



Principals as Educational Leaders



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FOREWORD

Tena koutou katoa.

It is my pleasure to introduce the Kiwi Leadership for Principals document. It represents the collaboration of a range of professionals committed to school leadership and ensuring the very best learning outcomes for our young people.

Research on school leadership has identified that principals can have a significant effect on student achievement and well-being. Principals have a critical role in leading an education system that equips all New Zealanders with the knowledge, skills and values to be successful citizens in the 21st century.

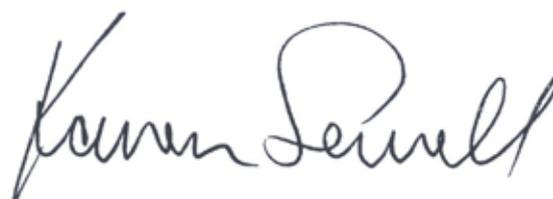
The OECD report *Improving School Leadership* (2008) recommended clarifying the key elements and responsibilities of school leaders' roles that have the greatest impact on student learning as a crucial step for strengthening professional leadership. In response, *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* reflects the qualities, knowledge and skills required for this critical task of leading learning in our schools. At the heart of the *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* document is the principal as an educational leader, leading both the learning and the organisation to enhance educational outcomes for all young people.

We face a number of challenges that require committed and responsive leadership at all levels. A critical leadership challenge is reflected in the disproportionately large number of Māori and Pasifika students who are not achieving their potential within the current education system. We must acknowledge that we have too many students who are leaving school without the level of qualification they need to succeed in life. These challenges require leaders who are committed to ongoing professional learning, who are receptive to new evidence as to what works and who are skilled at relating to students and their school communities.

Kiwi Leadership for Principals has been released after extensive and open consultation. Over the last two years, representatives of primary and secondary principals' groups have met with the Ministry, researchers, leadership advisers, and representatives from unions and professional associations to develop this document. As a result, *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* is based on principals' experiences of what works, the learning in the principal initiatives since 2001, such as the First Time Principals Programme, and the evidence from New Zealand and overseas about leadership and student achievement.

My thanks go to all who have contributed to the development of this document. *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* provides a starting point for aligning and strengthening our support for principals as educational leaders. Our challenge is now to build from this document to better support principals in their work with others in leading schools for the enhancement of student achievement and well-being. ■

Nāku noa



Karen Sewell
Secretary for Education

The main purpose of Kiwi Leadership for Principals is to present a model of leadership that reflects the qualities, knowledge and skills required to lead New Zealand schools from the present to the future. At the heart of the model is a clear focus on how we can work together to improve educational and social outcomes for all our young people.



INTRODUCTION

What is Kiwi Leadership for Principals About?

The Ministry of Education has developed this position paper, Kiwi Leadership for Principals (the KLP), in collaboration with the school sector. It is underpinned by research evidence contained in the 2008 Educational Leadership Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (Schooling) currently in development and from school leaders' insights derived from their experience.

Kiwi Leadership describes an approach to school principalship that is specially suited to the distinctive contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand. Our system of self-management allows principals to respond in ways that are appropriate to the needs and circumstances of their own schools. It draws on the Kiwi "can-do" attitude that is characteristic of New Zealand principals. This attitude is typified by a willingness to take action and achieve results.

The main purpose of the KLP is to present a model of leadership that reflects the qualities, knowledge and skills required to lead New Zealand schools from the present to the future. At the heart of the model is a clear focus on how we can work together to improve educational and social outcomes for all our young people.

The KLP describes our shared expectations of New Zealand principals now and in the years ahead. It provides a reference point for developing the Professional Leadership Strategy (PLS). The PLS will provide a three to five year plan that outlines how the Government intends to work with the sector to strengthen school leadership.

The KLP has been developed after considering:

- what international and national studies tell us about principal leadership practices that contribute to improved student outcomes. Information emerging from the Educational Leadership Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (Robinson, 2008, Ministry of Education, forthcoming) and New Zealand's ongoing involvement with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) contribute to the model of educational leadership presented here;
- what experienced principals have told us about effective professional practice;
- the kinds of leadership capabilities that schools might require in the future;
- feedback from leadership research and sector policy groups.

Educational Leadership

The KLP focusses particularly on the educational leadership that principals provide. This focus includes building and leading a community of learners, staff and board for whom the key interest is improving a range of student learning outcomes.

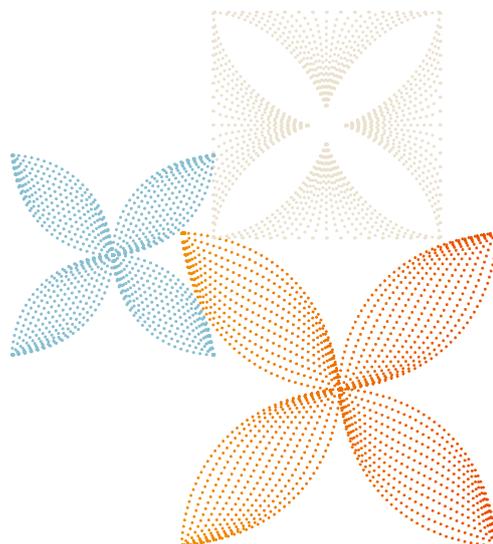
Effective educational leadership builds the pedagogical, administrative and cultural conditions necessary for successful learning and teaching. Principals do not do this alone. They use their leadership and management skills in ways that motivate and develop the capabilities of others so that responsibility for strengthening and sustaining the work and direction of the school is shared.

