Journal of Catholic Education

Volume 11 | Issue 3 Article 5

3-1-2008

# The Upper Room: A University-Archdiocesan Partnership to Develop Leaders for Catholic Schools

Timothy J. Cook

W. Patrick Durow



Recommended Citation

Cook, T. J., & Durow, W. P. (2008). The Upper Room: A University-Archdiocesan Partnership to Develop Leaders for Catholic Schools. *Journal of Catholic Education, 11* (3). http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.1103052013

## FOCUS SECTION

# THE UPPER ROOM: A UNIVERSITY-ARCHDIOCESAN PARTNERSHIP TO DEVELOP LEADERS FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

TIMOTHY J. COOK
W. PATRICK DUROW
*Creighton University*

*In* Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB; 2005) calls on Catholic colleges and universities to work with diocesan educational leaders to prepare leaders for Catholic schools. In response, the Creighton University Education Department and the Archdiocese of Omaha's Catholic Schools Office formed a task force that held a series of meetings in the "Upper Room" on Creighton's campus to create a framework for leadership in Catholic schools and develop a preparation program that fulfills the framework. This article describes the task force process, framework development, and the Catholic School Leadership graduate certificate that resulted. The article concludes with observations related to the Omaha experience and thoughts about what comes next.*

## INTRODUCTION

Effective leaders are essential for the future of Catholic schools. Leaders ensure that schools fulfill their educational and religious mission. Leadership is one of three themes that emerged from the Centennial Symposium on the Future of Catholic Education held in connection with the National Catholic Educational Association's (NCEA; 2004) 100th anniversary. Leadership concerns grow as more leaders lack the formal religious training and background considered necessary to lead Catholic schools. Schuttloffel (2003) reports that the majority of new administrators lack theological knowledge and spiritual leadership skills. Only one in five new Catholic school principals completes a preparation program at a Catholic university. Most receive their leadership preparation at public universities, and several novice Catholic school leaders are former public school administrators. According to Schuttloffel, "the majority of Catholic school principals today [have] had little theological education since sacramental prepara-

*Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, Vol. 11, No. 3, March 2008, 355-369

tion" (p. 23). Wallace (1998) notes that laypersons need a strong background in Catholic school history and theology to be effective faith leaders.

In a recent statement about Catholic schools, the U.S. bishops emphasize the critical importance of specialized leadership training for Catholic school leaders. In *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, the American bishops declare, "The preparation and ongoing formation of new administrators and teachers is vital if our schools are to remain truly Catholic in all aspects of school life" (USCCB, 2005, p. 9). The bishops urge Catholic higher education to play a larger role in this effort and to work together with diocesan leaders. "These programs will require even more active involvement and cooperation by our Catholic colleges and universities in collaboration with the diocesan educational leadership" (p. 10).

In response to the bishops' call, the Education Department at Creighton University, a Jesuit and Catholic university in Omaha founded in 1878, contacted the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Omaha about convening a representative task force to address Catholic school leadership preparation issues at the local level. The task force met four times during the academic year to accomplish two tasks: to create a leadership framework that delineates the set of attributes and capabilities that are specific and necessary for effective leadership in contemporary Catholic schools and to suggest possible coursework, workshops, and other forms of professional development that can be used or created to form future leaders in the Archdiocese of Omaha. By coincidence, the task force met in a place called the "Upper Room" in the Jesuit residence overlooking Creighton's campus. The setting seemed providential as it symbolized the inspired dialogue that occurred among this group of people from different backgrounds who came together to partner for a common mission reminiscent of the Pentecost event chronicled in the Acts of the Apostles.

This article describes the task force, the creation of the framework, and the preparation program that the task force designed to fulfill the framework. The article concludes with observations related to the Omaha experience and thoughts about what comes next.

