# Principal Sabbatical Research Report
## Term 3 2009

## Topic
**Synergy for future leaders. How do successful principal professional learning communities operate to ensure raised achievement for 21st century students?**

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## Executive Summary
After having an involvement in working collegially over a period of time with principals in other schools, I was keen to start combining this mode of operating in with the cluster work which was developing through our schooling improvement initiative.
Of particular interest was;

- Reflecting on research and current opinions of respected educationists who have been and are still influential in my thinking.
- Aligning my thinking with NZ research on Kiwi Leadership and the principal's role in having the greatest impact on student achievement.
- Designing or adopting a way of working for myself and as an option for our Schooling Improvement initiative in Naenae.
- Exploring the notion of Principal Leadership and Appraisal.

## Purpose
"Synergy for Future Leaders"

- How do successful Principal Professional Learning Communities operate to ensure "Raised achievement for 21$^{st}$ century students."
- What is the role of Critical Friend(s) for Principal's embedding Schooling Improvement Initiatives for sustainability.
- How can the BES professional learning and development, leadership and Kiwi Leadership/draft professional standards be aligned to provide a framework for effective principals and what tools can be used to measure this?

## Methodology
Over recent years my involvement with a cluster of schools through a "Schooling Improvement Initiative" and having 12 months in the role of Project Management of the Ministry of Education's "EHSAS initiative", it had reinforced to me what Richard Elmore states as "the hard to pick fruit" requires schools to network and cluster on the problem solving aspect.

During my period of sabbatical I took time to reflect on some educationalists who were having an influence of my thinking in my school and my work with my cluster in Naenae, (Michael Fullan, Richard Elmore, Louise Stoll), to hear speakers at the ICP

conference in Singapore (Andy Hargreaves, The Team from the Ariki project), and then make some comparisons and alignment with our own recent leadership direction in New Zealand through the Kiwi Leadership framework, and the Leadership BES.

## Background and Rationale
What are the researchers saying?
The first 3 below were influencing my leadership both within my school and as I worked with others:

*Louise Stoll*
**Professional Learning**
- Shared goals –*we know where we are going*
- Collective responsibility for pupils' learning –*we must succeed*
- Collaboration focused on learning –*we are working on this together*
- Continuous improvement–*we can get better*
- Lifelong learning–*learning is for everyone*
- Risk taking –*we learn by trying something new*
- Support –*there is always someone there to help*
- Mutual Respect –*everyone has something to offer*
- Openness –*we can discuss our differences*
- Celebration & humour –*we feel good about ourselves*

*Richard Elmore*
- Phase one:          Problem Recognition
- Phase two:          Low Hanging Fruit
- Phase three:        Stagnation
- Phase four:         External help
- Phase five:         Barrier resolution
- Phase six:          Impossible work
- Phase seven:        Transformed organisation          ⌉ PPLC
- Phase eight:        Self-management of Improvement⌡  SI

*Michael Fullan*

| Change Drivers | Secrets of Change |
| --- | --- |
| Engaging morale purpose | Love your employees |
| Building capacity | Connect peers with purpose |
| Understanding the change process | Capacity building prevails |
| Developing cultures of learning | Learning is the work |
| Developing cultures of learning | Transparency rules |
| Developing cultures of evaluation | Systems learn |

