiction between what we say and how we act. In addition, we need to be clear in our expectations about how language will be used in our school, and in our commitment to consistently interrupt the use of such language through a process of progressive discipline.

In 2021, [Jamila Dugan wrote](#), “Equity is not a destination but an unwavering com-

mitment to a journey.” As we sport our wide-angle embracive lenses, we must remember to do so with a healthy dose of self-compassion. I am committed to addressing systemic barriers and creating safe spaces for staff and students. My embracive lenses are freshly polished, and yet mistakes like the library display still occur. If we are truly walking the talk, we acknowledge that equity is a process, and that mistakes are fundamental to our growth. When we share our mistakes with others to create a safe environment, we can all learn and grow together. ▲

Cori Pitre is the principal of Queen Elizabeth II in Sudbury, Ontario.

✉ pitrec@rainbowschools.ca

RESOURCES

Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario. Undated. Anti-oppression. Retrieved August 9, 2022. <https://www.etfo.ca/socialjusticeunion/frameworks>

HAS YOUR WORK BECOME MORE COMPLICATED AND CONFLICTUAL?

We have helped hundreds of your colleagues to navigate their challenges with less stress. Let us help you through our workshops on:

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Learn to resolve conflicts, save time and money, and create a more fulfilling work environment.

Dealing With Difficult People

Learn to deliver difficult messages, gain confidence and deal with problematic people.

Become a Powerful Negotiator

Learn to be more persuasive, overcome obstacles and get the outcome you desire.



“Excellent workshop - full of real-world role plays and videos. The instructors established a co-learning environment that was risk-free and fostered creative solutions.”

Trina Wasilewski, Vice-Principal, Toronto District School Board



Visit sfhgroup.com for upcoming Toronto, Ottawa and Online sessions.

Ask us about our extensive experience teaching people in the education field.



Windsor Law
University of Windsor

1.800.318.9741

contact@adr.ca

sfhgroup.com



Embrace Inclusive Dance Practices for Children of All Abilities

New online course enables
integrated dance practices in both
the classroom and community

Calling all educators and community programmers: Explore creative movement activities that benefit children of all abilities. Inclusive Dance Practices in the Classroom and Community, a new online course created by Canada's National Ballet School (NBS), supports you in providing a safe, child-centered environment for dance.

Through this course, you will:

- Learn about the benefits of creative movement for children of all abilities
- Explore best practices in delivering integrated dance activities
- Discover strategies to engage children with diverse abilities
- Watch video examples of integrated dance programming
- Gain access to resources and supports such as movement cards and visual schedules

Cost: FREE. Register online at <https://learning.nbs-enb.ca>

Through the universal language of dance, share the joy and innumerable benefits with children of all abilities.



Photography by Celeste Cole



**COURSES
FOR TEACHERS**
Continuing Teacher Education

Learn. Lead. Inspire.



As a leader, you are passionate about helping make a difference in people's lives.

We share that passion. Our mission to develop progressive, ethical and thoughtful educational leaders is driven by a passion to make a difference.

Outstanding instructors, research-based courses, and an unparalleled level of personal support combine to make the difference you expect from one of Canada's leading universities.

In addition to our robust course and certification offerings, we can provide tailored programming to suit your team's professional development needs.



Learn more and register at

www.coursesforteachers.ca



facebook.com/QueensCTE



twitter.com/QueensCTE



instagram.com/QueensCTE



Anti-Oppressive Education

Adapting to the demands of educational and social reform

By Kulbir Singh Dhaliwal

School boards are tasked with increasing demands to reflect the needs of all learners and to actively move away from hegemonic systems rooted in the industrialization era. Challenges related to students' readiness to attain gainful employment beyond graduation, school engagement and inclusive education are among issues that contemporary professionals must address. An underlying theme of anti-oppressive education is the inability to meet student needs due to a lack of teacher training or an unwillingness to adapt to the demands of educational and social reform.

The emergence of advocacy related to marginalized identities is forcing educators and policy-makers to respond to the increasing need for diverse representation, equity, inclusion and justice. Traditional, unicultural, heterosexual, male-dominated and white-centred education fails to meet the needs of historically marginalized students. This article will address the need for educational transformation to reflect inclusive experiences of all students, through a review of the literature, as well as a discussion of current challenges in practice and connections to professional context.

At the turn of the century and millennium, a growing concern was that the skills required for graduating students were not being met in schools. Learning models had become outdated and problematic, and so school boards began to anticipate 21st-century learning models to prepare students for unknown

employment opportunities. There was a shared understanding and vision that the mindset and training that schools provided for students entering the workforce did not match technological advancements. It was essential that the landscape adapt to reflect the needs of modern society, understanding that traditional education founded on teaching students a preplanned, structured, thematic curriculum in an all-encompassing manner is impractical. Forcing students to learn and be assessed systematically did not yield skills such as creativity, technological aptitude and an ability to adapt to changing expectations (Zhao 2015, 132-3).

Students who excelled in non-traditional areas such as arts and technology were not acclaimed if their skills were not seen as being usable in areas deemed to yield academic success. Ultimately, measuring success based on a student's acceptance

to post-secondary institutions did not consider the value of a holistic approach (Robinson 2006, 11:55, 19:20). Twenty-first-century learning concepts are outdated and do not reflect a contemporary system of education as imagined at the turn of the century, given that nearly 25 per cent of the century has passed. Instead, what has resulted is the same polarizing education system that existed when the theoretical perspectives began to shift in the 1990s.

An unimagined and sometimes-ignored purpose of education is to understand the whole student and how their identity and lived experience can be a successful ingredient in adapting the learning environment for them. Many educators focus on the demographics of a school to justify poor practices that deny the importance of teaching from a global perspective and facilitating an understanding of diverse identities and skills. Students are not prepared for the real world when diverse identities do not exist or are not understood, including when these are missing from the mindset of educators (Ho 2011, para. 20). Students of diverse backgrounds are denied an opportunity to prosper in the classroom when staff assume a role of gatekeeper of knowledge and hold fixed mindsets about the students' capabilities. A critical component in fostering inclusion is to recruit staff, at all levels of an organization, who understand students' lived experiences and who reflect similar identities (Raza 2022, para. 44).

The presence of diverse role models provides students with security and is responsive to their needs. Racialized students often feel that the prominence of white educators leads to micro-aggressions, not only in the views held about their identifiable groups, but also in the actions toward them (Raza 2022, para. 31). This points to a crucial need for representation in schools to provide students with safe spaces to learn while challenging educators' norms and mindsets.

Demographic data collection supports change in practice and is helpful to offer objectivity in challenging conversations. As a school leader, I have invited colleagues to examine data to better understand staffing needs. In one school, data revealed that over 80 per cent of the student population consisted of racialized identities, while 63 per cent of staff identified as white; this is a reality in many schools with high populations of racialized students. Within less diverse communities, it is unlikely to find any racialized staff, especially in positions of increased responsibility.