# THEORETICAL REFLECTION

## THE MEANING OF A FRAMEWORK

A framework is defined as "a set of assumptions, values and practices that give support for a viewpoint" (*The Free Dictionary*, 2007). The accountability movement in PK-12 education has increased the scrutiny of public and private education performance, often creating conflicting demands on school

leaders with respect to the tasks to which each devotes significant time (Catano & Stronge, 2006). "Role conflict has the potential to affect a principal's effectiveness" (p. 224). Citing the adage, "what gets measured gets done" (p. 231), Catano and Stronge (2006) note the lack of specificity existent in types of leadership expectations. "Leadership as influence" can be confused with "leadership as management." To increase principals' effectiveness in leading schools to meet student performance standards, some districts and states have adopted standards for those principals. "National and state standards strive to standardize the work of principals. Locally school districts develop evaluation instruments in an effort to standardize the skills of principals" (p. 223).

The accountability movement in public and private education has spawned a vocabulary that is sometimes perplexing to practitioner and casual observer alike. The terms standards, benchmarks, outcome matrices, and frameworks have similar meanings. Most often, these terms have been applied to school curriculums and accountability measures of student learning. "Frameworks are blueprints for implementing the content standards adopted by the California State Board of Education" (California State Board of Education, 2007). "The framework presents a content and process for developing curriculum that enables schools to realize Michigan's vision for k-12 education" (Michigan Department of Education, 1996).

Closest in describing a framework for leadership is that developed by the Maryland Department of Education (2005):

> The Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework describes outcomes expected of Maryland principals as they provide instructional leadership for their schools. The framework is not intended to include all the various responsibilities of a quality principal. It also provides a foundation for the alignment of professional development opportunities offered at the state and local levels as well as course work offered at institutions of higher education. (p. 1)

## TASK DESCRIPTORS FOR PRINCIPALS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Early attempts to describe the ideal behavior of the Catholic school principal took many forms. Drahmann (1985) drew parallels between the lives of Christian heroes and saints with the ideal qualities of the Catholic school principal. Consistent with others noted later in this paper, Drahmann and Stenger (1989) described the roles of the Catholic school principal as religious leader, educational leader, and manager. Manno (1985) described broad categories of capabilities essential for the Catholic school principal: spiritual (belief and prayer), pastoral (creating an environment where others

can grow in faith), and professional (academic preparation and leadership skills). Manno also listed a number of personal qualities. Sweeney (1987) noted that a critical function of Catholic school principals was nurturing a school climate that developed students socially. Batsis (1994) responded to issues of the time by suggesting guidelines for crisis leadership in Catholic schools. Kealey (1999) used a diary approach to describe the typical management tasks of Catholic school assistant principals to find a common job description. References to religious instruction, prayer, or community service in this compendium were rare. The few noted identified opening school day prayer, discussion of Catholic identity, and duties of department and liturgy coordinator.

Ciriello (1996, 1998) described leadership as composed of the following components: symbolic and cultural, vision for Catholic education, enhancing staff morale, recognizing the leadership in others, using research, recognizing and effecting change, and attending to personal growth and development. Leadership in curriculum and instruction includes content and methods of religion instruction, development of the whole student, and cultural and religious differences. Spiritual leadership is faith development through trust, celebration, and service; building community; moral and ethical development; and history and philosophy. Leadership in management includes personnel, institutional growth, finance, and development.

Describing the leadership role of the principal differently, Herb (as cited in Caruso, 2003) noted that "Schools have existed with good managers for years. Today we need leaders with vision to help shape the new landscape of Catholic education" (p. 48).

## STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS

Standards for all principal preparation programs are prescribed specifically for institutions preparing school leaders by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). Those standards are frequently adopted by state departments of education for accreditation of both public and private university programs. The ISLLC standards specify that: candidates who complete accredited programs are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students (a) by facilitating a vision of learning; (b) by promoting a positive school culture; (c) by managing the organization; (d) by collaborating with families and community members; (e) by acting fairly and in an ethical manner; and (f) by responding to the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 1996).

