

the link



3 *Being Christian*
ED NOOT

6 *Data-Informed
Decision Making*
TRACEY YAN

9 *Trinity Western
University's
School of Education
Is On the Move*
ALLYSON JULE

15 *Multi-Tiered
System of
Supports*
GRACE VOO



Proprietaristik



Being Christian

Rowan Williams suggests that those who claim to follow Christ should embrace these three key roles as they seek to live in service to Him: Prophet, Priest, and King. Could this imperative also apply to Christian schools who bear the name of Christ and seek to embrace His identity?

IN HIS LANDMARK BOOK *Being Christian*, Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, explores the Christian life through examining baptism, Bible, eucharist, and prayer. He offers accessible and profound insight into what it means to be a Christian.

In addressing baptism, Williams contends that through baptism the Christian takes on the identity of Christ, recovering the “humanity that God first intended.” He then goes on to illuminate the identity of Christ as fulfilling the three key roles of Prophet, Priest, and King. Williams suggests that those who claim to follow Christ should embrace these three

key roles as they seek to live in service to Him.

Christian schools typically have the term “Christian” embedded in their name. As such, they publicly identify with Christ, proclaiming that their school seeks to follow Him. Could Williams’ imperative therefore also apply to institutions, organizations, and schools that bear the name of Christ and seek to embrace his identity? If so, perhaps Christian schools can more fully embody their mission, effectively playing their part in the Kingdom story, by organizationally embracing the roles of prophet, priest, and king.

Williams clear states that taking on the identity

Being Christian

of Christ is a multi-faceted experience. The identity of Christ brings great peace, joy, dignity, and delight, and, paradoxically, it also thrusts us into the chaos of life, opening our hearts to the suffering of those in dire straights and on the margins. Only by embracing the full identity of Christ, with both delight and chaos, can baptism help us recover our humanity.

Prophet

People often think of prophets as a type of religious fortune teller, peering into the future, accurately predicting events that are yet to come. Such soothsayers exist today, prognosticating everything from the second coming of Christ to Donald Trump's return to the White House.

Biblical prophecy, however, has a very different focus and tone; God's prophets are much more concerned about calling His people into faithfulness than with foretelling future events. As Williams puts it, "they act and speak to call the people of Israel back to their own essential truth and identity. They act and speak for the sake of a community's integrity, its faithfulness to who it is really meant to be."

The Christian school that understands its pro-

phetic role is actively engaged in exploring truth, identity, integrity, and faithfulness for Christians in the 21st century, seeking biblical wisdom to address the complex task of being salt and light in a secular pluralistic society. Prophets are unpopular as they prick at the collective conscience of a people. Their message resonates with some and disturbs others, placing the prophet in a risky position.

Does your Christian school embrace the risk of articulating a prophetic voice for biblical faithfulness and integrity today?

Priest

The Old Testament priestly role was one of mediation, interpretation, and representation, bridging the gap between God and man. After the intimate and harmonious relationship between God and humanity was shattered, a priest was needed to hold the relationship together until it could be fully restored. The priest is a mediator, a mender, a healer, and restorer.

As such, when a Christian school embraces its priestly role it is called upon to "mend shattered relationships between God and the world through the power of Christ and his Spirit." Such a Christian

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vibrant Kingdom.*



Being Christian

school seeks to build bridges and restore hope—not shying away from situations of deep hurt, brokenness, and pain, but gravitating towards them in the power of Christ to seek reconciliation and restoration.

Where does your Christian school enter situations of brokenness and pain working towards reconciliation?

King

In the Old Testament, the king was responsible to design, implement, and enforce laws and procedures that would keep the people close to God. The people looked to the king for justice, for the development and flourishing of a just society. The prophetic voices in Israel often called on the king to ensure justice, particularly for the vulnerable and oppressed—the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner.

Williams says that our royal calling, “is about how we freely engage in shaping our lives and our human environment in the direction of God’s justice, showing in our relationships and our engagement with the world something of God’s own freedom, God’s own liberty to heal and restore.”