Aspects of educational leadership are specific to the principal's role. These include setting strategic goals intended to enhance teaching and learning, and obtaining and managing the resources needed to achieve those goals. Leading change, problem solving, building relational trust, and managing the complex issues that occur in any school community are all part of the principal's role as an educational leader.

The KLP also takes account of the particular conditions in which New Zealand's self-managing schools operate. The New Zealand system of self-management is one of the most devolved within the OECD. This presents special obligations, opportunities, challenges and responsibilities for principals (Pont et al, 2008).

As well as being pedagogical leaders, principals are responsible for the day-to-day management of a broad range of policy and operational matters, including personnel, finance, property, health and safety, and the interpretation and delivery of the national curriculum. Principals are accountable to their boards of trustees for the effective conduct of these responsibilities. They are accountable, with the board, to their school community and local iwi. They also link with government agencies such as the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office who share responsibility for an effective school system.

In short, principals are ultimately responsible for the day-to-day management of everything that happens in their schools. ■



LOOKING FROM NOW TO THE FUTURE

21st Century Schooling

Our vision for schooling in the 21st century is consistent with The New Zealand Curriculum (2007). It is for young people who:

- are confident, connected, actively involved, and equipped to be lifelong learners;
- are creative, energetic, and enterprising;
- seize the opportunities offered by new knowledge and technologies to secure a sustainable social, cultural, economic, and environmental future for our country;
- work to create an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Māori and Pākehā recognise each other as full Treaty partners and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring;
- in their school years continue to develop the values, knowledge, and competencies that will enable them to live full and satisfying lives;
- are strong in the five key competencies: thinking; using language, symbols and texts; managing self; relating to others; participating and contributing.

21st Century Principalship

Our vision for principals in the 21st century is shaped by the rapid change and growth of the world we live in. As society, knowledge and technologies grow and change, so do our students' learning needs and the way learning is delivered.

The changing demographics of our schools are reflected in the increasingly diverse mix of students who attend them. Our students are from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and come with a range of experiences and needs. This means that schools have to respond to different and greater challenges than ever before.

The principals who lead our schools need to have the personal and professional qualities, knowledge and leadership skills required to meet these challenges.

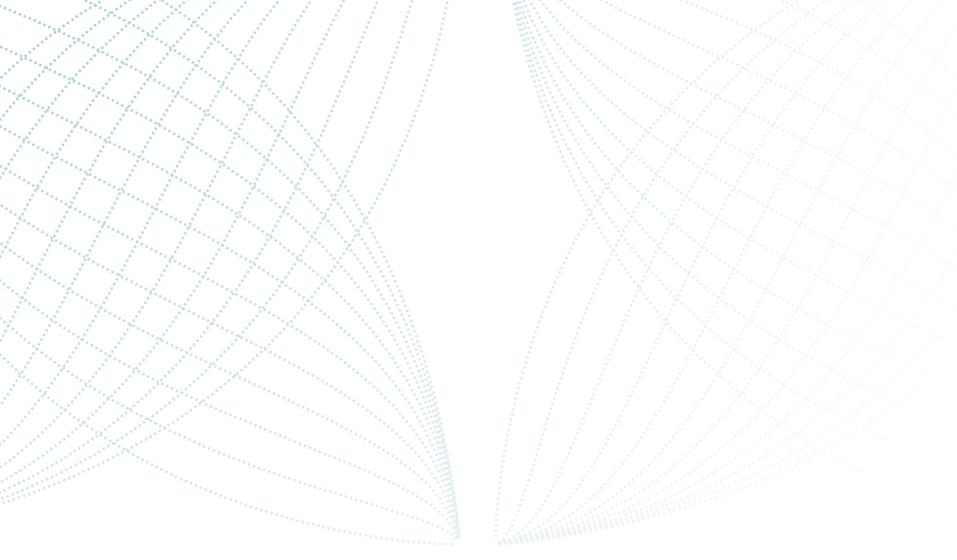
For example, school leaders who develop a climate of mutually trusting relationships with staff will

be essential to fostering the kinds of innovation, creativity and confidence that will address new complexities in student learning. Encouraging teachers to fully engage in ongoing professional learning should help give them the confidence to be innovative in classroom design, familiar with digital environments, and capable of using pedagogies that meet students' learning needs.

The distinct context of each school means principals need to have the kinds of leadership skills and understandings that will help them to maintain the best possible conditions for teaching, learning and building community confidence in the school. Building strong learning communities where there is shared commitment to investigating, exploring and evaluating practice is a critical leadership responsibility.



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Our Distinctive System

New Zealand's school system has a number of characteristics that distinguish it from other systems. Some of these relate to the place of Māori as tangata whenua.

The Treaty of Waitangi is central to, and symbolic of our national heritage, identity, and future. Our commitment to the principles of the Treaty obliges a distinctive focus on ensuring excellent education outcomes for Māori. Educational success is the key to enabling Māori to live as Māori in te ao Māori and in the wider world. Our task is to expand on emerging successes for Māori. This is fundamental to an equitable education system.