The effective leadership behaviors of Catholic school principals reflect these standards. Twale and Ridenour (2003) note that the charisms present in

Catholic university principal preparation programs can easily be consistent with the ISLLC standards. In addition, Creighton University (CU) in Omaha has added a standard for Catholic school leadership: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students in Catholic schools by fostering a shared vision of the Catholic school community, promoting a positive school culture rooted in Gospel values, leading the faith development of members of the community, enabling school personnel to carry out the Catholic mission of the school, and managing the resources of the school creatively and responsibly.

In a seminal three-volume book, Ciriello (1998) provided an extensive framework for Catholic school leadership. It identified three domains: managerial, educational, and spiritual. Managerial leadership includes personnel, institutional growth, finance, and development. Educational leadership is content and methods of religious instruction, development of the whole student, and appreciation of cultural and religious differences. Spiritual leadership is faith development in celebration and service, community, moral and ethical development, and Church history and philosophy.

Several arch/dioceses in Australia including the Archdiocese of Sydney (2001), Diocese of Ballarat (2004), and Diocese of Wollongong (2004) have developed frameworks for leadership in Catholic schools. These samples illustrate how Catholic school leadership frameworks can be constructed at the diocesan level to meet the needs of the local context.

After reviewing scholarly literature and studying sample frameworks provided by scholars and Australian dioceses, local Catholic educational leaders decided that a joint university-diocesan task force needed to be convened to develop a leadership framework for the Archdiocese of Omaha that was concise, easily understood, manageable, and applicable to local needs and conditions.

## METHOD: THE TASK FORCE PROCESS

The chair and associate chair of the Creighton University Education Department met with the archdiocesan superintendent to determine the structure, goals, and funding for the task force. They considered it important to identify concrete goals, keep the task force small yet representative, compensate members for their time and work, limit the duration of the task force, and ensure meaningful and fruitful meetings. The chairs and superintendent proposed a 10-member committee comprised of three CU professors of educational leadership, two representatives from the Catholic Schools Office, one pastor-educator, and four principals representing rural, urban, and suburban elementary and high schools. The goals of the task force were to (a) delineate

the specialized knowledge base and skill set that is necessary for effective leadership in contemporary Catholic schools in our local context and (b) suggest possible coursework, workshops, and other forms of professional development needed to form future leaders in the Archdiocese of Omaha. The task force was to complete its work in one academic year during four 2-hour meetings. Some independent reading and online discussion were to take place between meetings. To support the work of the task force, a $5,500 budget was submitted to and funded by a local benefactor.

# RESULTS

## DEVELOPMENT OF A FRAMEWORK

Effective leadership for Catholic schools presupposes a particular knowledge base and skill set that can only be attained through specialized coursework and professional development. As the task force looked to the future within the Archdiocese of Omaha, it prioritized the specialized knowledge base and skill set necessary for effective leadership in contemporary Catholic schools. The leadership framework was to list the capabilities that local scholars and practitioners believed necessary for an educator to be effective as a leader in the Catholic school context. It also was to describe leadership dimensions related to advancing the Catholic character and culture of the school. For example, knowledge and understanding of Church documents related to Catholic education were considered an expected capability of leaders in Catholic schools. In addition to capabilities related to Catholic identity, other unique aspects of Catholic school leadership were to be addressed as well, such as the pastor-principal working relationship and financing Catholic education. The task force sought a document that was specialized, contemporary, local, and brief.

Task force members read two documents in advance of the first meeting that set the stage: *Renewing Our Commitment* (USCCB, 2005) and *Strategic Vision for the Future of Catholic Education in the United States* (NCEA, 2004). In addition, the task force leader asked members to send a list of 5 to 10 general or specific leadership capabilities (i.e., knowledge, skills, or dispositions) considered necessary and unique for the Catholic school setting. The leader provided the following four sample frameworks to help members brainstorm: *Developing Educational Leadership* (University of Dayton, 2002); *Expectations for the Catholic School Principal* (Ciriello, 1996); *School Administration Program Framework* (Creighton University, 2007); *Leadership Framework* (Diocese of Wollongong, 2004). This exercise helped members focus and it elicited areas of agreement prior to the first meeting.

