

*‘A riddle, wrapped in a mystery,
inside an enigma’*

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Findings and Implications

Research Question 1

Research Question 2

Research Question 3

Research Question 4

Key Findings

Recommendations

PURPOSE

RATIONALE

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

1. STRUCTURAL AND STATISTICAL DATA

Findings and Implications

2. ORIGIN AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF INTERMEDIATES

Findings and Implications

3. THE AIMS AND PURPOSES OF INTERMEDIATES

Findings and Implications

4. THE FUTURE OF INTERMEDIATES

Findings and Implications

CONCLUSION

Key Findings

Key Recommendations

Recommendations

BIBLIOGRAPHY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key findings

Research Question 1

What structural and statistical data provides a context to understand intermediate schooling?

Findings and Implications

- Intermediate schooling is a part of a very diverse system of educational delivery for approximately half of Year 7 and 8 students nationally, serving both urban and city populations.
Therefore, intermediate schooling is not an option available to all Year 7 and 8 students.
- The New Zealand intermediate school, though similar to international models, stands alone as structure with a two-year tenure and administered by the primary sector.
Therefore, the intermediate schooling structure is unique internationally.
- An intermediate profile could be expressed as a school likely to be:
 - Established in the 1960's
 - Lead by a male principal
 - Located in the North Island viz Auckland
 - With a decile 6 socio-economic status
 - With a roll between 300-400 students
 - Coeducational
 - Without international students
- Intermediates are declining in number as the outcome of 'network reviews' in regions where student population is declining.
Therefore, intermediates that are located in regions of population decline are vulnerable and potentially at risk of closure.
- Intermediates have not been established as a desired schooling structure in the last two decades. There is a greater likelihood that restructured schools are middle or composite.
Therefore, middle or composite schooling is the preferred Ministry option of school structure for the present particularly, where there are changing demographics.

Research Question 2

What is the origin and historical development of intermediate schools to the present?

Findings and Implications

- There is a high variability in the knowledge of school leaders relating to the origin and history of intermediates. Generally, there is a limited understanding.
Therefore, a high variability in knowledge has potential to impact on the aims and purpose of intermediate schools.
- The original concept for intermediates was a centralised school structure with both a ‘terminal’ and ‘preparatory’ function and later, a ‘transitional’ function to bridge primary and secondary schooling.
Therefore, the historic functions of, ‘preparatory’ and ‘transitional’ remain at the forefront of many intermediates purpose and are a dominating perspective for the present and future development of intermediate schooling.
- The origin of intermediates commenced with a two-year structure and an intention to develop further as 3 or 4 years tenure. A variety of factors subverted this development including; economic restraints, secondary principals, Minister’s of Education ideo-political beliefs and regulatory privilege and, demographic trends.
Therefore, intermediates currently are a school structure of ‘default’ exposing them to potential political vulnerability.
- There is no recent literature or evaluations of intermediate schooling. Research is more likely to be focussed on Middle Schooling.
Therefore it is highly likely, intermediate schools are not a strategic priority for the Ministry of Education and it is more likely that the middle school, composite or ‘super-school’ structure be considered for development.

Research Question 3

What are the aims and purposes of intermediate education?

Findings and Implications

- Manual training or technology learning programmes have continued to be a feature of intermediate schools, taught by ‘specialist’ staff. Extraordinary staffing is allocated to schools with Years 7 and 8 students.
Therefore, technology programmes have been a sustained feature of intermediates.
- The learning of a second or subsequent language has been a feature of the curriculum since the 1960’s for Year 7 and 8 students.
Therefore, languages are a specific feature of intermediate schooling.
- An element of choice or supplementary learning programmes has been a feature of Year 7 and 8 curriculum since the 1930’s.
Therefore, learning programmes that include an element of choice are a sustained feature of intermediate schooling.
- No current document identifies the aims and purposes of intermediates specifically or provides explicit guidance.
Therefore, a lack of clarity and guidance generates an environment of high variability and potential extremes of practice in the quality of intermediate schools. It is for individual schools through their leadership and charters to determine.
- There are many historic features that continue in today’s intermediate schools.
Therefore, the aims and purposes of intermediate schooling are multi-functional and include; meeting the diverse needs of emerging adolescents, ‘specialist’ and supplementary learning programmes, student choice, second language learning and continuation of the ‘core’ curriculum.

Research Question 4

What is the future of intermediate schooling?

Findings and Implications

- The perception of principals relating to the future of intermediates is one of heightened vulnerability.
Therefore, this perception potentially impacts on the performance of leaders and teachers in regard to how they interpret their worth and commitment to intermediate schooling.
- The general experience of intermediate principals is that they receive no specific assistance or guidance on intermediate schooling from the Ministry of Education or other provider.
Therefore, this shared experience significantly contributes to the perception of high vulnerability.
- Principals and other professionals strongly suggest that intermediates extend their student tenure by one or two years thereby more effectively catering for the emerging adolescent. ERO (2001, p.51) recommended, “The future role of middle schools in New Zealand needs to be considered further in the light of the needs of all students from years 7 to 10.”
Therefore, principals could consider exploring their communities view, Ministry officials and supporting organisations eg AIMS, to have intermediates ‘renewed’ as middle schools. Secondary principals, current network review outcomes and fiscal considerations are likely to present a considerable barrier to this proposal.
- The quality of intermediate school education as indicated by ERO’s cycles of review suggest intermediates are performing slightly better than schools collectively.
Therefore, this should affirm that intermediates are a successful school structures.
- NEMP found there is no significant difference in Year 7 and 8 students achievement between intermediate schooling and full primary’s. However, ERO (2001), identified the likelihood of poorer achievement in schools with small cohorts of Year 7 and 8 students and are likely to be full primary’s.
Therefore, more research may be useful to further explore achievement and the differentiation between intermediate’s and full primary’s.
- The Ministry of Education is carrying out policy work on Years 7-10 and have published some of their findings to date.
Therefore, it would be prudent for intermediate leaders to be familiar with these findings to guide their leadership. It would be useful for the Ministry to be more proactive in presenting research beyond digital or hardcopy mediums, ie workshops providing for professional dialogue etc

Key Findings

KEY FINDING 1

This project found, intermediates are presently a vulnerable school structure within New Zealand's education system due to a complexity of issues. These include (in no particular order):

- There is a distinct lack of Ministry of Education leadership, strategic planning, professional support, guiding documents or expertise designated explicitly to the development and improvement of intermediates. ERO (2001, p.50) recommended, "the Government should establish clear directions and priorities for the education of Years 7 and 8 students."
- Intermediates are not a recognised as a specific sector of schooling as in countries like the USA. Consequently, intermediates are considered primary schools, by default, and are administered as such.
- The privileges of Minister's of Education include considerable fiscal and regulatory power and, the right to implement ideopolitical initiatives in isolation of empirical research.
- Changing demographics may result in a 'Network Review' of a specific region. Intermediates are likely to be closed rather than established as a review outcome.