A number of issues are evident through such data collection, including a lack of awareness about the problematic nature of staffing that does not reflect global identities and colour-blind attitudes centred on qualification and perceived suitability of applicants. Operating from a colour-blind approach is dangerous because in reality, individuals become aware of race as a social construct at a very young age (Kimura et al. 2021, 183). In moments where school leaders deny the need for staffing to reflect global identities or suggest that adverse experiences cease to exist, racialized individuals are left invalidated (Hobson 2014).

The Critical Race Theory emphasizes that "ideologies of objectivity, meritocracy, neutrality, and colour-blindness often shield dominant groups from identifying their privilege in ways that sustain power" (Matthews 2019, 4). The fragility surrounding dominant groups is a major factor in preventing education from advancing in a culturally relevant and responsive manner and through trauma-informed practice. When faced with courageous conversations about the impact of colonialism and historic discrimination, members of dominant groups often centre issues on their own fragility and need for support rather than acknowledging and taking action to move forward progressively (Yancy and Davidson 2014, 111). Further, the focus often shifts to making connections to one's own experiences of marginalization (Toliver and Hadley 2021, 487). Referencing data and research is necessary to call in those who resist and rely on traditional approaches, while avoiding a focus on their vulnerabilities, and doing what is necessary to support oppressed groups. This also illustrates the need to have racially diverse staff as participants in data collection, to avoid a single-sided narrative.

Members of dominant groups do not encounter the added disparities faced by their under-represented and underprivileged peers (Kimura et al. 2021, 183). A further challenge is that academic research and studies to support these realities are limited to what has emerged within the past decade, even though "racialized youth account for half of the youth population in Canadian cities like Toronto" (Matthews 2019, 1). Fostering an environment where staff reflect student and global identities creates positive outcomes, an understanding of lived experience and heightened awareness of the impact of oppressive education. Diverse staff represent an agency of change and provide hope for students who have historically experienced marginalization (Kimura et al. 2021, 184). To exact effective change, all

An unimagined and sometimes-ignored purpose of education is to understand the whole student and how their identity and lived experience can be a successful ingredient in adapting the learning environment for them.

parties must work together to improve systems where teachers themselves take charge in fostering inclusive environments (Kimura et al. 2021, 185). This includes acknowledging that lived experiences vary among groups and that such variations yield different experiences in school. Transforming schools to reflect non-dominant groups and shifting from the teacher as knowledge keeper to a facilitator of learning will have a major impact.

The concept of global identities can sometimes be a further stretch for staff who are challenged to understand that schools ought to reflect the communities they serve. However, a focus on global identities supports students in understanding those who may or may not exist in their school community, but definitely exist in the world. The focus of modern learning is to ensure students are prepared for the workforce, while other perspectives suggest that students need to be prepared for things that likely remain unknown at this time. Educators ought to abandon a mindset that focuses on an input-output model and instead support students in developing skills such as resilience and adaptability (Zhao 2015, 134). Modern education requires staff who are reflective and make efforts to understand who is in their classroom and what skills they need to be successful.

It is widely understood that cultural differences between home and school create challenges requiring appropriate action (Nieto 2005, 47). Teachers who reflect global identities can provide safe spaces for students to belong, and recognize approaches that are in place to address systemic discrimination and micro-aggressions (Raza 2022, para. 32). Intentional recruitment of staff is a major step in working toward trauma-informed practices and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRRP). “Monocultural schools, regardless of the brilliance of their teaching programs, cannot socialise students for the reality of a ...

globalised world” (Ho 2011, para. 20). This extends to staff who maintain monocultural norms and can present the same risk as students being exposed to a curriculum that does not reflect their identities and experiences.

Arnon and Reichel (2007) reference the work of Lamm (2000) by acknowledging that a key ingredient to pedagogical strength is teaching students through a cultural perspective; that is, helping them understand the importance of being citizens of their world (Arnon and Reichel 2007, para. 14 and 19). The shift from focusing on a teacher’s technical skills in facilitating content knowledge, to embedding cultural elements, is an important one. A revamp of curriculum is also required to reflect multiple perspectives instead of the ones taught historically. CRRP is not merely what and how concepts are taught, but also by whom. This is a shift from the mid-20th century, an era where student voice was deemed irrelevant (Arnon and Reichel, 2007, para. 21). Lack of prioritization contradicts fundamental components of trauma-informed practice and, when coupled with teacher perception of students and their experiences, can be detrimental (Yancy and Davidson 2014, 106). A more useful approach is one where teachers understand the differences that marginalized students experience between home and school without holding any assumptions of such groups.

Limited data and literature related to anti-oppressive education for historically marginalized students points to a strong need to reflect the communities served in schools through staffing and teaching practice. Affording students with opportunities to experience success equal to their peers from dominant and privileged groups is essential in educational reform and a way to cultivate school culture that prepares students with a better understanding of global identities from an asset-based perspective. It has taken nearly a quarter century to truly embrace the educational ideologies presented at the turn of the century, and reverting is not an option. Our school boards must acknowledge and take action based on the understanding that students from marginalized groups do not experience education in the same manner as their privileged counterparts. Failure to advance systems to meet the needs of all students is a violation of human rights and cannot be left unaddressed by school boards. ▲

Kulbir Singh Dhaliwal is a principal with the Simcoe County District School Board. He advocates for education reform to support marginalized groups.

✉ ksdhaliwal@scdsb.on.ca

REFERENCES

Anon, S., and N. Reichel. 2007, September 18. "Who is the Ideal Teacher? Am I? Similarity and Difference in Perception of Students of Education Regarding the Qualities of a Good Teacher and of Their Own Qualities as Teachers." *Teachers and Teaching* 13 (5), 441-64. <https://doi.org/ezproxy.csu.edu.au/10.1080/13540600701561653>.

Ho, C. 2011, May. "My School' and Others: Segregation and White Flight. *Australian Review of Public Affairs*. Accessed April 29, 2022. <http://www.australianreview.net/digest/2011/05/ho.html>.

Hobson, M. 2014, May 5. "Color Blind or Color Brave?" TED. Filmed March 2014 at TED, Vancouver, BC. Video, 14:02. https://www.ted.com/talks/melody_hobson_color_blind_or_color_brave?language=en.

Kimura, A. M., M. Anton-Oldenburg, and E. E. Pinderhughes. 2021, May 1. "Developing and Teaching an Anti-Bias Curriculum in a Public Elementary School: Leadership, K-1 Teachers', and Young Children's Experiences." *Journal of Research in Childhood Education* 36 (1), 10.1080/02568543.2021.1912222.

Matthews, A. 2019, February 19. "Racialized Youth in the Public Library: Systemic Racism Through a Critical Theory Lens." *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research* 15 (1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.21083/partnership.v15i1.5348>.

Nieto, S. 2005, Spring. "Public Education in the Twentieth Century and Beyond: High Hopes, Broken Promises, and an Uncertain Future." *Harvard Educational Review* 75 (1),

43-64. <https://ezproxy.csu.edu.au/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/public-education-twentieth-century-beyond-high/docview/212304103/se-2?accoun tid=10344>.

Raza, A. 2022, April 13. "Being Black in School: Peel Students Open Up About the Racism They Face in the Classroom." *CBC News*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/peel-students-racism-panel-1.6408851?vfz=medium%3Dsharebar>.