At the first meeting, the leader distributed a synthesis of the responses grouped in the categories that emerged. The leader called the first major category "Qualities and Attributes" and the second major category "Leadership Domains and Capabilities." The latter contained these seven subcategories: "History and Philosophy of Catholic Education," "Catholic Teaching," "Strategic Leadership," "Curriculum and Assessment and Instruction," "Faith Leadership," "Advocacy/Statesmanship," and "Finance and Governance."

**Audiences/Uses**

Before creating the framework, the task force brainstormed the possible audiences and uses for the document. The many potential audiences for the framework include aspiring and current Catholic school leaders, new Catholic school leaders with a public school background, Catholic Schools Office personnel, Creighton University Education Department faculty, pastors, school board members, and selection committees. Possible uses for the framework include:

- Assessing oneself for leadership
- Identifying future leaders
- Constructing growth plans
- Creating professional development opportunities
- Preparing former public school leaders
- Hiring principals
- Composing interview questions
- Appraising current leaders
- Aligning university coursework to Catholic school needs
- Creating professional development opportunities

**Attributes**

Subscribing to the belief that less is more, the task force centered its first discussion on those attributes essential for leadership in Catholic schools. Acknowledging that several attributes identified on the initial list were not unique to Catholic school leaders, the task force selected qualities that are particularly important for the Catholic school setting. Figure 1 shows the final list of attributes. The task force chose words carefully to be specific and to accentuate the religious dimension. For instance, it altered "strong morals" to read "strong faith and morals," converted "creativity" to "entrepreneurial spirit," and changed "vision" to "vision for Catholic schools." It avoided language that was too esoteric. For example, it changed "incarnational perspective" to "awareness of ministry." Lastly, the task force agreed

that attributes should be interpreted as active traits, emphasizing behavior and placing the accent on exhibiting rather than possessing.

**Personal Attributes**

*An effective Catholic school leader exhibits:*

- Strong faith and morals
- Awareness of ministry
- Vision for Catholic schools
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Passionate commitment
- Ability to inspire
- Servant leadership
- Commitment to social justice
- Patience and flexibility
- Lifelong learning
- Empowerment/ delegation
- Valuing of persons and relationships

**Leadership Capabilities**

*An effective Catholic school leader demonstrates capability in each of the six specialized domains listed below.*

**Faith Leadership**
- Articulates and models active faith and morals.
- Leads the community in worship and prayer.
- Builds school faith community.
- Generates a positive Catholic culture and environment in the school.
- Facilitates the systematic mission formation of school personnel.

**Mission Leadership**

Catholic Church Teachings
- Knows the fundamentals of Catholicism.
- Conversant with Catholic teaching, especially in relation to current moral/ethical issues.

History and Philosophy of Catholic Education
- Knows the evolutionary story of Catholic schools locally, nationally, and worldwide.
- Understands the distinctive mission and philosophy of contemporary Catholic schools as promulgated by Church documents and scholars.
- Communicates the Catholic identity and mission of the school verbally and in writing at every opportunity.

**Strategic Leadership**
- Knows current trends and directions in Catholic school education.
- Inspires all toward a shared vision for the future.
- Initiates, monitors, and evaluates the strategic planning process to fulfill the school's mission, actualize its vision, and position the school for the future (e.g., marketing, student recruitment).
- Promotes innovation, change, and collaboration in achieving the Catholic educational mission.
- Creates a development plan that explores additional sources of revenue (e.g., alumni giving, grants).

**Educational Leadership**
- Inspires and leads the school community toward educational excellence.
- Fosters a professional learning community that values lifelong learning and involves families.
- Recruits, selects, supervises, and evaluates school personnel in light of mission.
- Ensures that Catholic teaching and religious values are infused throughout the educational program.
- Provides for a high quality religious education program staffed by qualified teachers.