A Christian school, adopting its kingly role, rec-

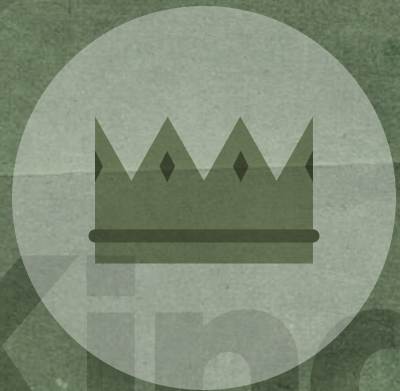
ognizes both internal and external ramifications. Internally, this leads to the development of a school climate or ethos which is just, fair, and right, allowing for the flourishing of all members of this community, with particular attention to those who are vulnerable and oppressed. Externally, this school engages with issues of social justice, advocating for what is noble, right, and true, once again with particular focus on those who are vulnerable and oppressed. Who are vulnerable and oppressed among us and in our society? Jesus gives us a glimpse in the parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25.

If Williams is right, then through baptism we participate in the identity of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. May our schools, as we identify ourselves with Christ, embody the character and nature of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. May this allow us to shine brightly in our small corner of God’s immense, diverse, and vibrant Kingdom. 🌸

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SCSBC Executive Director



Priest King

Tracey Yan

Data-Informed Decision Making

*Good data can be extremely useful when making decisions,
but bad data can quickly lead us down the wrong path.*



Data-informed Decision Making

IN OUR INCREASINGLY HIGH-TECH world, the volume of information and data we have access to can be both a blessing and a curse. It has become so much easier to collect data, whether it be student records, financial results, or community surveys, but we can often become overwhelmed by the volume of information we have and therefore lose sight of how it can best be used. We can also become afraid of data. Does it make us less personal? Less concerned about our culture and mission? More like the public sphere where executives are obsessed with key performance indicators? Where “customer” experiences are standardized with formulas?

For Christian schools, data should always

help accomplish three goals: achieve the school’s mission, provide the best possible experiences for stakeholders (students, staff, parents, donors), and promote long-term sustainability. Keeping these goals in mind helps inform both the types of data schools collect and how they use the data they have.

Why collect data in the first place? Isn’t it enough that we talk to our staff and students and have regular parent meetings? While personal communication with stakeholders is always important, relying solely on this type of feedback is dangerous. Unexamined assumptions based on anecdotal evidence can be costly when they lead to decisions that are not based on reality. World-renowned economist Roger Brinner famously

Photo illustration: everythingpossible / 123RF



stated, “The plural of anecdote is not data.”

Data-informed decision making requires intentional planning and follow-through. It is important to articulate and communicate the objectives of the data collection: what challenges are we facing and what questions do we need answered to respond to those challenges? Developing a systematic approach to collecting data also ensures that accurate data is collected from the right people at the right time and in turn communicated in the appropriate way to the appropriate people.

Careful data analysis is also crucial for informed decision making. For example, the SCSBC school benchmarking reports provide an excellent source of financial performance indicators and comparisons to other schools. However, the reports come with the caution to understand the story behind the numbers before making quick decisions based simply on ratios and percentages. Once those stories have been taken into account, financial benchmarks can help schools make informed choices with respect to tuition, staffing, compensation, and other program expenditures.

Surveys also involve some important considerations: the length of the survey, the clarity of the questions, the response scales used, and the number of open-ended questions can all impact the quality of the data collected. The timing of the survey is also key. For example, sending out a 30-minute staff survey during report card time may not generate the thoughtful responses needed. Likewise, parent satisfaction and exit surveys should ideally be sent at the same time each year so the data can be analyzed for trends from year to year.

Survey data itself can be dangerous if we don't understand how representative it is. It is important to interpret both numbers and comments carefully, looking for statistically sound conclusions from the figures and emerging themes from open-ended answers. Data should also be put into the context of current events. For example, responses to a question about tuition rates may be affected by a recent announcement of tuition increases. Lastly, we need to consider whether the survey data confirms or contradicts the information we have from other sources.

Communicating what we have done with the data is a critical final step in the process. Integrating our conclusions into the school's decisions and practices demonstrates visible use of the information and therefore builds trust among stakeholders for future data collection. Each survey question sets an expectation that something will be done with that answer, so we shouldn't ask questions that we don't plan to act on.

