

# Subversive Educational Leadership: Advancing Excellence, Equity, and Adequacy in Canada, Turkey, and Iran

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## Abstract

*Subversion has proved to be a very powerful change force in modern education. This study endeavors to explore the dynamics of subversion within the Canadian, Turkish, and Iranian educational systems with the express purpose of illuminating the potentials of subversion in reordering paradigms. Using a comparative framework, the paper discusses the use of subversive practices across contexts, illustrating which leadership characteristics enable the implementation process. The nuance of subversion for each country can be gleaned clearly while stating what kind of leadership will ensure that subversion is applied for the good of the advance in education. Drawing on theory and evidence, it also brings to the fore qualities of those leaders who promote change, inclusivity, and navigate socio-political complexities. This study will be helpful for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars in promoting innovative reform approaches that will assist in achieving excellence, equity, and adequacy in education across the world through the transformative power of subversive leadership.*

## 1. Introduction

The notion of subversion in the interest of transformative change through educational leadership resonates very strongly in the fields of contemporary education. This study explores, within the contours of Canadian, Turkish, and Iranian systems of education, how this subversion can indeed work to develop excellence, equity, and adequacy. It is in this aspect that the paper seeks to examine how subversion can reshape educational paradigms through strategic deployment by educationally committed leaders who are bent on challenging conventional norms and catalyzing positive change. This framework of comparative analysis will help the study to explore how the implementation of subversive practices can be done in diverse cultural and institutional contexts. It will outline the similarities and differences in how subversion is navigated by educational leaders with the view to overcoming those

particular obstacles that relate to singular education systems.

The inquiry into what type of educational leadership can best capture the potential of subversion in order to move education forward becomes, therefore, the heart of the matter. Guided by theoretical positions and empirical data, the research investigates characteristics and competencies of subversive educational leaders and provides insight into qualities needed for such leaders to inspire change, foster inclusivity, and negotiate a complex socio-political environment. This work is important as it contributes to the deepening of our understanding of subversion's role in education, along with its implications for achieving excellence, equity, and adequacy within diverse global contexts.

## 2. Literature Review

In the literature review section, five salient themes of subversion, excellence, equity, adequacy, and transformational leadership will be critically deconstructed. These are core aspects of the educational discourse and provide focal points for extensive inquiry and debate.

Subversion becomes a signifying theme of intentional disruption and shifting of well-settled principles and structures in education. In other words, it means that educators are under the compulsion to critically question dominant practices and relations of power so that an environment facilitating creativity and social development emerges. The twin ideas of excellence and equity occupy equal importance as guiding values, both silently embodying the twin mandate of ensuring quality education while advocating inclusivity and fairness. Adequacy further underlines the resource and support needs that are critical to making worthwhile learning opportunities for all learners possible. Finally, transformational leadership comes across as an ethos that can underline the vital contribution that is needed from inspiring leaders in bringing about positive change and leading education

reform. These are interrelated themes that are explored in the research with great care, such that they bring forth some very important insights and contribute significantly to the continuing debate about educational improvement and innovation. Each of these themes will be dealt with separately for comprehensive understanding of their meaning and implications.

**Subversion in Education.** The term subversion means a strategic opposition to the prevailing values and principles in a system which aims to reshape the dominant social order of a given civilization including aspects of power, authority, hierarchy, and norms. Subtle means that are adopted involve those capable of being embraced in resisting the oppressive dimensions of power, which perpetuate harm. This necessary survival process involves the intentional contradiction or negation of the dominant norms and principles. Subversion thus acts as a significant mode of resistance against well-entrenched systems of oppression.

Subversion in education can be defined as the intentional challenging and transformation of embedded norms, structures, and systems at work in education. This proactive process interrogates established practices, ideologies, and power dynamics pervasive in educational institutions. Its objective is the nurturing of critical thinking, creativity, and the stimulation of social change [13]. This dynamic concept tends to accept that education should not be static but needs to change along with dynamics in society.

One aspect of subversion in education involves innovation in curriculum design whereby teachers integrate other, or interdisciplinary approaches to the design of curriculum that go beyond the realms of traditional discipline-based curriculum design. In such cases, the student explores different outlooks and thus gets an all-rounded outlook on the world. Such a shift questions established order, embracing intellectual curiosity and adaptability of the learner. Other than innovation in curriculum design, subversion in education takes place in unconventional pedagogical strategies. With experiential learning, project-based learning, or inquiry-based learning, for instance, the teacher would have to organize activities with a view toward engaging students actively and in a more in-depth manner. These methods really perturb traditional instruction because students themselves become drivers of their learning processes as they create the necessary competencies for interacting with a progressively complex global environment. Through such diverse methods, subversion in education becomes a facilitator of transformation in learning experiences and social advancement.