So the opportunity to hear and reflect on new knowledge enabled me to develop further understandings and hence make some refined judgements:
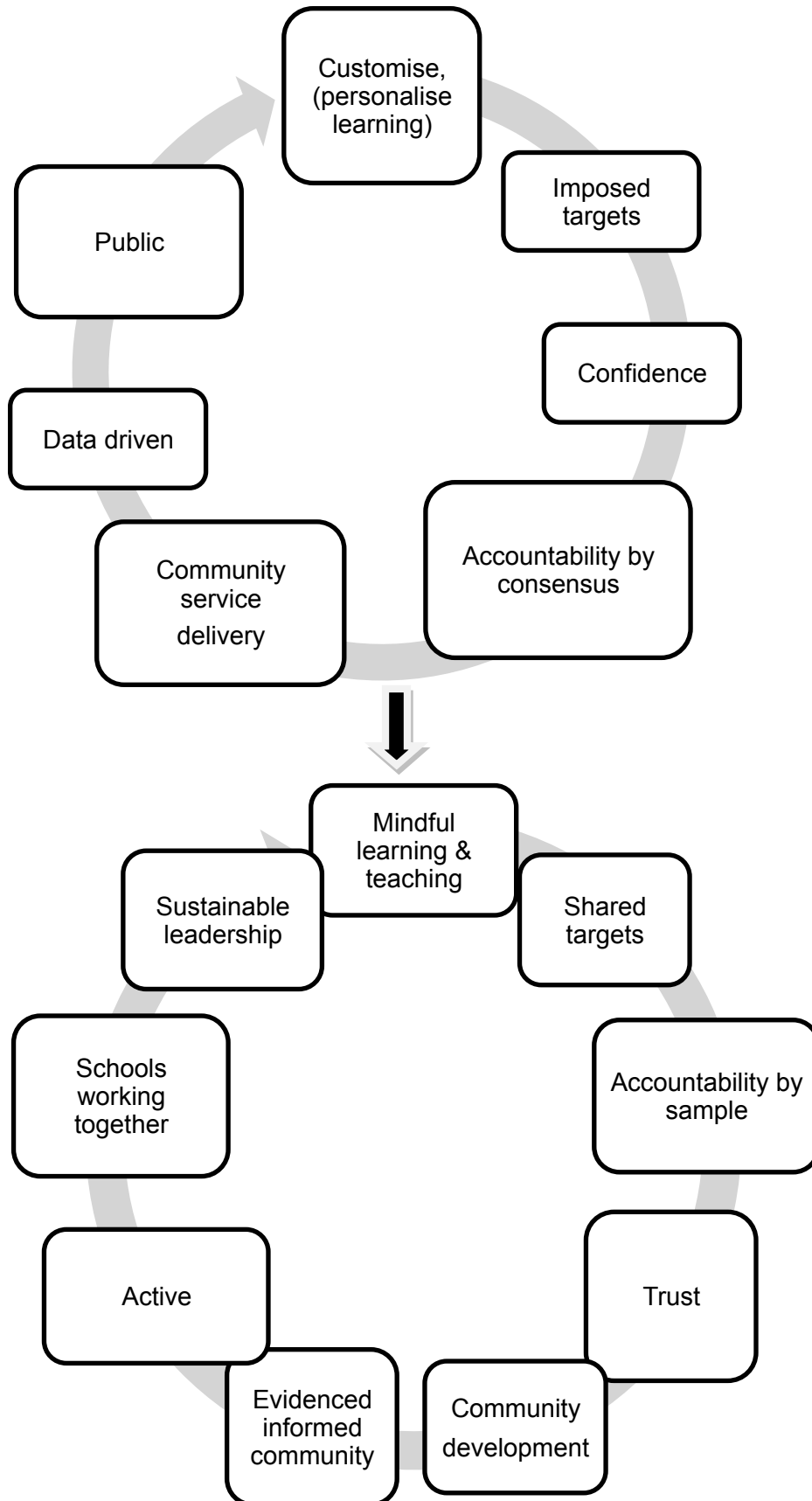
*Andy Hargreaves*: The 21st century is about;
- Learning to know
- Learning to do
- Learning to be
- Learning to live together

| The First Way of Change - 60's - 70's **Active Trust** | Second Way -80s-90s **Active Mistrust** (Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan) | Third way: **Public Trust** (Bill Clinton, Tony Blair) |
|---|---|---|
| Wanted to change the world. Age where there was a lot of flexibility. A lot of innovation in this period. Government lets teachers get on with it through trust. Teachers taught the way they wanted whether students needed it or were engaged. Incoherence. | Top Down Government Trying to add some coherence to performance of schools. Standardisation, more competition, centralisation Goals / performance / Targets. Tick box culture / coverage. Things that create energy get pushed aside with need for statisticsTop Down Government Trying to add some coherence to performance of schools. Standardisation, more competition, centralisation Goals / performance / Targets. Tick box culture / coverage. Things that create energy get pushed aside with need for statistics | Combination of Top down government and bottom up support. Targets, standardised tests. Limits –goals at top are government goals, narrow and not humanitarian |

