

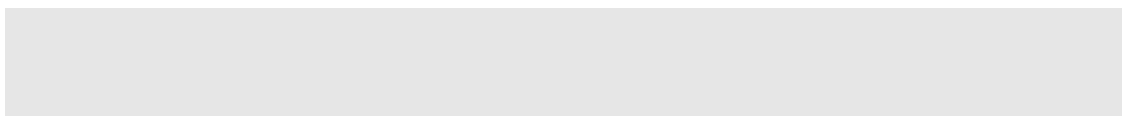
# Principal Sabbatical Report

Engaging Students in life  
long learning.

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Ashgrove School  
Term 3  
2006

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## Acknowledgement

I wish to express my appreciation to the Ashgrove Board for supporting my application and to the NZEI for their role in securing this provision in principal's conditions of service. Following my experience I would further encourage the NZEI to work towards gaining the right to compulsory sabbatical periods for principals after a defined length of service.

## Introduction

***“The learner is the heart of the matter.”***

As educators we subscribe to the truism that children are the sole purpose of the school, though often at that point our views as to what constitutes “best teaching” diverges. With this thought in mind, my study evolved into an examination of student's levels of engagement with the learning process as it was able to be observed in a range of schools.

There is an abundant supply of research available regarding the wider issues around effective learning. Some of the readings I considered as part of this study will be referred to in the body of the report.

Student engagement in this report is defined more widely than many of the definitions I was able to glean in Ministry publications. Initially those definitions seemed rather superficial; focussing on such things as attendance and length of time at school, acquisition of higher qualifications and so forth; pertinent within their particular contexts, but not so relevant from my perspective.

In this study I have adopted the definition found within a south Auckland school's E.R.O report. In this case the decision was made to consider student engagement in terms of four dimensions: affective or emotional engagement, practical functional engagement, and cognitive and metacognitive engagement. Metacognitive engagement takes place when students reflect on their learning and learning processes. Thus when all these dimensions are present one could expect to see students who have a strong desire to be at school; to participate in the learning programmes and to be making measurable gains in their achievement. Is this a utopian dream or is it achievable? If achievable, what processes bring it about? What resources are needed, what part does the school leadership play in ensuring effective change and finally how is the actual student achievement measured?

My intentions were:

1. To clarify my understanding of the terms; student engagement and school wide change.
2. To identify the triggers for school wide change.
3. To analyse the processes that were successful.

4. To evaluate the degree to which schools have had assistance in the process and hence the significance of effective resourcing.
5. To use the opportunity to broaden my own professional readings and to draw some conclusion as to their relevance in the NZ situation and to conclude which, if any, would be most pertinent to schools contemplating the improvement of students' engagement levels.

During the course of the study, school personnel were interviewed and observed and student opinion considered.

The report is in four sections.

Section 1: Defining the questions and planning the programme.

Section 2: Observations from the visits.

Section 3: Relating observations to theory.

Section 4: Conclusions

Appendix.;

*Consisting of notes based on the observations in each school.*

# SECTION 1

## Defining the questions and planning the programme.

### My original hypothesis.

*That to develop “Life Long Learners” students must gain sufficient enjoyment and satisfaction from the learning process that they voluntarily seek more of it. From this, should follow increasing levels of engagement, greater productivity and higher levels of achievement.*

### **Key Question:**

In those schools where student engagement is demonstrably high, how has this been developed, managed and sustained?

### **Subsidiary Questions:**

1. What defines “student engagement?”
2. How do you develop and sustain higher levels of engagement?
3. What are the essential aspects in teaching practice which increase student engagement and how do you ensure that the student will encounter a continuity of effective teaching practice for more than one year at a time?

## Definitions

### **1. Student Engagement.**

During the research project for ‘Te Kōtahitanga’, a number of Year 9 and 10 Māori students and their teachers were interviewed and were asked “What made the biggest difference to whether a student learned or not?”

From the findings, four out of five students thought that quality of face-to-face relationships and in-class interactions with their teachers made a big difference.

They said they did well when teachers **valued** them, **challenged** them and held **high expectations** about what they could do.

Returning to the definition of engagement from Manurewa Central's ERO report; to be truly engaged in learning there must be evidence that students have:

- ❖ Affective or emotional engagement. Do they want to be participating in these selected learning experiences? How do they respond to the questions, "What are you learning?" "Do you understand the relevance of what you are learning?" "Is what you are learning going to be of benefit to you?"
- ❖ Practical or functional engagement. What proportions of their learning day constitutes "on task" behaviour? Are the percentages of on task time increasing? Does "down time" exist and if so is it a significant proportion of time? Do they have to be reminded of the tasks and managed back to them?
- ❖ Cognitive and metacognitive engagement. Is the understanding of the learning increasing their wider functioning as learners? Are they being provided with the teaching to acquire the tools they need in order to think effectively? Do they know about their own learning patterns and how to make them effective?

## **2. School organisational change.**

The phrase life long learning is now almost universally accepted though the interpretations of its meaning vary widely. Many schools use it as a key part of their vision and while teachers espouse it widely many still struggle to make changes to deeply established teaching practices. Sadly in many of our staffrooms deficit thinking is still all too evident. As a simple test, listen to the sorts of comments you hear teachers making about students over the cups of morning tea and lunch.

The schools mentioned in this report have all had to contend with the necessity to develop a **school wide** understanding of what is appropriate pedagogy for the needs of modern learners. All of the schools were immersed in the change processes. All have become comfortable with the term "journey" to encapsulate the evolutionary nature of the process.

## **3. Quality (effective) teaching.**

Teaching which is deliberately undertaken through informed knowledge of modern pedagogy. Teaching which deliberately includes such factors as listed in "What Works in Schools" R.J Marzano. These are further defined in the diagram on page 10.

## **4. The Term's Timetable.**

The first two weeks of the term were spent visiting some local Christchurch schools and getting the professional reading underway. Week three was spent visiting schools on the West Coast of the South Island; week four visits to Christchurch schools; weeks five and six were a personal break in Queensland where apart from driving past schools and following the debate

about whether or not to put air-conditioning into Queensland schools, I had what I considered to be a well deserved break. In week seven the books came out again and I was off to Auckland for week eight. In week nine, still in Auckland I toured several more schools as part of the E-Time Tour organised by Chris and Faye Le Cren. Week ten was spent in Timaru and drafting this report.

In all twenty one schools were visited in Marlborough, Christchurch City, the West Coast of the South Island, greater Auckland, South Canterbury and the Bay of Plenty. The time spent in schools varied from an hour or two talking with the principal and key staff to up to half a day visiting classrooms, speaking with a range of teachers and students and documenting aspects of the study through notes, photos and video files.

