

in this issue

upfront

departments

features

**The First Decade:
10 Years, 10
Accomplishments**

[FULL ARTICLE](#)

**The First Decade:
10 Years,
10 Teachers**

[FULL ARTICLE](#)

**Male Presence in
Teaching Continues
to Decline**

by Brian Jamieson

[FULL ARTICLE](#)

**Where Was That
Line?**

by Joe Jamieson

[FULL ARTICLE](#)

resources

governing
ourselves

Male Presence in Teaching Continues to Decline

Male teachers are a vanishing breed, as retirements continue to outpace new hires. But does it really matter?

by Brian Jamieson

Vince Anania is one of a kind.

Sadly.

The effervescent veteran teacher at St. Charles School in Thorold is the only male Junior Kindergarten teacher in the entire Niagara Catholic DSB.

Anania, 44, doesn't really understand the novelty. Ask him and he'll tell you he's in the greatest career imaginable. He's literally buoyant with the challenge and opportunity of shaping young minds and inspiring in them a lifelong love of learning.

"These kids are our future, especially at the JK level," he says. "This is the first time they are coming into a learning institution. They don't know anything about a classroom environment and you're giving them the very first year of their educational career, a pathway, a love of school, the love of learning. They trust you. They believe everything you say, everything you do. You're like a god to these kids."

It's a challenge, he admits. They miss their parents. They have to learn to line up, raise their hands. They have to learn the structures, the routines.

"We're doing a big push on literacy and numeracy right down to the JK level, and all the information I'm giving them is so critical. It's not a job; it's a career."

Increasingly, however, it's not a career men are choosing.

Women outnumber men four to one

Three years after an independent study to examine the phenomenon of a declining male presence in Ontario's classrooms, little appears to have changed. Women outnumber men four to one at the primary-junior level. Men are retiring out of teaching faster than they're entering, and College data suggests the trend is likely to continue.

The proportion of College members (now at more than 207,000) who are male, particularly in the 55 and over group, continues to drop.

The percentage of English-language male teachers in Ontario dropped from 30 per cent in 2004 to 28 per cent in 2006, according to College data.

Men aged 55 and up teaching at the intermediate-senior level are the one subgroup in which male teachers comprise about equal numbers with females (51 per cent in 2006 versus 54 per cent in 2004). In 2004, only one-quarter of teachers over 55 at the primary-junior level were men. By 2006, the number dropped to 21 per cent.

In 2004, men represented just 10 per cent of primary-junior teachers under 30. By 2006, in the same under-30 primary-junior group, men accounted for 11 per cent. Of the under-30 primary-junior group certified to teach in French, men accounted for only five per cent.

Men are retiring out of teaching faster than they're entering.

According to the Ontario Universities Application Centre, the percentage of male candidates registered at Ontario faculties of education dropped from 28.1 per cent in 1999 to 27.3 per cent in 2005. Over the same period, however, the number of spaces for teacher education jumped from 5,923 to 7,496. More opportunities – but a smaller proportion of men rushing in to take advantage.

“Historically, we have had fewer male teachers in the elementary panel, specifically in the primary and junior divisions,” says Sylvia Terpstra, education director for the Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB. “What is most concerning for us is that this relatively stable ratio between male and female teachers is clearly changing, and we are experiencing the loss of the male voice in elementary schools.

“At a time when our communities are looking to schools for ever greater supports, combined with our recognition of the need for schools to lead the way in terms of character development, a shortfall in the number of positive male role models within our classrooms has emerged. This is not just something experienced by our school district, but is a provincial, national and international trend, the impact of which we may not feel for quite some time.

“Part of the possible solution to this issue, and one that we advocate, is for teachers' colleges to review their acceptance criteria and broaden the emphasis they place on experiential learning for candidates.”



Jean-Luc Bernard, Director of Education with the Conseil scolaire de district du Centre Sud-Ouest, was part of a group that made recommendations to attract men to teaching.