KEY FINDING 2

This project concludes, despite the previously mentioned threats and disconnect with the Ministry of Education there is much to be celebrated and developed for the future. In short, principals should consider the renewal of intermediates as middle schools becoming a 3 or 4 year learning programme. Nolan, Brown, Stewart and Beane cited in ERO (2001, p.10) state,

Over 40 years of school-based research and experience with hundreds of thousands of students in over 10,000 middle schools show that separate three or four year age span middle schools, when properly planned and led, are the most appropriate way to meet the educational needs of emerging adolescents.

In the interim, intermediates need to consider a shift in their educational imperative that is; consolidation, continuity and choice rejecting previous historical functions as ‘centralised’ schools of transition and preparation. As a renewed school structure to explicitly address social, cultural, physical and academic needs of emerging adolescents by the:

- Consolidation of previous learning and, as social consolidation by providing one of the few school options where a diversity of students attend differing from separatist structures organised by gender, religious affiliation, ethnicity or socio-economic status.
- Continuity of learning to challenge, enrich and provide new experiences through inquiry pedagogy.
- Choice over students learning pathways enhancing engagement, motivation and autonomy.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

Principals' take professional responsibility for the future development and improvement of intermediate schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

Robustly review intermediate education within the context of a Years 7 to 10 to provide greater clarity in meeting the needs of the emerging adolescent learner.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The intermediate school structure should remain, be strengthened and extended:

1. Remain, as schools of consolidation, continuity and choice for learning.
2. Strengthened, as a specific sector with explicit Ministry of Education leadership, guidance and support for their development and improvement. Therefore, Bishop's (2008, p.65) recommendations be given serious consideration as follows:

Ensure.... knowledge, skills and values are addressed in the preparation of teachers of young adolescents in all primary and secondary teacher education programmes:

- *The ability and desire to form supportive, authentic relationships with young adolescents;*
- *An understanding of the developmental nature and needs of young adolescents and how those connect to pedagogy;*
- *In-depth content knowledge, especially in numeracy, above and beyond what primary preparation can offer;*
 - An ability to foster learning through inquiry and integrative curriculum over traditional secondary school methods;*
 - A belief in balancing a focus on subject matter with a focus on the whole learner;*
 - A skill in differentiating instruction and assessment, to enable students to progress at different rates;*

3. Extended to a Year 7 – 9 middle school structure to more effectively address the needs of emerging adolescent learners by sustained engagement motivation and autonomy.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That principal's of intermediate schools consider reading the following titles to inform their leadership:

1. Bishop, P. (2008). *Middle Years Teacher Credentialing in Aotearoa/New Zealand*.
2. Education Review Office, (2001). *Students in Years 7 and 8*.
3. Watson, J.E. (1964). *Intermediate Schooling in New Zealand*.

PURPOSE

1. To analyse the structural and statistical data of intermediates
2. To understand the origin and historical development of intermediate schooling
3. To clarify the aims and purpose of intermediate schooling
4. To speculate on the future of intermediate schooling

RATIONALE

The Report of the Commission On Education in New Zealand (1962, p. 160) states, “The Intermediate School, whose name shows its essential nature, is probably the most controversial feature of the present school organization....”

This statement continues to hold true over 50 years later as recent events suggest that is; the closure of intermediates in Invercargill and Kawerau, the proposed three closures in Christchurch at the end of this year and, the planned changes to specialist teacher ratio’s last year (later retracted) demonstrate intermediates are a ‘most controversial feature’ and a vulnerable sector of schooling.

After 4 years as an intermediate principal I have been challenged by the lack of clarity and purpose for intermediate schooling as a specific educational structure. In an effort to demystify this I have pursued and engaged in discussions with intermediate colleagues, Ministry of Education advisors/officials, Educational Review Officers and, found great variability in their responses. A sample of these follows;

- Self-determined through charters
- To accommodate technology programmes
- To cater for the specific developmental needs of emerging adolescents
- As a transition from primary to secondary
- To ‘align the gap’ between primary and secondary education
- Preparation for secondary schooling
- The last opportunity to correct underachievement
- To address the strategic priorities of the Ministry of Education
- To provide a range of curricula activities not provided at primary schools

All, or some of these responses are demonstrated in current intermediate practice with differing emphasis. However, as a leader I find it professionally challenging that there are no definitive document/s or person/s with responsibility for intermediates (at least not one I could find) to develop my leadership of the intermediate school.

Consequently, the project's title, '**a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma**', captures my sentiments. The intent of this project is to understand the intermediate structure through; synthesising current statistical data, reviewing historical developments, exploring purposes and aims, reviewing literature and research and, finally what of our future? My goal, through this project, is to achieve an enhanced clarity of purpose for the school in I lead.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

- Source and analyse current intermediate structural and statistical data
- Review historical literature, current literature and research from a variety sources (published and digital)
- Identify and contact appropriate principals, other interested persons and Ministry personnel for interviewing
- Formulate interview questions to reflect the purpose of the project
- Interview/dialogue with appropriate principals, other interested persons and Ministry personnel
- Visit a sample of schools and key people
- Integrate interviews with literature and research review
- Synthesise all information to formulate findings and conclusion

1. STRUCTURAL AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF INTERMEDIATES

Background information

The Ministry of Education's website, Parent Section (2013) states,

In New Zealand most children start shortly after they turn five. All children must be enrolled at school by their sixth birthday. There are a wide variety of New Zealand schools providing education for primary and intermediate aged students (Years 1-8).

This is the only reference to intermediate schooling in the Parent Section.

Intermediate schools are one option available in schooling pathways. The most common schooling pathways include:

(6:2:5)

6 years contributing primary

2 years intermediate

5 years secondary

(8:5)

8 years full primary

0 years intermediate

5 years secondary

(6:7)

6 years contributing primary

0 years intermediate

7 years secondary

(13)

0 years intermediate

13 years composite

Approximately half of Year 7 and 8 students attend intermediates (see the table below):

ERO (2001, p.4) states,

Full Primary 33%

Intermediate 52%

Composite 3%

Restricted composite 2%

Y7-15 Secondary 10%

ERO (2001, p.6), commented on intermediate schools relative to international structures finding,

While intermediate schools are part of the primary system in New Zealand, middle schools in other countries are more similar in their organisational structure to secondary schools.

New Zealand is the only country in which:

- *Primary schooling effectively continues until the age of 13; and*
- *The majority of students have to make two transitions between schools within the space of two years*

The current diversity in schooling arrangements in New Zealand is unique internationally.