## SECTION 2

### Observations from the visits.

#### What caused this school organisational change?

From my observations the major catalysts for change included:

- ❖ A change of principal or other key personnel as a normal part of process.
- ❖ The Principal's Vision as developed through professional interactions and readings.
- ❖ Participation by the school in a Ministry Contract such as AToL, ICT e.t.c.
- ❖ An adverse E.R.O. report requiring specific actions either individually or on a regional basis.
- ❖ Ministry of Education involvement arising from documented concerns and the need for focussed improvement.
- ❖ A trial programme of some description, e.g. Numeracy in the early days or Gifted and Talented etc.
- ❖ School amalgamations as a result of Ministry network initiatives.
- ❖ Establishing as a new school.
- ❖ Threatened closure due to a decision that the school was not viable.

In many schools there were several factors present. The following table summarises the data from the schools visited. The totals may be greater than the actual number of schools as some fitted several categories.

<b>Main causes of change.</b>	<b>Numbers of Schools this typified.</b>
Existing Principal's vision recognition that change was desirable.	7 schools identified this as a key reason.
A change of Principal and new direction needed.	3 schools.
Significant ERO concerns.	In 4 schools this was one factor.
Beginning as a new school.	1 school specifically and one, some years earlier.
Participation in an M.O.E contract	11 schools. ATOL was sited in 6 schools as a major factor.
Competitive Market requirements.	One school. Integrated. This was one of several of the other factors.
Threatened closure.	1 school.



MoE interventions.

2 major interventions were observed. The West Coast Literacy project and the Manurewa Enhancement Initiative. Together these involved 6 of the schools visited.

All schools in the study reported significant improvements in their students' engagement with learning as reported by teachers. It was evident in all the classes visited, that the level of the learning was engaging and meaningful. Students were "on task" with relevant and challenging learning opportunities. When asked, most students could talk enthusiastically about what they were "learning", as opposed to "what they were doing". Further they could tell you why they were learning it and what relevance it had in their general education. The sceptics among us will know that you can prime a class for a visit but equally it doesn't take very long to detect the veneer especially when you ask students about their learning. Classroom, programme and display design had a lot to do with the students having visual guides and scaffolds to direct their focus to the major purpose of the learning.



In the photo the exemplars are clear and the students' progress against them is recorded in a way the child can see clearly the next steps to be taken.

Most schools were in the process of developing specific measurements to determine the changes in attitude but all reported an anecdotal awareness that students were more focussed and productive.

All the schools visited reported that managing student behaviour was a smaller demand on teacher and senior management time, if an issue at all. This was not to say that schools had lowered standards and were therefore not intervening with poor behaviour, in fact the opposite is true as these schools more consistently promoted positive values in line with their principles and practices arising from shared vision and values. Further and in the light of other discussions I have had with a number of Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour, I place a considerable amount of significance on this, as a factor in eliminating **disengaged** behaviour patterns.

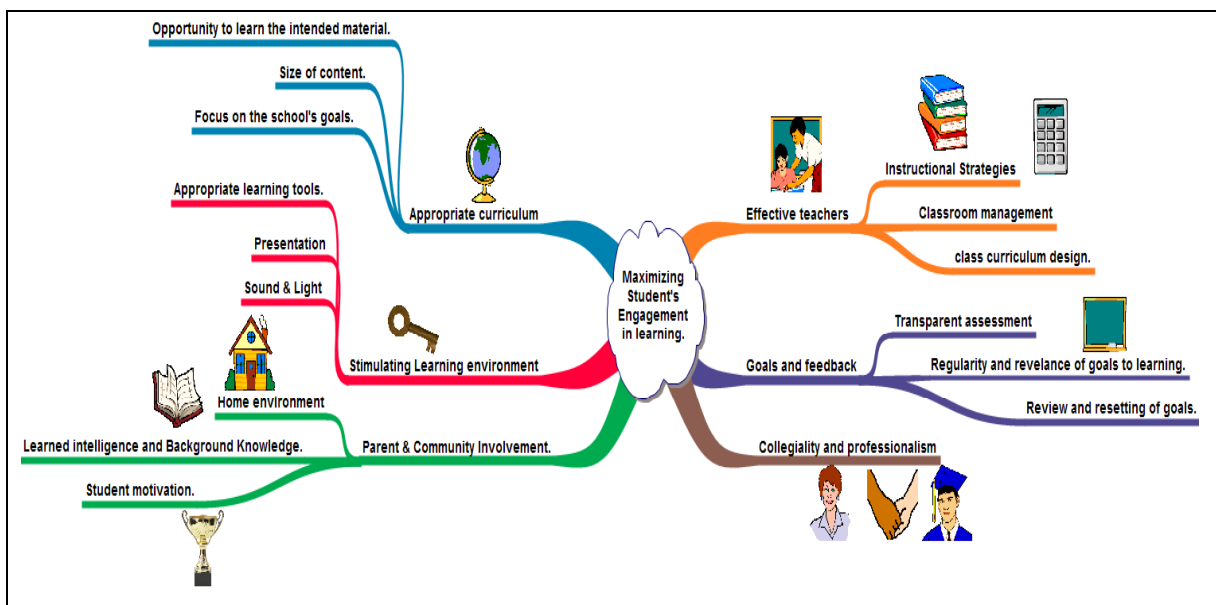
In all the classrooms I visited I was struck by the quality of the teaching, the presentation of the learning environment and the active participation on the part of the students. In this conclusion it was noticeable that school size and decile had little effect.

Having then posed the questions and found the answers to be workable it remains to create a process that will work for those of us with some distance still to travel.

## SECTION 3

### Relating observations to theory

I have avoided trying to quote a large number of previous studies in order that this report is as practical as possible. One text however that I found encapsulated much of what I observed was “What Works in Schools. Translating Research into Action” Robert J. Marzano. Marzano has constructed a synthesis of years of global research and in my travels it was evident that successful practice fitted well within his model. The following diagram however is a rather liberal adaptation.



In achieving the highest levels of engagement the successful school is most likely to have addressed most if not all of these aspects.

1. A school wide expectation regarding the way the local curriculum is interpreted from the national requirements; agreed practice, on the part of the staff, in the way goals are set and feedback is given; ways in which the community are actively involved; ways in which the school environment is safe and well organised; guidance regarding the ways in which staff act professionally and collegially. The concept of teachers being sole practitioners in their isolated class and implementing programmes with little reference to their colleagues was well gone.
2. Teacher effectiveness. Assisting the teachers to reach a high level of effectiveness through staff development aimed at informing them of the most effective teaching strategies, ways to manage classrooms and ways to interpret curriculum for their particular students.

3. The learning needs of the students themselves. This involves developing in the teachers, an appreciation of the student's home environment, their learning capacity and previous knowledge and the factors which most effectively motivate them. It relates also to a teacher's belief or otherwise in the degree to which each student is capable of learning. In this regard effective schools will have agreed a shared belief in teaching and learning. There are clearly issues of resourcing which lie well beyond a school's ability to assemble if this dimension is to ever be fully addressed by society.

