

REFERENCE

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IT'S NOT ABOUT STATUES AND A CRUCIFIX

SR. JANE HOSCH, OSF, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD-CAPE GIRARDEAU

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

SR. GLENN ANNE MCPHEE, O.P., SUPERINTENDENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

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

of the Archdiocese of San Francisco have grappled with a restatement of our Mission. It became clear that unless the Catholic culture of every school community is of highest priority, the future of Catholic education is in jeopardy. Consequently, those who are on the front line, our teachers and principals, must develop their faith lives through catechetical and theological updates and other spiritual development opportunities. The ongoing religious formation of Catholic school educators is crucial for the future of our schools. Shared ownership of the religious mission of the school is essential.

Other critical issues follow from this. Among these is the recognition that parents are the primary educators of our children. Catholic school teachers and administrators are challenged to work with parents in mutual trust, support, and dedication in order to realize common goals for students. We must welcome cultural diversity in our school communities. The world continues to shrink and the reality of a global village is here. There is no room for prejudice in our schools. Finally, we must grapple with financial issues. At the diocesan and local levels we are struggling to enable families to choose a Catholic school education regardless of racial, social, or economic background. The cultural diversity of the San Francisco Bay area, and the regular influx of immigrants into our community, make it increasingly difficult to maintain Catholic inner city and urban schools, a problem exacerbated by the frequent economic poverty of these newer groups.

The school communities with which I interact accept that these are the major challenges in our area. We are blessed to have the Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership of the University of San Francisco in our community to help us meet these challenges. Collaborative programs and diocesan-sponsored programs are needed to help develop and foster the kind of faith life that our leaders must have if Catholic schools are to succeed. Programs should be tailored to particular groups, such as those already working in Catholic schools, those from public institutions wishing to work in Catholic schools, those with little leadership experience, and even those with a great deal of experience. Much work needs to be done on the recruitment and training of the next generation of leaders.

WE CANNOT BE CONTENT WITH THE STATUS QUO

**BROTHER ROBERT R. BIMONTE, FSC, SUPERINTENDENT OF
EDUCATION, DIOCESE OF BUFFALO**

The formation and education of teachers and administrators in Catholic schools are crucial. It is essential that our teachers and administrators have the academic and professional preparation to be educational leaders. They must understand and be able to apply current educational research and

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