Another characteristic of the New Zealand system is our approach to self-managing schools. This highly decentralised system gives many opportunities for principals to work closely with their boards of trustees as the professional leader and chief executive. It has promoted wider community participation in decision-making, and it has allowed schools to better respond to the specific needs of their students and the expectations of the community. Decentralised decision-making has given principals and boards the ability to set the direction and align resources with the school's goals and targets, which are expected to reflect national priorities. The principal is responsible for implementing the direction agreed by the board. In every New Zealand school the principal is ultimately responsible for the quality and effectiveness of the multiple and interconnected dimensions of educational leadership and management.

The self-managing devolution has produced many examples of innovative curricula and partnerships between schools and their families, whānau and

communities, as they have worked together to meet the particular needs of their young people. The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) offers further opportunities for schools to design a curriculum specific to their own contexts, and to strengthen the engagement of parents, families and whānau in supporting their children's learning.

While devolution has allowed principals to develop systems in response to the needs of their students, it has also increased their administrative workload. Some research (e.g. Hodgen & Wylie, 2005) suggests that New Zealand principals spend almost twice as much time on administration as do their international counterparts. The multiple demands of leadership and administration can be a source of tension for the principal when deciding how to prioritise time and attention.

New Zealand principals respond positively to the challenges of a devolved system, working out ways to serve the best interests of their schools, teachers and students. Principals are supportive of our self-managing system because it allows them to make decisions and direct their school's resources to pursue the educational goals agreed with their board.

Through our vision for principalship in New Zealand schools and the implementation of a professional leadership strategy, we seek to address challenges that face our schooling system, particularly those relating to supply, retention, succession and leadership sustainability.

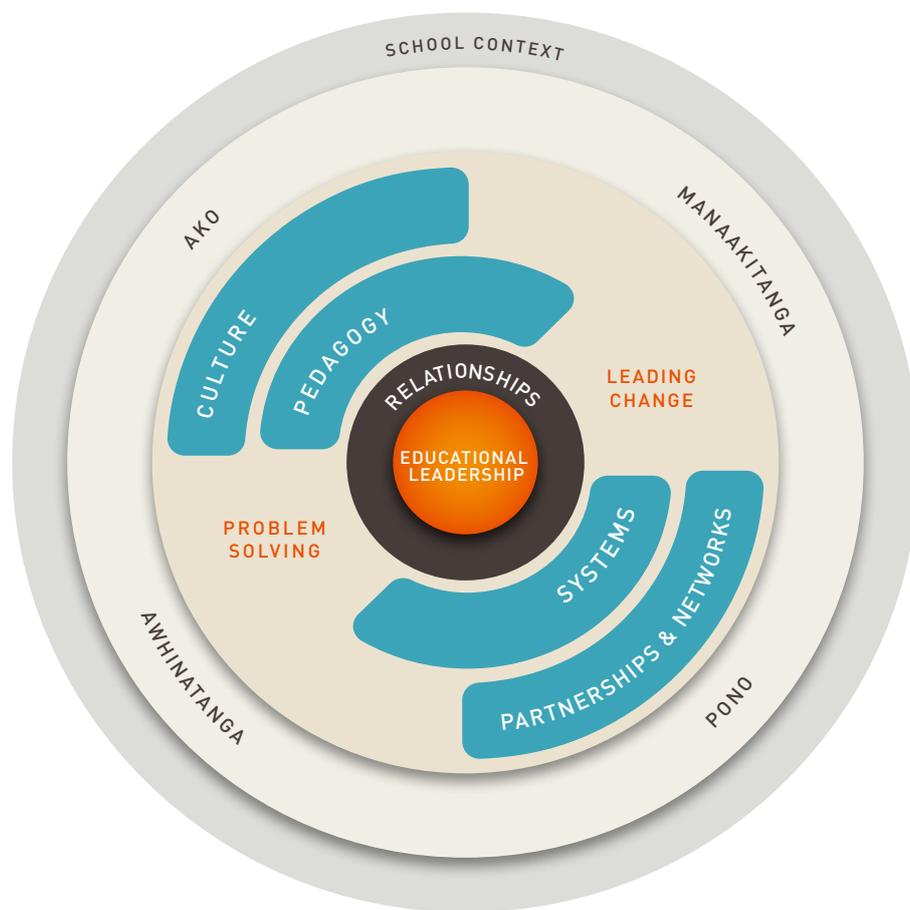


Our challenges are:

- to provide professional learning opportunities for principals that will assist them to meet the increasing complexity of their role in a 21st century schooling system;
- to support principals to focus on student achievement and pedagogical leadership within a self-managing context;
- to distribute pedagogical leadership capacity and capability through every level of the school to improve student social and educational outcomes, and reduce within-school variance;
- to respond to the learning needs of an increasingly diverse student population, including those who live with disabilities and/or learning challenges, and to better serve Māori and Pasifika students;
- to recruit and retain quality principals for all school contexts, particularly for small rural schools, and those with high Māori and Pasifika populations;
- to increase New Zealand research and development into educational leadership, aimed at systemic improvement. ■

A MODEL OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

This Educational Leadership Model sets out the qualities, knowledge and skills principals need to lead 21st century schools.



