
THE CREATION OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AT SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

KEVIN M. HANBURY

ZENI V. FOX

CHARLES P. MITCHEL

Seton Hall University

This article summarizes the development and implementation of a Catholic school leadership program at a diocesan university. Supported by university faculty as well as seminary faculty, this program offers a unique response to the training of future school leaders. The course work blends leadership theory, theology, and educational administration and is delivered via a cohort model.

The mission statement of Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, states:

Seton Hall University is a major Catholic university. In a diverse and collaborative environment it focuses on academics and ethical development. Seton Hall students are prepared to be leaders in their professional and community lives in a global society and are challenged by outstanding faculty, an evolving technologically advanced setting, and values-centered curricula.

Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley founded Seton Hall University, the oldest diocesan university in the United States, in 1856. He named the college after his aunt, Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton, a wife, mother, educator, religious community founder, and the first American-born saint. As part of the Newark Archdiocese, Seton Hall has continually addressed its ministry to foster education. The undergraduate and graduate population is approximate-

ly 10,000 students. Seton Hall is strongly committed to sharing its Catholic identity and mission with the people of New Jersey and others from various states and countries.

A few years ago, discussions began with the superintendents of Catholic schools of the Ecclesiastical Province of New Jersey concerning the future of Catholic elementary and high school education. (The Province of New Jersey consists of five dioceses: the Archdiocese of Newark and the Dioceses of Camden, Metuchen, Paterson, and Trenton.) Two years ago, intense discussions resumed in response to the continuing declining numbers of priests, brothers, and sisters and the increase of lay persons employed in the ministry of teaching. Superintendents had growing concerns about the ongoing professional quality of Catholic school faculties and principals. The laity who are teaching in New Jersey's Catholic schools bring valuable professional competence and experience. The discussions therefore went forward in an attempt to address how to prepare Catholic-school teachers to be future leaders. If lay people are to serve as leaders of a community of teachers and are responsible for handing on the faith to young children and maturing adults, they must be conversant with the specialized aspects of Catholic education.

Seton Hall University's College of Education and Human Services and the Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology rose to the challenge. The two schools formed a partnership and developed a Catholic School Leadership Program that culminates in the Master of Arts degree as well as New Jersey principal certification. One of the purposes of this program is, in consultation with the superintendents, to identify and prepare competent faith-filled men and women to assume administrative roles in Catholic schools.

A definition of Catholic identity in the Catholic school community is one of the problems facing us today. Shimabukuro, in *A Call to Reflection: A Teacher's Guide to Catholic Identity for the 21st Century* (1998), stated that Catholic identity among Catholic-school teachers is a critical issue affecting the future of Catholic education globally. With the decreasing number of vocations to religious life, Catholic schools must focus on training future educational leaders. Throughout the dioceses of New Jersey, many schools have merged due to changes in demographics and the increased cost of tuition. In many urban schools, the Catholic mission has therefore been forced to redefine itself. The Catholic mission of our schools must be strong in preserving Catholicity but sensitive to diverse cultural and religious communities. Many schools in today's cities are heavily populated with wonderful young students from highly diverse ethnic backgrounds. This awakens the true definition of what it means to be Catholic. In this sense "catholic" means to be open, welcoming, and respectful of all constituencies. The Catholic dimension is one of diversity and ecumenism.

The gifted, dedicated, and talented teachers employed in these schools

are closely following Pope John Paul II's *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (1994) in preparing for the next millennium. In this treatise, John Paul II prays for a better appreciation and understanding of the signs of hope present in the last part of this century. Education must also signal hope for society. Catholic education must continue to listen to the voice of the Spirit by giving attention to and accepting new technology in the classroom and the world, having greater awareness of curriculum development and sensitivity to students' environment, and desiring mutual respect and reconciliation for all peoples. Catholic education must prepare for the promotion of laity and a development of their gifts, talents, and charisms.