## **1. Curriculum Design.**

Each school had worked through the process of defining a vision for their school. They had in most cases done this with assistance from outside facilitation. The most often cited contract had been AToL and all the schools were in agreement that this contract had been highly effective. The schools on the West Coast of the South Island were involved with Literacy improvement and were likewise supportive of the process and the results being obtained. The question of resources and support to schools cannot be overlooked. The West Coast is an example where additional resourcing by the local authorities and Ministry of Education had been fundamental to coordinating consistent practice across a cluster. Another such instance was to be found in South Auckland where the Manurewa Enhancement Initiative covers thirty two schools of all types. I greatly appreciated the time given by both Vin Leonard (West Coast project) and John Good (MEI) in sharing the experiences and achievements of both these interventions. In both instances it was evident to me that targeted intervention which puts high quality data in the hands of teachers, can facilitate very effective professional dialogue and subsequently is more likely to lead to more effective teaching. This process would be extremely helpful to any cluster of schools should they wish to establish it.

In those schools visited, the vision and the teaching beliefs arising from it were under constant review through the professional structures in place within the schools. Even before the relatively recent curriculum stock take, many schools had come to the realisation that the existing curriculum was impossible and they had in effect carried out their own stock takes. With the agreements of boards of trustees as to what was of real value to the communities they had set out to write their own manageable curriculum. Professional development was regarded as a crucial component with many schools spending an increasing proportion of their budgets to ensure effective initiatives as well as the increasing need to sustain earlier initiatives. One principal went so far as to advocate the spending of 30% of the budget on teacher development in the light of some of John Hattie's findings as to how much difference individual teachers make.

In 100% of cases Literacy and Numeracy were considered core areas and were treated separately with much emphasis on the use of quality data to provide evidence to inform teaching practice. Of the schools which had participated in the Numeracy contract, many were ambivalent as to its overall effectiveness and the effect on the wider Maths programmes, the major criticism being inconsistent messages from the facilitators; changing approaches over the years and a growing perception that while there has been improvement in some areas of mathematical performance, other areas, such as computation have deteriorated. I concede that this is anecdotal and does not fit entirely with the ministry's statistical data but in view of the numbers of teachers making similar comments it is an area for consideration.

Beyond the core subjects all the schools had also changed the remaining subject areas to ensure "powerful (authentic) learning." In most cases this was based around Inquiry models of learning. In all cases the underlying philosophy was that the Child should **sense** their control of their learning. This child centred approach to learning was shared by all schools. In one school the motto "KIC Start (Kids In Charge) is consistently to be seen in all classes. This however is very far from some of the laissez faire notions of children being in charge that we have seen at earlier times in our educational history. Guiding young learners to the point where their responsibility rises requires more focussed pedagogical knowledge on the part of the teacher and much more collegial support amongst staff. It requires a change in thinking with which many teachers are struggling. The inquiry models I observed were tightly structured and the teachers worked hard to scaffold the learning at all stages.

In all schools topic selection and lesson planning was done collegially through pods, syndicates or year groups. Individual teachers planning individual programmes are a "thing of the past" in these **well aligned** schools.

### The Place of Inquiry Learning

*Inquiry is a dynamic approach to learning that involves exploring the world, asking questions, making discoveries, and rigorously testing those discoveries in the search for new understanding. However, inquiry is a tough concept to pin down. It is complex, multifaceted, and looks different in different classrooms and contexts (<http://ilf.crlt.indiana.edu>).*

The majority of the schools I observed were using Inquiry approaches to develop their powerful learning through integration. Rather than expand on the process here I recommend the report submitted to Leadspace by Lyn Atkinson "How do Exemplary Principals manage and sustain change in order to enhance student learning outcomes."

## **2. Establishing challenge and providing feedback.**

When a student comes to the learning experience knowing that they will have the opportunity to work on a new challenge in a supportive emotionally safe environment with clear guidance as to how they are doing in their learning and

that the support to reach the next step will be there, the chances of them failing are greatly reduced.

***“If children don’t learn the way we teach.....perhaps we should teach the way they learn” “Eppig 1981 as quoted in “Formative Assessment in Action” Shirley Clarke.***

All of the schools in the observations have a process for ensuring that assessment is understood and used across the school in conjunction with the collection of sufficient summative data as to allow for sound evidence based decisions.

The biggest challenge has been the time it takes to develop sufficient levels of trust within the school staff. Once the trust has consolidated; highly professional discussion with supportive critique of practice can become the norm within professional learning circles. Teachers have had to read appropriate material, take time to discuss and trial it in supportive collegial groups and trial again where necessary. The emphasis on meeting times has moved from discussion of “administrivia” to learning centred dialogue.

It has been necessary in the majority of schools for school wide requirements to be put in place by school management after sufficient staff consultation. In one school the teachers have all adopted a standardised system of marking children’s work. A green highlighter indicates the child has met the required learning intention while a pink one indicates a need for further work. This system was observed in action in a new entrant class, a year five and six class and a year seven and eight room. In all three, the students have also been taught effective methods of peer conferencing and providing appropriate feedback. The time taken to instil these approaches has, in my view, more than paid dividends.

In one intermediate school where staff and student morale was very low, a significant effort has been placed into developing a Record of Student Achievement for each student which not only shows the student and their family their achievement level in Maths and English but which is added to during the term by the students as they include assessment results and samples of their work. While portfolios of work as such are not new the sharing of all the major data with the student in a way that points to their next steps and leads to appropriate goal setting is much more powerful than simply collecting sample of work to talk with parents about once or twice a year. In the intermediate’s case the record goes home at the end of the term. In conjunction goals are set with families at the beginning of term one and progress is checked each term. In another low decile highly multicultural school in South Auckland the teacher encourages feedback against goals on a daily basis.





Goal evaluation and resetting daily.

A Bay of Plenty school uses an entirely electronic report in which the child talks about their levels, their goals and how they are progressing against them. Teachers were extremely complementary about this format.

### **3. The Quality of the Teaching.**

The most important factor in achieving this was through the school's professional development programmes. The end result was observable in immaculate classrooms, carefully planned and laid out. In not one single classroom was any irrelevant "clutter" evident. Everything that was present had a purpose and was there after careful planning. This was true in brand new schools and in schools that had very old buildings and very little spare space. Certain commonalities characterised the teaching to a high degree in all the classes I observed:

- ❖ The school vision or the practicalities of it in terms of the characteristics expected of the learner.
- ❖ Guidance for the students on how to think. This varied between summaries of Bloom's and de Bono's thinking hats. In each case where this was on display the meanings were usually "unpacked" in student language.
- ❖ Commonly on display were rubrics which indicated how the student was progressing as a learner and as a developing social person. The feedback offered by this method was powerful when reinforced by

teachers who ended the day with a recap of the daily learning, what it meant and how it affected the student in their life.