Elements of the Model

Educational Leadership

Educational Leadership is at the centre of the model. Educational leaders lead learning to:

- improve outcomes for all students, with a particular focus on Māori and Pasifika;
- create the conditions for effective teaching and learning;
- develop and maintain schools as learning organisations;
- make connections and build networks within and beyond their schools;
- develop others as leaders.



School context

Different contexts can present different challenges for school leaders. As educational leaders, principals need to adapt or adjust their leadership practices to meet the particular demands of school context.

Manaakitanga, pono, ako and awhinatanga¹

Effective school leaders demonstrate these four qualities. They are essential for school leaders who are focussed on educational leadership.

Leading change and problem solving

Leading change and problem solving are key activities of effective educational leaders.

Culture, pedagogy, systems, partnerships and networks, bounded by relationships

School leaders work across these four interconnected areas of practice. In order to be effective they must be knowledgeable and capable in all. Quality relationships are pivotal to effectiveness in all four areas.

The Importance of Relationships

Building trusting and learning-focussed relationships within and beyond the school is central to the principal's role (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Relationships built on trust are developed when principals respect and care for others and consistently “walk the talk”.

Principals can benefit from personal reflection, sharing ideas and initiatives with their peers, and working with others to clarify situations and solve problems. Relationship skills are embedded in every dimension of such actions and involve much more than simply getting along with others. They play an important part in managing conflicts of interest, supporting and challenging teacher practices, and dealing with a range of challenges and situations.

Educational leadership and leading change require principals to communicate clearly their

intentions to teachers. The more principals focus their relationships with teachers on the core business of teaching, and the more they communicate goals and expectations about quality teaching and learning for each student, the more effective they are likely to be in leading their schools towards improved student outcomes for all. Moreover, integrating staff considerations in the development and implementation of school practices is central to making significant shifts. Effective principals get the relationships right and tackle the educational challenges at the same time — incorporating both, simultaneously, into their problem solving (Robinson, 2007).

The relationship principals have with their boards of trustees is especially important. The principal has a unique constitutional role in being both a full

1 Manaakitanga, leading with moral purpose; Pono, having self-belief; Ako, being a learner; Awhinatanga, guiding and supporting.



member of the board and its chief executive. Among other responsibilities, the principal and the board of trustees are jointly responsible for setting the educational direction for the school and its goals for student learning. The principal's task includes providing the board with evidence-based analysis of student learning and evaluative reviews of school practices that help inform future action.

Principals know how important building and sustaining good community relationships is to the well-being and culture of their schools. Relationship building prepares the ground for creating partnerships between the school and its community. When the community engages with the work of the school, the positive spin-offs invariably benefit both teaching and learning.

Improved learning for all students is likely when the principal's leadership is underpinned by effective functional and interpersonal

relationships. These relationships play an important part in enabling the principal to:

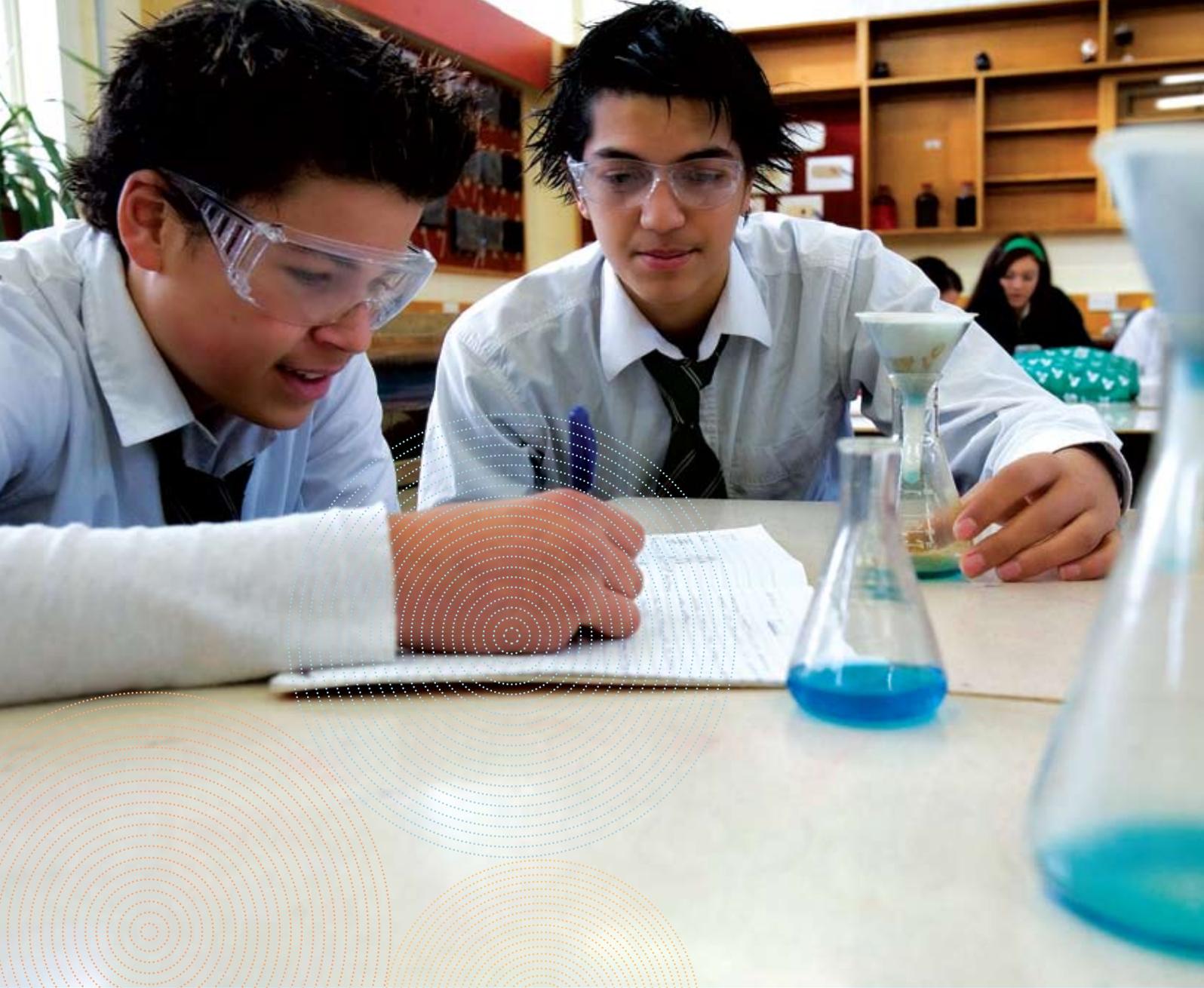
- build trusting relationships through active listening, caring for others, and demonstrating personal integrity;
- actively lead and participate in professional learning with staff;
- manage the delicate balance between supporting and challenging others;
- encourage and participate in professional conversations that help teachers to share expertise and strategies that improve student learning;
- manage dilemmas when the needs of the students and those of other members of the school community are in conflict;
- encourage giving feedback to teachers through regular and documented classroom observations.