The following analysis is of current data sourced from the Ministry of Education (2013). The information has been aggregated to depict schools by; roll, decile, decade in which established, number of international students, location and gender of principal as follows:

ROLL NUMBERS		DECILE	
100-200	11%	1	6%
200-300	15%	2	12%
300-400	20%	3	9%
400-500	17%	4	15%
500-600	15%	5	16%
600-700	9%	6	17%
700-800	6%	7	5%
800-900	2%	8	9%
900-1000	3%	9	8%
1000-1100	1%	10	4%
1200-1300	1%		
DECADE OF ESTABLISHMENT		INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	
1920	1%	0	63%
1930	4%	1-5	23%
1940	7%	6-10	8%
1950	23%	11-15	4%
1960	35%	16-20	3%
1970	25%	21-25	1%
1980	2%	46-50	1%
1990	2%		
2000	1% (merged)		

TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS: 115

(An intermediate was defined as a school specifying 'intermediate' in its title.

Consequently 5 schools were excluded from this total with preparatory/middle/junior high/senior in the school title)

CO-EDUCATIONAL: 100%

PRINCIPALSHIP GENDER:

(Assumed by name)

Female: 30%

Male: 70%

LOCATION:

North Island: 82%

South Island: 18%

Auckland region: 34%

Wellington region: 11%

Christchurch: 10%

The Ministry of Education's website, School Type (2013) states,

Between 1 July 2011 and July 2012, nine schools change school type. Of these, one full primary school became a contributing school, one full primary school became a composite school and seven contributing schools became full primary schools.

Findings and implications

- Intermediate schooling is a part of a very diverse system of educational delivery for approximately half of Year 7 and 8 students nationally, serving both urban and city populations.
Therefore, intermediate schooling is not an option available to all Year 7 and 8 students.
- The New Zealand intermediate school, though similar to international models, stands alone as structure with a two-year tenure and administered by the primary sector.
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Therefore, intermediates that are located in regions of population decline are vulnerable and potentially at risk of closure.

- Intermediates have not been established as a desired schooling structure in the last two decades. There is a greater likelihood that restructured schools are middle or composite.

Therefore, middle or composite schooling is the preferred Ministry option of school structure for the present particularly, where there are changing demographics.

2. THE ORIGIN AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS

Background

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES:

What is your understanding of the origin/history of intermediates?

Lester: *There are a number of historical factors, particularly over the period from the 1920s through 1950's, that ultimately led to the establishment and growth of Intermediate Schools. It's a long and somewhat messy background, going back to the times when entry into secondary education required passing the proficiency examinations at Standard 6 (Form 2; Year 8). Moreover, secondary schooling at the time was distinctly academic in its orientation, and not too accommodating of students who couldn't make the grade or who weren't so disposed. This academic focus continued to be the case when the proficiency examination was abolished, meaning that many students continued to be disenfranchised learners. Solutions included the establishment of technical high schools (preparation for the 'trades'), and "middle schools" or "Junior High Schools" that didn't seem to gain much momentum. During the years of the Proficiency Examination, many students finished their schooling at the primary levels, without much preparation for work. One of the early cases for intermediates (more to the point, middle schools/junior high schools) was to provide some practical, basic learning that would help students transit into the workforce, whether skilled or unskilled.*

Other factors also contributed to the establishment of Intermediates, including, for example, the pressure on space in some primary schools, particularly in parts of Auckland. This was especially the case in the 1940s-early-1950s as a consequence of the spectacular expansion of the school population in urban areas in the post-war period. Among all of this was a political imperative to reduce costs. There are a number of examples in documented history of this being the case.

Interestingly it wasn't until during the 1960's that more educational justifications for Intermediates were being promoted. For example, their appropriateness for providing for the characteristics of children entering upon the phase of early adolescent development – but this, of course, was not necessarily based on substantive empirical insights, and did not find widespread agreement. Indeed, there is little evidence that Intermediates initially arose out of strong, well argued pedagogical or curricular justifications.

But times have changed. We now have some more sophisticated views and insights into schools, teaching and learning. A number of these can justifiably proffer sound justifications for Intermediate Schools. Regardless, they are set within a volatile, opportunistic political and bureaucratic environment that tirelessly strives to redefine and reshape according to managerialist and other ideologies of the day.

Alistair: *Kowhai Intermediate was founded in 1924 and others soon after. The aim was to build them from 2 to 4 year schools (like the current Middle School), but the Depression in the 30's did for that idea. I assume, that even then somebody realized that the formal secondary pattern was not suited to the learning needs of 10 – 14 year old kids.*

Other respondents:

We were supposed to be Middle Schools driven by Beeby

Secondary School principals stymied proposal

Transition to secondary school based on the premise of form I and form II

Purpose built schools for manual training with specialist teachers

Opportunity to provide more practical subjects... very sexist ie girls doing sewing etc

No idea

Beeby developed them in the 1930's pushing for Middle School – 4 years

Pressure from secondary prevented it from becoming 4 years

Many intermediates were built in the 60's and 70's to cope with the overflow of the babyboom

Unsure... thought they started in the 50's

CHRONOLOGY OF INTERMEDIATE DEVELOPMENT FROM INCEPTION TO THE PRESENT

1870's

Education Act of 1877

- Free, secular & compulsory education up to 14 years old legislated
- It was anticipated the majority of pupils would require no further schooling after primary

1890's

- The Nelson Intermediate School Yearbook contains the following citation (Newspaper article, 1969) quoting,

“A plan for the first Intermediate-type school in New Zealand was started in Nelson in 1894.” The Headmaster of Nelson Intermediate School, Mr G Chapman-Cohen, said at the 1969 end of the year break-up ceremony. “Two years later,” he said, “In 1869 America’s first Intermediate was established in Richmond, Indiana. Mr F G (Sas) Gibbs, a former Headmaster of Nelson Central School instigated the idea of placing pupils at form 1 & 2 level into a separate stage of education.” He said, “There had earlier been similar school patterns in England.

- The first centralised schools were established (Standards III to VII – 11 years to 15 years) on the 14th August 1894, Nelson Central School for boys (300 students) and Toi Toi Valley for girls (Victory). The Junior classes (up to Standard III) were taught by women teachers (Tasman Street, Brook Street, Hampden Street and Haven Road) and then promoted to central schools. These first ‘prototypes’ operated for approximately for a decade and were regulated by the province.