*Excellence*, in the best understanding of the word, calls for tireless commitment and striving, far away

from mediocrity, with skills that few have, which deserve admiration for its rarity and pursuit of perfection in whatever one does.

Excellence in education would, therefore, mean striving for exceptional quality and attainment in the educational setting. Excellence, according to Clark and Pointon [8], represents attainment of mastery and proficiency in various areas of learning and teaching. Excellence is much more than just meeting standards of performance; excellence means incorporating an integrated approach toward not only attaining better levels of improvement but also innovating. Excellence, in education, encompasses a broader perspective of educating students with intellectual, social, and emotional development beyond mere academic achievements.

It is noted that excellence in education, therefore, requires overcoming those complex challenges inhibiting the standards of performance and retention of students. Poorly designed curricula, inadequately prepared teachers, and too little student motivation are formidable obstacles. Each of these issues degrades the quality of education delivery and results in disengagement from students, resulting in decreased academic achievement and increased dropout rates. Therefore, they must be comprehensively addressed, not only by strategies that help raise academic standards but also nurture a supportive climate that enhances student success.

*Conversely*, when these issues are being taken care of proactively, real gains both in academic performances and student retention could result. On one hand, it leverages educationally sound curriculum designs, teacher training programs that develop professional capacity, and motivation-engagement cultures. It improves the standards of performance while reducing dropout rates in education. Meador [16] points to the most critical phase of implementation for excellence, entailing the need for strategic interventions to transform students' learning outcomes. It is in addressing these issues that educational stakeholders, through a concerted effort, may help create a culture of excellence that allows students to blossom into meaningful contributors to society.

*Equity*, according to Radwanski [20], is the prime component of social justice that embraces the connotations of fairness and impartiality. It is within educational settings that these come into play most prominently, where fairness and inclusion in their various forms take center stage in attempts to provide equity within a learning environment.

Fairness in education involves the consideration of personal and social circumstances like gender, socio-economic status, and ethnic origin. It affirmatively validates the principle that no such variable shall serve

as a barrier to the realization of full educational potential on the part of any person. In striving for fairness, an education system pursues the attainment of the situation where everyone has had the equal opportunity to receive good-quality education and achieve the highest possible standards, whatever each person's background and whichever circumstances.

Zhang, Chan, and Boyle [27], define it as a commitment to a guaranteed minimum level of education in which everyone, irrespective of individual needs or abilities, are all included. In doing so, to the authors, the educational environment would be welcoming to the diversity that students with special needs bring along, hence meeting the particular learning needs of the students. This means that inclusive practice instills a sense of belonging and empowerment among all learners in educational institutions, equity by taking into consideration different needs individuals may face in pursuit of their education.

Sufficiency is a core concept in educational discourse, referring to something being satisfactory or acceptable, especially regarding the sufficiency of resources to realize intended educational outcomes. As applied to education, the term *adequacy* refers to the availability of resources—whether financial, instructional, or infrastructural—sufficient to meet predetermined educational objectives. They range from the minimum competence in standardized tests to the most ambitious goals of complete cognitive development and academic achievement of the students [4].

In other words, *adequacy* in education means allocating resources and support systems that will help achieve set academic standards by students and accomplishment of their educational potentials. It is beyond just conformance to the minimum standards, emphasizing an environment that will lead to holistic learning and growth [14], [4]. It does not only mean equal provision of instructional materials and qualified instructors, but it also means equal facilities and learning opportunities irrespective of the student's socioeconomic status or learning needs. By adding adequacy to the concept of equality, schools hope to show fairness and equity through the provision of tools and opportunities for each student to excel in school and become successful in his or her educational pursuits.

