



*Canada's*

**Outstanding Principals™**



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**IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

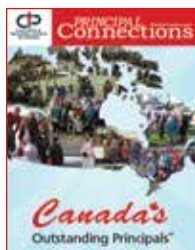
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**On the cover**  
**Canada's Outstanding Principals™**  
Collage by Ania Czapajlo



By **James T. Mulligan, CSC**

# A PERSPECTIVE

## ON CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

*February 2010*

Whether we examine our vision documents on the role of the Catholic school principal or reflect on our experience, both underscore the critical importance of *faith leadership* if our schools are to remain Catholic. I gladly share the following reflection with Ontario's Catholic school principals and vice-principals.

Mostly, I look to the future, and try to identify the questions and challenges that must be faced by the community of Catholic school leaders. For a moment, though, I want to look backward: the Catholic education project in Ontario must be celebrated.

Recent Ministry standardized test scores suggest that Ontario's Catholic schools offer a very solid education for our students. I believe, too, that our schools are places of daily miracles and touches of grace. For the most part, I feel that it is the commitment and dedication of the Catholic school principal that is the source and inspiration for much of what we celebrate. As administrators, academic leaders and faith animators you deserve the gospel praise: *Well done, good and faithful servants!* Please regard the following reflection both as a symbolic thank you for your dedication and as a help and guideline for your ministry now and into the future.

I structure this essay on leadership in Catholic education in three parts. A first reflection will touch on *the context* in which we find ourselves in 2010; a second reflection proposes *three leadership strategies* that are helpful, indeed necessary, in our contemporary working context; and a third reflection suggests *two essential, personal habits of the soul* needed to minister in 2010 as a Catholic school leader. I focus on what I consider the larger Catholic school leadership questions and issues. I believe they are critically important questions, as opposed to the *urgent* questions that administrators must deal with day in and day out. A great weakness in the seemingly inevitable bureaucracy of Catholic education, endemic to every Catholic school board, is that the urgent takes time and focus away from what is ultimately more important; conserving the enduring gift of Catholic education for future generations. The challenge for the Catholic school leader is to find the way to assure reflection and action on the large important questions, all the while dealing with the urgent administrivia of the day.



# REDUCING THE RISK OF HARM

## SOBERING STATISTICS

A recent report released by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health indicated that 23% of students reported that they had been offered, sold or were given a drug at school. This percentage represents 219,000 Ontario students.

The 2009 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey, which was released on November 18, 2009, indicated that 16% of all students reported that they were intoxicated at school at least once in the 12 months before the survey. The survey indicated that males (17%) are more likely than females (14%) to report getting drunk or high at school.

The survey focuses on binge drinking as being a particularly serious problem for Canadian youth. It found that 25% of students reported binge drinking at least once during the four weeks before the survey. This percentage represents about 250,700 students in grades 7 through 12. About 9% of all students reported

binge drinking two or three times during the past month. It also should be noted that binge drinking increases significantly with grade. Only 3% of students in Grade 7 were involved in binge drinking, while it climbed to a high of 49% among Grade 12 students.

The survey also indicated that one-in-five students (21%) drink hazardously, in that their drinking puts them at risk for current or future physical and social problems.

Another area of public health concern involves alcohol, drugs and vehicles. The survey indicated that there are about one-in-eight (12%) licensed students who drink and drive. A higher percentage of licensed students reported driving after using cannabis. Especially worrisome is that one-quarter (23%) of all students report being a passenger with a driver who had been drinking and 13% rode with a driver who had been using drugs.

By **Dawn-Marie Wemigwans**, Aboriginal Lead and Vice-principal  
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# IN THE FACE OF CHANGE

☀️ *An Aboriginal Perspective* ☀️

*After years of struggle about the politics, practice of inclusion and multicultural education, it is time we understand that inclusive, diverse classrooms are here to stay. But inclusion is not about disability and it's not about schools. Inclusion is creating a society in which all children and their families feel welcomed and valued.<sup>1</sup>*