1900's

- Primary schooling was universally established throughout New Zealand
- There was an increasing demand for secondary schooling
- A proposal for reorganising schooling of 10-14 olds was suggested to ease the transition from primary to secondary
- Primary and secondary schooling were regarded as alternative kinds of education rather than successive phases of education

1920's

- James Parr - Minister of Education (1920)

- Watson (1964) identified four issues of ‘special force’ specific to intermediates as:
 1. A smoother transition from primary to secondary
 2. By providing for a broader curriculum for the variation of both ability and ambition
 3. By the utilisation of expensive facilities required of the curriculum
 4. By the best use of varied teacher qualifications

Reform to be attempted by either;

1. Attach top 2 classes of the 8 year primary school to secondary, technical or district high school
2. Transfer these classes to a separate 3 year school

Watson (1964) commented on these reforms by stating,

... both solutions were prejudiced by the administrative and professional divisions between primary and secondary schooling as well as by the circumstances of a falling school population, an excess of teachers, friction between central and local authorities, and the general political, social and economic instability of the times

- Regulations for the establishment of junior high schools were gazetted in September 1922.
- Watson (1964) describes the junior high schools as initially providing for slightly more staffing than primary schools and a separate salary scale. It was apparent that the only pupils who would remain for a third year were those who did not intend to go to a secondary, technical, or district high school.
- Education Amendment Act 1924 defined ‘junior high school’ as

A school providing courses of instruction occupying normally three years and, in general, covering the higher stages of the course of primary instruction and the earlier stages of the secondary course’

Cited in Cumming (19, p.229)

- Frank Tate Report (1925), viewed the establishment of Kowhai Junior High School as, “one of the most hopeful and instructive advances in public education in New Zealand.”
- Cited in Cumming (19, p.229)

The first Intermediate was established in October 1922 (Kowhai Junior High School) in Kingsland Auckland, with R. E. Rudman as headmaster (ex secondary headmaster, Inspector and lecturer)
Robert Muldoon (former prime minister) attended this school

1930's

- The creation of two-year intermediate schools were established and administered by primary education boards and, staffed predominately by primary teachers.
- The Beeby Survey was initiated by Minister of Education, Peter Fraser in 1936 and was the first major evaluation of intermediate schooling. Clarence Beeby was the director of NZCER and his findings supported the retention of intermediate schooling commenting, "The strongest single argument for the intermediate school is that it can offer all the advantages to consolidation... These advantages in themselves are sufficient to justify the extension of the intermediate school system..." cited in Watson (1964). The 'advantages' Beeby refers are social cohesion, educational and vocational guidance and, a reduction in the gap between primary and secondary.

5 intermediate's established

1940's

- The school leaving age is increased to 15 years old in 1944

8 intermediate's established

1950's

26 intermediate's established

1960's

- The report of the Commission On Education in New Zealand survey in 1962 (Currie Report) was the second major evaluation of intermediate schooling since 1922. This commission included and supported the concept of intermediate schooling.
- John E Watson, (1964) completed the most comprehensive report and narrative on Intermediate Schooling in New Zealand ever produced. Watson supported the concept of intermediate schooling.

40 intermediate's established

1970's

- The Amos (1972) investigation was initiated by Minister of Education

29 intermediate's established

1980's

- The Intermediate Schools Principals' Association report (1984), described the specialisation of intermediates as,

The large group brought together in the Intermediate School can share common interests and problems away from those whom they have outgrown and without the dominance of the virtual adults who are their seniors in secondary school.

- The Education Act of 1989 was established and included the following regulations that governs intermediates:

5 Restrictions on enrolment at primary school

(2) No person who turned 14 in any year shall be or continue to be enrolled at a primary school, or in a class below form 3 at a composite school, in the next year.

(3) No person who, in the opinion of the Secretary, -

(a) has completed the work of form 3: or

(b) has completed work equivalent to the work of form 2, -

shall in any year be or continue to be enrolled at a primary school, or in a class below form 3 at a composite school.

149 Intermediate Departments

subject to section 157, the Minister may, by notice in the Gazette, -

(a) establish an intermediate department-

(i) within a composite school that is not an integrated school: or

*(ii) to form any part of a secondary school that is not an integrated school;
or*

(b) disestablish any intermediate department.

2 intermediate's established

1990's

- Stewart and Nolan (1992), identified 10-14 years as a critical age range and that middle schools for 3-4 years as the appropriate form of educational structure for them. They comment that it is administrative convenience and other non-educational factors that led to the establishment of two-year intermediate schools rather than three-year middle schools early in the twentieth century.

1 intermediate's established

The last intermediate established was Somerville in 1997, located in Auckland

2000's

- Education Review Office Report in 2001 report on intermediate schooling within a review of students education in Years 7 and 8.

2 intermediates merged to establish Wainuiomata (previously established), Wellington in 2002

Findings and Implications

- There is a high variability in the knowledge of school leaders relating to the origin and history of intermediates. Generally, there is a limited understanding.
Therefore, a high variability in knowledge has potential to impact on the aims and purpose of intermediate schools.
- The original concept for intermediates was a centralised school structure with both a ‘terminal’ and ‘preparatory’ function and later, a ‘transitional’ function to bridge primary and secondary schooling.
Therefore, the historic functions of, ‘preparatory’ and ‘transitional’ remain at the forefront of many intermediates purpose and are a dominating perspective for the present and future development of intermediate schooling.
- The origin of intermediates commenced with a two-year structure and an intention to develop further as 3 or 4 years tenure. A variety of factors subverted this development including; economic restraints, secondary principals, Minister’s of Education ideo-political beliefs and regulatory privilege and, demographic trends.
Therefore, intermediates currently are a school structure of ‘default’ exposing them to potential political vulnerability.
- There is no recent literature or evaluations of intermediate schooling. Research is more likely to be focussed on Middle Schooling.
Therefore it is highly likely, intermediate schools are not a strategic priority for the Ministry of Education and it is more likely that the middle school, composite or ‘super-school’ structure be considered for development.

3. THE AIMS AND PURPOSE OF INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLING

INTERVIEW QUESTION AND RESPONSES:

What is your understanding of the purpose of intermediate schooling?

Lester: It is doubtful whether it is instructive or useful to consider the purpose of Intermediate schooling today within the contexts of its early beginnings. Circumstances of recent years are very different indeed, and purposes need to somehow be aligned with the present. So what, arguably, are the purposes of today? Are they simply to prepare students for secondary education, or to slavishly the Ministry of Education's mantra of raising measured achievement of diverse learners in National Standards? None of these reasons should appeal to a thinking educator.