**Community and Political Leadership**
- Positively influences relationships between the school and its communities.
- Uses public relations strategies to promote the school and its mission to all publics.
- Advocates the support of Catholic schools by the entire Catholic community.
- Collaborates and networks with others who share in the mission of Catholic education.
- Works with the local Catholic diocese, local public school district, other government agencies, and school parents to access available public funds.
- Mobilizes the school community to seek additional public funding.

**Organizational Leadership**
- Understands site-based management in relation to Catholic schools.
- Understands Catholic school governance structures, especially the role of the parish pastor, pastoral council, parish finance committee, school board, Catholic Schools Office, and state Department of Education.
- Promotes shared leadership in school administration and governance.
- Demonstrates effective stewardship of school resources.
- Understands school law, public policy, and school safety as they apply to Catholic schools.

*Figure 1.* Framework for Developing Catholic School Leaders

## Domains/Capabilities

Table 1 summarizes how the leadership domains evolved. The task force started out with seven domains with the hope of reducing the list to five, if possible, to make them more memorable and manageable. In the end, it

reduced them to six, combining history and philosophy with Catholic teaching under a new category called mission leadership. Except for the two purely religious domains—faith leadership and mission leadership—the other four domains reflected an earlier version of ISLLC standards.

Table 1

*Comparison of Original and Revised List of Leadership Domains*

| Leadership domains | |
|---|---|
| Original list | Revised list |
| 1. Faith leadership | 1. Faith leadership |
| 2. History and philosophy | 2. Mission leadership |
| 3. Catholic teaching | ▪ History and philosophy |
| 4. Strategic leadership | ▪ Catholic teaching |
| 5. Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment | 3. Strategic leadership |
| 6. Advocacy/Statesmanship | 4. Educational leadership |
| 7. Finance and governance | 5. Community and political leadership |
| | 6. Organizational leadership |

Figure 1 encapsulates the final version of the framework, showing the domains and enumerating the capabilities associated with each domain. The task force decided to keep faith leadership and mission leadership separate and place them first to accentuate the preeminence of the religious dimension in the framework. Faith leadership referred to the ministerial, pastoral, and public witness aspects of being a leader in a Catholic school. It is not enough to have a strong personal faith and be an active Catholic in a parish. Exhibiting faith leadership requires specific skills for public ministry, such as leading prayer. Enhancing the Catholic ethos and environment of a school demands leader attention and ability. Expertise related to hiring for mission and providing for the continual formation of personnel for the educational apostolate was seen as critical.

Closely related yet meriting distinction, mission leadership referred to understanding the ecclesial identity of schools and the role that schools play in the larger evangelizing mission of the Catholic Church. Mission leadership requires knowledge of Church teaching generally and the history and

philosophy of Catholic schooling specifically. This knowledge base serves as both anchor and compass in helping leaders address contemporary issues and chart a course that is authentically Catholic. For instance, understanding and taking to heart Catholic teaching about parents as the primary educators of children greatly influences the priority and shape given to the relationship between home and school. Catholic teaching inspires leaders and school communities to design creative approaches to the home and school relationship that fulfill our mission, distinguish us in the educational arena, and serve as an educational charism Catholic schools offer to society.

Strategic leadership was defined as bringing about a shared vision. The task force agreed that the leader must have the capacity to be steward of the vision and catalyst for strategic planning in partnership with others. Fueled by the concern for assessment and accountability, the task force added "evaluates" to "initiates" and "monitors" strategic planning. The task force changed "curriculum and assessment" to "educational leadership" to broaden the domain to include excellence of the entire educational program. The task force agreed that religious education must be a focal point of this domain. Catholic school curriculum is distinct from public schools. Though standards and curriculums are based on state standards, they extend beyond them by infusing the Catholic component. Assessments are not based on state standardized tests. Teachers write performance assessments that are interdisciplinary and incorporate Catholic values. The Catholic component is brought into all subject areas, and is not the responsibility of the theology teacher.