- ❖ All schools visited were highly proficient with ICT. Again most of the schools had participated in the ICT cluster contracts. In all cases pods of computers supplemented the computer suite and in all cases the classroom computers were viewed as being more significant than the suite. In one case all the students work from laptops all the time though this can not be a reality for most of us in the foreseeable future.
- ❖ Uniform display of and enforcement of the school's behaviour expectations. Four schools ran a formal privilege time which provided a regular and automatic reward to the majority of students who work according to expectation. These are often the students who get little recognition. Most significantly the staffs were consistently clear in their understandings of what the behavioural expectations meant and how to support each other in their enforcement.

It was beyond the scope of my observations to attempt to observe other specific techniques to reinforce learning such as; wait time during questioning and ensuring that teachers planned for the requisite number of exposures to new ideas in order to firmly ground new concepts but I felt that the way the schools were developing inquiry approaches, would ensure high quality teaching techniques through the professional development processes.







#### 4. Involving the parents.

The focus of the study again precluded me from looking in depth at this aspect but it was evident in all schools that the business of communicating the messages and working with parents was taken very seriously. Two specific approaches remain with me as examples of good practice. The school foyer is a crucial part of a school as it is where the parents and students mix most often. The design if this area is critical.

One West Coast school in particular had on display, in addition to the usual information flyers, bulletins and so forth, very comprehensive booklets from the board of Trustees outlining all aspects of the school's governance and the roles of the parent representatives. For those parents interested, there would be little chance that they could not be informed of the school's programmes. Most schools had comprehensive web sites though not all were up to date or easy to navigate. Another school has a continuously running video of school activities on a flat screen in the foyer and their students broadcast to a 20km radius through the school radio station daily.

I was privileged to attend a celebration assembly at an Auckland school and after each such assembly designated staff members will have a cup of tea or coffee with the attending parents and use the opportunity to share developments or information on new programmes and other matters of importance.

#### 5. Creating safe and orderly environments.

It became evident very early in the process of visiting schools that the environments were ones the community could be proud of. The general lack of rubbish was an immediately obvious feature and in many cases this was associated with at least two of schools having taken their rubbish tins away as part of the process for making students responsible for their own rubbish. There is again a link into making the curriculum authentic for students and

taking the espousing of pride in your school to a concrete level. Management of bags, shoes and enforcement of the same standards of presentation by all staff were universally apparent and helped reinforce the message of a well aligned school.



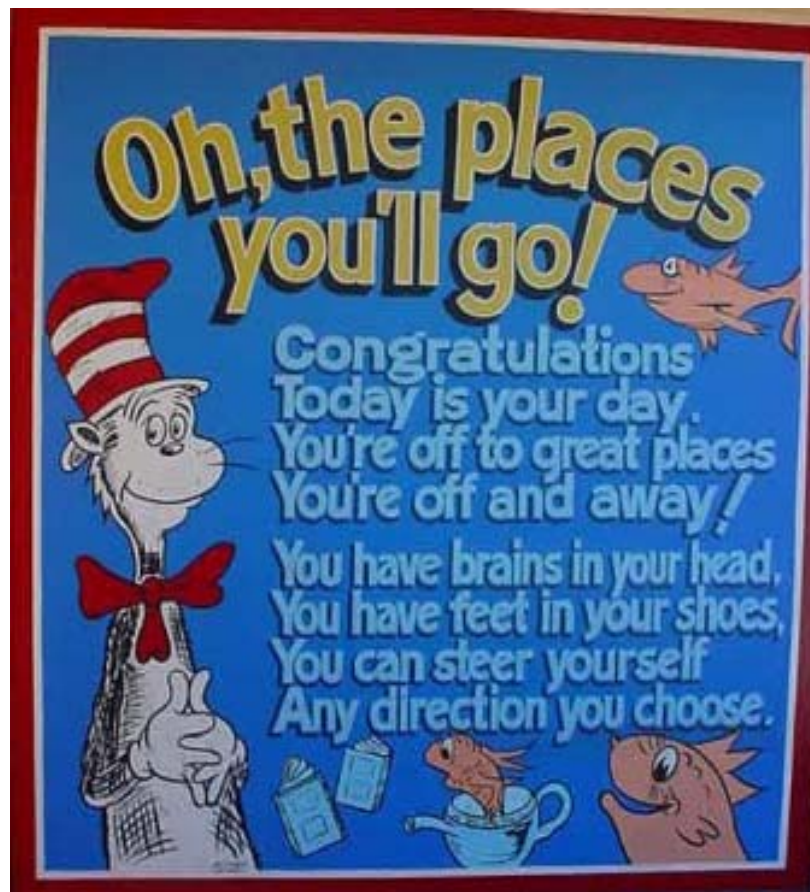
## 6. Staff professionalism.

*“Collegial behaviour is demonstrated by teachers who are supportive of one another. They openly enjoy professional interactions, are respectful and courteous of each others needs.” Christine Villani as quoted in “What Works in Schools” R.J.Marzano p61.*

*“Professionalism, then, includes a certain level of knowledge about one’s subject area, but perhaps more important, it also involves **pedagogical knowledge of how to teach that subject** –matter content.” What Works in Schools” p64 R.J. Marzano.*

My observations did not allow time to participate in staff or learning circle meetings. However discussion with teachers and principals lead to the conclusion that well targeted “development” meetings occur on Teacher Only Days, Call Back days, learning circle release days or half days, selected early closing days, but NOT a weekday afternoon after a full day in the classroom. Syndicate meetings have evolved into Learning circle meetings and the weekly meeting to discuss student achievement rather that buying the next set of readers or cricket bats has become established in the schools who are leading the way. I was interested to note that many schools had reduced the number of meetings once processes were established.

One school decided to begin by assisting the teachers to see needs directly rather than having a management focus set. The principal set an Action Research model which involved each staff member in examining an aspect of their own practice. Apart from providing action research skills to the teacher this began an immediate focus on evidence based decision making within the school.



# SECTION 4

## **Reflection and Conclusions.**

### **First the reflection**

Having for the first time in ten years had the opportunity to step back from the day to day management and see what others are doing I firmly believe this opportunity should become a requirement and be built into every principal's conditions of employment.

There is no substitute for programmed reflective time each week to read professional material and keep up to date with Leadspace, yet I always found this difficult if not impossible. In addition as principals we have to ensure that we meet with colleagues in a meaningful context regularly and we get out of our own schools and peer review what we are doing.

In developing a school in which the learner and learning are central, we need to place a high priority on staff development. Our schools are well staffed with the world's most adaptable and dedicated teachers and if they are not teaching effectively the chances are most likely that they haven't had the opportunity to see exactly how to be the most effective. We owe it to them as leaders to take the time and put in the resource to allow this to happen.