Jean-Luc Bernard, Director of Education with the Conseil scolaire de district du Centre Sud-Ouest, says new part-time programs enable people to continue working while they cross over into teaching. He sees more men coming in at the elementary level as a result.

“It's a good thing to see more men interested in teaching,” Bernard says. “As to whether they will remain, given the salary level, I believe things are hopeful. Certainly

shadowing is still needed as well as some assistance in the early years, to be sure, whether it's a man or a woman. There's no difference.”

Would he like to see more men in teaching? Definitely.

“Our students have different learning styles,” Bernard says. “I think that a man's teaching style compared to a woman's is different. The experiences are different and we know full well that learning, in terms of reading, in terms of the whole field of literacy, is completely different for boys and girls. Male and female teachers will teach this program and this skill differently. That is why I think it's important to have both.”

A 2004 study commissioned by Bernard, former Trillium Lakelands DSB director David Hill, former Ontario College of Teachers Registrar Doug Wilson, and Pat Falter, a consulting director at Laurentian University, found that fewer than one in three teachers were men and that only one in 10 under the age of 30 were male. Further, 40 per cent of male teachers in 2004 were over the age of 50 and likely to retire.

“We are experiencing the loss of the male voice in elementary schools.”

The project uncovered a number of perceived barriers to men entering teaching, such as low salaries, negative stereotypes and fear of allegations of sexual misconduct.

In their report, *Narrowing the Gender Gap: Attracting Men to Teaching*, the project partners recommended:

- mounting a province-sponsored marketing campaign
- developing recruitment materials for education faculties, district school boards and other employers to highlight the benefits of teaching and to dispel myths that discourage men from entering the profession investigating further incentives
- increasing alternative and part-time programs at education faculties
- encouraging co-operative education and peer tutoring placements for male high school students in elementary schools
- setting up mentoring programs for male teachers, and
- conducting further research into boys' achievement and the presence of male teachers.

Where the recommendations landed or what impact they had on the practices of faculties and district school boards isn't clear.

Does it matter?

But does it really matter anyway? Even *Narrowing the Gender Gap: Attracting Men to Teaching* acknowledged that what Ontario needed most were excellent teachers – regardless of gender.

“We have to have a quantity of men in teaching to provide the male voice and a male approach to looking at the learning process,” says Bill Hogarth, Director of Education for the York Region DSB. “When we don't have the voices, we have gaps in instruction.

“I don't think we can give up on the recruitment issue, I just think that there are fewer and fewer men to choose from. How, when the pool is so much smaller now, can you get the quality you want to get?”

Hogarth, who oversees one of Ontario's fastest-growing boards, estimates that one in five York Region teachers is male. But redoubling efforts to recruit more men may be

looking at the problem from the wrong end, he suggests.



Vince Anania is convinced that other male teachers don't know what they're missing in not teaching kindergarten – kids being born into the new world of education.

“Let's be concerned, not about men in teaching, but about the classroom, what it looks like and the voice that boys and girls hear. We know there is a learning gap between boys and girls. What can we do to address it? If we're only hearing one voice or one instructional strategy, what is it doing to our boys?” Hogarth asks. “I would start with the student first and ask what we are missing in not having more men in classrooms.”

Hogarth says he's concerned about how boys learn and what types of instructional intelligence and strategies are used to help them. “We're all trying to see it through the literacy lens because we have that focus. But there's more to it than that. There's a gender gap.”

Hogarth says, “Men use a different approach – not that it's better or worse – and if we reduce that, then we're reducing the opportunities to address some of the gender gap issues that I see on our doorstep.”

The barriers to entice men to careers in teaching still exist, he says. “When you have whole schools without any men at all, including caretakers, it really leads men to believe that teaching isn't for them, particularly at the elementary level and to some degree at the secondary level.”

“Male and female teachers will teach this program and this skill differently.”

Vince Anania says he wishes there were more males teaching kindergarten. He simply thinks they don't know what they're missing.