Robinson, K. 2006, February. "Do Schools Kill Creativity?" Filmed February 2006 at TED, Monterey, CA. Video 19:12. https://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_do_schools_kill_creativity/transcript?language=en.

Toliver, S. R., and H. Hadley. 2021, July 26. "Rhetorically Speaking: On White Preservice Teachers' Failure to Imagine an Anti-racist English Education." *English Teaching: Practice & Critique* 20 (4), 485-500. 10.1108/ETPC-09-2020-0112.

Yancy, G., and M. del Guadalupe Davidson, eds. 2014. *Exploring Race in Predominantly White Classrooms: Scholars of Color Reflect*. Taylor & Francis Group. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/CSUAU/detail.action?docID=1637486&pq-origsite=primo>.

Zhao, Y. 2015, March 18. "A World at Risk: An Imperative for a Paradigm Shift to Cultivate 21st Century Learners." *Society (New Brunswick)*, 52 (2), 129-35. 10.1007/s12115-015-9872-8.



OTIP RAEO.

Insurance served your way

Protecting the Ontario education community is our only purpose. We'll shop the market to find the best insurance policy that fits your individual needs, as well as your budget.

GET AN ONLINE QUOTE:
[OTIPinsurance.com/opc_magazine](https://www.otipinsurance.com/opc_magazine)

Plus
get exclusive discounts
and a **\$20 gift card**
when you get a quote!*



*Restrictions apply. You must speak with an OTIP broker on the telephone to review your quote to be eligible for the \$20 gift card. Must be a resident of Ontario and a member of the education community. Maximum of one gift card per household. Promotion ends December 31, 2022. The merchants represented are not sponsors of the rewards or otherwise affiliated with this company. Please visit each company's website for additional terms and conditions. Visit www.otipinsurance.com/promotion-card2 for full eligibility criteria and offer details.

Need School & Team Spiritwear in Bulk?

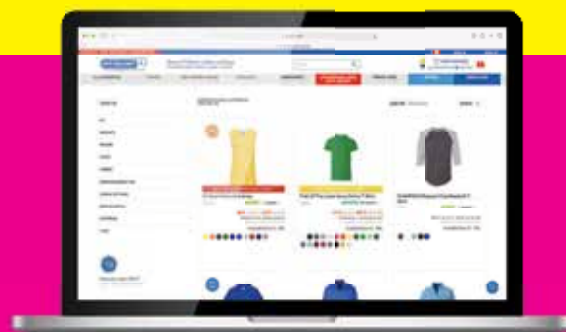


Trust Entripy to outfit your school and teams in quality apparel, customized with your logos

- ✓ Canada's Leader in Custom Apparel
- ✓ 5 business day order completion
- ✓ Print or embroider – we do both!
- ✓ Low minimums – as low as 6
- ✓ No additional artwork charges

SAVE 20%*
on your next Entripy.com order

USE CODE
THEREG20



Visit entripy.com to find 100s of products that match your school colours!



Entripy is a Certified Supplier member of the Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC)

Need Help? Visit us online at entripy.com and Live Chat

Or Call Us! **1 (866) 368-7479**
Toll Free

Looking for an Out-of-the-Box Fundraising Solution for Your Team or Club?

Sell custom-printed school spiritwear online and get back 10% of all sales*



* Sales is defined as all pre-tax, pre-shipping amounts. Visit entripyshops.com to learn more.

How it works:



Benefits of opening an EntripyShop:



Simple and Easy to Use



10% Rebate for Your Organization



No Fees or Maintenance Charges



Orders Ship Directly to Parents and Students

Register at entripyshops.com to get started!

THE CHALLENGES OF ATTRACTING

FSL Teachers

Guidelines for better recruitment and retention

By David Jack, Stefan Merchant and Laura Hermans-Nymark

The job of a principal is a complex one. This complexity requires principals to make many high-stakes decisions, including the hiring of teachers. Whether principals are leading central hiring teams for their districts, or hiring staff for their individual schools, they wield considerable influence on hiring decisions, and bear responsibility for supporting the professional growth and learning of teachers.

The complexities of hiring decisions increase in the context of teacher shortages, with the most prevalent and long-standing challenge being the shortage of French as a Second Language (FSL) teachers in Ontario. The [Ontario Public School Boards' Association](#) (OPSBA) recently completed a [multi-year study](#) confirming the challenges schools and districts face in finding teachers ready to fill FSL positions. The study also identified several factors that contribute to this challenge, as well as short- and long-term strategies to address the issue.

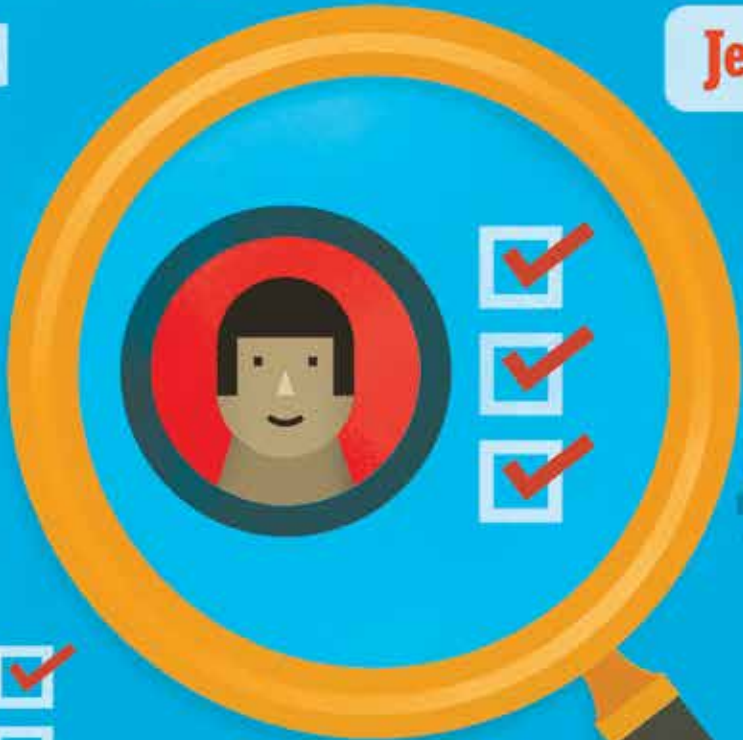
Illustration by Luc Melanson



Bonjour !



**Un
deux
trois**



Je parle français



**Je suis
Tu es
Il est**



One of the factors that influences the availability of job-ready FSL teachers stems from the results of French language proficiency assessments. The OPSBA's recent [pan-Canadian study](#) reported close to 90 per cent of English-language school boards across Canada conduct such assessments during their hiring process. That study confirmed the findings of an earlier one, looking at 60 Ontario school boards where approximately one in four FSL teacher applicants fell short of French proficiency expectations during these assessments – further aggravating boards' efforts to fill vacant positions.

