

Editorial: Special Issue CJEAP 190 Issues and Challenges of Educational Administrators' Work Intensification: Part One

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The intent for a special issue was derived from the realization that K-12 school administrators' responsibilities and roles have significantly increased in an ever-changing and complex school landscape. This special issue, Volume One, features a narrative case approach with a focus on the knowledge and skills deemed necessary to face the demands associated with an administrator's *workload intensification*. Workload intensification takes the form of extended work hours, increased complexity and volume of work tasks, and an expansion of day to day responsibilities (ATA, 2012; Allan, O'Donnell, & Peetz, 1999; Green, 2004; Pollock, Wang & Hauseman, 2014, 2017). Some researchers have also noted other factors that impact and/or influence the level of workload intensification, such as a decrease in the time allotted for completing one's regular work duties, increased levels of student diversity, working within bureaucratic organizations, and a high reliance on various forms of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to work remotely (ATA, 2012; Allan et al., 1999; Green, 2004; Pollock, et al., 2017, 2014; Starr & White, 2008).

This particular CJEAP special issue, Volume One, provides a collection of narrative cases from a variety of points of view within a Canadian context to better *understand* the current situation and issues related to the work intensification among administrators in the K-12 education system. The narrative cases are meant to bring real-life situations and experiences to life, to contribute to the understanding of the issues and challenges that school administrators face, and to generate discussions regarding *insightful solutions* through the case teaching notes and activities. This special issue, Volume One, is dedicated to case teaching and features eight case narratives with approaches that are designed to help those who work with aspiring and current administrators. The cases have been written and submitted by academics, graduate students, practicing principals, school superintendents, and higher education instructors. The audience we have aimed to benefit from reading this special issue are leadership program developers, leadership training programs, and university instructors. Each case provides a resource framework for current and aspiring education leaders to reflect upon, learn, develop new leadership skills and knowledge, and consider alternative practices, solutions, and possibilities to the rising issue of work intensification for K-12 school administrators.

The cases in this special issue, Volume One, cover a range of issues and topics with relevant teaching activities. Below, the abstracts are listed (ordered by title alphabetically) of each case in this Special Issue Volume One to give readers a brief overview of the case narrative context(s), teaching notes, and the various activities included in each case.

A Perfect Storm for Leading Equity and Inclusion: Policy Complexities, Varied Learning Needs, and Cultures that Don't Support Them (Hands, C. & Freckelton, K.).

The case describes an experienced principal's arrival at a new school, his observations of the school and its teachers, and his experiences as he attempts to ensure all students have access to education, particularly

those requiring accommodations or assistive technology. The culture of the school is compartmentalized; early- and mid- to late-career teachers do not engage with one another. Some teachers use the technology available to the classrooms and some do not, regardless of student need. Communication and competency issues also arise, and the parent community is concerned. The principal must balance all constituents' needs and interests while meeting a vision for an equitable and inclusive school. The case includes three activities and accompanying readings that explore different issues that arise. The first activity unpacks these concepts using a structure-culture-agency framework. The second activity takes a closer look at structure and agency through policy development. Lastly, the third activity examines the impact of culture and agency through professional development planning.

Boy, I wish I were a man: Navigating Principalship as a Woman (MacKinnon, K.).

This case study follows Maggie, a principal of a large urban elementary school, as she navigates principalship as a woman, revealing various gendered discourses along the way. Maggie recognizes gender as a factor and makes distinctions between male and female ways of leading. She reveals some of the barriers she faces as a female principal and refers to discourses of strength, for example, which act upon her leadership. This case study, and the teaching notes that follow, encourage both practising and prospective leaders to consider gender as a factor which impacts the daily work of elementary school principals.

Managing Bad Teachers: The Hows and the Whys (Higginbottom, K.).

C.B. Peterson Elementary School is identified as an at-risk school, as per the North West District School Board's (NWDSB) criteria. In light of rising diversity issues, the school board has released an Equity and Inclusion Policy, which is a top priority to C.B. Peterson's administration team. This new policy adds to the work intensification faced by these administrators. This case describes the candid discussions between the administration team during their first private meeting to make staffing decisions that reflect the Equity and Inclusion Policy for the upcoming school year. However, staffing a more socially just school, that is in compliance with the NWDSB's new priorities, will add hours to administrators' workload. Tensions arise when conversations about how to staff for a socially just school lead to disagreements. Discussions include where to strategically place effective, ineffective, and altogether bad teaching staff in order to have the greatest and least impact on students, respectively. Teaching activities in this case study focus on strategies for dealing with teachers who refuse to adapt their practice to current policies/initiatives, as well as strategies for conflict management.