Catholic education could benefit from "servant leaders." This is an appropriate term used by Greenleaf in *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (1991). The Catholic school system throughout New Jersey is ready and willing to offer preparation for those identified as future leaders. Seton Hall believes that there are exceptionally gifted and talented Catholic-school educators whose vocation is to minister to both disadvantaged and advantaged students. These are the educators who, while on their own personal faith journey, wish to help young people grow into the best they can become physically, mentally, and spiritually. Our Catholic schools need servant leaders to awaken in today's youth a respect for themselves, an appreciation of diversity, and an understanding of ethical and values-centered lives. Strong servant leaders can assist today's youth in learning to become the volunteers, the caregivers, and the leaders of the Church.

PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM

This Catholic School Leadership Program has three main purposes:

- to equip participants for school leadership in elementary or secondary Catholic schools;
- to form a spiritual development program aimed at focusing on Catholic-school principals as leaders of community prayer and worship with the school constituencies of students, faculty, and families; and
- to provide a holistic curriculum that prepares participants with knowledge that draws upon both the secular field of educational leadership and the Catholic educational and spiritual tradition.

In *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent* (1998), Groome reminds us that every teacher and parent, regardless of philosophy, has a "functioning anthropology," whether we admit to it or not. This leadership program attempts to assist participants in seeing humanity as something to be valued and respected and in becoming gifted leaders intol-

erant of the social injustices and inequities of life. The Catholic-school leader of the future needs to be supported by the Church in dialogue with its hierarchy. Tomorrow's Catholic-school principals need to lead communities into becoming part of God's kingdom on earth.

The College of Education and Human Services, in collaboration with the Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology, offers this cohort master's degree through its Department of Educational Administration and Supervision. Seton Hall's College of Education and Human Services and the School of Theology are the contemporary embodiments of almost 150 years of educating the educators and ministers of New Jersey and beyond. Our Catholic School Leadership Master of Arts Program is the manifestation of the University's commitment to meeting the needs of Catholic education for the new millennium.

A CONTEXT: CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRIES

The Catholic Church in the United States has a rich institutional legacy from those who have come before us in the journey of faith. Communities of religious women and men as well as dioceses have founded innumerable schools, colleges, universities, social service agencies, and health care agencies. These institutions have been supported by the monetary and professional contributions of countless numbers of the lay faithful.

The leadership of these institutions was usually vested in members of the clergy or religious orders. In recent years, however, the nature of these institutions has changed significantly. Increasingly, they serve and employ people of various faiths to further their mission, are accountable to accrediting agencies and other entities not part of Church structure, and receive funding from many sources. And leadership for these institutions is being given to lay Catholics. In this context, a question has arisen: How will we maintain the Catholic identity of these institutions in the face of the changes we are experiencing?

In 1990, Fordham University undertook an early broad-based engagement of this question; their effort included a Delphi study, a symposium, and a publication presenting their work (*The Future of Catholic Institutional Ministries*). At the symposium, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin said that he envisioned five or so major Catholic universities establishing "academic programs to help new lay leaders of Catholic schools, hospitals, and social service agencies to understand in greater depth the basic components of Catholic culture, identity, and mission."

More recently, a committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has concluded its work. The project of the committee was "leadership for lay ecclesial ministry." Central to the work was an effort to describe

the new lay ecclesial ministers (the description calls for a person with the “responsibility and the necessary authority for institutional leadership in a particular area of ministry”) and a focus on ensuring the quality of the preparation of these ministers. In reviewing the work of the committee, the Administrative Board of the Bishops’ Conference cited the urgent need for spiritual formation for these ministers.

EDUCATION AND FORMATION OF LAY LEADERS

These concerns of the larger Church influenced the design of the Masters in Catholic School Leadership at Seton Hall University. The leaders from the Catholic schools offices of the five dioceses of New Jersey greatly contributed to the shaping of our response to the educational and formational needs of those preparing to become Catholic-school principals. These needs are addressed in several ways: through various liturgical experiences, through three courses planned specifically for this program, and through the actual experience of the cohort community.