Good data can be extremely useful when making decisions, but bad data can quickly lead us down the wrong path. Determining how to collect the right

data, critically analyze it, integrate it thoughtfully into our practices, and communicate the results, are all key steps in ensuring that data is a useful tool in helping schools achieve their mission, provide excellent experiences for all stakeholders, and improve long-term financial and program sustainability. ✨

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Allyson Jule

Trinity Western University's School of Education Is On the Move

SCSBC and the TWU School of Education have enjoyed a long and constructive working relationship, despite our locations on opposite sides of the TWU campus. The move of the School of Education into the Northwest Building has provided an opportunity to explore a concurrent move by SCSBC to bring our two organizations into closer proximity, thereby enhancing opportunities to collaborate. At the time of publication, discussions pertaining to this move are progressing well.

GOD IS FULL OF MIRACLES. With an upcoming move to a renovated building on TWU's Langley campus in September 2021—one that includes a potentially new shared location with SCSBC—the School of Education is reflecting a lot on the miracles it has witnessed.

The School of Education at Trinity Western University is, in and of itself, a miracle. It is the only faith-based Teacher Education Program in the province and has a reputation for developing extraordinary teachers for both public and independent school systems. Our Professional Year Program emerged after a difficult legal challenge in 2001 about whether devout Christian teachers could be trusted to support all students, including those from the LGBTQ+ community. The result was that both the public and private sectors recognized the value of the Christian worldview in teacher preparation. Miracle #1: we exist – and a secular

society found a place for our Christian Teacher Education Program and our vision to develop excellent teachers for BC schools.

Since 2001, TWU's School of Education has been able to award the Bachelor of Education degree and full BC teaching certification. As such, there are more than 750 teachers in the province, across Canada, and around the world, who were prepared and educated at Trinity. That is 750 miracles: 750 people who felt a call to teach and who came to Trinity Western University for their preparation for the classroom. Such impact is being felt in the many lives of the children and youth that our graduates have influenced.

Our symbol since 2012 has been a green apple. Why? The traditional gift of an apple for the teacher seems to have been particularly associated with the first day of school in September which is also apple harvest time. Apples were seen as an acceptable "payment in kind" from parents across rural North



America who were unable to afford the school fees. This was particularly adopted in Canada during the Great Depression in the 1930s. Learning is also associated with the apple: “A” stands for apple when learning the ABCs. Apples are a positive, easily recognizable emblem of teaching.

There are many red apples (thousands of varieties) but only three are green. The green apple is extra special. They are popular in both classic and contemporary art to symbolize the divine, the rare, and the mysterious—something exceptional and wonderful. A green apple is a special apple. We offer a special kind of teacher education for a special kind of teacher.

Before the pandemic, the School of Education experienced significant numerical growth; the incoming class grew from approximately 40 – 50 students in 2010 to some 100 today. Applicants to our two-year post-degree program have also increased from approximately 25 to 130 applicants this year. Surprisingly, the pandemic has done little to hamper this growth. We have met the challenges of COVID-19 by moving courses online while still offering in-school practicum experiences. This is another miracle: TWU's School of Education is thriving during very difficult times.

To watch what God has done and how God has used us to impact education in BC has been a steady marvel. And now, on our 20th anniversary we are witnessing another miracle. We are moving! The School of Education has been located in the Vernon

Strombeck Centre, on the edge of campus, where the original TWU library was located, for many, many years even before the full B. Ed. Program was offered. But now, we have simply outgrown it. We are moving to TWU's Northwest Building on

the other side of campus, where the Northwest Seminary once lived. Renovations will happen over the summer of 2021 and we will move in September. The change of surroundings will be significant.

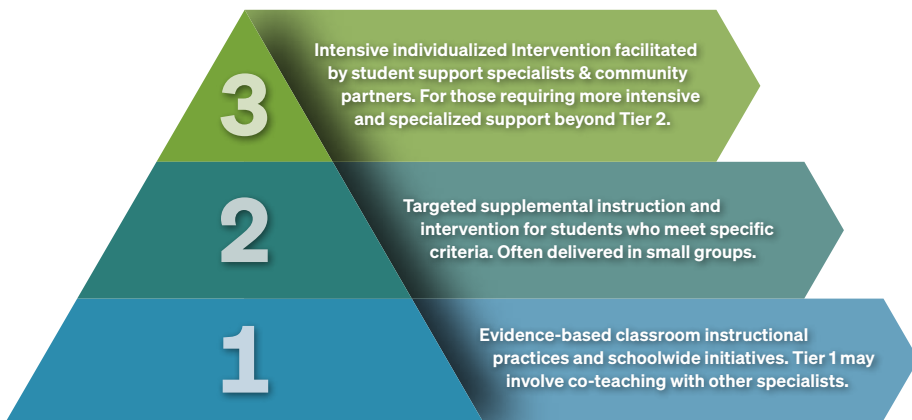
The number of classrooms will more than double our capacity and increase our office space—this will allow us to bring together various education-related departments, including the Society of Christian Schools in BC (SCSBC). We are delighted about this merging of location and look forward to more collaboration, connection, and synergy with BC Christian schools. The closer connection will open up opportunity for a very special partnership with SCSBC—one which can serve to magnify the impact of Christian education. This is another miracle: together, we can form a larger, more comprehensive centre for our shared work. We educate new teachers and SCSBC supports them. What a wonderful relationship!