In my view, the broad purposes of Intermediate schooling are similar to all levels or types of schooling – but it is the setting that can provide distinctive characteristics that can be to the advantage of students and their learning, teachers and their teaching. The purposes of schooling for New Zealand students is well stated in the NZ Curriculum – a curriculum that states a number of broad goals for all levels of schooling – primary, intermediate, secondary. I don't need to spell them out here. Above all, however, students deserve an education that will motivate and help them to develop and grow with the confidence and capabilities needed to live satisfying lives in a world that is constantly changing, yet a world that also retains much of the past. Students deserve rich, relevant learning experiences that not only address the academic, but also the aesthetic, physical, social, moral and practical skills dimensions so central to human roundedness. They need ongoing learning experiences in classroom and school learning environments that equip them with the dispositions and competencies needed for inquiry and critical thinking – which are essential not only for personal growth but also for participating in a democratic society.

The Intermediate, in my view, should not be regarded as a 'transition' point between primary contributing schooling and secondary schooling. That is something of a non-argument. Rather, it should be regarded as a point of renewed and refreshed impetus for learning within a socio-cultural environment that brings together young people who share so much in common in terms of the highly significant personal physiological changes that are occurring within them. Personal chemistry is changing, with consequent changes in physical, emotional, and social characteristics. Most Intermediate students are transiting childhood and dependency to youth, independence and maturity. For many, this is a time of personal confusion mixed with growing self-awareness and assertion. There is often a floating between dependency and autonomy – wanting to be grown up, yet also to have the security and comfort of childhood. Patterns of feeling, behaving, and associating are changing.

Thus, it requires a very good Intermediate school to allow these natural personal transitions to occur within an environment where learning, expectations, relationships and communications are responsive and tailored to the specialness of Year 7 and Year 8 students. It has long been observed that some Intermediates do this very well indeed, whereas others offer little evidence vibrant thinking and practice.

***Alistair:** I believe it is to provide a link between the home-room based primary approach and the subject-based secondary approach. We provide the security and teacher-knowledge of the kids' needs but begin a transition to a specialist teacher-subject-based approach. In a four year Middle School, by the end of Year 10 probably most of the teaching is by specialists with home-room teacher delivering his/her chosen subject but still having that close contact with the kids.*

Other Respondents:

Meet the needs of the students

Advantage can think more closely about the students we have en mass

Some intermediates do this very well and others poorly

Transition

Unique age to develop skills and personality in large like cohort

Friendships easier unlike secondary

Don't know if there is anymore.... To provided wide range of experiences and consolidate learning

Not a clear purpose- little 'point of difference' from other schools

Specialist education for emerging adolescents and preparation for college

Bridge primary to secondary schooling

Technology education

Students outgrow primary school structure

To provide school leavers with life and trade skills

To meet the special needs of pre-adolescents

What is the purpose of your school.... What need is it meeting?

***Lester:** This question is no longer relevant for me, although I would caution about over emphasizing the "technicraft", "manual", or "specialist" or whatever programmes as a "point of difference". I think this is a weak argument, and I have heard it too often. In my view the purpose of the Intermediate is to provide students with balanced, rounded programmes that seek excellence in all learning areas, while also attending to the development of citizenship and personal efficacy. Nothing new in that – and indeed there is nothing that is new that is necessarily better.*

***Alistair:** We are a specialist-type school which focuses on providing for the needs of the 10 – 14 year old student. (I remember a new Y7 kid sayng to me, "You know what's neat about this school? All the books in the library are just for us. "). We must provide what I call a 'four-square' approach. Academic:*

this is the base, and we must deliver a sound academic programme suited as far as possible, to each student and to all students. Social: we must offer a programme which provides opportunities for the students to grow socially, to interact with each other positively and take responsibility within their classes, teams and the school. Cultural: we must provide opportunities for our students to come across and try out new skills and experiences in the cultural field, ie music art, kapa haka etc. physical: we must cater for this age group's physical needs through sport, dance, camps etc

Other Respondents:

Meet the need of age/cohort

Find the right pathway for our students

Develop positive pathway into citizenship

Ensure students can access the curriculum and are critical and independent thinkers

Provide experiences and opportunities to meet needs, strengths and talents

Keep students motivated in their learning

High quality education for middle year children to meet their special needs

To provide breadth of experience to discover passions and talents

'Last chance' in literacy and maths

Increase life opportunities

To provide many opportunities to try to 'open eyes' to the world and opportunity to 'sample' and try new stuff

Provide core curriculum

Beeby (1938), regarded the Junior High School as a structure fulfilling both a 'terminal' (the completion of schooling) and 'preparatory' (prepared for secondary schooling) functions. Furthermore, he identified the purposes of intermediate education as a balanced curriculum including opportunities for the exploration of pupil aptitudes, provision for specialist teaching, bridging the gap between primary and secondary education and continuing the teaching of the basic curriculum subjects.

ERO (2001, p.28) postulates,

The purpose of intermediate schools is to provide for the particular needs of young adolescents. Those with a clear philosophy generally provide a high quality education. They have the advantage of bringing together and working with the largest groups of Year 7 and 8 students. This enables them to provide a range of specialist opportunities that may not be possible for other types of schooling. In addition school resources are selected and purchased solely for students who attend that school and there is therefore a greater chance of sufficiency and variety.

CURRICULUM REVIEW

The prescribed curriculum, spanning a century of compulsory education, provides an insight into the aims and purposes of intermediates.

In the 1890's, Toi Toi School for girls in Nelson, offered instruction in cookery and dressmaking (not unlike the manual training of the later established intermediate schools).

Regulations for intermediate schools and departments were made by an Order in Council of December 1932. Cumming & Cumming (1978, p.251) found,

All pupils were to receive about seventeen hours a week, instruction in English, history and civics, arithmetic, geography, elementary science, drawing, singing, and physical education according to the prescriptions for Form One and Two in the syllabus of instruction for primary schools. During the remaining portion of the school week all pupils to receive manual and home arts for not less than one and a half hours weekly, and also supplementary course of instruction chosen from the academic, commercial, agricultural, art or manual training courses. The supplementary course for each pupil was to be determined by the principal after considering the wishes of the parents and the report of the head teachers of the contributing school.

A sample of clubs operating in Intermediate Schools 1957-8 identified by Watson (1964, pp.200-201):

- *Harmonica*
- *Drum and Bugle*
- *Glee*
- *Operetta*
- *Mothercraft*
- *Poultry*
- *Esperanto*
- *Junior projectionists*
- *Boxing*
- *Fancy dancing*

Watson (1964, p.200) also found "...while most schools had an art club, very few had a dress-designing club, while most had a drama club, few had a Maori club...."

The Report of the Commission On Education in New Zealand (1962, p.273), made recommendations to strengthen language and science programmes:

That the science curriculum for forms I and II be coordinated with that of the rest of the secondary system, and that laboratories for these forms be planned accordingly.

That in the planning of the introduction of foreign language in forms I and II curriculum officers pay close attention to recent overseas experiment in language work at this junior level; and that serious consideration be given to the place of Maori and Esperanto as introductory to foreign language study.