Fourth Way -**Active Trust**

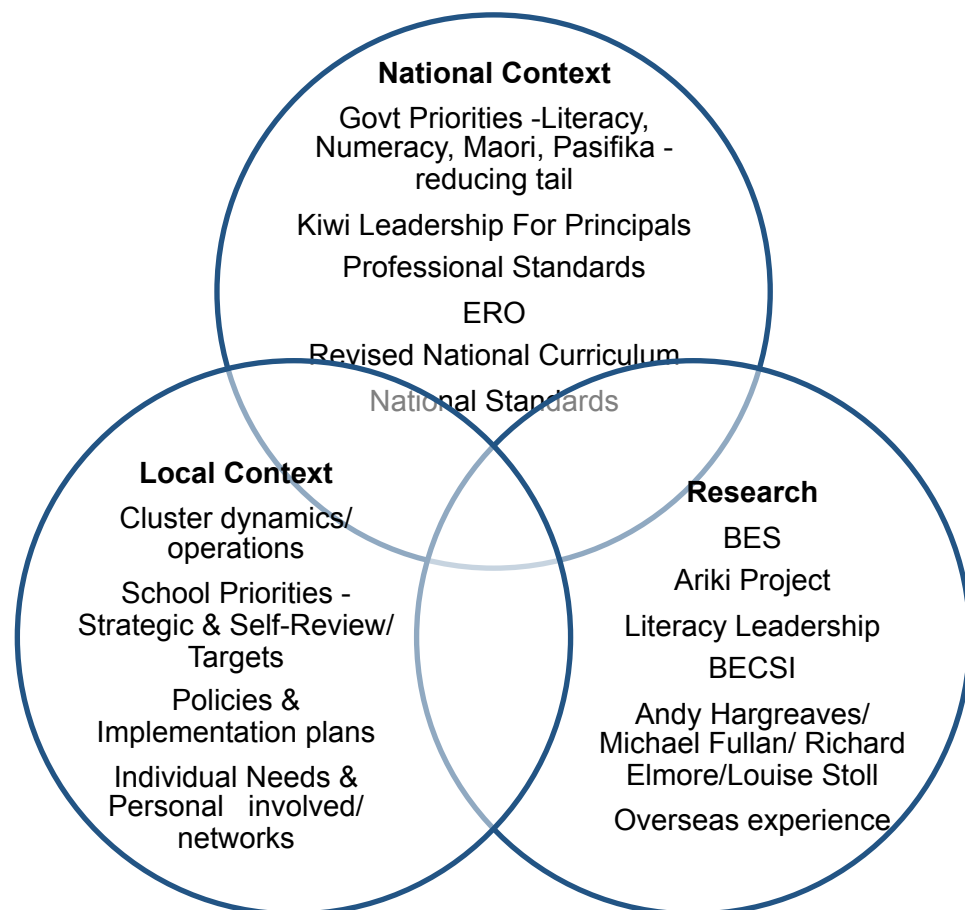| 6 pillars of purpose | 3 Principles of Professionalism | 4 Catalysts of Coherence |
|---|---|---|
| An inspiring & inclusive vision<br>Public engagement | High Quality Teachers<br>*Quality control at entry point* | Sustainable leadership<br>*Succession planning & distributed leadership* |
| No achievement without investment | Powerful Professionalism<br>*Agents of positive change* | Integrating Networks<br>*Disseminating knowledge, spread innovation* |
| Corporate Educational responsibility | | Responsibility before accountability |
| Students as partners in change<br>Mindful learning & teaching | Lively learning communities<br>*PLCs using data & judgement together  in a meaningful way* | Measure achievement through statistically valid sample |

Moving from the Third Way to the Fourth Way

Customise, (personalise learning)

Imposed targets

Public

Confidence

Data driven

Accountability by consensus

Community service delivery

Mindful learning & teaching

Sustainable leadership

Shared targets

Schools working together

Accountability by sample

Active

Trust

Evidenced informed community

Community development

Denise Sainsbury
Sabbatical Report 2009

Comparing with what is happening on the New Zealand Scene -A home grown solution:

| Principles of Quality Professional Development | | Leadership Dimensions (Robinson 2007) | Ariki Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Principal development should engage the participant & at the same time enable more effective School Development | • Establishing goals and expectations | Challenging current practices. Developing reflective critique processes across school |
| 2 | Working with evidence of practice in a carefully proscribed reflective group setting will encourage the development of high quality judgement | • Strategic Resourcing.<br>• Promoting and participating in Teacher learning and Development | Establishing QLC's within current practices. Using the reflective protocols for reflecting on & critiquing current practice. |
| 3 | Professional development should be integrated into the fabric of daily work – instead of not as well as. | • Planning, Coordinating and evaluating teaching & the curriculum | Providing a model of collecting & evaluating evidence of practice by substituting new appraisal practices. |
| 4 | QPD should help principals find relationships between their interactions and what teachers do. | • Planning, Coordinating and evaluating teaching & the curriculum | Matching evidence of principal practice with increased effectiveness of teaching & learning. |
| 5 | Knowledge acquisition opportunities need to mesh with current interests & use relevant technologies to engage participants. | • Ensuring an orderly & supportive environment | Introducing Knowledge Acquisition opportunities through a Podcast resource.<br>Prioritising learning and teaching activities. |

***The Six assumptions lie behind the thinking from which this project is created:***
• Current Principal Appraisal processes have a bias towards compliance and have limited ability to focus on the principal's influence on learning and teaching.
• Effective schools encourage reflective thinking and critique at every level.
• We should be looking for correlations between what teachers do and leadership interactions.
• Teachers should be expected to critique their practice on a regular basis and principals should be guiding this critique.
• Summaries from these teacher reflective sessions should provide evidence of the school's strategy in action.
• Pedagogical leadership can be ascertained to be present when principals are able to assemble evidence of their own practice which can be shown to have a positive effect on what happens in classrooms.