Once we are settled, we look forward to welcoming educators into our new space and celebrating together God's work through the School of Education. We have much to celebrate: we are living the days of miracles and wonder. Enjoy a green apple today! 🍏

ALLYSON JULE

Dean, TWU School of Education

The closer connection with SCSBC will open up opportunity for a very special partnership—one which can serve to magnify the impact of Christian education. This is another miracle: together, we can form a larger, more comprehensive centre for our shared work. We educate new teachers and SCSBC supports them. What a wonderful relationship!



Multi-Tiered System of Supports

One school's journey to implement a holistic approach to supporting student learning, behaviour, and emotional needs.

WITH THE RISE OF ANXIETY and stress in our current educational context, more students require individualized attention and holistic care for their learning. What can Christian schools do to better serve our students? Is there any one approach that can be used to support all of the diverse needs?

At Vancouver Christian School, a K–12 school with approximately 850 students, we often found ourselves stretched for resources and scrambling to provide temporary solutions for behavioural, learning, and mental health issues. Three years ago, in the hopes of finding a researched-based, proactive, and long-term solution for student support, the high school began looking into the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework to think about and evaluate the student supports that we can offer. Step by step, we began using the MTSS to deal with the complexity of student problems in our elementary and middle school as well.

The Goal of the MTSS Model

“How can we make learning better for our students?” and “How can we improve student learning?” have been the general guiding questions for us. The MTSS allowed us to better identify a variety of different

learning issues and promote immediate intervention as soon as students’ problems were revealed. Through the MTSS lens, we have been able to see how we can better improve education for *all students*. It has also helped us minimize the “wait to fail” situations that prevented at-risk students from receiving intervention sooner versus later.

We were first intrigued that the MTSS model could be tailored to different school contexts and there was no one “right” way for implementation. I was appointed the K–12 administrator to strategically implement MTSS. One of the first things I had to consider was a communication plan for all of the stakeholders so everyone would understand the function of the MTSS and how it supports the work we do with students.

Here are the steps we took to implement MTSS at Vancouver Christian School.

Multi-Tier Supports

We began by identifying and ensuring three levels (or tiers) in our intervention system, and used these tiers to define the amount of support that any given student may need. These tiers of supports increase in intensity from one tier to the next. We decided on three tiers:

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Tier 1: The Whole Class (Universal)

This level applied to all students and included high quality teaching and support for all students in the school.

We have put the most professional development resources into this tier. We focused on research-based strategies on inclusive teaching practices and assessment. We began conversations around assessment and had to monitor student progress so educators could use this data to help decide what interventions were needed. We ensured that every teacher had an individualized professional action plan that focused on a research-based teaching practice.

We integrated three resource teachers to 360° support the class teacher, and the academic needs of the whole class (a humanities resource teacher, a math and science specialist, and a life skills resource teacher).

Tier 2: Small Group (Targeted)

This level applied to some students and included additional interventions for students who needed help with specific skills. We had to think strategically about where these targeted support times would fit within our high school schedule. We began to look at lunch and after school times. The goal was to avoid having students miss out during the whole class instructional time.

This year, in hopes of being more inclusive in our practice, we scheduled a flexible Wednesday where all students could get additional small group supports throughout the day. Moving forward, we want to continue looking at integrating resource teachers to work with small groups of students.

We are also looking at creating a K–12 social-emotional support program that takes into account the spiritual formation of students at

different grade levels. We plan to have the school counselling team provide a few psycho-educational groups throughout the school year to help support the social-emotional growth of our students.

Tier 3: Individualized Support (Intensive)

This level applied to few students and included interventions designed to address the unique needs of the individual student.