*Transformational Leadership* maintains that leaders attempt to find out what changes are required to move their organization to some future state and then take decisive action to make the transformations real [6], [25]. The approach depends on the development of a vision which does not only predict what changes should be made but inspires others to accept the need for change and implement the vision itself [15]. Articulation and visualization of the vision by

transformational leaders motivate the organizational change in a focused way to achieve the strategic goals, innovating and growing the business. Consider, for instance, an organization that is not innovative. In solving such a problem, there would need to be a multidimensional strategy where changes in culture, support for creating ideas, and easier processes for the implementation and evaluation of ideas are involved. The transformational leader would, therefore, identify such necessary changes with ease, devise a vision that incorporates all such required alternations, and motivates people to join and support this transformational change. There are ways many to motivate the people and join the vision, and the two most crucial of them are:. On one hand, transformational leaders may employ charisma to inspire and mobilize others through effective persuasive communication, exemplary behavior, and steadfast adherence to shared values in order to instill purpose and commitment [26]. Leaders may also use tactics of self-empowerment through nurturing the sense of identity of individuals and creating a collective desire to improve personally and organizationally [15], [25]. The approaches of this nature require constant and individualized attention towards the needs and ambitions of people, which is supportive and enabling towards ensuring an enabling organizational culture.

Inasmuch as their form of leadership is transformational, they are seemingly out-of-the-box thinkers; a factor that could justify their tendency to question the status quo [26]. This creative disposition lets them cut through complex and ambiguous problems in order to provide solutions in innovative ways; this, therefore, makes transformational leadership especially effective for challenges where ingenuity and adaptability are at play [18]. In the same way, transformational leadership may focus on wholesale change at the expense of transactional leadership's incremental optimizations [18]. With this in mind, while the capacity for transformational leadership is highly valuable in driving organizational innovation and adaptation, going forward, the balance of such transformative vision must be tempered by pragmatic problem-solving.

*Transaction leadership* depends on using "a system of rewards and punishments for motivating followers based on performance against recognized behaviors" [15]. As such, once a good performance is recorded, for example, the transactional leader will reward such a person to continue enjoying the good performance; similarly, poor performance is punished to avoid recurrence. As such, the transactional leader will clearly spell out the rules and procedures that outline who will be rewarded or punished depending on the performance which means that the set guidelines are the means of

rewarding the motivation.

The leaders using transactional leadership tend to work within the existing frameworks of the organization. They accept the prevailing goals, structure, and culture [13], [25]. They operate within these confines to negotiate the obtaining of present goals and usually adopt traditional methods of problem solving by operating within given norms (see Table 1). Transactional leadership succeeds in work situations that have clearly defined goals and well-structured problems where attainment of maximum efficiency is key [15]. However, most of these leaders eventually adopt a passive kind of leadership style, mainly engaging themselves in setting and enforcing rules, monitoring the progress, and maintaining the status quo [13], [25].

Table 1. Summary of differences between Transactional and Transformational Leadership [13], [25].

| Transactional Leadership                                                                               | Transformational Leadership                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emphasizes efficiency                                                                                  | Emphasizes effectiveness                                                                                                     |
| Is responsive to problems                                                                              | Proactively resolves problems                                                                                                |
| Works within the organization's culture                                                                | Works to change the organization's culture through new ideas                                                                 |
| Encourages accomplishment of objectives through reward and punishment                                  | Encourages accomplishment of objectives through appeal to higher ideals and moral values                                     |
| Motivates others through appeal to self interest                                                       | Motivates others through encouraging group interests                                                                         |
| Improves performance through corrective action, when necessary, but maintains the status quo otherwise | Improve performance through considering the situation of everyone, and supporting their intellectual and creative capacities |

Transactional leaders primarily utilize contingent rewards to reinforce good performance, as well as "management-by-exception" practices that intervene when performance is poor and institute remedial action. Transactional leadership is therefore less able to handle change or resolve problems that are in need of creative solutions or are not well-structured. It is successful in maintaining stability, along with reaching predetermined goals; however, it fails in dynamic environments or to inspire innovation.

### 3. Findings

*Iran* - The revolutionary years in Iran, from 1979 to 1988, have been the period when genuine reforms swept across the nation, establishing Islamic principles in all

spheres of Iranian life. With a multifarious agenda, such reforms aimed to raise a genuinely Islamic society steeped in Islamic culture, redefine social mores through education, and neutralize Western cultural influences. From political strategies, the reform efforts briskly spilled into the educational arena, with most changes occurring between 1979 and 2012. This metamorphosis in education in Iran took place across various dimensions: "First came the legislative interventions that reoriented the educational setup toward the single aim of serving the objectives of the Islamic propagation." Then there were changes in the curriculum that infused Islamic teachings into textbooks and pedagogical frameworks, restructuring the education narrative. The structural reforms were noted in the reorganization of educational centers and peoples' roles at different levels, boosting state supervision and authority over teacher training and recruitment.