The New Zealand Curriculum Framework was the curriculum of 1992.

The New Zealand Curriculum (2007), is the current curriculum and guidance pertaining to intermediate education includes the following descriptors:

Learning in years 7-10

During these years, students have opportunities to achieve to the best of their abilities across the breadth and depth of the New Zealand Curriculum – values, key competencies, and learning areas – laying the foundation for living and further learning.

A responsive curriculum will recognise that students in these years are undergoing rapid physical development, becoming increasingly socially aware, and encountering increasingly complex curriculum contexts. Particularly important are positive relationships with adults, opportunities for students to be involved in the community, and authentic learning experiences.

Students' learning progress is closely linked to their ongoing development of literacy and numeracy skills. These continue to require focused teaching.

The Arts:

Over the course of years 1–8, students will learn in all four disciplines.

Health and Physical Education:

All seven areas are to be included in teaching and learning programmes at both primary and secondary levels. It is expected that all students will have had opportunities to learn basic aquatic skills by the end of year 6 and practical cooking skills by the end of year 8

Science:

The core strand, Nature of science, is required learning for all students up to year 10. The other strands provide contexts for learning. Over the course of years 1–10, science programmes should include learning in all four context strands.

Social Sciences:

Learning based on the level 1–5 social studies achievement objectives establishes a foundation for the separate social science disciplines offered in the senior secondary school.

In years 1–10, schools are required to provide teaching and learning in English, the arts, health and physical education, mathematics and statistics, science, the social sciences, and technology.

All schools with students in years 7–10 should be working towards offering students opportunities for learning a second or subsequent language.

In years 1–10, schools are required to provide teaching and learning in English, the arts, health and physical education, mathematics and statistics, science, the social sciences, and technology.

Findings and Implications

- Manual training or technology learning programmes have continued to be a feature of intermediate schools, taught by ‘specialist’ staff. Extraordinary staffing is allocated to schools with Years 7 and 8 students.
Therefore, technology programmes have been a sustained feature of intermediates.
- The learning of a second or subsequent language has been a feature of the curriculum since the 1960’s for Year 7 and 8 students.
Therefore, languages are a specific feature of intermediate schooling.
- An element of choice or supplementary learning programmes has been a feature of Year 7 and 8 curriculum since the 1930’s.
Therefore, learning programmes that include an element of choice are a sustained feature of intermediate schooling.
- No current document identifies the aims and purposes of intermediates specifically or provides explicit guidance.
Therefore, a lack of clarity and guidance generates an environment of high variability and potential extremes of practice in the quality of intermediate schools. It is for individual schools through their leadership and charters to determine.
- There are many historic features that continue in today’s intermediate schools.
Therefore, the aims and purposes of intermediate schooling are multi-functional and include; meeting the diverse needs of emerging adolescents, ‘specialist’ and supplementary learning programmes, student choice, second language learning and continuation of the ‘core’ curriculum.

4. THE FUTURE OF INTERMEDIATES

Background

INTERVIEW QUESTION AND RESPONSES:

What is your view on the future of Intermediate schooling?

Lester: Vulnerable! We can read the future, in some respects, from patterns of the past. A Minister of Education single-handedly wiped out Intermediates in our southern most city – not at the behest of the people, and not because those schools were under performing or in poor shape, but out of a personal, political mindset that exercised the unilateral privilege of regulatory and fiscal power. There are other such examples – including the recent Christchurch re-shuffle. There are three main groups that exercise control over the future of intermediates: politicians, their public (which really means ‘political’) servants and advisers, and intermediate principals and teachers – the latter having limited power when it comes to the crunch. If an intermediate is not performing brightly for its students it is, and should be, at risk. But this is not the fault of Intermediates per se. It is the result of ineffective leadership. Indeed, the same applies to all school settings and types across the sector.

The other risk factor is pure and simply demographic and fiscal. When the roll drops below a certain level (for whatever reason – demographic or poor performance reputation) it is at risk. On the other hand, large, bursting intermediates – regardless of performance, are difficult to dismantle if the cost of re-accommodating students is disproportionate.

Alistair: In a word – pessimistic! I am sure that most of the MOE ‘officials’ who advise each Minister have a strong secondary bias and they see intermediates as a waste of time, (not to mention a potential and actual PPTA membership erosion). I have never heard any official pronouncements from the MOE about having schools which focus on the learning needs of this specific age group. Just watch what happens in Christchurch!

Other Respondents:

Sensitive to what the population does

Need ta strategic view ie ‘what education system do we need?’

Year 7 – 9 a future model

Tenuous and vulnerable

Like to think a vibrant future.... When done well.... When done badly a shambles

Year 7 – 9 worthy of exploring as two years are too short

Honestly don’t know.... The stronghold is Auckland and Bay of Plenty

Explore 4 year concept Year 6 – Year 9

Guidance about Middle Schooling from the Ministry of Education

Intermediates suffer from 'museumfication' that is they aggressively defend their artefacts and, at best, change display cases from time to time. The ghost of the chief curator, Beeby, lurks in the corridors of many principals' thinking. Intermediate schooling has to 'Te Papa-ise' or risk losing relevancy buried beneath the dust of self-mythologising nostalgia. Looking to the Ministry for leadership or epistemic duty is futile, they are motivated by politics, preference and custom – reason and innovation are in short supply - these skills have to be the premise of principals if intermediates are to have a viable future!

Lesley Longstone, Secretary of Education (October 2012 addressed the Nelson Principal's Conference at Lake Rotoiti) in response to a question on the future of intermediates commented, *'that there is no agenda against intermediates'*.

Chris Hipkins, Associate Education Spokesperson for Labour (16th May addressed the WISPA at Fergusson Intermediate) in response to a question concerning intermediates commented,

*There is no political agenda against Middle Schooling
Closures are happening by default after reviews like Christchurch
Need to engage with research..... there is little available
Really no framework behind decision-making for Middle Schooling
I don't have fixed views
Like the idea of Middle Schools.... has some appeal
Would like evidenced based information on Middle Schooling.... like an
evaluation of the school in Albany*

FINDINGS FROM A VARIETY OF RESEARCH

The following extracts are from a variety of significant reviews or study's focussing on intermediates.

Beeby (1938) found that many intermediate schools were;

- Poorly equipped
- Poorly housed
- Inadequately staffed
- Without effective leadership
- Achieving slightly better than primary
- Offering richer corporate life

His recommendations included;

- The appointment of teachers with special responsibilities
- The encouragement of a greater diversity of optional activities
- That intermediates not be compelled to begin secondary school subjects

The Report of the Commission On Education in New Zealand (1962, pp. 223 - 373) stated,

(5) That the present system of intermediate schools be extended in the cities and towns and that these schools be renamed junior high schools.