The Power of Context

A key difference between New Zealand and other OECD countries is our particular system of self-managing schools. Our system requires that principals work as chief executives of their boards of trustees to support the development of policy, then take responsibility for carrying policy into practice. This includes setting the direction for the school in ways that reflect the needs and values of the local community.

Different school types, sizes and communities create different contextual challenges for principals (Southworth, 2004). New Zealand school contexts are more varied than most other OECD countries where, for example, up to 90 per cent

of schools are in urban centres. In New Zealand about half of all schools are situated in provincial or rural areas. Forty per cent of New Zealand primary schools have fewer than 100 students, and many have teaching principals. At the other extreme are large secondary schools with up to 3,000 students. In these schools the distance between the principal, staff and students is considerably greater than in smaller schools. The increasingly diverse composition of New Zealand's student population, accompanied by a widening range of student learning needs, present further challenges. Principals and teachers are faced with developing the school's capacity to identify, understand and meet those learning needs.



Context has major implications for leadership and management arrangements, professional development, shaping the curriculum, developing learning environments, managing resources, and engaging with communities.

Because principals work within the fabric and politics of the school community, the leadership role extends to the wider community itself. This requires knowing and understanding what is valued by the local community. Then, using skilful relationships and communications, the principal leads thinking around how the school and community might work together to provide students with the best learning opportunities. ■

KEY PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Leading Change

To lead change in schools, principals need knowledge and insight into the complex processes of change and the key drivers that make for successful change (Fullan, 2005). In particular they need to keep their focus clearly on the central vision for their school, even in the face of distractions. A principal's ability to establish relational trust among all members of the school community contributes to building a collaborative learning culture that can help bring the school community together around the core values that underpin the vision.

Achieving the desired impact of the revised New Zealand curriculum will depend on the leadership and initiative of principals, particularly over the next three to four years. The curriculum provides the overarching vision, principles and values for education in New Zealand. It also outlines key competencies which have emerged from research about the abilities and qualities successful school leavers need to participate fully in society. Supporting students to explore values, develop competencies, and build the knowledge and skills identified in the New Zealand curriculum will require principals to identify areas for change in their schools, consider the focus for this change, and how the change can be stimulated and sustained.

Focussed effort in a school is important if school-wide teaching and student learning are to improve. This involves communicating clear academic goals, having high expectations, and

valuing student well-being. All change processes benefit from being evidence informed and having regular review of progress and effect.

Although the principal is in a critical position to lead change, he or she cannot do it alone. Empowering others throughout the school to develop and exercise leadership roles and to share in the leadership of change is both desirable and achievable. This, along with the engagement of support from external agencies, is vital for principals working in difficult or challenging school contexts.

The greater the challenge of the school context, the greater the need for a deliberate leadership focus on student learning and well-being. Few troubled schools have been turned around without the intervention of a principal who has set clear priorities and goals that are followed through with effective strategy. Many other factors contribute to such turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst (Marzano et al, 2005).

Principals who lead change effectively recognise that there are procedural and emotional considerations. One can impact on the other. Change on a large scale invariably needs a team approach to leadership.

The team leading change requires:

- up-to-date knowledge of successful approaches to teaching, learning and assessment;
- the ability to convincingly communicate the rationale for any change;

- the ability to lead staff development that results in change;
- knowledge of the ongoing conditions needed to support shifts in teaching practice;
- skill in monitoring the impact of the change and making adjustments when needed.

Effective leaders recognise that change can bring about counter-productive emotional responses. It can also challenge established practice and professional values. Principals leading significant change need to pay particular attention to:

- ensuring all staff feel their concerns are genuinely listened to and understood;
- supporting staff who feel they may lose control during the exploration of new approaches;
- explaining how changed approaches may be consistent with some established values while challenging others.