One of the most critical reforms within education was structural reorganization: dissolving opposition forces among teachers and the formation of committees for ideological schooling in state schools. Daily prayers and clerical activities, propagandist shows to affirm state discourses, became part and parcel of school life. Lawyer elections underlined the fact that priority in schools needed to be given to nurturing Islamic values among the young, setting the status of schools as sacred.

The metamorphosis of the curriculum reflects a systematic effort by the Headquarters of the Cultural Revolution to inject Islamic principles into school curricula. The process of textbook revision, initiated at the university level, trickled down into all levels of education as subjects took on distinctly Shi'a Islamic characteristics-for instance, social sciences and history texts replete with religiously framed interpretations of events around divine truth and martyrdom tales. This blending of ideologies, in full concurrence with state demands, worked in contrast to modern concepts of education [19].

Further limitation of enrolment in the humanities courses signaled even more ideological agendas, pointing to how government efforts reached out to suppress the culture of dissent and streamline educational pathways. These policies, together with changes in content, called into question ideological homogenization and suppression of critical debate. This was quite a loss for critical thinking and analytical competencies, both of which rely upon educational pluralism.

As portrayed by Paivandi, gender dynamics within the educational landscape also manifested discriminatory undercurrents. The textbook images depicted traditional gender roles, relegating women to the domestic sphere, while at the same time their

contributions within broader fields of endeavor were marginalized. Other systemic discrepancies in gender equality came through legal and social constraints on attire and public interactions that supported and embedded such inequalities [21].

*The AKP in Turkey* - Navigating Politics, Religion, and Democracy With its rise to power in 2002, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has been at the centre of one of the most heated debates on its commitment to democratic principles and its stance on secularism in Turkey. Çınar's review covers the broad array of existing literature on the AKP's ideology and practice.

Çınar's review represents a wide range of opinions about the political position of the AKP and its attitude towards secularism. Eligür [9] claims that the AKP has a political Islamic ideology and seeks to undermine the secular democracy. In contrast, Hale and Özbudun [10] argue that the AKP makes use of Turkey's Islamic social ethos the same way that conservative parties do in Western democracies, and relies on a vision of a secular yet culturally sensitive state.

Atasoy [3] brings in the concept of the AKP using Islam as a cultural background but also taking up liberal democratic reforms, partly due to the impulses of European integration and neoliberal economic agenda. Çınar [1] develops this idea further to argue that it is the appeal to a national identity rooted in the Ottoman Empire that informs the Islamic subtext of the AKP, while the policy direction of the party remains secular [24]. The AKP government has also been criticized for its authoritarian tendencies, especially in the period following the 2016 attempted military coup. In response, the AKP implemented mass detentions, detaining tens of thousands from all walks of life on charges of terrorist cleansing [11]. This strict measure drew the interest of the international community, with Amnesty International indicating that the arrests and suspensions had reached a disturbingly large scale. The years that followed were marked by further crackdowns against the military, police, and academics, again raising concerns internationally.

*Public schools in Ontario* are administered by either secular or Roman Catholic school boards. For Roman Catholic boards, it would be assumed that for the most part, their teachers would be of the Catholic faith; however, for the secular boards, there is no such requirement that they must. Since the 1980s, Roman Catholic schools have received public funding in a manner that is no different from that of secular schools, so long as they allow non-Catholic students to attend them and make provisions for those who want to opt out of religious activities or classes [7].

Recent events, however, have underscored some of the tensions in these exemptions, as students encounter

resistance to securing exemption requests that contravene human rights codes. Consider, for example, the exemption from religious studies classes granted to a high school student; this was granted with the heavy conditions imposed on his attendance at the graduation ceremonies; he sued. The settlement, in his favour, reiterates the need for Ontario Catholic schools to ensure access to such exemptions without undue interrogation or duress [7]. This legal outcome represents wider changes in the direction of religious neutrality within Ontario's public educational space. While religious courses or activities are not ruled out, what the government tries to ensure is protection of the student's autonomy in such a way that participation in these events or activities remains voluntarily based on consent in order to meet the evolving standards concerning inclusivity and individual rights [24].