(6) That experiments be made in establishing form I-VI co-educational schools in new housing areas in the cities.

(5) That in intermediate schools the staffing ratio be so modified as to reduce the maximum size of classes first to 40, then to 35.

(26) That homework be a formal requirement for all pupils at no later point than the beginning of form II.

Watson (1964, pp.418-434) recommendations included,

- *The intermediate school system in New Zealand should be continued, extended, and strengthened.*
- *Whenever possible, intermediate schools should be independent schools, attached to neither to primary nor to secondary schools.*
- *Plans for extending the intermediate school system to rural districts and small towns should be speeded up.*
- *The length of the intermediate school course should continue to be two years.*
- *In appointments of the headmasterships of intermediate schools preference should be given to applicants who are university graduates and who have satisfactorily completed a course in school administration.*
- *The study of a second language in a simple practical manner should be included in the basic curriculum for all above-average pupils.*

Bishop (2008, p.65) recommended,

Heighten awareness of Years 7-10 as a key area.

Ensure all Ministry of Education documents that discuss primary and secondary education also include the education of young adolescents in Years 7-10 as a distinct learning pathway, as identified in the New Zealand Curriculum

Establish a website or links to New Zealand-specific middle years research and development.

Expand the role and function of the Middle Years Steering Group to engage stakeholders and maintain focus on research and policy for Years 7-10.

Review policy settings related to promoting engagement in Years 7-10

Create new policies and programmes that are evidence-based and increase positive student outcomes in Years 7-10.

Ensure.... knowledge, skills and values are addressed in the preparation of teachers of young adolescents in all primary and secondary teacher education programmes:

FINDINGS ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The following ERO data provides a measure of a schools performance or quality. Schools with a one to two year return are of 'poor performance' and schools that are on a four to five year return are of 'exceptional performance'.

Diana Anderson, Acting Chief Review Officer (an email to state schools, 9th May 2013) stated,

- *The majority of schools are on a three-year return time.*
- *Currently 12-15% are on a one-to-two year return time, where the performance of the school or kura kaupapa Māori is poor,*
- *and approximately 12 percent are on a four-to-five year return time when they can demonstrate exceptional performance*

Mark Canning, Manager Ministerial and Legal Services, Education Review Office (16 April 2013 responding to a request from the author) wrote,

- *Since 1 July 2011 ERO has reviewed 55 (48%) intermediate schools –*
- *5 (9%) of these have been placed on a one to two year return*
- *40 (73%) on a three year return*
- *10 (18%) on a four to five year return*

A REVIEW OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The following provides a measure of student achievement of intermediates, relative to other structures, providing for Year 7 and 8 students viz full primary (the majority of Year 7 and 8 students who are not enrolled at intermediates attend full primary schools). The first two cycles of the New Zealand's National Monitoring Project: 1995-1998 and 1999-2002 found,

.... analyses, which give stable results over two cycles of national monitoring, show very few differences in student achievement in relation to the type of school attended at year 8 level, where there are two major types of schools – intermediate and full primary.

Furthermore, in the analysis of cycle 3 (2003- 2006) data shows that the above finding still remains accurate.

The Education Review Office Report (2001, pp.51-58) found,

One of the most serious findings of this report is the low quality of education being provided to years 7 and 8 students in many composite schools, many small full primary schools and many rural Year 7 to 15 schools. Students in these types of schools are less likely than those in other schools to have access to teachers who are able to focus on their emotional and educational needs. There is not a strong relationship between the type of school attended by Years 7 and 8 and the quality of education.

ERO found that full primary schools with cohorts of 41 or more Years 7 and 8 students tended to perform better overall than composite or Year 7 to 15 secondary schools with similar size Years 7 and 8 cohorts.

Durling, Ng, and Bishop (2010, pp.1-4) state,

It also indicates that the middle years of schooling can be an important intervention stage for ensuring students remain engaged at school and achieve successful outcomes.

That it is essential to hone the different skills, knowledge and attributes specially with middle years students in mind if teaching and learning for these students is to be effective.

INTERVIEW QUESTION AND RESPONSES:

What guidance or support do you receive specifically for intermediates or Y7/8 education?

Lester: None. I began my teaching career in a large Intermediate, and was principal of two Intermediates. I had to make and tailor my own learning and take initiatives for guiding and counseling colleagues in the understandings and practices necessary for the Intermediate context. I long came to the view that it was a waste of time to depend on, look to, or wait for the 'system' to provide relevant and helpful support – because the system simply didn't have the right people to lead this. This has not changed, and it is not unsurprising given the serious deficits in the nature of system leadership in our country and the constant intrusion of political arrogance.

Alistair: There is little point in waiting on the "system" to genuinely commit to this. I'm of the view that associations of Intermediates need to take care of it themselves.

Other Respondents:

Real problem no specific support and no intermediate principal's seem to go to MoE or ERO

Intermediate Numeracy Project

Nothing from MoE or GSE

Absolutely none

None

None.... 3 para's in the NZC, a little on TKI

Nothing from the Ministry

Bishop (2008, pp. 58-59), identified recent policy work related to Years 7 – 10 by the Ministry of Education (NB phase I was completed in 2007). This work includes:

Phase I

Research Literature Review - Review of relevant international and national research on middle schooling and student achievement outcomes

Statistical Snapshot - Compilation and analysis of New Zealand data available across years 7 to 10

Transition to Secondary School: A Literature Review - Review of national and international research on transition and identifies issues relating to the impacts of transition upon student achievement and adjustment to secondary school

Transitions from Primary to Secondary Schooling Study - Investigates what it is like for students when they move from primary to secondary schooling with a focus on their experiences and achievement.

Phase II

Middle Schooling Steering Group - Cross-Ministry Steering Group overseeing the development of a strong, coherent evidence base to underpin the development of policy related to teaching and learning and student outcomes in the middle schooling years

Teacher Education for Middle Schooling Years - Policy study of the intersection between teacher credentialing and young adolescents' learning.

Student Engagement Research - Examination of key aspects of engagement for NZ's students in the middle schooling years.

Pathways and Achievement of NZ's Middle School Students - A longitudinal study of the pathways and achievements of students in year 7 in 2007 attending NZs middle schools.

Phase III

Case Studies of Middle Years Schooling - Examination of contributors to effectiveness in middle years schooling.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR CHANGE OF CLASS

If an intermediate chooses to change status by extending its cohort of students the following information/process is required by the Ministry of Education in summary,

Parental Choice – consultation including the proportion supporting the proposed change.

Staff Consultation – the board has consulted with principal and staff.