No Time, Less Money: A Collaborative Response to Intensification (Bayles, B. & Knowles, B.).

After the completion of a difficult round of negotiations, Prairie Spirit School Division (PSSD) and the Prairie Spirit Teachers' Association (PSTA) convened a committee to investigate causes of teacher workload intensification. The committee perceived an increase in the amount and complexity of teachers' and administrators' workload(s) but required reliable data to inform an appropriate response. This case narrative describes the collaborative efforts of the PSTA and PSSD to address workload intensification with limited resources. The committee contracted a consulting firm to assist in developing an online survey of more than 700 PSTA members to identify causes of intensification. The respondents reported a significant increase in workload over the previous three years, particularly in the areas of assessment, grading, and reporting; differentiating instruction to meet diverse learning needs; and finding classroom resources. The majority of the respondents positively rated their physical and mental health but indicated a need for increased support(s) for stress management and physical activity. While working to translate the data into solutions, the committee articulated the importance of collegial collaboration and recognized the difficulty in prompting struggling teachers and administrators to reach out to each other for help. The committee identified causes of intensification and the need to understand the factors that promote or restrict collegial collaboration. The case narrative is followed by four activities to help educational leadership students explore the complexity of workload intensification.

Proactively Mitigating School Leaders' Emotionally Draining Situations (Pollock, P., Wang, F., & Hauseman, C.).

This case study focuses on emotionally draining situations for school leaders in the context of work intensification. Specifically, this study draws upon real-life reports from Canadian studies to present a fictitious scenario. This case depicts a high school principal who must simultaneously deal with student discipline, interact with parents, conduct classroom walk-throughs, complete tasks associated with being an instructional leader, and work with teachers—to name a few. Readers are encouraged to connect research to practice through several teaching activities that include: *a jigsaw discussion approach, a think-pair-share approach, a forum theatre approach, and a pro and con grid approach.*

Superintendents' Work (Intensification) in a Shifting Policy Climate: Enacting a Student Discipline Strategy (Faubert, B., Pollock, K., & Hauseman, C.).

In this case narrative, senior superintendents reckon with the challenges of implementing a revised strategic policy for student discipline in an intensified work environment. Challenges include: (a) providing professional learning to familiarize leaders and educators with regulatory requirements; (b) a problematic trend of school and district leaders avoiding long-term suspensions; (c) the disproportionate number of minoritized students who are suspended/expelled; and (d) securing the resources needed to realize the punitive and preventative elements of the strategy. The case description is followed by three exercises—*case framing, reflective practice, and action plan*—that instructors can use in graduate-level courses and professional development workshops.

The Impact of Principals' Work on their Well-being (Walker, A.).

This case examines both Ethan's workload and well-being issues. Ethan is floundering amid the growing demands and challenges associated with his work at Norwood Secondary School, Ontario, Canada. Although Ethan has been seeing a doctor to improve his well-being, he realizes that he needs to create a better work-life balance to successfully manage his school and better his health. This case study has four teaching notes: the first and second activities invite participants to discuss how Ethan's work-related challenges impact his well-being; the third activity looks at misrecognition, while the fourth activity explores the strategies Ethan can use to improve his well-being issues.

Work Intensification and the Secondary Vice Principal (Lim, L.).

Work intensification has increased the workload and complexity of work performed by principals and vice-principals. This case narrative provides an account of work intensification on the secondary vice-principal role. The vice-principal role consists of administrating to various school operations and instructional leadership duties as assigned by the principal. In particular, the role has evolved into "juggling" reactive and urgent school operations tasks with important instructional leadership duties to improve student learning and achievement. The teaching notes address three tensions of the vice-principal role: (a) developing and strengthening personal leadership resources, (b) prioritizing school operations and instructional leadership duties, and (c) striving for work-life balance.

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