#### 4. Critical Discussion

Ontario appears as a beacon in the area of public education, being one of the very best, most equitable, and adequate models around the world. Strongly, the government adheres to the allowance of various religious orientation accommodations through the system of education by law. It shows this by allowing religious exercise exemptions or course work exemption without placing an undue burden or compelling coercion in the student's choice; hence, student autonomy and an environment promoting excellence should be assured in the system of education.

The recognition of religious diversity and its accommodation, within educational systems, is considered a cornerstone in which public education in Ontario rests. In this sense, Ontario is unique in having both a secular and a Roman Catholic school board coexist, expressing the commitment of the province to providing education that would suit diverse needs and preferences by its students. Whereas Roman Catholic boards may have a preference wish-list for teachers of the Catholic faith, the absence of such a requirement in the secular boards makes such a board outright fair and equal opportunity to all teachers regardless of their religious affiliation. This therefore creates room for diversity within the teaching fraternity.

Secondly, that such a system as Roman Catholic schools get funding from the public purse on equal conditions as those the Secular ones testifies to the fact that the government is actually resolved to ensure that adequacy of resources and opportunities to education shall be no different between various School Boards. Funding is provided on the condition that provisions are made for the admission of non-Catholic students, as well as for any wishes by students or their parents for exemption from religious activities or classes. In this

way, public education in Ontario attempts to balance the scales of adequacy and fairness through equal public financial provision for both secular and Catholic schools within a framework of inclusiveness and respect for individual rights. At the heart of Ontario's system of education lies the concept of student choice and freedom. Recent events, like the court decision that ruled in favor of a high school student for exemption from religious studies classes, just prove the involvement of the government in the protection of the rights of students in making sure that participation in either religious activities or subject is totally voluntary and with consent. Through this, not only are individual freedoms preserved, but also a climate of excellently striving for improvement the students can engage in interest and aspiration, without having to be excessively coerced or constrained.

Contrast with the commitment of the Ontario system of public education to excellence, equity, and adequacy; it was hard not to notice the deep challenges Iran's educational reforms and the trajectory of the AKP in Turkey faced regarding these ideals. These reforms, though initiated during the revolutionary era with the aim of infusing Islamic ethos in all aspects of life, have tended to create concerns of ideological hegemony and aggregate dissent rather than help in the creation of inclusiveness and excellence in education. Academic freedom and diversity of thought, which are prime ingredients in attaining excellence in education, get restricted due to the overemphasis on promoting an Islamic culture within educational institutions. What is more, the reforms reinforced gender disparities, establishing a code of conduct further subordinating women and curtailing their educational opportunities. Therefore, even though Iranian educational reforms may have had the objective of refashioning society with Islamic values, they compromised principles of equity and adequacy in education.

Meanwhile, the trajectory that the AKP has followed in the governance of Turkey has provided a set of serious hurdles toward the achievement of excellence, equity, and adequacy in education. The complex interaction between political ideology, religious identity, and democratic governance has raised questions concerning the AKP's respect for democratic principles and the rule of law. The AKP government has been very notorious in its attempts to inject its Islamic ideology into the educational sector, a clear indication of its shrinking tendency toward secularism and academic freedom. Besides that, it has also manifested an authoritarian style of governance underlined by its reactions to such tests as the 2016 attempted coup, characterized by mass arrests and suspensions across different sectors. These steps have flouted the principles of equity and adequacy since they have been

constricting education opportunities and silencing voices.

Unlike the challenges faced under Iran and Turkey, the Ontario public education system entity fosters inclusiveness in self-governance and human rights expression. The Ontario's schooling system entity enables an omnipresent environment that fosters excellence, equity, and adequacy through the accommodation of religion affiliations, enabling students to feel self-determining in their choice to engage in religious activities and courses. Moreover, the presence of religious pluralism, together with an allowance for exemption from religious activities, entails all-inclusive principles and protection of individual rights so as to not overly burden or place limits on students from pursuing educational opportunities. These considerations make the Ontario approach, with emphasis on inclusiveness, autonomy, and individual rights, even more critical in developing an educational setting that shall foster excellence, equity, and adequacy. From what was presented regarding Iran and Turkey, ideological imperatives and autocratic regimes can inhibit the realisation of these ideals; thus, the Ontario commitment to the fostering of excellence and equity for all students is all the more significant.

