

## **Editorial: Special Issue CJEP 192 Issues and Challenges of Educational Administrators’ Work Intensification: Part Two**

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The inspiration for a Part Two came from an overwhelming number of responses to our initial call for proposals of a special issue for the *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy* (CJEAP) regarding educational administrators’ experiences with work intensification. The eight cases presented in Part Two provide additional context to CJEAP Special Issue Part One. All cases (Part One and Two) have been inspired by concerns that scholars across the country are discovering and exploring not only the level of work intensification among K-12 administrators but also in higher administrative levels of education.

The Part One Editorial (Briscoe & Whalen, 2019) acknowledged a Canadian wide phenomenon: Our K-12 school administrators are facing daily challenges with growing work intensification in their duties and roles due to continuous systemic changes and various complexities of the Canadian K-12 education system. Special issue Part Two is an extension of Part One: a narrative case approach to focus on the knowledge and skills deemed necessary to face the demands associated with an administrator’s workload intensification. The evidence-based literature (Alberta Teachers’ Association [ATA], 2012; Allan, O’Donnell, & Peetz, 1999; Green, 2004; Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman, 2014, 2017) specified in Part One continues to support the same rationale in Part Two, which reiterates the importance for conversations as vehicles for informing educational stakeholders across the nation of the current situation of the increasing work intensification of educational administrators and for seeking solutions for these challenges. The uniqueness of Part Two is the variety of voices telling the narratives: practicing administrators, higher education professors, graduate students, researchers, research participants; all are sharing their concerns regarding work intensification and the challenges they are coping with on a day-to-day basis.

To restate, the scope of 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 et al., 1999; Green, 2004; Pollock et al., 2014, 2017). Other factors that impact and/or influence the level of workload intensification may include: 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., 2014, 2017; Starr & White, 2008).

CJEAP Special Issue Part Two provides eight narrative cases. The cases provide a voice to the K-12 school administrators within their local community, and a variety of perspectives from a Canadian context to better *understand* the current situation and issues related to the work intensification among administrators. The cases are meant to bring real situations and experiences to life that will contribute to the understanding of the issues and challenges that school administrators face. These cases generate discussions regarding *insightful solutions* through the case teaching notes and activities associated with all eight cases. Part Two of the special issue is also dedicated to case teaching through the use of very different stories, but very similar issues and challenges that will inform aspiring and current administrators. The audience that will benefit most from reading the cases and working through the teaching activities presented in both Part One and Two are leadership program developers, leadership trainers, 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 Special Issue Part Two cover a range of issues and topics. Below, the abstracts are listed (ordered by title alphabetically) of each case in Part Two to give readers a brief overview of the case narrative context(s), teaching notes, and the various activities included in each case.

### **Contemporary Expectations for Entrepreneurship: Lessons to be Learned from a Case About the Shift in Canadian Decanal Responsibilities (Scott, D., Scott, S., Abdoulaye, A., Crosby, S., Dudar, L., Fournier, E., and Litz, D.)**

This paper presents a case narrative of a university dean who is charged with instituting change within her faculty in order to resolve the faculty's financial issues. The case narrative explores academic conceptualizations of entrepreneurship and describes the dean's context in terms of: her executive leadership team, the financial issues she was facing, the financial contentions in instituting change, legal complexities, programmatic and marketing dimensions, poor academic cultures, and work intensification implications. The teaching notes present five leadership development activities that span these issues and encourage students to engage in brainstorming, mind-mapping, placemat, jigsaw, and leadership reflection activities.

### **Disturbances Outside the Public Library: Need for Collaborative Community Intervention (Levesque, M. & Brien, K.)**

Trudy Fletcher goes to her town's public library during the noon hour and is faced with an angry group of teenagers crowding the entryway. She enters the library and learns that the library staff members are sheltering a student from a rival school who is being threatened with assault by local students over a previous violent incident. Joyce Miller, principal of the local high school, who has been experiencing difficulty with on-campus student behaviour, is faced with having to determine the best course of action in dealing with the situation. This case raises questions about the extent to which various community stakeholders, including school personnel, have authority and responsibility to respond to and prevent these types of incidents, as well as the additional workload and stress placed on an administrator for an event occurring off school property. The suggested teaching activities allow graduate classes to examine and discuss this case thoroughly, and includes attention given to adolescent decision-making, legal and policy factors, proactive and preventive intervention options for schools and communities, and work intensification of principals.