Our educational support services coordinator, educational assistants, and resource teachers form a school-based team to support the learning of students who need more focused assistance. In addition, our counselling team provides Christian-based counselling services to support students who need social-emotional and mental health support. Our principal and vice-principal also provide targeted support for the behavioural needs of students.

With the rise of a variety of different and complex behavioural and learning issues in the current educational context, the MTSS approach may also work for your school.

An Integrated Plan

After determining the three tiers of support, we made an integrated plan addressing the academic, behavioural, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of all students.

The Plan for Behavioural Issues

For behavioural support, we began by implementing the Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework.

PBIS helped us improve student behaviour significantly. We use the PBIS with our high school students across all environments in our school (classroom, washroom, gym, outside, playground, learning commons, lobby, and hallways) creating a safe and effective learning environment.

When implementing the PBIS, it was important that *everyone* knew what the behavioural expectations were so that they could *all* play a role in improving school safety and promoting positive

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

behaviour. The vice-principal and I worked together to integrate the PBIS into all aspects of the school and we used the same language about behavioural expectations to teach and support positive behaviour. Teachers and staff nominated students who demonstrated positive behaviour and positive behavioural letters were sent home to encourage students and families.

The Plan for Academic and Learning Issues

For academic and learning support, we utilized the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. We focused on being “prevention oriented.” Through our monthly school-based team meetings, teachers communicated with administrators, the educational support services team, and the counselling team, and identified which students needed additional support. With this team approach, we were better able to implement evidence-based interventions for all students and we were able to tailor interventions based on specific students’ needs.

The Plan for Social, Emotional, and Spiritual Issues

We use a combination of counsellor and pastoral supports to provide social, emotional, and spiritual support to students. We consider counselling as both an intervention and a prevention service.

In the past, our school counsellors worked part-time and worked with specific students. This casual working relationship made it difficult for thorough collaboration with our school-based team. Hence, we moved to offering counsellors the same contract as teachers so that they could be part of our school-based team. With this adjustment, counsellors have enhanced our students’ educational achievement through goal setting, assisting with the development of individualized education plans, and helping to promote effective work and study habits. Our counsellors also lead a monthly parent education evening where parents can learn more about research-based strategies that have to do with current trends, mental health issues, and parenting support.

Moving forward, we envision our school coun-

sellors playing a vital role in nurturing the spiritual formation of the students. Our counsellors can integrate Christ-centred counselling practices so students can experience more spiritual wholeness and intimacy with God.

Barriers to Implementation

In implementing the MTSS into the culture of our school, we were challenged by coordinating practices and expectations, and providing effective universal support. It was important for us to have a clear MTSS plan and then stick to it, helping us guard against bias when it comes to decision making in supporting students. We need to facilitate ongoing professional development around the basics of the MTSS to ensure that new and seasoned staff are on the same page with the MTSS process.

The MTSS pyramid needs a consistent large base at Tier 1 so as many students are served as possible. Hence, it is vital for us to explore and build out our Tier 1 universal supports. We are seeking to strengthen differentiation, increase high-quality classroom instruction, improve assessment practices, and create transparent expectations for social-emotional learning. Critical to this process, we are embedding more time where staff teams can engage in problem solving, discuss appropriate interventions, and monitor student progress.

With the rise of a variety of different and complex behavioural and learning issues in the current educational context, the MTSS approach may also work for your school. Implementing the MTSS is a journey of school improvement involving all major stakeholders.

The MTSS framework helped our K–12 school think about and evaluate the way we support our students. It is helping us have the good and much needed conversations around how we can create a school community where *every* student can learn. 🌸

GRACE VOO

*Secondary Principal, Clinical Counsellor
Vancouver Christian School*

News & Events

Saturday, 30 October 2021 The Society of Christian Schools in BC invites you to the 22nd annual **SCSBC Leadership Conference** for Christian school board and committee members and administrators.

Institutions remain essential to human flourishing. They are the very means by which communities thrive, individual vocations are fulfilled, and society is changed for the good. We all must learn the wisdom of working effectively within institutions—what Gordon T. Smith calls “Institutional Intelligence.”



Gordon T. Smith is President of Ambrose University. Smith has served as the executive director of reSource Leadership International and as Academic Dean of Regent College, Vancouver, where he continues to teach.

Institutional Intelligence

SCSBC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2021

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