

REFERENCE

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IT'S NOT ABOUT STATUES AND A CRUCIFIX

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The Catholic identity of a school is evidenced not only by crucifix and statue but by the faith-filled personnel who witness to Gospel values and call for their articulation in administrative and curricular areas, sports programs, and all school-related activities. The interview process for a Catholic school principal contains many professionally related questions. It should also include, however, questions such as: Would you feel at ease leading the faculty in prayer? What is your knowledge of and formal training in basic Catholic teachings? How would you integrate Catholic social principles into various curricular areas and into the general life of the school?

As a Catholic school superintendent, I review many applications of former public school administrators. If I employ them, it is imperative that they fulfill additional diocesan requirements established to ensure an adequate familiarity with Catholic educational philosophy by participating in development activities such as Catholic educational leadership programs, diocesan workshops, retreats, and days of reflection. These are critical components of an ongoing formation program for all school leaders, but especially for those whose background is the public school system. If we do not provide these opportunities on a timely and regular basis we will be simply private educational institutions without our Catholic identity. The Catholic culture will disintegrate because we cannot give to others what we ourselves do not have, that is, a life that witnesses to daily Gospel living.

OWNING THE MISSION IS PARAMOUNT

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The issue that seems most crucial revolves around fostering Catholic culture in every school community. There is a corollary to this that involves challenging those who minister in Catholic schools to develop their own faith lives and to foster faith communities that will proclaim and apply Gospel values effectively. In recent months, we at the Department of Catholic Schools

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