The task force considered combining the final two domains that addressed resources, governance, and public policy but decided not to fuse them because they were significant and distinct enough to stand separately. Advocacy/Statesmanship was renamed Political and Community Leadership because the task force believes the latter title uses language that is more accessible to educators. This leadership domain represents the task force's conviction that today's Catholic educational leader must have the capability to advocate for the interests of Catholic schools, students, and families in the political arena, with local public school districts, and within the Catholic community.

Lastly, Finances and Governance was renamed Organizational Leadership to broaden the domain's scope to include the unique characteristics of Catholic schools as organizations. Administering a Catholic school is different from running a public school. In business terms, the leader is more of a CEO than a store manager. Catholic school leadership requires expertise related to site-based management, Church governance structures, budgeting and finance, and public policy and law. In its discussions, the task force

emphasized the need to foster an appreciation for the stewardship model of school resources that includes time, treasure, and talent and involves the entire Catholic community. It stressed the need to promote shared leadership and explore innovative models of administrative leadership because leadership is becoming more complex and responsibilities are growing exponentially. The task force decided to specify school safety as a pressing organizational concern for Catholic school leaders today.

## CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE

Once the framework was finalized, the task force turned to the discussion of leadership development. The second goal of the task force was to pinpoint possible coursework, workshops, and other forms of professional development to form future leaders in the Archdiocese of Omaha.

The task force employed four guiding principles in its deliberations about possible leadership development schemes: quality, administrative ease, affordability, and accessibility. Quality signified leadership development that is stimulating and effective, seen as vital for the success of this initiative. Administrative ease meant working with existing structures and programming for the sake of simplicity, minimizing increased burden on the archdiocese or university. Affordability recognized the need to keep costs low. Accessibility suggested providing convenient scheduling and a user friendly delivery method, especially critical for educators in rural areas.

As a springboard for the discussion on quality, the task force read "We Are Called: The Principal as Faith Leader in the Catholic School" (Wallace, 2000). Wallace found that principals who rated their formal preparation to be Catholic school leaders as excellent completed special graduate courses designed for Catholic educators that included a heavy emphasis on Church documents and history. Schuttloffel's (2003) research affirms the belief that school leadership training located at Catholic universities is the most effective preparation. These research findings swayed the task force to devise a leadership development plan that is centered on university graduate coursework.

University representatives on the task force proposed a six-credit Catholic School Leadership certificate whose features reflected the guiding principles (see Figure 2). In the spirit of quality and administrative ease, the certificate would be issued by the university and it would be configured from existing graduate coursework that aligned closely with the framework, namely EDU 520, 603, 604, and 605 (Figure 2). To achieve affordability and accessibility, the university proposed that the coursework be offered at a 75% discount and that it be delivered using a web-based distance format.

Catholic educational leaders on the task force liked the university proposal. After reviewing the framework, the major revision to the certificate they recommended was the addition of a course dealing with basic Catholic teaching that impacts Catholic school life and mission. In response, university representatives created a course entitled "Fundamentals of Catholicism for Educators." This course provides an introduction to the teachings of the Catholic Church in these areas: creed, liturgy and sacraments, Christian morality, Christian prayer, Catholic social teaching, and Scripture. This course will apply Catholic Church teaching to issues that are pertinent to educators in K-12 Catholic schools today.

Finally, the task force discussed these questions: Should the certificate be voluntary or mandatory for aspiring leaders? For current leaders? Who should pay the 25% of tuition not covered by the university? There were differences of opinion surrounding the first two questions. Some members believed that requiring the certificate for aspirants when there is already a shortage is imprudent. Others held that preparation related to the distinctive mission of Catholic schools should not be optional. Task force members were less inclined to require the certificate of current principals because of the negative reaction diocesan mandates have received in the past. The task force agreed that requiring individuals to pay tuition would be a disincentive. The superintendent conducted an online survey of current principals to test the waters before making a decision. In the end, the superintendent decided to strongly encourage but not require aspirants and current leaders to complete the certificate.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| EDU 520 | Foundations of Catholic Education | (3 credits) |
| EDU 602 | Fundamentals of Catholicism for Educators | (3 credits) |
| EDU 603 | Leadership in Catholic Schools: The Educational Domain | (1 credit) |
| EDU 604 | Leadership in Catholic Schools: The Spiritual Domain | (1 credit) |
| EDU 605 | Leadership in Catholic Schools: The Managerial Domain | (1 credit) |