Research on FSL teacher retention identifies links between FSL teachers' insecurities with their level of French proficiency, and their inclination to seek teaching opportunities in areas other than FSL. French proficiency assessments can play dual roles:

- to gather sufficient information about an applicant's language skills to satisfy districts' hiring expectations; and
- to identify starting points in facilitating language development opportunities.

Increasingly, this latter role is recognized as a strategy for retaining FSL teachers.

Two key findings from the OPSBA's most recent study relate specifically to the role of principals in hiring FSL teachers:

- the responsibility to conduct these assessments most often falls to principals, usually those who speak French; and
- the assessment protocols that principals are required to use with FSL teacher applicants may not align with fair assessment principles.

This is especially concerning given the high-stakes nature of the assessment itself.

The OPSBA study found that the evaluation of the applicant's response is typically based on holistic impressions and not rated against a rubric, and that few principals have the opportunity to confer with colleagues about their impressions of the applicant's French proficiency before making a final decision. Given the importance of hiring decisions for the school, students and principals, it is critical that any assessment made during the hiring process is robust and defensible, and gives useful, actionable information about the applicant. Since almost all schools have FSL teachers on staff, even principals who are not directly involved in conducting these assessments have a vested interest in their quality and outcomes.

For principals who conduct French proficiency assessments when hiring FSL teachers, or for those with questions about the assessment process used in their district, we offer five guidelines.

Each guideline offers advice on how to improve the process of assessing French language proficiency and is supported by research and accepted effective practices in language assessment. The practicality and ease of implementing each guideline will vary from district to district and school to school, but making even one positive change can result in stronger evidence of an applicant's French proficiency, leading to better hiring decisions and FSL instruction in schools.

Guideline 1: Separate the assessment of French language proficiency from other parts of the hiring process.

Assessing a candidate's French language proficiency by asking questions during the employment interview creates several problems. The first is that it limits how many questions can be asked, and it places constraints on the content of those questions.

It can be tempting to use an interview prompt such as, "Tell us your philosophy of inclusion" in French because this can potentially give information about the candidate's French language skills and their philosophy of inclusion. However, asking such questions does a disservice to the candidate for several reasons. The first is that applicants learning French as an additional language (the majority of applicants in Ontario) are



IT IS CRITICAL
that any assessment made
during the hiring process is
robust and defensible, and gives
useful, actionable information
about the applicant.



unlikely to be able to articulate a complex topic such as their philosophy of inclusion in French as well as they can in their first language, and so are disadvantaged during the interview.

The second is that the language and vocabulary required to answer such a question do not reflect the type of language and vocabulary they will need when teaching French. Finally, candidates are often nervous during an interview, and this can negatively impact their language performance, especially if the opportunity to demonstrate their language skills is limited to one or two questions.

Separating the French language assessment from other components of the hiring process yields two advantages. First, with more time for verbal interaction, the assessment outcomes become a more valid reflection of the applicant's proficiency in French. Second, with less focus on the larger topics of curriculum or general pedagogy, the assessment can be crafted to pinpoint specific areas of language teaching.

Guideline 2:

Focus on the language skills teachers need.

We expect teachers to be good language role models, but this is only part of the job. FSL teachers also explain, instruct, thoughtfully respond to students' errors, provide feedback and manage the classroom. The assessment tasks should reflect the ways in which FSL teachers use language in their job. For instance, questions that ask applicants to respond to a hypothetical scenario will prompt speakers to engage in the type of language used with students as well as demonstrating their use of vocabulary, verb regulation, syntax and so on.

Guideline 3: Create and communicate expected standards of French language proficiency.

As part of the OPSBA study, we looked at the websites of 86 different school districts across Canada and found that only 11 of them contained any information about their French language proficiency requirements or assessments, and none of them gave any detail about the assessments applicants would be required to complete when applying for FSL positions.

The act of creating French language proficiency expectations naturally leads to important conversations about what language skills and proficiencies you are looking for in your FSL teachers. Communicating those expectations helps applicants understand what level of proficiency they should have, or aspire to, if they want to work in your school or district. Known, shared expectations also reduce the inconsistency associated with evaluating applicants' French language proficiency using holistic impressions.

Guideline 4: Decide who the evaluators are going to be and ensure they have the requisite skills.

The principals selected to conduct French language proficiency as-

essments usually self-identify as being able to complete the assessment. Self-identification is a reasonable first step, but it needs to be followed with training and collaboration with other principals in the district. The aim of this training and collaboration is to ensure that everyone understands what language skills are being assessed, and is evaluating to common expectations. The evaluation of an applicant's French language skills should be consistent regardless of who does the evaluation.

Guideline 5:

Assessments can be formative as well as summative.

In a labour market where finding FSL teachers can be challenging, some districts and schools find themselves hiring teachers whose French language proficiency is below what is hoped for. In these cases, the assessment information gained during the application process can provide immediate constructive feedback to the applicant and may serve to inform language development plans for this teacher, once in the job.

If the assessment reveals the candidate has strong oral skills but struggles with verb conjugation in their writing, this provides useful information for the principal and the candidate on how to move forward with their language development.

What's next?

As part of our research, four school boards in Ontario (Upper Canada, Hamilton-Wentworth, Peel and Durham) are currently engaged in pilot projects to review and revise their existing French proficiency assessment protocols in light of the guidelines discussed above.

While principals are central to the work in these pilot projects, the projects are meeting success through collaboration between principals, human resources officials, program support staff and a local faculty of education. Collectively, the projects are guided by these questions:

- What do we mean when we say "proficiency"?
- Does our assessment process lead to consistent assessment between different evaluators?
- How does our assessment account for potential bias in evaluating French proficiency?
- Does our assessment process document evaluation results that can be shared with an applicant?

Results from these pilot projects will be included in a tool kit for developing French language proficiency assessments. The tool kit will provide assessment tools and procedures that have been piloted and field tested in various school districts and faculties of education across Canada, and is due for publication by OPSBA in 2023–24.

Hiring FSL teachers with strong French language proficiency can enhance the quality of French instruction for students, provide evidence for a language development path if needed and



THE AIM OF THIS TRAINING AND COLLABORATION

is to ensure that everyone understands what language skills are being assessed, and is evaluating to common expectations.

ultimately improve FSL teacher retention. For these benefits to be realized, the assessment tools and processes must be intentionally designed to provide the high-quality information needed for high-stakes decision-making.

The Ontario Principals' Council has provided support to the research being conducted by OPSBA through its participation on the FSL Partnership Committee. In addition, as a means of

supporting recruitment and retention of FSL teachers, the OPC has partnered with OPSBA, the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO) and a few school districts to offer [online modules](#) for principals and vice-principals. ▲

Dr. David Jack is the project manager for OPSBA's FSL Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy initiative: French Language Proficiency Assessment Toolkit. [@wdjackjack](#)

✉ djack@opsba.org

Dr. Stefan Merchant is an adjunct assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University and project lead for the French Language Proficiency Assessment Toolkit initiative.

Dr. Laura Hermans-Nymark is an adjunct professor in the Faculty of Education at Western University, and a researcher for the French Language Proficiency Assessment Toolkit initiative.

