

College Helps Prepare Educators for Classrooms of Tomorrow

The principal's role is one of the most influential roles in the educational system. That is why the Ontario College of Teachers is ensuring that Ontario's school leaders are prepared for the challenge of making decisions that reflect the best interests of students and the school community.

We have revised the Principal's Qualification Program (PQP) guideline to better reflect the changing educational leadership role required of the principal in Ontario. The new program guideline articulates a clear image of the principal and reflects Ontario's rich cultural diversity. First Nations, Inuit and Métis perspectives are also incorporated in the new guideline.

Our College staff worked with a provincial writing team of education partners to develop the PQP guideline using current research and consultation feedback from College members, stakeholders and the public. We appreciate that the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario, an accredited provider of the PQP, provided feedback for the new guideline and also had a representative on the writing team, Carla Dziob-Smith, from Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB.

The 2009 guideline sets out the new expectations that will prepare classroom teachers to become principals and vice-principals. The revised guideline reflects a substantial change to the program's content and the timeline to complete the practicum. The leadership practicum component has also been enriched to more effectively support principal formation. We hope the new guideline will support our common commitment to providing quality programs for future principals.

I am a proponent of lifelong learning, whether it is earning a principal's qualification, sharpening a classroom skill or learning alongside your colleagues. I firmly believe that engagement in ongoing professional learning contributes to your capacity to provide quality learning experiences for students entrusted to your care. And learning does not stop just because you are a leader.

In fact, a key indicator that school leaders and teachers are committed to lifelong learning and building for the future is that the College awarded more than 38,000 additional qualifications in 2008 alone. It shows teaching professionals are keen to improve their practice, teach new subjects or take on new responsibilities.

The College's unique system of ongoing professional learning provides more than 340 different courses and programs offered

to members by faculties of education, school boards, teacher unions, principals' organizations and subject associations. Educators across the province are working together on a major review of these courses. Over the last two years, the College has developed or revised 89 courses on a wide range of subjects like special education, computer technology and teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. The College is creating a whole series of new courses on technological education with up to 50 new courses.

And just as the program for prospective principals was revised from beginning to end, the program for future supervisory officers is undergoing a major review. We launched an extensive consultation to review the Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program in the fall. A diverse group of more than 80 educational leaders from around the province gathered at the College in late September for an innovative consultation that centred on the theme of enhancing supervisory officer formation for successful leadership in a changing landscape.

The activity behind the scenes is non-stop as well. The Ontario teaching profession is fine-tuning the details of a groundbreaking update of teacher certification in the province with the Ontario government. The proposed wide-ranging changes to teacher qualifications will help prepare educators for the classrooms of tomorrow.

The College's 2006 study, *Preparing Teachers for Tomorrow*, identified many changes we needed to make to the way we prepare teachers for the classroom and for professional certification.

Our College Council will be considering a new *Teachers' Qualifications Regulation* that will streamline certification and remove barriers to certification for teachers from elsewhere in Canada and around the world. This regulation has not seen major change since 1978, long before our College was created.

Parents and students across Ontario should be pleased to know that the province's educators are committed to enhancing their professional knowledge as the educational environment evolves. They are ensuring that our system of ongoing professional learning is up to date and taking tens of thousands of courses every year.

Visit the Ontario College of Teachers' web site at www.oct.ca for further information.