“Other male teachers think it's just play,” he says. “I tell them they're missing kids being born into the new world of education. You're missing the innocence and the development.”

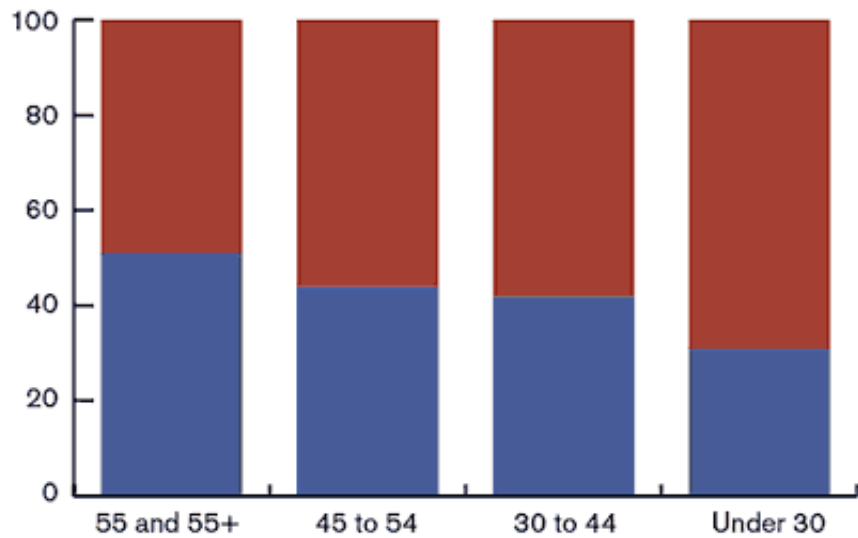
“I've been told by mothers that I'm a father figure for their children,” he says. “They need that male stability. Boys that don't have fathers want more of my attention. They talk more about sports. They want to play with me more. They miss that male role model.”

He loves working with children, understanding their needs, identifying their strengths, addressing their challenges.

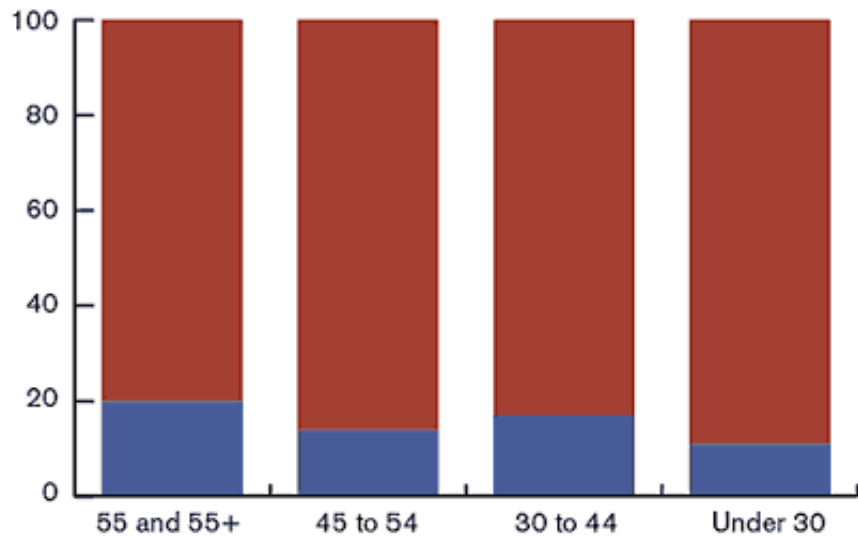
“I fell in love with it,” Anania says. “These kids are our future. You're giving them the pathway that is positive learning.”

Male ■ Female ■

Intermediate-Senior Teachers



Primary-Junior Teachers



There will be an overall decline in the proportion of male teachers, since the highest percentage is in the oldest age group and as they retire they are not being replaced by younger men at the same rate.

www.oct.ca | info@oct.ca