RESOURCES

- i Mason, R., and M. Schroeder. 2010. "Principal Hiring Practices: Toward a Reduction of Uncertainty." *The Clearing House* 83, 186-93.
- ii Ontario Public School Boards' Association. 2019. [Meeting Labour Market Needs for French as a Second Language Instruction in Ontario – Understanding Perspectives Regarding the French as a Second Language Teacher Labour Market Issue](#).
- iii Wernicke, M. 2020. *Linguistic Insecurity – Qu'est-ce que c'est?* Research Brief, Canadian Parents for French.
- iv Wernicke, M. 2020. "Orientations to French Language Varieties among Western Canadian French-as-a-second language Teachers." *Critical Multilingualism Studies* 8(1), 165–90.
- v Swanson, P. 2012. "Second/Foreign Language Teacher Efficacy and Its Relationship to Professional Attrition." *Canadian Modern Language Review* 68(1), 78-101.

Win \$1500 of multilingual EdTech for your school

700+ digital books. 64 languages. Multilingual classroom ideas. Educator training & guides. Usage data. And more!

ENTER TO WIN

or scan!



OsgoodePD's Upcoming Programs in **EDUCATION LAW**

Are you confident in your understanding of the law that governs today's education system?

Blended
(In-Person)

OR

Online (Live)

*Can't make
the date?*

Registration includes 120-day unlimited, online access to the recorded program

Register today:
osgoodepd.ca/register

- **Critical and Emerging Issues in School Law for K-12 Education Professionals**
Oct. 3 and 24, 2022
- **Education Law for Private and Independent Schools**
Nov. 4, 2022
- **The Legal Guide to Special Education Law**
Nov. 23, 2022
- **Advanced Issues in Special Education Law**
Jan. 17, 2023
- **Certificate in Human Rights for Education Professionals**
Feb. 3, 4, and March 31 and Apr. 1, 2023
- **Legal Guide to Privacy and Information Management for Education Professionals**
Feb 10, 2023
- **Mental Health Law for Children and Youth**
Mar. 27, 2023
- **Human Resources Law for Education Professionals**
May 1, 2023




The Osgoode Certificate in Education Law

Complete 5 days of programming within 2 years to earn the Certificate.

Endorsed by







Gearing Up for a Healthy School Year

Well-being,
positive
leadership and
sustainability

By the Protective Services Team



The start of a new school year holds infinite promise and, we all hope, a change from the unrelenting stress of the past two years under the impact of both increasing work expectations and the pandemic. Of one thing we are certain: continuing to work at this pace is unsustainable for the health and well-being of school leaders and the staff and students they supervise.

To move themselves away from this level of intensity, principals and vice-principals are encouraged to continue to reframe their schools for recovery and regrowth. By refining protocols and processes already in place that focus on health and well-being and the building of productive, respectful relationships, you will help to build sustainable learning and working environments that respect the rights of all to feel safe and challenged to succeed. As you work to determine those strategies and processes, it is important for administrators to consider the factors over which you have control versus those issues for which there must be a larger advocacy by the OPC and our partners in education at a systems level, be it local or provincial.

Where to Start?

To create the healthy, positive environment desired for the duration of the school year, it's critical to examine issues at play at the end of the previous school year, analyze areas for growth and change that the school can act on, and identify strategies and advocacy to support collective well-being as principals and vice-principals work toward remaining healthy, confident and able to lead successfully in challenging times. A good place to start is a simple self-check by individual school leaders on what is perceived to be the level of well-being in the school. For example:

- On a scale from 1 (Not there) to 5 (Nailing it!), how would I rate the state of well-being in our school currently? What does a 5 look like?
- Name two factors that are supporting well-being in our school.
- Name two factors that are barriers to well-being in our school.

At a provincial level, the 2021–22 school year saw the OPC Protective Services Team (PST) respond to a significant increase in daily calls from administrators requiring support. It was very clear that your role in the current working and learning environment is not sustainable, given the degree of anxiety, emotion and stress

demonstrated in calls, in our district meetings and in local referrals. Trends identified by the PST included a continued rise in harassment and human rights complaints, a marked increase in LTD and medical leaves for reasons of mental and physical health challenges, and unparalleled exhaustion, dejection and frustration in many Members, along with an increased need for advocacy where meetings with members of senior teams were required.

The People for Education's Annual Ontario School Survey (AOSS) for 2021–22, entitled *A Perfect Storm of Stress*, identified several themes: the failure to fill staff shortages and the resultant safety issues with the lack of staff, complicated by the lack of funding to assist in filling jobs, along with a two-year Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) education program to qualify teachers and principals pushed to their limits with unmanageable stress and workloads.

Identifying specific challenges faced by administration, staff, students and families during the past school year will help school leaders determine necessary interventions and/or new paths to help address those areas that were not going well. It also provides a starting point for discussions with board senior teams on the support the school needs and expects.

Reframing the School Year for the Sustainability of Well-Being and Student Success

At the forefront of planning for an extraordinary school year is understanding that the concepts of success and well-being must be framed around the tenets of equity for all students, staff and families. Equitable access to what is needed for academic success, social prosperity (opportunities for the same education and resources for all students regardless of family economic standing and status) and well-being is critical. If all students cannot be healthy, well and successful in our schools, leadership must determine why that is, and work toward a solution.

In *Well-Being in Schools: Three forces that will uplift your students in a volatile world*, Hargreaves and Shirley encourage school leaders to focus on three forces: personal and social prosperity, more ethical uses of digital learning technologies, and renewing our relationship with nature to build sustainable environments for well-being and student success.

Where are the barriers that exist for students in these three areas to have personal health needs met; to have the capacity to rise above economic inequality; to have access, assistance and protection from overuse with appropriate technologies; and to have the opportunity to access natural settings in our schools? Developing keen awareness of student situations and taking steps to eradicate these barriers moves not only the well-being of students into focus, but that of the staff and leadership as well.

The Restorative Nature of the School's Physical Environment

In consideration of the physical experience of being in our schools, we turn our attention to classrooms, common spaces, offices, outdoor schoolyards, and the natural settings and elements in our schools that are available. Space for movement and quiet reflection is important. Where does it exist in your school?

"Research reveals that environments can increase or reduce our stress, which in turn impacts our bodies. What you are seeing, hearing, experiencing at any moment is changing not only your mood, but how your nervous, endocrine,

and immune systems are working. The stress of an unpleasant environment can cause you to feel anxious, or sad or helpless. This in turn elevates your blood pressure, heart rate, and muscle tension and suppresses your immune system,” Louise Delagran wrote in *How Does Nature Impact Our Wellbeing?* “A pleasing environment reverses that. And regardless of age or culture, humans find nature pleasing. In one study cited in the book *Healing Gardens*, researchers found that more than two-thirds of people choose a natural setting to retreat to when stressed.”

Establishing Positive Leadership Through the Lens of Well-being

In establishing a positive school learning and working environment, school leaders must work in partnership with staff, students, families and community members, as well as members of the senior team. As they build the strength of their team, principals and vice-principals are reminded there are many supports and strategies to assist them.

