Effective Catholic School Principals and What They Do

A Comprehensive Program of Professional Growth for School Principals

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Catholic school principals hold a position of trust and service, and they are called on to minister to a faith centered community by nurturing the intellectual, spiritual, and moral growth of students and staff. Current North American research confirms that the academic and spiritual success of Catholic schools is greatly influenced by the administrative skill, educational expertise, and moral integrity of the principal. This professional growth instrument represents several years of research and professional interaction with highly successful principals. It has been designed to assist Catholic school principals in achieving maximum effectiveness in their own schools.

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**Rationale**

This instrument is intended to be a vehicle of professional growth for Catholic school principals at both the elementary and the secondary school levels. Its primary purpose is not to evaluate or appraise the quality of principal performance, but rather to assist principals in identifying undeveloped areas of educational responsibility, spiritual leadership, and legal obligation. These areas can then be addressed and used to develop a game plan for self improvement and professional growth. An effective plan for professional growth must be based on a comparison between the expectations of a Catholic school principal and the actual areas of responsibility that are being fully and competently addressed. Professional growth is the process by which undeveloped or neglected areas are addressed, developed, and improved.

But what are the expectations of a Catholic school principal? And what qualities characterize Catholic school leadership? The educational and legal duties of all school principals are enshrined in law through provincial legislation and curriculum requirements, and academic standards are likewise clearly defined in government guidelines. Leadership in a Catholic school community, however, goes far beyond this. The Catholic school principal is called to be a spiritual leader in a faith-centered community. This is a role of sacred trust and service in which the principal participates in building the Catholic community by nurturing the faith and the spiritual growth of students and staff. Spiritual leadership is not to be seen as separate and distinct from professional and educational leadership. The leadership of a Catholic school principal is fundamentally service oriented and seeks to develop a school culture of intellectual, spiritual, and personal development. This professional growth instrument classifies the Catholic school principal’s duties and responsibilities in five broad areas:

1. **Supervision of Staff**
2. **Supervision of Students**
3. **Supervision of Curriculum**
4. **School Organization**
5. **Leadership Within the School Community**

Each of the five areas of responsibility is intended to be a fundamental component of the principal’s professional growth plan and all five areas should be addressed each year. The instrument should be used as a means of identifying specific growth areas within the basic components. Typically, 50% to 75% of total expectations are being addressed in varying degrees of proficiency while about 25% will require specific attention in order to bring them on board. The five sub-indicators and twenty criteria under each component provide the detail required to develop specific growth plans. The scoring procedure outlined on page 5 should be used to develop the Task-Orientation Scale, a Task-Orientation Rating and an Objectives Action Plan.