### **Fixing the Plane While It's in the Air: Managing a Principal's Energy (Briscoe, P. & Wild, P.)**

In this case narrative, Peter, an experienced principal in a new school board and school, is struggling to keep up with the day-to-day challenges at his school and to achieve work-life balance. Challenges include: (a) small changes in the school that demand some of his time; (b) daily unintended interruptions that are draining his time and energy; (c) feeling overwhelmed, which causes feelings of hopelessness and despair; and (d) the demands of long daily work hours that are affecting his family life and his ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The case includes teaching notes and two activities—exploring the difference between time and energy management, completing an energy management audit, and devising a plan and strategies to restore and replenish energy—that instructors can use in graduate-level courses and professional development workshops.

### **Managing Emotions and Coping in a Context of Work Intensification (Hauseman, C.)**

Work intensification has heightened and accelerated the need for Canadian school principals to manage their emotions. This case explores the emotional aspects of a contemporary principal's work in a large urban school and highlights effective coping strategies and approaches used to regulate her emotions. The teaching notes describe several activities that can strengthen leadership capacity and ensure that participants engage with current research on emotions and work intensification. Activities include identification

and evaluation of coping, emotional regulation strategies, scripted and improvisational role play, and structured reflection.

### **Principal Leadership and Prioritizing Equity in An Era of Work Intensification: Must Wellbeing be Sacrificed (Swapp, D.)**

This case explores themes of equity, leadership, wellbeing, and work intensification. The case follows Jennifer “Jen” Barns, the new principal at Westfield Public School, a JK-8 school in Ontario. Jen is overwhelmed by all the responsibilities of the job. She does not have a productive working relationship with her staff and is unable to get them to support a social justice initiative or take on responsibilities at the school. At first glance, it appears the issue may be with the teachers, or the equity agenda Jen is proposing to implement. However, a closer look at the case reveals gaps in principal leadership that would need to be addressed if Jen is to turn things around. Three teaching activities are included to fully situate the case and chart a course of action that includes identifying the issues in the case and developing several leadership principles that would: transform the learning environment at Westfield, foster sustainable school improvement, and improve Jen’s wellbeing. While the case casts an important gaze on the impact of an equity focus on workload and wellbeing, it also provides the basis for a discussion of the pivotal role principals play in leading schools in this contemporary era of change.

### **Promoting Equity in Contexts of Work Intensification: A Principal’s Challenge (Tuters, S. & Ryan, J.)**

This case describes the experience of a principal, named Jade, working in a diverse school in South Central Ontario. A teacher in Jade’s school had been confronted by parents and a school board trustee for reading a book to their class about a family with two moms. The teacher, no longer feeling safe or welcome, eventually decided to switch schools. Jade would have liked to be more involved in the issue, but, given her mounting workload, found it difficult to devote as much time as she would have liked. This case is a starting point for discussion with educational leaders and teachers about the challenges of leading and teaching for social justice in a context where many are experiencing work intensification. The teaching notes are designed to help the readers understand the micro and macropolitical context in greater detail including perspectives and values of the key actors, particularly that of the principal. The role of the principal is underexplored and therefore often misconstrued or misunderstood. The principal of a school is expected to be an instructional leader, a human resources manager, and a leader for students and the broader community. They are primarily and ultimately responsible for too many aspects of the day-to-day operations and the lives of staff and students. This case raises important questions about the role of schools and the roles of principals within those schools.

### **Rural Teaching Principal: Leadership with Precious Few Minutes (Jutras, M., Wallin, D., Newton, P., & Adilman, J.)**

This case examines a rural teaching principal in a small K-12 school in a prairie province. The case examines the work intensification of Mrs. Hayes, whose school has been affected by reductions in student enrolment, staffing, and administrative time. Overwhelmed by myriad responsibilities, the principal feels inadequate as both a teacher and a leader. She is exhausted in her efforts to provide quality learning and extra-curricular opportunities for students, as her workload continues to grow. Teaching activities examine the uniqueness of the rural teaching principal role and possible solutions that may support leaders as they manage work intensification in order to accomplish the responsibilities of this dual role.

### **The Professional Learning Community to Implement the Results-Based Management Approach (RBM) in Québec (Bouchamma, Y. & April, D.)**

School principals are agents of change in the implementation of education policies as they oversee accountability actions that serve to monitor and evaluate student achievement and identify the measures required. In Québec, where *results-based management* (RBM) is encouraged, the *professional learning community* (PLC) approach ensures this accountability by enabling members to gather, manage, and ana-

lyze student data. This case study pertains to the experience of one principal who sought training on how to integrate a PLC in his school. In the context of RBM, characterized by an increase in administrative tasks, this principal ultimately experienced a low sense of effectiveness regarding his supervision practices by having few legal structures to support this supervision. Two series of teaching activities are proposed related to prioritization tasks and the role of PLCs in a context of work intensification and RBM.

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