*Figure 2*. Catholic School Leadership Certificate Coursework at Creighton University

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The university–archdiocesan partnership proved successful. The joint task force achieved its two goals of crafting a leadership framework and design-

ing a professional development scheme that resulted in a set of graduate courses leading to a Catholic School Leadership certificate.

The authors discovered that aspects of the task force process contributed to its effectiveness. Having a leader who facilitated discussion yet provided direction was critical. Advance preparation through assigned readings and reflection questions provided focus and kept participants engaged between meetings. Drafting and revising documents between meetings, as well as soliciting feedback, was expeditious. Meetings that were structured and reserved for meaningful discussion, not tasks like wordsmithing draft documents, were considered the best use of time. Paying participants a stipend for their time and expertise conveyed appreciation and promoted professionalism.

The authors were surprised that current school leaders on the task force lobbied for the addition of a separate graduate course devoted to the fundamentals of Catholicism. It highlighted the idea that we need to adapt Catholic school leader preparation to changing times, the changing nature of the Church and its aspiring school leaders. We can no longer assume that new leaders have an adult understanding of the faith especially as it informs effective leadership in Catholic schools (Schuttloffel, 2003).

For this reason, the decision to make the Catholic School Leadership certificate optional was perplexing to the authors. We were conflicted because we understand the danger of setting up the certificate for failure if it is viewed as another burdensome mandate. Yet we were concerned about the message sent by making the certificate voluntary. Is the Catholic dimension of school leadership less important than the secular dimension? Is faith leadership optional? This decision seems to run contrary to the conviction about the necessity of lay formation for Catholic school educators expressed by the Congregation for Catholic Education (1982): "Formation is indispensable; without it, the school will wander further and further away from its objectives" (§79).

We learned from the survey of principals that many endorsed the idea of a Catholic School Leadership certificate in concept. This was good news. Their major concerns had more to do with issues of cost and delivery. We believe principals will eventually accept a mandatory certificate if full funding is guaranteed and if course delivery is convenient. Diocesan offices of education and schools need to provide resources for the costs of leadership training. Other incentives such as preferential hiring and salary increases should be devised as well.

What is the way forward? Although the task force accomplished its goals, the work is not finished. It is a work in progress. The framework and certificate exist on paper only. They are conceptualized but not yet operational. The next phase involves making the framework a living document,

implementing the certificate, and assessing the progress of both. The framework needs to become highly visible and supported. The university and archdiocese will disseminate and publicize it to school pastors, Catholic school educators, potential benefactors, and the local Catholic population. Publishing an article in the archdiocesan newspaper about the task force process yielded a donation from a benefactor. Education Department officials worked diligently and quickly to get the Catholic School Leadership certificate officially approved by the university. Marketing materials will be created and presentations are being scheduled for the diocesan annual teacher conference and other regional meetings. The university and archdiocese will work together to identify potential leaders. Future plans include marketing the online certificate to other dioceses. Lastly, the task force will reconvene to evaluate the framework, certificate, progress on implementation, and to discern the way forward to support the development of leaders for Catholic schools. We realized that the certificate represents one piece of initial formation. Much more needs to be done.

We came away from the task force experience convinced that there is much value in bringing people together to dialogue and problem solve. Based on our experience, the conversation on this topic seems welcome by diocesan leaders, current Catholic school principals, university educators, and pastors committed to their Catholic schools. People were simply happy to talk about these things. Working together has built stronger relationships among all of these groups. Furthermore, involving school people in decision making related to leadership development gives broad ownership and reduces the perception that decisions are handed down from on high. In the long run, the process may turn out to be as important as the product.

