



---

3-1-1999

## We Cannot Be Content With the Status Quo

Robert R. Bimonte

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce>

---

### Recommended Citation

Bimonte, R. R. (1999). We Cannot Be Content With the Status Quo. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 2 (3).  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.0203102013>

This Focus Section Article is brought to you for free with open access by the School of Education at Digital Commons at Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for publication in *Journal of Catholic Education* by the journal's editorial board and has been published on the web by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons at Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information about Digital Commons, please contact [digitalcommons@lmu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@lmu.edu). To contact the editorial board of *Journal of Catholic Education*, please email [JCE@nd.edu](mailto:JCE@nd.edu).

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**

**T**he 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

technology. As administrators, they need to grasp and live principles of effective leadership. In the past, Catholic universities have been outstanding in providing this education and in many cases providing opportunities to build community among their students. However, the difficulty arises in sustaining that knowledge and experience in day-to-day activities of running a school and in dealing with the rapid rate of change facing schools. Given this rate of change and the proliferation of new technologies, we can never be content with the status quo.

Along with the need to be current in educational matters, we are faced with an equally important challenge to be up-to-date with religious and moral teaching. The Catholic "literacy" of our teachers and administrators is crucial. How well can they explain the Church's teachings on religious and moral dimensions of such questions as cloning, genetic engineering, and a host of other scientific advances, some of which we may have difficulty imagining? We must ensure that our students are able to assess the implications of their choices and those of the society in which they live.

This becomes more complicated when viewed from the vantage point of where and how our teachers are trained. A large percentage of our teachers are graduates of the state university system, and have had little or no opportunity for adult theological reflection. We address this by requiring a certification process that supplements their faith development and formation. Since this must be done at the local level, it is imperative that we have administrators who live the Gospel and who know how to help others grow in their own faith.

Finally, we need to think about the challenge of collaboration. The self-sufficient school or school system is no longer feasible in an increasingly complex world. We must work together with agencies and institutions such as Catholic health care and other social agencies ministering to the family. These agencies and services can help children and families with problems that inhibit their learning. Establishing family centers and sharing available resources will be a major function of future educational leaders.

## **LEADERSHIP PREPARATION IS ONGOING**

SR. CATHERINE KAMPHAUS, CSC, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS,  
DIOCESE OF SALT LAKE CITY

**S**ix major issues face my principals and staff. First is the diversity of language and culture in our schools. We are teaching in a more global environment. Second, students come to us with a variety of learning styles and ability levels, and programs are needed to meet them. Third, finances are a continual problem. How do we raise salaries and benefits, for example, and

Copyright of *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry & Practice* is the property of Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry & Practice and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.