Problem Solving

A key activity of educational leadership is identifying, analysing and solving problems that occur in schools. The skill of understanding and managing the problem solving process is central to all aspects of educational leadership.

Educational leaders who are successful problem solvers see the “big picture” and ensure that others understand that students’ needs or interests are the first consideration in the process

of reaching a solution. They begin by identifying the issues that need to be taken into account, and they recognise that there are often tensions between the issues and the range of possible solutions. When attempting to solve problems it is important to involve others in a collaborative process to help reach a full understanding of the underlying issues. It is also important that all relevant considerations are seen to have been addressed in a balanced and thoughtful way.

Principals who are effective problem solvers:

- explicitly check their own assumptions about the problem;
- relate the problem to the wider vision and values of the school;
- clearly state their own interpretation of the problem, with reasons, and without restraining other views;
- actively seek the interpretations of others;
- anticipate obstacles and how they could be overcome;
- plan a collaborative problem solving process;
- develop widely shared goals for the process;
- overtly manage the meeting and discussion processes;
- express little or no negative emotion, frustration or impatience. ■

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Principals work within four areas of practice to lead change and to solve problems in their schools: culture, pedagogy, systems, and partnerships and networks. The areas are described separately but in practice they overlap and interlink.

Culture: “What we value around here”

Principals who focus the school culture on enhancing learning and teaching:

- have the skills to develop and implement shared goals and vision;
- develop targets which set an expectation that all students will experience success in learning;
- create a culture in which teamwork is expected and valued, and in which teachers are enabled to take on appropriate leadership roles;
- build distributed leadership networks that secure commitment and responsibility for continued improvement through all levels of the school;
- challenge and modify values and traditions which are not in students’ best interests;
- lead and create opportunities to celebrate progress and success.

A school’s culture consists of the customs, rituals, and stories that are evident and valued throughout the whole school. An effective school culture is one in which the customs and values foster success for all; and where clear boundaries are set, known and agreed to by everyone (Stoll et al, 2003). In developing a positive culture, effective principals ensure that educational practices are inclusive. They make certain that students and their families do not feel alienated either from their own culture or from the culture of the school.

A school’s culture is also reflected in how, as an organisation, it solves the problems it faces. Effective school leadership ensures that the culture of the school is one that is safe and well organised, allowing teachers to focus on their teaching, and students on their learning (Robinson, 2007).

The Treaty of Waitangi provides a rationale for building a school culture that acknowledges kaupapa Māori, and promotes te reo Māori and tikanga Māori. New Zealand research indicates that student achievement is affected by the degree to which a student’s culture is respected by the school, and by the degree to which there is a connection between the culture of the community and whānau and the values of the school (Bishop et al, 2007).

Pedagogy: Knowledge about teaching and learning

Principals who foster an environment where there is an expectation that all students will experience learning success:

- participate in professional learning and are recognised as “leading learners” in their school;
- are regarded and consulted as professional leaders with significant knowledge about teaching and learning;
- have direct, hands-on involvement with curriculum design and implementation;
- understand what teachers do and build a professional learning community that supports, challenges, and inquires into its own professional practice;
- keep assessment for national qualifications at levels that are manageable and reasonable for students;
- enable teachers to explore the links between their teaching practice and the learning of each student;
- encourage innovative teacher practice linked to each student’s learning needs and outcomes;

- demonstrate understanding of, and support all teachers to use, assessment for improving student learning;
- ensure that teaching and learning programmes are informed by ongoing self-review and evaluation processes using student achievement data.

Successful schools are organised around learning. Their principals are knowledgeable about effective pedagogy and about what works for the individual needs of different students in their particular contexts. They are recognised in their schools for their professional knowledge and strength as pedagogical leaders. They involve the whole school community in setting clear goals for teaching and learning. They recognise that teacher learning is crucial to improving achievement and other valued outcomes for students. They create opportunities for professional learning communities to flourish throughout the school so that teachers can work collaboratively and share evidence-informed practice with each other (Coburn, 2003).

As principals develop their own professional knowledge and thinking, they gain a deeper appreciation of the conditions teachers need if they are to achieve and sustain improvements in the learning of each student. While teachers are responsible for ensuring that all students achieve to the best of their ability, they will be supported in their work by their principals' deep knowledge about teaching and learning. This knowledge enables principals to discuss changes with teachers and helps them to make appropriate adjustments to class organisation, resourcing and assessment procedures. In large schools, principals are likely to distribute this kind of pedagogical support through senior and middle leaders.

Research indicates that principals who are pedagogical leaders have a moderate-to-large impact on student outcomes (Nelson & Sassi, 2005). Powerful pedagogical leadership practices include principals participating and promoting professional learning, and principals, senior/middle leaders and teachers working together to solve pedagogical problems, obtain appropriate resources, and plan and monitor the curriculum and the quality of teaching (Robinson, 2007).

Effective principals create conditions that mean the school, as an organisation, is focussed first and foremost on teaching and learning. Students learn best when their social needs are met and their engagement with learning is strong. This begins with developing a collective sense of well-being for every member of the school community. It also means ensuring the right level of care and support for each student.