- Trust is critical. Build it and nurture relationships when possible. Trust will support your leadership.
- Reach out for support from your supervisory officer and board resource staff.
- Wellness comes from personal balance. Be kind to yourself to support others effectively.
- Use a trauma-informed lens as you move forward. It will nurture you and your school community.
- Set clear expectations for interactions, and work with someone to take notes.
- You have the right to a safe, respectful work environment as the school leader. Clear expectations around codes of conducts and protocols for safe meetings and communications are important.
- Be aware, be present and listen carefully to identify needs before they become overwhelming.

Building Relationships for Successful Interactions with Families and Students

Strong and collaborative relationships are the foundation for providing safe and nurturing

experiences for students and families. Given the increase school leaders have seen in escalated interactions with families of students, it is clearly crucial to build strong relationships at the start of the year, to instill trust and confidence in the school as a partner in their child’s education. Having all teachers and support staff work in collaboration with the administration to examine current relationship-building practices at the start of the school year gives principals and their staffs the opportunity to support a variety of approaches to communication, and sets up a safe

space for follow-up discussion if questions arise. All staff should be mindful and conscientious in how they foster positive relationships from the beginning of the year.

Many of the complaints coming from parents either to the school, the board or the OCT revolve around communication and perceptions of treatment of their children. Taking the time to work with staff on examining belief systems and traditional protocols that may be biased and require change will demonstrate the school’s intent to provide a safe learning space. Issues of

At the forefront of planning for an extraordinary school year is understanding that the concepts of success and well-being must be framed around the tenets of equity for all students, staff and families.



bias toward staff from families may also be addressed in this safe learning space. Time spent on solution-based planning benefits the well-being of all and creates a positive workspace for school leaders to deal with issues that arise.

Centring Well-being in Schools Around EDI and Anti-racist Practices

As we seek to build relationships with our students and their families, it's important to consider the role cultural bias plays. In meetings, phone calls and general interactions around the school, administrators might consider the following:

- a. What have I done to earn the trust of families, especially those from traditionally underserved communities?
- b. When asking questions of students and families, have I done a self-check? What am I asking, and how, when and why do I need to know? Should I even be asking? How might my question be perceived?
- c. Is there bias in my approach – when do I attach behaviours to aspects of identity? Does bias show up through contact or lack of contact with students and families? Do I have an awareness of whether our school's policies sound biased or have inequitable impacts when presented as reasons for school actions?
- d. Am I making assumptions based on how a

student or family presents or doesn't present? Do I know how each person I meet self-identifies, and which practices, traditions and aspects of life are important to them? (Unless you are able to answer yes to the latter question, it's critical to provide students and families with a safe space to work and communicate in school interactions.)

- e. Do I understand where escalated reactions from students and families originate? What's happened to make them angry? Am I getting these reactions because I haven't done the necessary work (described above)? Am I reactive and defensive if challenged, when the challenge is still within the limits of personal safety?
- f. Is this how I consistently treat people in my office?

Recognizing First Signs of Toxic Behaviours and School Culture

A toxic school culture often depends on context and the individuals involved. Toxicity is usually caused by negative habits and behaviours which, left unchallenged, form negative norms. In the initial stages, these behaviours and actions may not even be noticed as problematic or seem significant. Given the intricate nature of school cultures, however, people may be emotionally

impacted by these negative emotions, habits and behaviours, resulting in broken trust, possible issues with staff performance and a change in the culture of the school.

Recognizing early signs and being prepared to address them will work to prevent creating or being pulled into a toxic culture. Positive leadership will provide opportunities for open discussion of issues when they arise. Poor communication, fear and perceived lack of support create misunderstanding, missed direction or a breakdown in confidence or trust in all relationships and fuels frustration. Establishing clear direction about expectations for communication protocols is paramount in all school relations, and strong written communication practices serve both administrators and school staff well. Support that is provided readily and as part of a positive school culture, with the success of all in mind, is a critical factor for the sustainability of well-being. – *The 3 Signs of Toxic School Culture*

In proactively preparing for success in the coming school year, it is hoped that principals and vice-principals will have an opportunity to once again experience a positive, joyful work environment that nurtures their own well-being, and leaves them feeling fully equipped to support students in also becoming healthier, socially prosperous and successful.

As always, school leaders are encouraged to reach out to the OPC Protective Services Team or the OPC Professional Learning Department to provide support at any time during the school year. ▲

✉ asayed@principals.on.ca

RESOURCES

- Anon. Undated. "The 3 Signs of Toxic School Culture." <https://www.integritycoaching.co.uk/blog/3-signs-toxic-school-culture>.
- Delagran, Louise. Undated. "How Does Nature Impact Our Well-being?" <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/how-does-nature-impact-our-well-being>.
- Hargreaves, Andy, and Dennis Shirley. 2022. *Well-being in Schools: Three forces that will uplift your students in a volatile world*. Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD. <https://www.amazon.com/Well-Being-Schools-Forces-Students-Volatile/dp/1416630724>.
- OPC Tip Sheets – Communication, Managing Escalated Interactions with Parents. <https://www.principals.ca/en/protective-services/pst-resources.aspx>.
- People for Education. 2022. March. "A Perfect Storm of Stress, 2021–22 Annual Ontario School Survey." <https://peopleforeducation.ca/report/2022-annual-report-on-schools-a-perfect-storm-of-stress>.
- Santos, Laurie. Undated. "The Science of Well-Being." Yale University online course. <https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being>.

monster
Arts
for
Youth

South Asian Arts Workshops

Visual Arts, Dance, Film, Music, Drama, Poetry & Spoken Word

Visit monstrartity.com/monsterarts and download the MAY Teacher's Package for more info!

Workshop bookings are open for the 2022/2023 school year.

monstrARTity

CONGRATULATIONS

Celebrating Retirements

We want to extend our congratulations to OPC Members who retired during the 2021-22 school year.

