



Service and Advocacy in a Culture of Change

I am amazed at how quickly my term as president has come to an end. This year has been one of the most rewarding professional development opportunities of my career. The presidency has given me the opportunity to meet principals and vice-principals from across the province during my association visits and at various events. I have had the privilege of witnessing the passion and dedication of our principals and vice-principals as they walk the road in Catholic education.

This has been an exciting and challenging year for the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario. Dealing with the challenges of change has taken us in a new direction. CPCO is once again a de-designated organization, which allows us to hire retired educators to do the work of the association. We began this year with searches for an executive director, a director of professional learning and a protective services coordinator. These changes have allowed CPCO to continue to focus on our mandate of service and advocacy to members by building the capacity of the organization with regards to infrastructure and governance while advancing the cause of Catholic education.

In an effort to understand and deal with the ongoing changes in educational practices, the role of the principal continues to be ever challenging. CPCO provides support and resources to principals and vice-principals as they build leadership capacity through the lens of our Catholic faith. Through personal experiences shared during my local association visits, members have expressed their appreciation for the work of CPCO. They have indicated their support for the changes we advocated, which support our core beliefs, values and the distinct nature of our faith community.

Moving to a self-funded legal program has been debated by CPCO since 2005. June 1, 2011 marked the historic date that legal services were brought in-house, in order to provide direct services to members. CPCO's goal is to make sure that our members receive high quality service through this self-funded model by building capacity in our organization.

Declining enrolment and budget short-falls have resulted in some school boards altering the work assignments of principals and vice-principals. The more prevalent solution is to have teaching principals and vice-principals in schools. CPCO will continue to advocate for administrators' working conditions and challenges to leadership succession that directly impact on our students and safe schools.

PPM 152 *Terms and Conditions of Employment of Principals and Vice-Principals* was a major focus this year. This PPM caps a long history of advocacy with which CPCO has been involved dating back to 1998 and Bill 160 when Catholic school principals and vice-principals were removed from the Ontario English

Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA). Since then, and especially since the publication of the government's discussion paper *New Supports for Principals and Vice-Principals in Ontario Publicly Funded Schools* in 2005, this advocacy has been a priority agenda item for all CPCO presidents.

Having a united voice as we continue to embrace the challenges in public education is essential. This has been another successful year in the relationships that we have continued to nurture with our Catholic partners at the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE), the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association (OCSOA), the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA), our colleagues at the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC), l'Association des directions et des directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO) and the many education partners with whom we work on a regular basis.

This year has been one of significant challenges and changes. I am confident that we will continue to achieve success under the strong leadership of President Jim Minello, Executive Director Patricia Manson and the 2011-12 executive council. The voice and wisdom of our members will guide CPCO in this culture of change as we continue to redefine ourselves as an effective and dynamic organization.

On a personal note I wish to thank the members of CPCO for making me feel welcome in their communities. It has been a great privilege to work with so many dedicated Catholic principals and vice-principals as president of the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario. Your kind words and emails of support throughout the year were appreciated.

To our retiring colleagues we thank you for your dedication and valuable service to the students and the Catholic community you help to build. To the CPCO provincial staff, I thank you for supporting me as we worked together to promote the purpose and vision of CPCO for the benefit of our association. As I complete my term as president, I look forward to being re-united with my colleagues in Thunder Bay and to serve our students, the leaders of tomorrow.

On behalf of the CPCO executive council, I wish you a well-deserved and relaxing summer holiday. May each of you enjoy the blessings of time with your family and friends, and the time to re-energize, so that you are ready to return to your schools in September with renewed passion.

I will be a witness to you in the world, O Lord.

Psalm 17:50