Systems: “How things work around here”

Principals who develop and use management systems to support and enhance student learning:

- know about effective management practice and systems, and model consistent use of them;
- prioritise and resource selected areas targeted for improvement;
- use evidence to monitor progress, plan, and manage change;
- delegate the running of systems to appropriate school staff;
- establish contingency strategies for when unforeseen circumstances arise.

Every school needs to have systems that help create the conditions for staff and students to



work effectively together. Everyone appreciates simple, clear goals and effective processes. School systems provide and effectively communicate the ground rules for everyone. They ensure a measure of consistency in approach and action across the school.

Effective management systems are crucial to sustaining quality teaching and learning. Such systems involve setting up processes and structures for school self review, external review, performance management, student assessment and reporting, curriculum organisation, and timetabling. Good systems help reduce distractions from the core focus on teaching and learning.

Effective management of systems and structures ensures that the school is an open organisation where everyone is familiar with everyone else's roles. The cultural norms of the school that flow from such systems strengthen cohesion and support a smooth operation so that learning is maximised.

Because New Zealand principals work in self-managing schools, they have some autonomy to manage resources to meet the needs of their school communities. They can shift resources and structure systems to better meet the learning needs of all their students.

Principalship requires a mix of professional knowledge and expertise along with the ability to develop and manage systems efficiently. Except in very small schools, the principal is likely to delegate aspects of the management systems to other staff.

Partnerships and Networks: Creating positive links to support learning

Principals who strengthen partnerships and networks to enhance student learning:

- are knowledgeable and strategic about wider trends and opportunities in education;
- are enterprising and resourceful in developing informal or formal partnerships that promote learning opportunities for students;
- demonstrate the interpersonal skills needed for building strong relationships with key stakeholder groups such as trustees, parents, whānau and local organisations;
- can manage the conflicts and dilemmas that sometimes arise in the school community;
- are able to connect with their peers in other schools to build effective professional learning communities.

Effective principals have external networks that range from face-to-face through to online contacts. Networks help provide them with up-to-date and relevant knowledge about educational trends and issues. They give opportunities for making connections and developing learning partnerships that can be an effective way of sharing resources. Local schools may cluster together to share ideas, to organise student or professional learning, or to support one another. Principals are expected to work with partner schools in these clusters. They are also expected to engage actively with the Ministry with regard to students who have disabilities.



Effective principals are community leaders. This starts with their role as chief executive of the board of trustees. They work with trustees as representatives of the local community in setting the strategic direction for the school and determining priorities. A school's vision and values statements have strengthened validity when they are developed in partnership with the local community.

Effective principals also work with local parents and caregivers on home-school partnerships that ensure all students are welcome and their learning needs addressed. Partnerships that succeed in engaging parents with the learning of their children have been shown to contribute to improved student outcomes (Biddulph et al, 2003).

The people who make up a school community are not typically of one mind on many issues. There will often be a range of views across different interest groups on educational matters. Effective principals are sensitive to these differences and work with groups and individuals to develop common understandings, and ideally consensus, on key educational issues. ■

QUALITIES

Four educational leadership qualities underpin principals' ability to lead their schools: manaakitanga (leading with moral purpose), pono (having self belief), ako (being a learner), and awhinatanga (guiding and supporting). These qualities are at the heart of effective leadership in Aotearoa.

Manaakitanga: Leading with moral purpose

Effective principals have a central belief system that is focussed on student learning and well-being. They set clear goals, and pursue them to ensure success for all. They focus on closing the gaps between the highest and lowest-achieving students in order to raise learning standards and outcomes for all. They create schools that welcome and include all members of the community.

Principals who were consulted in preparing this paper talked about their moral commitment to helping students achieve academic and personal fulfilment and make a contribution to the life of the school, the community, and beyond. They emphasised the importance of relationships built on trust, respect and openness. In schools where there is trust and a strong sense of purpose, areas of conflict can be identified, worked on and resolved. To do this effectively principals need to learn how to deal with ethical dilemmas, and how to progress complex issues when they arise.

Having a sense of moral purpose and a commitment to improved learning and social outcomes is not just about supporting and guiding students, it also involves a commitment to the professional growth and support of other school leaders and teachers. Effective school principals are committed to creating and encouraging trusting relationships built on mutual dialogue and respect.

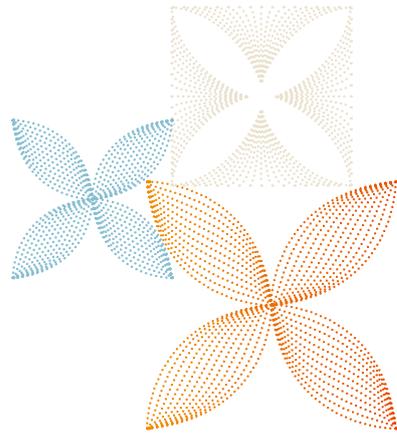
Pono: Having self-belief

Effective principals have a strong sense of self-belief, which helps them to lead with integrity and conviction. They are committed to improvement and are willing to try out new ideas. Their self-belief enables them to remain motivated even in difficult conditions. Their motivation is based on the conviction that they can and will make a difference for their students' learning. They use their networks and partnerships for support when working through complex or difficult situations (Goleman et al, 2002).