We need to carefully consider when the PD should occur.

The selection of an effective external facilitator made the process successful in many schools, be that a private consultant or through a Ministry contract, AToL, ICT. Enhancing High Standards, Literacy, Numeracy etc. Ideally only one contract at a time but few schools have been able to achieve this.

### **Resources.**

There will be schools like ours who have worked hard over the years to undertake PD for each of the curriculum documents as they came along and as a result have not focussed so much on an overall pedagogy. In practical terms I returned to my school excited by the possibilities but conscious of the groundwork needed if teachers are not to be further overwhelmed by more change. I returned also conscious of the fact that unlike similar sized and similar decile schools in Auckland who can charge and receive over \$400.00 a year in school fees, my community wants almost as much in the way of quality teaching but many won't pay \$80.00 a year in fees. You could argue, and I would agree, that in a state school



you shouldn't have to pay anything. It is very evident however that if we are to make the gains the Ministry desire it will come at a price. Current operational funding levels are already insufficient to keep the school operating on a day to day basis. Qualitative change costs and we should collectively be demanding the resources to make it effective.

## Conclusions

I return to my school knowing that the student achievement levels are generally "satisfactory" and there is little chance of the Ministry putting in resources to analyse our data or in fact provide any other resources out of the norm.

I returned rejuvenated and excited by where learning in NZ is going and appreciative of the Ministry's urging to spend 80% of my time on "leading the learning". However the reality was that upon returning I could find no evidence that the Ministry in the meantime had:

- ❖ Provided the resources to appoint a property consultant for all that time consuming work. Yes I know they think it's already in my Operations Grant.
- ❖ Increased the management staffing component enough to allow for a proper distribution of the management tasks across enough people to free the principal for 80% of time studying teaching issues. I won't go on as the pattern is well known to us all.

I believe principals have now to use the strength of local networks to fight for more resource but also work collegially to support improved teaching on a local basis. Much improvement can be made at no cost.

On the South Island West Coast and in South Auckland the schools have had the advantage of outside agencies collecting, collating, analysing and reporting data back in a way that principals and teachers can digest and use to improve achievement. Areas that do not have the advantage of an intervention should consider clustering together to do this for themselves. None of us want national testing for the good reason that league tables create divisive completion once they become misinterpreted by the general public. However shared cluster data under the control of professionals could be of great assistance to schools when gauging how effective they are.

I have deliberately not identified schools by name in this report, but should any reader wish to learn more I would be happy to put to contact the principal concerned to facilitate a dialogue.

I wish all my teaching colleagues, the health and energy to continue with mankind's most important vocation; educating our young for the rest of their lives.

John Hawker

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## **Appendix 1.**

### **The detail of what was reported by schools to some of the focus questions.**

#### **1. What is the nature of the change your school is undergoing?**

##### **School A**

To rescue the school from threatened closure as a first priority and to increase the engagement of the students in learning. To make their learning seem purposeful to them. The school is decile 2. The school students were largely dysfunctional and staff morale was at very low levels. A commissioner had been in place.

##### **School B**

Improvement in Literacy levels as part of the wider West Coast Improvement Project associated with the Woolf Fischer Organisation. Inquiry learning through out the school based on a consultant's model.

Behaviour management including the Summit Programme proving very effective.

Expanded use of the STAR test in Reading as the basis for collecting sound formative and summative data on progress. .

##### **School C**

Enhanced literacy contract having done the ATOL previously.

This school has not done the numeracy at y7/8 as yet?

Raising the levels of student achievement through peer conferences. This is developing across the school from year 0 upwards and has arisen largely through involvement in AtoL.

ICT contract had been completed.

##### **School D**

Literacy levels courtesy of the West Coast Literacy initiative.

Formative assessment to increase student engagement built on the AtoL contract. (2 years)

##### **School E**

The need for better curriculum integration.

Identified need for common understandings and inquiry learning. A need for all staff to be able to identify the best pedagogy. This process developed through the ATol from the beginning of this year.

##### **School F**

Formative Assessment methods in general as evidenced by the in class use of use of Learning Intentions, success criteria and questioning.

Numeracy currently in the final year of the contract.

ICT being planned for 2007.

New reporting to parent formats and timetables.  
Bringing the students into the teaching and learning cycle by sharing the programmes of work with them.

### **School G**

Attempting to make the teaching and learning as effective as possible and raise the general standard of the teaching. Improvement in school wide literacy initially.

Aiming to specifically improve the levels of students' writing. Aiming to use learning intentions in all lessons.

### **School H**

Establishing realistic and meaningful goal setting for students at all class levels.

Ensuring that students understand the purpose of their learning and are therefore more in control of their own learning.

Grounding the school logo and theme into the school wide identity.

Instigation of Inquiry learning.

Establishment of strong social skills teaching.

### **School I**

The move was to place the focus on the learner above all other considerations.

In that process specifically identified elements were addressed.

- ❖ "I care" Philosophy
- ❖ School Pride
- ❖ Focus on Quality Resources
- ❖ Focus on School discipline and support
- ❖ Focus on the learning environment
- ❖ Appointment of Quality Teachers
- ❖ Commitment to supporting the learner
- ❖ Providing quality school wide programmes
- ❖ Developing a culture of learning-teacher and learner.(Sharing the learning goals)
- ❖ Setting High Expectations and giving students confidence with their successes

The school then defined the priority curriculum areas to be addressed.

Literacy

Numeracy

The Development of the local curriculum in the case of this school it was the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme.

### **School J**

Geographical location in south Auckland meant that they were included in the Manurewa Initiative designed to enhance the levels of student achievement.

Primary strategy is through focus on the basic purposes of a primary school.

### **School K**

School initiated inspired by the principal. Participation in the appropriate contracts as part of strategic planning.



**School L**

Saving a failing school. Developing formative practices throughout the school.

**School M**

Developing the vision into school wide practice with buy in at all levels and modern pedagogy informing the classroom practice.

**The catalyst for Change.****School A**

Threatened closure and intensive Ministry Intervention following a commissioner having been appointed and the resignation of the previous principal.

Students largely dysfunctional.

**School B**

The major impetus for the changes were a wide spread adverse ERO report relating to schools in general on the West Coast. The ERO report was regarded as being flawed in the sense that the data was questionable and all schools were globally criticized when many did not have data of great concern.

**School C**

Participation in the AToL project. The West Coast Literacy project.

**School D**

The West Coast Literacy initiative.

**School E****School F**

Participation in the AtoL contract run by Steve Edwards (Christchurch College of Education) over a three year period. The contract was selected as there was a feeling in the staff that they needed to have more precise tools to use to know more about the children and a feeling that although a lot was known there was another level that could be achieved.

**School G**

Build up the school and make the school as effective as possible. Responding to market need owing to the special nature of the school.