Abbott, Maureen

Lakehead DSB

Arden, Bill

Ottawa-Carleton DSB

Banks, Debbie

Upper Canada DSB

Bartalos, Michael

Peel DSB

Bate, Cindy

Halton DSB

Battler, Paul

York Region DSB

Bennett, David

Avon Maitland DSB

Berriault, Judith

Peel DSB

Bileski, Karin

Waterloo Region DSB

Blakely, Sandra

Ottawa-Carleton DSB

Brock, Sofia

Waterloo Region DSB

Campeau, Jayson

Lambton Kent DSB

Carswell, Linda

Thames Valley DSB

Counsell, Heather

Ottawa-Carleton DSB

Crljen, Sooky

Toronto DSB

Dobbin, Carl

Ottawa-Carleton DSB

English, Nicholas

Toronto DSB

Faraone, Sandi

Toronto DSB

Farrell, Paul

Toronto DSB

Farrelly, Shona

Toronto DSB

Ferguson, Susan

Lambton Kent DSB

Fields, Lucy

Peel DSB

Foran, Jeff

York Region DSB

Forth, Laurie

Near North DSB

Galliford, Glenda

Simcoe County DSB

Gault, Mair Ann

Upper Canada DSB

Gladu, Shelley

Superior-Greenstone DSB

Houghton, Laura

Toronto DSB

Jacobs, Monica

Toronto DSB

Jafri, Rizwana

Toronto DSB

Jaremy, David

Algoma DSB

Karailiadis, Kiki

Toronto DSB

Klassen, Laurene

DSB Niagara

Koehn, Martha

Toronto DSB

Labbett Dawson, Michelle

Toronto DSB

Leung, Frank

Waterloo Region DSB

Lubczynski, Andy

Toronto DSB

MacCrae, Angie

Renfrew County DSB

MacFarlane, Diana

Ottawa-Carleton DSB

Mano, Krista

Upper Canada DSB

Martino, Martha

Halton DSB

McCann-Kyte, Cathy

Renfrew County DSB

McDonald, Ann

Keewatin-Patricia DSB

McFadden, Tim

York Region DSB

McLaren, Kim

Toronto DSB

Merkley, Joanne

Simcoe County DSB

Millard-Smith, Laura Lee

Simcoe County DSB

Milligan, Colin

Thames Valley DSB

Minardi, Denise

Hamilton-Wentworth DSB

Moffat, Heather

Hamilton-Wentworth DSB

Moran, Marg

York Region DSB

Morphet, Charlotte

Grand Erie DSB

Moy, Alexander

Toronto DSB

Murray, Tim

Upper Grand DSB

Myhal, Ann

Grand Erie DSB

Neal, Niki

Thames Valley DSB

Pacheco, Deanna

Keewatin-Patricia DSB

Paquette, Laurent

Near North DSB

Pearson, Tim

Ottawa-Carleton DSB

Phillips, Kim

Halton DSB

Pollard, Judith

Peel DSB

Proulx, Catherine

Toronto DSB

Purmal, Greg

Peel DSB

Rankin, Kim

Durham DSB

Ricci, Ron

Greater Essex County DSB

Richards, Veletia

Renfrew County DSB

Rizzo, Kelly

Hamilton-Wentworth DSB

Robinson, Paula

Avon Maitland DSB

Rodney Bartalos, Michelle

Hamilton-Wentworth DSB

Rowland, Mhairi

Upper Canada DSB

Sambrook, Thelma

Toronto DSB

Sampson, Jennifer

Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB

Schmalz, Julia

Thames Valley DSB

Seabrook, Melanie

Ottawa-Carleton DSB

Shamas, Debbie

Algoma DSB

Staples, Tracy

Upper Canada DSB

Stone, Peter

Simcoe County DSB

Taylor, Andrea

Halton DSB

Turcotte, Doug

Ontario North East DSB

Turnbull, Alison

Trillium Lakelands DSB

Uberoi, Tripta

Toronto DSB

Waler, Christine

DSB Niagara

Walker, Geordie

Ottawa-Carleton DSB

Waller, Jackie

Hastings & Prince Edward DSB

Wilson, Marion

Hastings & Prince Edward DSB

Yamamoto, Marsha

Toronto DSB

Zondag, Daphne

Lambton Kent DSB

Zondag, Don

Lambton Kent DSB

Mark Your Calendar

November

7

[Principals' Development Course – Online](#)
• Module 10 – Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ in Your School
• Module 12 – Supporting Leadership in Mathematics Improvement
November 7 – December 9
Application deadline: October 24

9

[Special Education for Administrators AQ \(SEAQP\) – Online](#)
November 9 – June 2
Application deadline: October 26

10

[Emerging Leader Development Program \(ELDP\) – Online](#)
• Module 2 – Having a Professional/Challenging Conversation
November 10 – 20
Application deadline: November 3

December

9

[Emerging Leader Development Program \(ELDP\) – Online](#)
• Module 3 – Exploring Your Equity Stance
December 9 – 18
Application deadline: December 2

January

16

[Principals' Development Course – Online](#)
• Module 15 – I Stand in Treaty
• Module 11 – Leading the Special Education Program
January 16 – February 17
Application deadline: January 2

20

[Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program \(SOQP\) – Online](#)
• Module 1 – 4

January 20 – 22
Application deadline: December 16

[Emerging Leader Development Program \(ELDP\) – Online](#)

• Module 4 – What is Instructional Leadership?
January 20 – 29
Application deadline: January 13

February

3

[Emerging Leader Development Program \(ELDP\) – Online](#)
• Module 5 – Leading Safe Schools
February 3 – 12
Application deadline: January 27

4

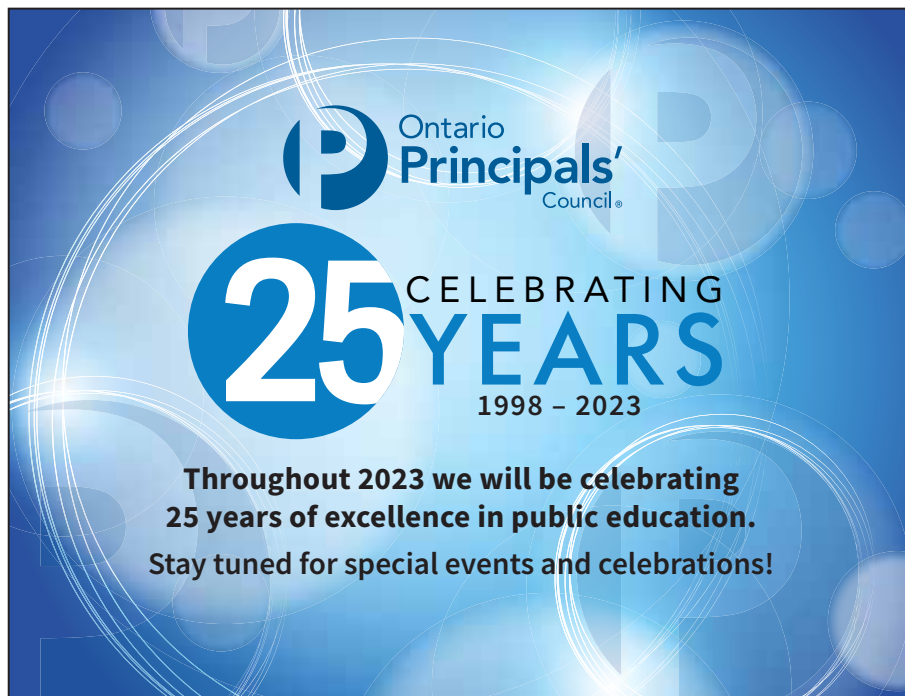
[Mentoring Qualification Program – Online](#)
• Module 1 – 4
February 4 – April 30
Application deadline: January 21

21

[Principals' Development Course – Online](#)
• Module 18 – Anti-Oppressive School Improvement
• Module 7 – Courageous Conversations
February 21 – March 24
Application deadline: February 6

27

[Principal's Qualification Program Spring 2023 – Online or Blended Option](#)
February 27 – June 15
Application deadline: February 13



