



Moving Forward



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.

Leadership is not just the sole responsibility of the school principal and vice-principal. Leadership is a shared responsibility and the professional work of everyone in a Catholic school. In order to see the intended changes we require in classrooms, teachers, students, parents and the community at large must take responsibility to lead and share their area of expertise.

Shared leadership is all about inclusion, voice and engagement. We know that in the long-term, top down leadership does not work. Creating ways to encourage partnerships and share leadership opportunities within a school is the next practical step in Ontario's collaborative professionalism story. If we want schools to continue to improve their practice we have to work together with all stakeholders, to develop common understandings and consciously build on the communal nature of our Catholicity.

Dr. Jill Gowdie sets the stage for this edition of *Principal Connections* with her article, *Hold It Like a Mirror*. She connects sharing leadership with knowing our own story deeply, creating a disposition for real conversation and trusting in others. She sees developing a profound understanding of the relationship between thinking and belonging, and what that means to the individual and the community, as key.

The roots of shared leadership are found in the word "trust." Michael Saver, author of the article *Searching for Trust: The Gospel According to ... Google?* identifies the importance of strong relational trust in the adult community of a school. He explores the connection between staff psychological safety and learning, and provides us with food for thought about ways to recognize the presence of relational trust in our schools.

Steven Katz, Lisa Ain Dack and John Malloy explain the challenges involved with creating a common understanding of shared leadership. They examine what shared leadership is and what it is not. Their article highlights the importance of both interdependence and individual accountability and the adaptive need for intelligent and responsive leadership actions.

Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley discuss their thoughts on the complexities of change in education today. They identify shared responsibility in schools as a way to move forward. Their article, *Leading from the Middle*, places student learning and well-being at the centre of the leaders' practice. They describe leading from the middle as a way of bringing school and system leaders closer to the heart and soul of their practice.

Steve Munby reflects on the value of the “self-aware, imperfect leader” in his article. This is the leader who is open to sharing. This type of leader humbly realizes that they do not have all the answers and willingly invites the expertise and help of others. If we want sustainable schools that are led well, we need to place the focus on doing what’s right for students and genuinely reach out to others for help, instead of striving for perfection.

As a school community we very much belong to each other, and when we share in leadership, develop partnerships and collaborate professionally, we are better at everything we do. Shared leadership is a mindset, a shift in practice that involves everyone, everywhere, all the time. To quote Parker Palmer, “... in a genuine community, everyone must lead, everyone must follow, it is always both/and.”

Wishing you and your family a very blessed Christmas.



The above article was featured in the **Shared Leadership** 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](#).