The primary components of the program are offered on weekends and during two weeks in the summer. Each weekend begins with Friday dinner, followed by a prayer service before the evening class. A service is prepared specifically for each weekend; and the lay liturgist presides in the seminary chapel, thus modeling a role which lay leaders may assume in their schools. Saturday and Sunday mornings include brief prayer services prepared by the liturgist and led by members of the group. One service is held in the classroom and one in the chapel, again providing models. On Saturday evening after class, a Eucharistic liturgy is celebrated as part of the total experience of the course because the goals are educational and formational.

The first course in the program, which is offered through the seminary, is “Catholic Education—Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.” One purpose of the course is to situate the present work of our Catholic schools in its broader context, the ministry of teaching in the Christian tradition. The intent is both to educate by telling the story and to empower ministers to continue it. A second focus is on the history of Catholic education in the United States as well as an exploration of the Catholic schools of today. The holistic nature of Catholic education is presented, explaining the place of prayer, liturgy, justice, service, community, and doctrine in the life of the school. Emphasis is placed on the importance of fostering faith development. These elements are also part of the total Catholic School Leadership Program, reinforcing their importance and fostering ongoing faith formation in the group.

The second seminary-sponsored course, offered the first summer, is “The Principal as Spiritual Leader.” A primary emphasis in this course is on developing a spirituality that supports leadership behaviors. Course assignments

include reflective exercises designed to assist participants in articulating their personal journeys as teachers and ministers. Class time is used to allow them to share these reflections. Another emphasis is on the school as a community of faith and an entity in the ecclesial system, part of the mission of the Church. Participants explore their responsibility for the faith formation of faculty, students, and parents; and they develop a plan and rationale for a yearlong program. The course also invites participants to explore issues of power, authority, and leadership in relation to both their own situation and to the rich heritage of the Church's tradition—the model Jesus offers, the empowerment by the Spirit, and the challenge from our social justice teachings. Throughout the course, opportunities are structured to invite integration of abstract principles with the personal experience of leadership in the school. The intention is to empower spiritual leaders.

The third course offered through the seminary is “Catholic Identity, Ethos, and Culture.” In order to become more effective bearers of Catholic identity, participants explore some dimensions of Catholic identity, history, and culture. Because as principals they will serve in an official role in the Church, their studies include an examination of the juridical system, as well as the teachings of the Church regarding personal morality and social justice. The goal of the course is to deepen the experience of Catholicity in the participants, who have been called to hand on the Catholic tradition through the total life of the schools that they will lead.

Finally, the cohort itself is an important dimension of the program, addressing educational and formational goals through the community that is formed. Students help each other learn through giving assistance and sharing their professional experiences. Particularly for those who have only been in schools with weak leadership and a limited tradition of faculty formation, this experience can be instructive. The opportunity to reflect together on vocation, on the work of the Spirit in their lives, and on the challenge of the Gospel, strengthens their formation in faith and provides a model to use in schools. One student, after listening to others share some assignments which articulated their spiritual journeys, summarized this well:

As each story was shared it became evident that God has been a gracious and generous lover of each one of us.... Participants by their own on-going commitment to Catholic education had recognized and owned a special charisma that called them forth.... Many of the cohort participants were experience-rich in all three of these spiritual areas [teach, preach, sanctify] but often were language-poor in expressing them as such. (Anne Bennis-Hartmann).

In 1972 the United States Bishops published *To Teach as Jesus Did*, in which they enunciated with new power the three central aspects of teaching

as Jesus did, and therefore of Catholic education: message, community, and service. Of community they said:

Community is at the heart of Christian education not simply as a concept to be taught but as a reality to be lived. Through education, men must be moved to build community in all areas of life; they can do this best if they have learned the meaning of community by experiencing it. Formed by this experience, they are better able to build community in their families, their places of work, their neighborhoods, their nation, their world. (par. 23)

The cohort model allows participants to experience community through shared meals, shared course work, shared study, shared experiences and, most importantly, shared faith and prayer.