OPC Staff Contacts

President
Patsy Agard
president@principals.ca

Professional Learning
learning@principals.ca

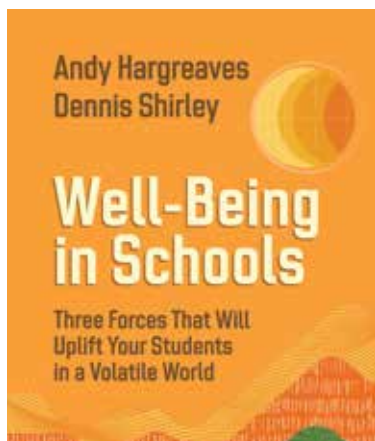
Executive Director
Allyson Otten
aotten@principals.ca

Membership Services
membership@principals.ca

Communications
Peggy Sweeney
psweeney@principals.ca

General Inquiry
admin@principals.ca

Protective Services
Aditi Sayed
asayed@principals.ca



Well-Being in Schools: Three forces that will uplift your students in a volatile world

By Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley
ASCD, Alexandria, Virginia, USA
ISBN: 978-1-4166-3072-2

“If you had a choice to be healthy or successful, which would you choose?” (p.xi)

So begins a thoughtful conversation about the importance of understanding what really matters for students. In this book, the conditions for students’ well-being and happiness are carefully examined, and examples are provided from successful education systems around the world. Discussion takes place on what is meant by “well-being,” what it looks like, why it’s important and how issues around well-being are considered in both teaching and assessment as we measure student success.

Authors Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley ask readers to examine their own fundamental beliefs about the priority of students’ well-being in relation to academic success, achievement and high performance. Education systems have focused on education reform for the purpose of raising students’ scores in high-stakes or mid-stakes testing in literacy, mathematics and science, and that focus has taken a significant toll on students’ well-being, often perpetrating ill-being. Yet, the global focus on education reform continues.

Added to this pressure is the rapid change and social isolation students

have faced through such factors as the increased use and expansion of digital technology, use of cellphones and increased screen time. It is clear that such problems existed before COVID-19 changed the delivery of education.

Hopeful direction is provided in the presentation of three core forces that contribute to well-being in our schools. These forces – personal and social prosperity, ethical technology use and the need for students to renew their relationship with nature – provide solid direction for boards and schools in the development of well-being policy and practice.

In discussing the need for prosperity for all, social psychology research points to the need for the use of evidence-informed approaches to enhance student well-being. Such strategies include helping to take care of basic needs such as safety and security, and helping build students’ self-confidence and resiliency as well as their ability to self-regulate and remain calm. The book underlines the importance of recognizing not only individual well-being but also states of well-being across social groups. It looks specifically at inequality at global, na-

tional and local levels, asking whether a strong public education system improves well-being and if the lack of one promotes ill-being.

“Ethical technology use: The moral side of screen life” examines how schools use technology. This chapter states that while digital technology proved to be a lifesaver during the pandemic when it was unclear whether students would have access to teachers and learning, it also proved to be the cause of several maladies, including stress and anxiety for many children, decreased movement and frequent feelings of being overwhelmed. The issue of equity in access for all children was also a critical problem, and the authors encourage boards and schools to develop an “ethically seamless approach” to the use of digital technology.

Finally, the authors point to the restorative nature of play and students being outdoors, having access to the natural world, and the benefits to student well-being.

This book is a satisfying, hopeful read, and it promotes universal well-being as an ethical imperative. I couldn’t agree more. ▲

Vicki Shannon is an OPC Protective Services Consultant

✉ vshannon@principals.ca

Changing the Journey - Affinity Spaces

Sharing our experiences

“Our journey will always be different.”

Over the years, I struggled with these words: trying to place them, understand them and make sense of them as a racialized woman, a Muslim, an ally and a school leader. I grew restless, seeking answers, questioning what seemed like a maze of mixed messages. In time, my colleagues, who shared lived experiences, assured me I would come to find meaning.

As an early vice-principal, both eager and unsure of how to navigate my first steps, I found myself wondering if a secret society of Indigenous and racialized administrators existed, a group of super sleuths and warriors of change who managed to decipher this coded language of educational leadership. I was hopeful - would they share both their wisdom and their guidance?

I started to encounter unexpected twists and turns in my leadership journey. I began to sense this notion of difference, perhaps not intentional, but nonetheless present. Deep silences permeated the spaces I shared with colleagues. I quickly realized that being connected to a network of colleagues was critical to

both my personal and professional well-being and success.

The idea of an affinity network was a new notion to me: a community that centred my identity, fostered responsive leadership and made space for the types of brave conversations I was yearning to have. I reflected on this following the 2017 shooting at a Quebec City mosque. Struck by the news of devastating loss, I began to experience a deep sense of despair recalling the aftermath of 9/11, when isolation overcame me.

The only other Muslim administrator I knew at the time reached out to talk about the tragedy. It was an unexpected, but needed call. We talked about how freeing the conversation had been and then wondered what would happen if we risked reaching out to others. What would it mean in their ability to lead?

And so we opened up the conversation and invited the public to the first meeting of the Muslim Educators' Network of Durham. Employees at all levels of the system, including allies, attended with an interest in seeking space for equity-deserving commu-

nities, developing relationships and growing leadership capacity.

The secret society wasn't so secret after all. Our journey did not have to be different. We could share our stories, build community and engage in advocacy. As a result, and with time, not only did opportunities arise for identity-based mentorship and leadership development through the system, but more affinity networks were emerging, forming as a collective, empowering one another's work, supporting diverse forms of leadership and shifting the landscape of inclusive leadership. The beginning of affinity networks, in my leadership journey, was the difference I needed.

In the words of Brené Brown, “When we have the courage to walk into our story and own it, we get to write the ending.” ▲

Find out more about the [OPC Affinity Groups](#).

Shahana Arain is a principal with the Durham District School Board, co-chair of the Muslim Educators' Network of Durham and a Provincial Facilitator of Courageous Leadership for Senior Leaders.

✉ Shahana.Arain@ddsb.ca



LAURENTIEN

Established in 1971, Laurentien is a division of Marquis Book Printing, the largest book manufacturer and distributor in Canada. With our best-in-class printing plant and distribution centre in the Greater Toronto Area, we are well positioned to serve your yearbook and student agenda needs. We proudly serve 1 500 schools across the country.



**Manon Marquis,
Ottawa**

1-888-875-3290 | 4407
819-962-7840
mmarquis@laurentien.ca



**James Aymar,
Toronto**

1-888-875-3290 | 4233
437-421-0641
jaymar@laurentien.ca

CALL US NOW
FOR YOUR

2022-2023 YEARBOOK



Responsible
environmental
practices

YOUR OBVIOUS AND SUSTAINABLE CHOICE FOR **YEARBOOKS** AND STUDENT **AGENDAS**

LAURENTIEN.CA

100%

**MADE IN
CANADA**



UNLOCK THE POWER OF **RTI AT WORK™**

Participate in expert-led, personalized Response to Intervention at Work™ training at your school. With RTI, you'll discover proven strategies to improve interventions at all tiers of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports pyramid and develop a targeted plan to keep the focus on what's really important—high levels of learning for all students.



I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE
SolutionTree.com/CA/Training