Participation over two years in the Literacy Contract.

Use of learning intentions had been seen by the staff in shared PD at St. Andrews School.

**School H**

- ❖ School size 650 students and the need to retain and maintain team work.
- ❖ The need to deal with the over large size of the curriculum.
- ❖ Perception by ERO that standards were lower than the decile might

suggest they should be.

**School I**

The catalysts were internally identified. Recognition of the changing needs of the district and a change in principal with the recognition that the school was stagnating and a new direction was needed.

**School K**

An on going desire for self improvement.

**School L**

A new principal and management team and poor previous ERO reports.

**School M**

Internal appreciation of the need to modernise the pedagogy following specific contracts such as ICT.

**Specific Evidence that indicated change was needed.**

**School A**

Out of control, behaviours. Commissioner running the school for two years. Evidence from other stakeholders that a strong Intermediate school was a preference.

Staff morale was at low ebb.

**School B**

Suspension rates on the coast in general together with global (ERO interpreted) Literacy data.

**School C**

Woolf- Fischer STAR data.

Achievement data as follows. Reading STAR for all age groups X times per year. NUMPA to each 7 and 9 year olds.

**School D**

Generalised data across the West Coast Schools.

**School E**

**School F**

Anecdotal in the main. A perceived need by teachers that the craft of teaching was changing and there were new skills and approaches to be acquired if children's needs were to be met as well as possible within the realities of the classroom.

Some staff had been involved in a meeting at Kaiapoi North School at which various schools talked about their journeys into effective teaching.

**School G**

Perceived low levels of performance against PAT averages for a school of the type.

**School H**

Not extensive but some trends were obvious such as the deterioration in the skill levels of the new entrants.

The need for good data and selecting what was appropriate data arose from AtoL.

**School I**

Declining decile. Demographic change “White flight” Now being reversed successfully/.

**School J.**

Active strategic plan with on going self improvement as part of the focus.

**School K.**

Previous poor ERO reports and the beginning of a new principal and management team.

**Developing the journey. (Planning the change.) And collection of data to inform on the effects of the change.(Time frames)**

**School A**

The first step was to improve the behaviour of the students by instituting a school wide structured plan and the second step was to focus the students on their learning. The focus on learning was improved through setting up a school wide Record of Student Learning and Achievement.”

**School B**

ICT was over 3 years from 2002. Numeracy over 3 years and Literacy anticipated to be the same.

**School C**

Change is always with us but to gain consistency in student peer assessment across a U5 school, two years plus at a minimum

**School D**

Two year process in relation to the Literacy focus.

**School E**

**School F**

Numeracy 3 years, just finishing. AToL three years. Basically each aspect of the change to take three years.

**School G**

Two to three years for each change plus sustainability.

**School H**

Maintenance of the school’s current data gathering processes. Switch from one MSM to an alternate means of data gathering. Assessment regime currently being reviewed.

**Pedagogy**

Through the use of contracts; AtoL, ICT,

Regular PD consists of weekly staff meetings with multiple PD themes having to be accommodated. Weekly syndicate meetings cover both PD and administration.

**Spelling Skills**

Use of expert facilitators such as Joy Allcock (Spelling Programme writer)

### Inquiry Learning

Use of Freeville Flyers, Selwyn House, Aorangi when it came to talking to the staff about the Inquiry learning. Various systems of inquiry learning were trialed over a term.

Each thread of change is planned to take 2.5 to three years.

### **School I**

Very comprehensive planning by the year group leaders.

Straight classes throughout the school. Year group teachers are given release of 6 days per year for planning units and evaluation of the unit effectiveness.

Board fund two days per teacher and the other 4 are from their CRT. The remaining days of their CRT are for their own priorities.

### **School K.**

ATOL has been the primary contract in starting the process.

PD built in to the strategic plan.

Principal insisted on Numeracy project being delivered only as a whole school as opposed to piecemeal development through year groups or syndicates.

ATOL and ICT both formed an essential part of the process.

Obligations on all staff as part of their employment to undertake on going PD.

INFO as per Gwen Garwith.

Increasing accountability on team leaders.

### **School L.**

The principal is a large component in the process with the assistance of an able management team who meet regularly for data analysis sessions for a day.

The most effective component is the Quality learning circles approach which has been planned very thoroughly on the basis of the principal's academic studies and interests. The planning for depth of professional discussion was the focus of most of the discussion.

### **School M**

Use of four T.o.Ds to re visit their vision, to look at the key fundamentals. Two days produced four concepts. These were then communicated with the board who contributed further ideas. They needed their graphic to be developed then the gifted and talented artists went to work for three days on the graphic. They went to the community with the camera. Made a mural around five key ideas. Two terms to work on it then to get a graphic artist and another term was spent developing that.

Once the imagery was agreed it was advertised widely with posters, fridge magnets book marks. Launch day for whole School at the beach. Local radio station invited and lots of fun activities planned such as sand sculptures. They are currently unpacking the graphic. They asked their staff what Life Long Learning means. Then the kids were asked what learning is. This was recorded on video which gave evidence of where they were at. The staff then viewed the video of what the kids thought. This was very powerful as initially the children's understandings were considered to be shallow.

Also built into the targets. This year the video of students showed a big move in deeper understanding. Then teachers were released to look at the six kids

from their classes. The coaching model used by the AP or DP to gather data for Numeracy or literacy.

This school like many has an over arching theme school wide in their learning programmes.

Waves represent the way the curriculum is delivered. One wave is the thinking. 4 waves and 4 aspects to learning.

The Vision is built on a structured approach to the nature of learning school wide.

They are now working on the same thing for performance management. The pattern is based on the learning model for the children.

## **The Role of Professional Development in ensuring change at classroom level.**

### **School A**

Content that is seen as relevant to need. Delivery by a credible person implying great use of external resource people, consultants e.t.c.

### **School B**

Outside facilitation, Literacy, Numeracy. Regular scheduled PD based staff meetings on a fortnightly basis in most cases. Closely linking it with the school's appraisal process.

Specific focus to assist long serving teachers who find it difficult to shift their thinking.

ICT contract was of limited help as the emphasis was more on the technology in the earlier days and less on the pedagogy than is the case now.

They used an educational consultant for Inquiry teaching.

### **School C**

Regular PD through staff meetings and syndicate meetings.

Regular staff PD and the use of data to drive decision making.

### **School D**

Through continuing PD based on a learning groups approach. Professional groups meeting to analyse and develop approaches. Evidence base to decision making.

Staff members are "long stayers" and there has not been a sustainability problem the continuity of staffing has allowed for shared beliefs and common understandings to develop.

### **School E**

Staff meetings with PD on a weekly basis. Developing within the school culture a process of regular professional readings. Action research and using the teachers as researchers to ensure they saw the relevancy of the work.

Wed staff meetings wholly PD focus.