## REFERENCES

Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia. (2001). *A Catholic school leadership framework.* Sydney: Catholic Education Office.

Batsis, T. M. (1994). *Crisis management in Catholic schools*. Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

California State Board of Education. (2007). *Standards & frameworks.* Retrieved November 6, 2007, from http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/

Caruso, M. P. (2003). Setting the stage for the process. *Momentum, 34*(1), 47-48.

Catano, N., & Stronge, J. H. (2006). What are principals expected to do? Congruence between principal evaluation and performance standards. *NASSP Bulletin, 90*(3), 221–237.

Ciriello, M. J. (1996). *Expectations for the Catholic school principal: A handbook for pastors and parish school committees.* Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

Ciriello, M. J. (1998). *Formation and development for Catholic school leaders* (2nd ed., Vols. 1-3). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1982). *Lay Catholics in schools: Witnesses to faith.* Boston: St. Paul.

Council of Chief State School Officers. (1996). *Interstate school leaders licensure consortium: Standards for leaders.* Retrieved November 6, 2007, from http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/isllcstd.pdf

Creighton University Department of Education. (2007). *School administration program framework*. Omaha, NE: Author.

Diocese of Ballarat, Australia. (2004). *Leadership development framework.* Retrieved November 6, 2007, from http://web.ceo.balrt.catholic.edu.au/ldf/

Diocese of Wollongong, Australia. (2004). *Leadership framework*. Retrieved November 6, 2007, from http://www.ceo.woll.catholic.edu.au/policies/Leadership_Framework.doc

Drahmann, T. (1985, April). *The many-splendored role of Catholic school principals.* Presented at the annual meeting of the National Catholic Educational Association, St. Louis, MO.

Drahmann, T., & Stenger, A. (1989). *The Catholic school principal: An outline for action* (Rev. ed.). Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

*The free dictionary*. (2007). Retrieved November 6, 2007, from http://www.thefreedictionary.com

Kealey, R. J. (1999). *A day in the life of a Catholic school assistant principal*. Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

Manno, B. V. (1985). *Those who would be Catholic school principals: Their recruitment, preparation, and evaluation.* Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

Maryland Department of Education. (2005). *Maryland instructional leadership framework*. Retrieved November 6, 2007, from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/nr/rdonlyres/babbcce8-07f0-4c82-ab4e-fb8549e67474/9383/instructionalleadershipframeworkfeb2006.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (1996). *Michigan curriculum framework*. Retrieved November 6, 2007, from http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MichiganCurriculumFramework_8172_7.pdf

National Catholic Educational Association. (2004). *Strategic vision for the future of Catholic education in the United States*. Washington, DC: Author.

Schuttloffel, M. J. (2003). *Report on the future of Catholic school leadership.* Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

Sweeney, P. J. (1987). Coleman revisited: Policy implications for Catholic school educators. *Momentum, 18*(4), 11–13.

Twale, D. J., & Ridenour, C. S. (2003). The sacred and the secular: Aligning a Marianist mission with professional standards of practice in an educational leadership doctoral program. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 7*(2), 181-196.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2005). *Renewing our commitment to Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the third millennium.* Washington, DC: Author.

University of Dayton. (2002). *Developing educational leadership: Continuing the conversation.* Dayton, OH: Author.

Wallace. T. J. (1998). The faith leadership issue. *Momentum, 29*(2), 46–49.

Wallace, T. J. (2000). We are called: The principal as faith leader in the Catholic school. In T. C. Hunt, T. E. Oldenski, & T. J. Wallace (Eds.), *Catholic school leadership* (pp. 191-203). New York: Falmer.

*Timothy J. Cook is associate professor and associate chair of education at Creighton University. W. Patrick Durow is assistant professor of education at Creighton University. Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to Dr. Timothy J. Cook, Department of Education, Creighton University, 2500 California Plaza, Omaha, NE 68178.*