Implications for Education Provision in the Wider Community – submissions from other boards, likely impact, concerns raised by schools that may be affected and, discussion re possibility of school reorganisations within the wider network of schools.

Transport – current situation and likely changes.

Implications for School Organisation – current roll and future predictions.

Property/Resource Implications – sufficient property and changes to property.

Findings and Implications

- The perception of principals relating to the future of intermediates is one of heightened vulnerability.
Therefore, this perception potentially impacts on the performance of leaders and teachers in regard to how they interpret their worth and commitment to intermediate schooling.
- The general experience of intermediate principals is that they receive no specific assistance or guidance on intermediate schooling from the Ministry of Education or other provider.
Therefore, this shared experience significantly contributes to the perception of high vulnerability.
- Principals and other professionals strongly suggest that intermediates extend their student tenure by one or two years thereby more effectively catering for the emerging adolescent. ERO (2001, p.51) recommended, “The future role of middle schools in New Zealand needs to be considered further in the light of the needs of all students from years 7 to 10.”
Therefore, principals could consider exploring their communities view, Ministry officials and supporting organisations eg AIMS, to have intermediates ‘renewed’ as middle schools. Secondary principals, current network review outcomes and fiscal considerations are likely to present a considerable barrier to this proposal.
- The quality of intermediate school education as indicated by ERO’s cycles of review suggest intermediates are performing slightly better than schools collectively.
Therefore, this should affirm that intermediates are a successful school structures.
- NEMP found there is no significant difference in Year 7 and 8 students achievement between intermediate schooling and full primary’s. However, ERO (2001), identified the likelihood of poorer achievement in schools with small cohorts of Year 7 and 8 students and are likely to be full primary’s.
Therefore, more research may be useful to further explore achievement and the differentiation between intermediate’s and full primary’s.
- The Ministry of Education is carrying out policy work on Years 7-10 and have published some of their findings to date.
Therefore, it would be prudent for intermediate leaders to be familiar with these findings to guide their leadership. It would be useful for the Ministry to be more proactive in presenting research beyond digital or hardcopy mediums, ie workshops providing for professional dialogue etc

CONCLUSION

The Report of the Commission On Education in New Zealand (1962, pp. 160-161) stated,

The intermediate school, whose name shows its essential nature, is probably the most controversial feature of the present school organization, and the Commission has spent much time in considering the history of its establishment, the purposes it was meant to serve, its achievements, and its future.

This project, on a considerably more modest scale, has attempted to answer what was to be measured by the above formal report over 50 years ago. The overarching goal was to demystify intermediate schooling which I described as, **‘a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma’** because of its ‘controversial features’ within the New Zealand education system and unique nature internationally. This was researched by synthesizing; current statistical data, historical developments, aims and purposes, literature review, research findings and, finally what of our future? In addition, the findings of this project, has provided a greater clarity of understanding and purpose for the school in which I lead.

KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDING 1

This project found, intermediates are presently a vulnerable school structure within New Zealand’s education system due to a complexity of issues. These include (in no particular order):

- There is a distinct lack of Ministry of Education leadership, strategic planning, professional support, guiding documents or expertise designated explicitly to the development and improvement of intermediates. ERO (2001, p.50) recommended, “the Government should establish clear directions and priorities for the education of Years 7 and 8 students.”
- Intermediates are not a recognised as a specific sector of schooling as in countries like the USA. Consequently, intermediates are considered primary schools, by default, and are administered as such.
- The privileges of Minister’s of Education include considerable fiscal and regulatory power and, the right to implement ideopolitical initiatives in isolation of empirical research.
- Changing demographics may result in a ‘Network Review’ of a specific region. Intermediates are likely to be closed rather than established as a review outcome.

KEY FINDING 2

This project concludes, despite the previously mentioned threats and disconnect with the Ministry of Education there is much to be celebrated and developed for the future. In short, principals should consider the renewal of intermediates as middle schools becoming a 3 or 4 year learning programme. Nolan, Brown, Stewart and Beane cited in ERO (2001, p.10) state,

Over 40 years of school-based research and experience with hundreds of thousands of students in over 10,000 middle schools show that separate three or four year age span middle schools, when properly planned and led, are the most appropriate way to meet the educational needs of emerging adolescents.

In the interim, intermediates need to consider a shift in their educational imperative that is; consolidation, continuity and choice rejecting previous historical functions as ‘centralised’ schools of transition and preparation. As a renewed school structure to explicitly address social, cultural, physical and academic needs of emerging adolescents by the:

- Consolidation of previous learning and, as social consolidation by providing one of the few school options where a diversity of students attend differing from separatist structures organised by gender, religious affiliation, ethnicity or socio-economic status.
- Continuity of learning to challenge, enrich and provide new experiences through inquiry pedagogy.
- Choice over students learning pathways enhancing engagement, motivation and autonomy.

In closing, the existential maxim, ‘we have the right to the consequences of our actions’ is an appropriate consideration for principals of intermediates as they lead schools of an uncertain future. I encourage principals to take professional responsibility for the future of intermediate schools through their students, teachers, communities and Ministry of Education.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

Principals' take professional responsibility for the future development and improvement of intermediate schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

Robustly review intermediate education within the context of a Years 7 to 10 to provide greater clarity in meeting the needs of the emerging adolescent learner.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The intermediate school structure should remain, be strengthened and extended:

1. Remain, as schools of consolidation, continuity and choice for learning.
2. Strengthened, as a specific sector with explicit Ministry of Education leadership, guidance and support for their development and improvement. Therefore, Bishop's (2008, p.65) recommendations be given serious consideration as follows:

Ensure.... knowledge, skills and values are addressed in the preparation of teachers of young adolescents in all primary and secondary teacher education programmes:

- *The ability and desire to form supportive, authentic relationships with young adolescents;*
- *An understanding of the developmental nature and needs of young adolescents and how those connect to pedagogy;*
- *In-depth content knowledge, especially in numeracy, above and beyond what primary preparation can offer;*
 - An ability to foster learning through inquiry and integrative curriculum over traditional secondary school methods;*
 - A belief in balancing a focus on subject matter with a focus on the whole learner;*
 - A skill in differentiating instruction and assessment, to enable students to progress at different rates;*

3. Extended to a Year 7 – 9 middle school structure to more effectively address the needs of emerging adolescent learners by sustained engagement motivation and autonomy.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That principal's of intermediate schools consider reading the following titles to inform their leadership:

1. Bishop, P. (2008). *Middle Years Teacher Credentialing in Aotearoa/New Zealand*.
2. Education Review Office, (2001). *Students in Years 7 and 8*.
3. Watson, J.E. (1964). *Intermediate Schooling in New Zealand*.

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