Admin meeting on Tuesday mornings.

Principal initiated the process. Importance of staff feedback. They ran a session on teachers' beliefs and principal noted the main areas through

attentive listening.

Then readings together and shared school effectiveness vision.

AtoL readings then kicked in.

More discussion about what the words mean in effect. This took a term of weekly meetings.

Then developed action plan to implement the curriculum adaptation.

With college adviser talking about how to get the action research cycle in place for the school and the teacher's own projects. E.g. highlighter marking. Principal believes there is a need to present PD to staff in the same way that children learn. Clear intentions and success criteria mapped out.

Principal prepares a summary about the topic (action research) and presents it to the staff with the request that they consider it and they then construct together what the common understanding is.

### **School F**

The main impetus in the process is the use of the contracts, (Numeracy AtoL, and ICT) One major contract at a time. All these are based on the pedagogy of improving teaching and learning, all build on formative assessment approaches.

All school PD is school-wide PD. No budget allocations are made for anything but school wide PD. (This is an issue with some staff through the annual BoT EEO survey of staff).

"Good PD needs TIME and MONEY."

Regular staff meetings target the PD.

Changes in the areas of student reporting were based on lots of input from staff and from parents in terms of what they needed to know.

Teachers working with students, turning AOs into child speak to assist in the formation of goals. Conferencing with students to ensure that they not only know what it is they have to learn but why.

Link to performance of teachers is through the attestation process. More standardization of planning is now expected at least for LTP and unit plans. Necessary to increase senior staff and principal walk and talk time, in classes looking and asking.

### **School G**

Through regular principal lead and contract driven professional development.

Four teacher only days are held each year on this basis only one staff meeting or syndicate meeting is held each week.

Sound evidence based, non judgmental and allowing the teachers to exercise their professionalism in the analysis.

Lots of staff practice with marking written language but the moderation has been achieved by the final grading being done by the Principal, AP and DP.

Set rubric from the exemplars regarding the standards of language. They use a level by level approach subdivided into three grades L=low M= medium H= High.

Teacher Only Days set as joint hands on marking activities.

### **School H**

In response to questions of staff reluctance and resistance. Principal and DP reported this had was not an issue as the means of staff development has been thorough and repetitive

In a large school sustainability is a problem.

The characteristics that were identified as being most positive PD were:

- ❖ External presenters, examples from other schools and people's experiences.
- ❖ No money spared on the PD budget. Whole management team participation in major seminars and presentations.
- ❖ Whole management team planning days once a term.
- ❖ 3 Teacher only days per year to ground major themes.
- ❖ Need to exclude many topics to focus on the important ones.

### **School I**

- ❖ School Wide Professional Development planned strategically
- ❖ Planning in year groups supported by PYP co-ordinators
- ❖ Planning, evaluating, reflecting in syndicates
- ❖ Additional Planning Time provided and CRT time used creatively
- ❖ Known school wide systems and formats
- ❖ Teachers ideas valued ,considered, and responded to
- ❖ On –Going support for programmes and P.D for the schools established learning programmes
- ❖ Strongly well informed and supportive management team

#### Staff meeting regime

3 per term one led by the principal.

The syndicates are the powerhouses. Weekly syndicate meetings focus on learning.

6 planning days per teacher per year.

One or two contracts per year. Sustainability programmes within the staff development budget.

ATOL and ICT both done.

#### Use of external contracts

One as a norm though two can be managed.

Regard to school reviews these are done during the planning days.

Management leaders

With PD through management meetings and professional reading "Using Evidence In Teaching Practice." Helen Timperley.

### **School J**

Has done ATOL and ICT both had a powerful effect.

There are obligations on all staff as part of their employment to undertake on going PD.

High levels of accountability on team leaders who are seen as the key curriculum people.

Two TODS. In school time development two days when the children did not attend later in the morning.

Weekly staff meeting. Syndicate meetings weekly. Outside facilitation is widely used.

Major mechanism for new initiative development within the school is through the use of contracts. Ideally one per year but two has been the reality on occasion.

In answer to the question of what constitutes quality PD Good contracts and accountability through measurable results.

### **School L**

Staff meetings for PD after school have been abandoned as the research backs up the common knowledge that they are not effective. Instead there may be one per term in addition to the two TODS at the start of the year. Regarding the use of external contracts One only though a major such as Enhancing High Standards, will run in conjunction with others.

## **Evidence of Good Teaching leading to Good Learning in the classroom.**

### **School A**

The process is still relatively new and the key indicators as regards improving student levels relates to the use of asTTle Writing, STAR Reading tests in conjunction with probes and the newly developed levels for assessing the new key competencies. These are supported by a system of student licenses at three levels (1) Beginners (2) Restricted (3) Full.

There has been a reduction in stand downs and suspensions.

### **School B**

Primarily **STAR** for reading.

Very detailed STEPS based behaviour plan which has school wide continuity of understanding as to what constitutes desirable behaviours. Data is collected school wide on templates at syndicate level and summarised onto the Principal's master sheets for analysis and reporting to the board.

### **School C**

Achievement data as follows. Reading **STAR** for all age groups 2 times per year. NUMPA to each 7 and 9 year olds.

### **School D**

This is based on the conclusions drawn from quality data gathered across the focus areas. Reading is regularly based on STAR results.

The full numpa test is administered to all students every two or three years. Supplemented by Gloss.

### **School E**

### **School F**

The increased use of the assessment rubric and the evidence that learning intentions are forming a part of lesson and that success criteria are part of the assessment rubrics.

And staff reluctance has been mostly overcome through constant discussion and participation through the contracts.

Lots of sharing amongst staff of what they are doing well and demonstrating this to colleagues. Impetus is needed to make this happen on some occasions.

Moving about from class to class.

### **School G**



### **School H**

All staff members are required to have students setting goals. All the staff members are expected to make learning intentions clear in each learning exercise. Planning formats are not dictated but good models are provided by the management and planning must be evident.

All teachers at this school are required to be trained in "Skills for Growing."

### **School I**

Very obvious change to school wide behaviours. Very few if any referrals to syndicate leaders of higher for behaviour. All unsatisfactory behaviours are taken back to the issue of whether or not the student cares about others. The care theme is endemic as are all the values and the thinking skills and inquiry approaches.

#### **Evidence Based Practices**

- Linking the assessment to the learning intentions
- Analysing the data, comparing the data, evaluating the data
- Devising new learning strategies-reviewing, reflecting
- Making meaning of the data-school wide/nationally
- Seeing the linkages-formative, summative and school wide data
- **Professional Development**

Research-readings to grow teachers knowledge and to implement change strategies

Professional sharing incl PLG's (Professional learning Groups)

School Wide P.D. focus

### **School K**

The LI are set by the planning teams and the children are informed of the intentions at the beginning of the lesson.