## Findings

**National Context**

Govt Priorities -Literacy, Numeracy, Maori, Pasifika - reducing tail

Kiwi Leadership For Principals

Professional Standards

ERO

Revised National Curriculum

National Standards

**Local Context**

Cluster dynamics/ operations

School Priorities - Strategic & Self-Review/ Targets

Policies & Implementation plans

Individual Needs & Personal involved/ networks

**Research**

BES

Ariki Project

Literacy Leadership

BECSI

Andy Hargreaves/ Michael Fullan/ Richard Elmore/Louise Stoll

Overseas experience

## Implications

| Role of Principal as the Lead Learner in implementing the New Zealand Curriculum to 21$^{st}$ century learners (Schools Planning & Reporting Framework) | | Kiwi Leadership Framework | Professional Standards for Principals | BES Leadership Dimensions (Robinson 2007) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objectives** | | **Actions** | **Measures** | **Outcomes** |
| **Charter** –Vision, Strategies, Annual **Evaluate** –Monitor, Self-Review **Report**-Parents, Community, Board, Variance (MOE) | Relationships | **School Context** **Manaakitanga** leading with moral purpose **Pono** having self-belief **Ako** being a learner **Awhinatanga** guiding & supporting By **Leading Change** **Problem Solving** in **Culture** **Pedagogy** **Partnerships & Networks** **Systems** | **Culture** Provide professional leadership that focuses the school culture on enhancing learning and teaching. **Pedagogy** Create a learning environment where there is an expectation that all students will experience success in learning. **Partnerships & Networks** Strengthen communication and relationships to enhance student learning. **Systems** Develop and use management systems to support and enhance learning. | **Establishing Goals & Expectations**; inclusive of a school-wide vision aligned to other school goals and initiatives **Planning, Coordinating & Evaluating** teaching & the curriculum **Promoting & participating** in Teacher learning & Developing **Strategic** Resourcing **Ensuring** and Orderly and Supportive Environment |

## Benefits

Our **VISION** is for our learners …..
So our shared **BELIEFS** give consensus that we should operate with these **VALUES** and by these **PRINCIPLES** which are based on **EVIDENCE** from BES, Ka Hikitia & other appropriate **RESEARCH & EVALUATION** & our local **DATA**.
Then we need to adopt these **STRATEGIES** which will require **ACTIONS** to **IMPLEMENT** learning and teaching **PROGRAMMES** for skills in **LITERACY** & **NUMERACY** as part of the **key competencies**; Thinking; Using language, symbols & texts; Managing self; Relating to others; Participating and Contributing, while using the other learning areas of Social Studies, Science, Technology, Health (often

**INTEGRATED**), **Arts, Sports/PE** –as a vehicle for authentic contexts to engage and give opportunities to transfer learning.
We will aim for **TARGETS** with **MEASURES** and we will show in **REVIEW** and **REPORTING** systems or **ACTION** changes based on **EVIDENCE**.

## Conclusions

**LINKS TO PRINCIPAL APPRAISAL PROCESS**

| Accountability (evaluative) | Developmental (supportive) |
|---|---|
| Professional Standards (2008) Feedback from Survey will be shared with Chairperson through dialogue. The Chairperson will then use the critiquing form on professional standards to initiate discussions with randomly selected staff /community/students | Personal Goals The Principal will provide evidence from a range of sources as a reflective portfolio. The Chairperson will validate aspects of this. Self-Review/ interview/ feedback In-school Leaders and outside facilitators Cluster Principals who have been involved in critique |

## Acknowledgements

First I would like to thank the Board of Trustees of Dyer Street School for the support they gave me in undertaking my sabbatical including the monetary contribution allowing me to attend the ICP conference in Singapore.
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Many thanks to principals and staff of the schools who willingly gave their time, to allow me to talk and reflect during this time, particularly those in the Naenae Cluster, those I have worked with during the appraisal process and those involved in the Ariki project
I must acknowledge and thank the staff of my own school, in particular the Acting Principal Lisa Gibson and the other members of the Leadership Team who carried out additional responsibilities during my absence.
To the NZ Ministry of Education, who provided the opportunity for this sabbatical, thank you. It certainly enabled me to pursue a personal interest and to reflect while recharging my batteries.