Table 1
Master of Arts Degree in Catholic School Leadership

Semester	Course Titles	Offered
I	Catholic Education—Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow	Weekend
	Microcomputers for Administrators	
	Supervision of Instruction and Evaluation	
II	Organization and Administration of Education	Weekend
	Directed Research in Administration	
III	Principal as Spiritual Leader	Summer
IV	Curriculum Development and Evaluation	Weekend
	Leadership and Management Assessment	
V	School Law	Weekend
	Finance in Administration	
VI	Catholic Identity, Ethos, and Culture	Summer
	Culminating Research Seminar or Administrative Internship	

Note: All courses are 3 credits and students progress through the program as a cohort.

COURSES

SEMESTER I

Catholic Education—Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

An overview of the history of the ministry of teaching in the Christian tradition and of Catholic schools in the United States. An examination of the multiple tasks of the school in fostering faith development and an exploration of norms for the school of the future.

Microcomputers for Administrators

Introduction to the use of microcomputers in Catholic-school administration. Topics include computer literacy, computers in the curriculum, managing

instruction, budgeting, scheduling, database management systems, and word processing. Course is designed to enhance technological and networking skills.

Supervision of Instruction and Evaluation

Theories, principles, and practices that determine effectiveness, efficiency, and humane supervision at all levels of education. Emphasis on clinical supervision, general supervision, new research in the field, and better techniques for observation, evaluation, and inservice programs to provide Catholic-school educators with state-of-the art supervisory tools. Role-play, case study, and lecture with large and small group interaction are employed to promote improved supervision.

SEMESTER II

Organization and Administration of Education

Comprehensive principles, historical background, and future perspectives for effective Catholic-school administrators. Innovative curricula; individualization and new organizational patterns; general and clinical supervisory techniques and practices; human, technological, and conceptual skills for effective school administrators; leadership patterns and pitfalls; generalist's view of school finances, school law, school business administration; human and public relations.

Directed Research in Administration

Presents research methodology and procedures in educational administration and supervision. Students develop a research project with the guidance of the professor. Students are offered an opportunity to gain an understanding of the building blocks of good research design. Introductions to the tools of social science and educational research as well as research sources on the Internet are provided.

SEMESTER III

Principal as Spiritual Leader

An exploration of the role of the principal with a particular focus on the vocation of teaching and leadership. Topics include leadership, the school as an ecclesial system and a community of faith, and the work of faculty formation.

SEMESTER IV

Curriculum Development and Evaluation

Evolving concepts of the curriculum. Philosophy of Catholic-school curriculum development, principles and procedures, essential tools. Preparation,

approaches, direct and indirect influences. Survey of current practices and trends.

Leadership and Management Assessment

Diagnostic and prescriptive teaching models covering 12 critical areas of leadership and management.

SEMESTER V

School Law

Designed to help Catholic-school educators and administrators understand their legal status in the school. School laws of New Jersey. Emphasis on legislation and school decisions regarding contemporary problems, such as students' rights, teachers' rights, and academic freedom.

Finance in Administration

Exploration of Catholic-school finance in the United States: sources of revenue, expenditures, and indebtedness; fiscal problems; existing and proposed plans for school.

SEMESTER VI

Catholic Identity, Ethos, and Culture

An examination of key aspects of Catholic identity and belief and an overview of some components of Catholicism, including aspects of Catholic history, doctrine, culture, juridical system, moral teaching, and institutional life.

Culminating Research Seminar

Culminating research seminar designed to synthesize all coursework into a final major research project.

OR

Administrative Internship

Administrative internship in K-12 or higher education with permission of administrator and chairperson of the Department of Education Administration and Supervision.

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Kevin M. Hanbury is associate dean and director of the Catholic School Leadership Program, Zeni V. Fox is associate professor of pastoral theology, and Charles P. Mitchel is associate professor of education at Seton Hall University. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Fr. Kevin M. Hanbury, Associate Dean, School of Education, Seton Hall University, 4th Floor, Kozłowski Hall, 400 South Orange Ave., South Orange, NJ 07079.

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