Regular curriculum reviews are carried out by the syndicate teams.

### **School L**

There is evidence available to the principal anecdotally and through the group analysis of the syndicate data in learning circles. The impression of the principal is that this has made a measurable difference.

## **Definition of and techniques for good teaching expected & being consistently implemented across the whole school/classes, also evidence of change producing results.**

### **School A**

Creation of student engagement in the learning process together with evidence of improvement in assessments. Good behavior management consistent with school policy.

### **School B**

There is a very strong data driven reporting system operating in the school and underlying the processes of school wide review. Principal's reports are

data rich and each school review is on the basis of evidence.  
Not all staff members are “on board” as yet.

#### The Summit Programme (Behaviour model)

12 children at a time are selected. They are children who need the no limits type approach. It is a Boot camp type approach. Key is to have the right instructors who can challenge the students in some more extreme ways. Some of the time is “in school” time. Little cost to the school. Behaviour programme arose from the eliminating violence. Programme from Cleve Shearer. Eliminating violence includes everyone. Everyone needs to be on the same message.

Woolf Fischer involvement.

Literacy also the Numeracy Project.

#### **School D**

Arises out of the learning circle approach being followed through the analysis of the data which is being collected.

#### **School F**

Changes were made to the means of documenting student learning. Records of work and teaching programmes were rebuilt in the core areas of Literacy and Numeracy. The newly created records of work had selected AOs included from the curriculum documents, a revised field of reduced AOs which were built as Learning intentions, these were all placed into levels (rubric).

Through PD, interschool discussion and through the appraisal processes. Appraisal (more formative) and attestation (summative) are split and follow different processes and hierarchy.

Team leaders appraise own teams and principal appraises senior management and TAs. For attestation AP DP and P share all staff amongst themselves. Different time frames operate.

Key areas of planning etc are required in the attestation process.

#### **School G**

PATs beginning of every year.

STAR in September survey.

Written language samples taken once per term.

The expectations and drive to improve comes through non judgmental presentation of clear and detailed data. Data tables are formatted in such a way as to make the overall picture very clear.

Averages for each year group over several years for PAT average percentiles in Reading Comp, vocab and Maths.

STAR results for the same in September year group by year group and class by class as well as by gender, special needs etc.

Writing is defined in structure

5 minutes planning – 20 minutes writing – 5 minutes proof reading. Set topics are given.

#### **School H**

#### **School I**

All planning is prescribed and follows from the school formula of units. All units are Inquiry based. Syndicate leaders are regularly accountable to the principal for ensuring that syndicate meetings are focused on making a

difference to students.

Assessment requirements mostly done by assessing against the rubrics.

Rubrics are fundamental to all assessment.

Knowledge grew from ATOL.

Because the units are standardised school wide and rotated on an annual basis the incorporation of student achievement data to inform teaching practice is built in to the planning cycle.

### **School K**

Not yet at that point. Very transitory populace as still working at a relatively superficial level.

### **School L**

### **School M**

## **Supporting teacher's skill development in teaching practice.**

### **School A**

Owing to the previous state of staff morale and the student behaviours teachers have been very receptive. Detail as regards PD formats.

It is early days for this and the priorities have been to establish behaviour plan, undertake literacy initiative, develop student involvement with assessment of their own learning and get a focus on literacy and numeracy into the timetabling.

### **School B**

Assisted through professional discussions arising from the data supplied to schools through the Woolf Fischer model.

Currently doing Writing Moderation. The literacy contract has been part of that. 30 days have been allocated for marking asTTle via the Woolf Fischer and the Ministry.

Lead teachers are released.

### **School C**

Continual sustainability methods are a time consuming issue. It is almost impossible to keep all staff in a big school up to date. Data and a sound contract reduced the likelihood that staff will be reluctant or obstructive. Participation in the AtoL contract.

### **School D**

AsTTle Writing following the external funding of the moderation exercise.

Writing being a strong focus in the classrooms.

Through continuing PD based on a learning groups approach. Professional groups meeting to analyse and develop approaches.

### **School E**

### **School F**

The writing record of work was made electronic using Classroom Manager.

The reporting to parent process was revised to ensure the data on student achievement was reported fully.

The collection of data in order to meet the reporting requirements provides evidence of the increased emphasis on the evidence that students are achieving.

Mostly this was through up-skilling at the centre of which was the AtoL contract.

#### **School G**

When asked about methods for overcoming staff reluctance or resistance the comment was clear that this had not been an issue “Not since the evidence was presented as data.” The teacher’s individual skills have developed well through the regular presentation of data and working with it.

#### **School H**

#### **School I**

See previous answer.

#### **School K**

#### **School L**

#### **School M**

#### **School J**

A central question is posed when staff meets to consider the analysed data received from the Ministry as part of the project. This question is; are we achieving acceptable levels for us? If so they work to celebrate that evidence and enjoy, if not they resolve to do something about it?

### **Management practices and resourcing to support the change process.**

#### **School A**

Additional staffing from banked staffing. Use of teacher’s aides with additional staffing briefly from the Ministry to rescue things. Maintaining assessment recording.

#### **School B**

Lead teachers with generous amounts of release time. Having a DP take on a lead teacher role was not wise owing to the heavy work load.

#### **School C**

Syndicate leaders and lead teachers have a big responsibility to bring the word to the staff. Trialing and modeling by syndicate leaders is a big part of the process.

Barriers to faster progress include total workload on teachers, changing

emphases in contracts and changing advice as contracts evolve. Staff turnover. Paucity of available units when compared to the allocations available to secondary and area schools. Continual changing staff entitlements and needs making the delegations difficult to maintain over time. Allocation of appropriate units when available for lead teachers. External resourcing to allow for big workload issues such as Writing moderation to occur.

### **School F**

Some areas to avoid include attempting to gather too much achievement data especially through the non core areas. The records of work were changed to build in the key competencies in this area rather than knowledge assessments. They became too complex and not effective.

### **School G**

Use of deputy principal to take responsibility for property management, free from class responsibilities and able to take most routine tasks from the principal.

### **School I**

DP released but not AP.  
Generous release for syndicate leaders.

All safety compliance coverage is done in the final week of the school year and tied into the thematic units.

### **School J**

An essential element is the strength of syndicate leadership and the focus on achievement at the syndicate management level. This is considered to be the point at which the biggest differences are made.

### **School K.**

It is anticipated that five years will be the time to fully bed in any major change by the time the PD is in place.

Make it obvious what is required. High expectations of staff but also high praise and recognition. Individualized comments on cards through the year. Embedding management organisation to ensure continuous PD has been difficult. Difficult through the problems of changing staff and staff politics.

### **School L**

AP who is released from classes does much of the provision of release time there is a generous allocation.

### **School M**

Seven directors of learning.  
All senior team released on a Friday an excellent idea. Costly but effective.