Principals with strong self-belief lead with a sense of purpose. They are self-aware; they understand their emotions and are clear about their goals. From this flows their self-managing capacity and the focussed drive that all leaders need to achieve their goals. Leaders with such self confidence embody an upbeat and optimistic enthusiasm that is infectious. Their courage, conviction and enthusiasm brings out the best in others.

Self-belief is strongly associated with resilience. Resilience is a capacity for bouncing back when faced with adversity or stress. Resilience is based upon a positive self-view and confidence in one's strengths and abilities to make realistic plans, to show skill in communication and problem-solving, and to demonstrate the capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses.

While the job of being a principal can be highly engaging and satisfying, it is also demanding. Competing priorities mean that principals often leave to one side their own personal and professional



needs as they negotiate the tensions involved in being both educational leader and manager. Principals need to be aware of their own energy levels and set priorities that will ensure they have a healthy work-life balance. This is very important for their well-being.

Ako: Being a learner

Ako is about building collaborative learning and teaching relationships within the school. It suggests a reciprocal approach to leading learning. When principals demonstrate ako, all members of the school community participate in identifying significant issues and solving problems. Students, teachers, leaders and the community together can contribute to the collective knowledge base of the school.

Principals are expected to have a depth of professional knowledge. They are expected to make good decisions and exercise sound judgement. Their work contributes to growing the knowledge and expertise of the profession. Keeping up-to-date with the evidence for professional leadership in schools is a fundamental expectation of principals. To support them in this principals need opportunities to reflect and learn. They need access to quality information about all aspects of school leadership.

Principals who take their own learning seriously and keep their own passion for learning alive act as important role models for their schools. There is a crucial link between a principal's own development of critical thinking, their engagement with professional learning, and their ability to be an educational leader. Becoming a principal involves stepping up and using professional knowledge and experience to improve the teaching and learning of all students.

Effective principals have in place their own professional learning programme to help inform their thinking and practice, and to keep

them up-to-date with issues and developments in education generally. This learning is sometimes done alone, with a respected colleague, with a local principals' group, through participation in principal development initiatives, or as study for further qualifications.

Awhinatanga: Guiding and supporting

Awhinatanga refers to the level of interpersonal care from school leadership that is evident in staff relationships. Awhinatanga is based on empathy from the top, and involves the principal's ability to sense the feelings, needs and perspectives of others. Principals show the way they value others by recognising and responding to what staff do and how they feel. Empathetic caring for the whole person in terms of both personal and work situations builds mutual understandings and cements productive relationships. By recognising the individual natures and circumstances of staff members, principals strengthen trust and connectedness across the staff as a whole.

The principal also has a key role in guiding and supporting others to step up as leaders. This is achieved by recognising and developing the leadership potential of teachers in different areas and levels of the school. Creating opportunities for leadership skills to be developed by teachers, students and other members of the school community helps strengthen a school-wide commitment to achieving the agreed outcomes. This is important not only for building positive relationships, but for growing and sustaining the school's leadership capacity.

Support for teaching and learning is also generated by allocating material and human resources in ways that are aligned to the agreed goals and expectations of the school. Principals who plan for and provide strategic resourcing have an effect on the quality of student outcomes. ■

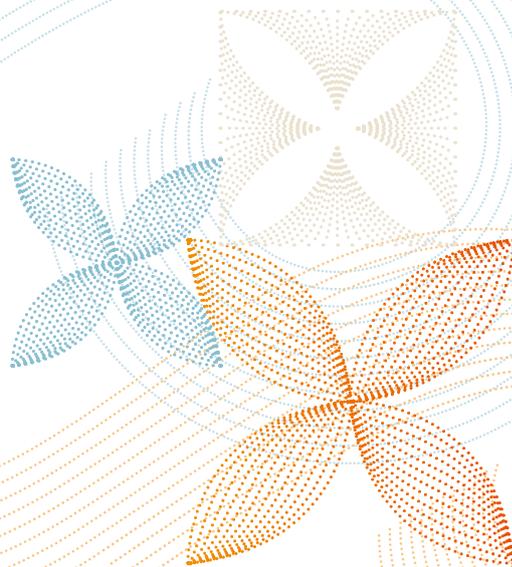


OUR WAY AHEAD

The KLP describes the knowledge, skills and qualities of New Zealand principals that we are looking for, now and in the future. It is a reference point which outlines the expectations we have of school principals. It is a starting point for a Professional Leadership Strategy (PLS) which will be developed in partnership with the sector. The strategy will provide a plan that is intended to

strengthen and support leadership in New Zealand schools over the next three to five years. The PLS will be designed to address the system challenges outlined on pages 10 and 11 of this paper.

Two further parts of the overall strategy are under development: Kiwi Leadership for Senior and Middle Leaders, and Leadership for Māori-medium Leaders. ■





Our vision for principalship in the 21st century is shaped by the rapid change and growth of the world we live in. As society, knowledge and technologies grow and change, so do our students' learning needs and the way learning is delivered.

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Regional think tanks were held in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch between November 2006 and March 2007.

Since April 2007 a reference group comprised of academics, Ministry of Education officials, school principals, and sector group representatives has met to provide advice and guidance. New Zealand Secondary Principals' Council, New Zealand Education Institute, New Zealand Principals' Federation, Secondary Principals Association of New Zealand and New Zealand School Trustees' Association are represented on this group.

A two-day National Leadership Hui with over 70 participants considered a possible draft paper in August 2007.

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