In the canvas of Canadian education, much is being promised by the transformative leadership style to bring excellence, equity, and inclusiveness in education. Rooted in the principles of empowerment, collaboration, and visionary thinking, this exciting framework meets the changing needs and challenges of contemporary education.

The transformative leadership is basically harnessed by the stakeholders' inspiratory and empowering potential for changing the status quo. Such a leader is visionary in that he or she has the capacity to conceptualise an enviable dream for the future of education-based on excellence, equity, and inclusiveness. The transformative leader fosters ownership and co-responsibility through discussion and decision-making with educators, students, parents, and members of the community in the collective pursuit of realizing an exemplary educational system.

Transformative leadership is concerned with equity and social justice, taking into consideration the myriad of needs and diverse backgrounds prevalent in a school community. Leaders using this approach are part of the dismantling of systemic barriers to learning and achievement, encouraging policies and practices that foster inclusion and equity for all students. The transformative leader builds learning environments in which every student will be valued, supported, and empowered to succeed by creating a culture respectful of others, empathetic, and culturally competent.

Transformative leadership also highly values collaboration and innovation to advance excellence in education. This is where leaders would look for opportunities to collaborate with others in the education community and beyond, reaping maximum benefit from their shared expertise and resources to achieve a common goal. Transformative leaders would create a culture of continuous learning and improvement, thereby fostering experimentation, creativity, and risk-taking-which then lead to the development of new teaching practices and programs that achieve the assurance of increased student engagement and improvement in outcomes.

Transformative leadership serves as a strong foundation from which to advance excellence, equity, and inclusivity in the Canadian education system. Taking an approach that inspires and empowers all stakeholders while placing equity and social justice at the forefront, and fostering collaboration and innovation, the transformative leader will be able to create meaningful change and build learning environments where all students will be truly enabled to achieve full potential. It is also in this regard that, through a transformative leadership style, the meaningful and lasting changes in education outcomes for all students can be truly effected as Canadian educators continue to lead in these uncharted times.

## 5. Conclusions

Among the systems examined, the Ontario public education system represents a prototype of transformative leadership that secures excellence, equity, and adequacy within a collective vision. Based on the power of empowerment and collaboration, the transformative leadership played rather a pivotal role in framing Ontario's educational landscape into a model that fosters inclusion, individual rights, and excellence in education.

Core in the education system of Ontario is a transformational leadership style characterized by vision, empowerment, and collaboration. The leaders in the Ontario public education system have focused on a visionary perspective whereby they express a vision of what education may be like in the years to come, where inclusivity, diversity, and excellence are seen as core elements to be experienced by all students. Through the stakeholder dialogue and decision-making, transformative leaders allowed the cultivation of ownership and shared responsibilities for realizing this collective vision-one that serves as a very driver of positive change and innovation within the educational community.

What is more, the transformative leadership within the Ontario education system is committed to equity

and social justice. In such a system, the leaders value the diversity in the needs and backgrounds of the students; they know the need for destroying systemic barriers to the process of learning and achievement for students. Transformative leaders promote policies and initiatives that ensure equal opportunity and support services for the provision of resources.

Besides, transformative leadership in the Ontario education system focuses on liberty and individual rights, therefore; students have a sense of independence to pursue their educational aspirations freely. The inclusion of exemptions from religious activities or courses with limited or no scrutiny and coercion allows Ontario's approach to be accommodative and respectful toward those beliefs and values held by individuals, further engendering a culture of acceptance and diversity in these school contexts.

Conversely, educational reforms in Iran and the AKP trajectory in Turkey have underlined the challenges presented by an authoritarian way of governance and ideological hegemony. Lack of transformative leadership in such contexts translates into silenced voices, lack of autonomy, and questions regarding commitment to democratic principles, all combining to defeat the goals of excellence, equity, and adequacy in education.

The Ontario Public Education system provides an excellent illustration of how, in the light of such requirements, leadership influences the outcome. Relatively speaking, striking a balance on visionary leadership, commitment to equity and social justice, and valuing individual rights and autonomy, the approach taken by Ontario makes it possible for students to truly achieve excellence, irrespective of their background or beliefs. Moving forward, it can only be expected that the modern educational landscape will continue to pose complex challenges for Canadian educators, but the potential certainly exists for a transformative style of leadership to serve as a true catalyst for meaningful and lasting improvements in educational outcomes for all students.

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