



# Equity is Excellence



**By Deirdre Kinsella Biss**

Editor, *Principal Connections*

With the release of the latest issue of ***Principal Connections***, Editor Deirdre Kinsella Biss provides a sneak preview of what you can expect in our magazine this month.

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Greater equity for our students means greater student success. Helping students reach their maximum potential requires being aware of the barriers that exist in our schools and taking action to remove them. Recognizing the importance of our students' identity, their needs, their community and their well-being is vital to supporting their growth. As Catholic leaders we are called to make our schools safe, equitable learning places. So, the type of relationships we form, the learning environment we create, the curriculum we teach, and the policies we implement all matter significantly.

In his opening message, Jean Vanier says the change starts with us. He invites us to love others audaciously, to alter our perspective, to question deeply and to take responsibility for other people. He challenges us to think critically about what "normal" means in this world. He appeals to us to build a world of justice and peace by activating these foundational building blocks.

Shakil Choudhury shares insights on systemic discrimination and the "land of micro-inequities" in his article *A Neuroscience Perspective on Systemic Discrimination*. He draws our attention to the small words, actions and beliefs that can validate one group, while minimizing and diminishing other groups. He provides us with four starting points that can influence our practice.

Avis Glaze shares her thoughts with us about the importance of equity in our schools. In her interview with *Principal Connections*, Avis discusses the equity focus in Ontario from a historical perspective and highlights future trends that could impact equity initiatives in our schools. She also speaks candidly about her concerns for our Indigenous students and shares some personal experiences with equity and inclusion.

The curriculum we teach matters. Equity includes students being able to see themselves in the curriculum they learn. Literacy and numeracy is not enough. In his article, *The Principalship Has Changed: 2020 Here We Come*, Michael Fullan discusses the need for all our students to develop certain foundational "Global Competencies." He suggests that our school communities must co-learn together to make a difference and change the world.

Equity involves more than what happens in the classroom. Christine Corso discusses some of the double disadvantaged gaps that exist for students, starting at the school entry point. In her article, *Issues of Equity in Ontario's Schools*, Christine looks at the impact that situations of poverty have on student learning.

Awareness of personal biases and blind spots is an essential part of the equity journey. Understanding the role that

“privilege” plays in society is necessary for personal growth and enables us to better identify and break down barriers. In the article, *Jesus Understood Privilege, Why Can’t We?* Michelle Coutinho and Michael Harrison use Gospel stories to highlight Jesus as the ultimate role model for dealing with situations of privilege.

Equity involves everyone. It requires an inclusive and holistic way of thinking. It requires a deep understanding of the point of view of others. It involves a willingness to problem solve and work together. We must reflect on the work we do and address whose voices are present and whose voices are missing. Equity touches the hearts and minds of those we encounter. Building equity in our Catholic schools requires us to consciously level the playing field and provide opportunity, support and access to learning for all.



The above article was featured in the **Equity** issue of CPCO’s *Principal Connections* magazine.

If you would like to read the whole issue, you can purchase it [here](#).

CPCO Practising Associates can read the issue for free by logging in [here](#).