

## **Developing New Zealand's middle leaders through to principalship**

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*School leaders are usually highly experienced educators with a rich background in teaching, subject leadership, and whole-school management. It makes sense to draw on this experience in devising, implementing and assessing leadership programmes (Bush & Glover, 2005, p. 237).*

### **Introduction**

For this paper the term middle leader references any leader in a school who is not the principal. This work is most relevant to the primary sector.

Post completion of a Doctorate in Education in 2012, researching the learning pathways of urban primary school principals, my focus has changed. I feel as a country we have to prioritise the development of middle leaders. This is imperative to ensure a future supply of high quality principals.

In this paper I have barely touched on trying to understand how schools prepare their middle leaders to take on more senior roles, but practitioner experience tells me it is not nearly enough. Do we offer enough guidance? Do we support theoretically underpinned learning enough? Do we ensure these leaders are motivated, and well equipped to want to take on the role of principal? The biggest questions of all, do we have the time and funding to provide leadership learning and what are our expectations for leaders going forward? Finally, do we keep doing what we have always done, where there is no real equity in provision? There are certainly more questions than answers.

In New Zealand we currently have policy work going into developing other streams of leadership for those who do not aspire to principalship. We have the expert teacher and the Col leadership roles for leaders for curriculum/ classroom based leaders, but my explicit interest lies in developing primary principals. We know that 70 % of our principals in the primary sector will retire in the next 10 years. Based on the premise that we have to have principals to lead our schools, and knowing how important a leader is to the culture and direction of school, it is incumbent on the government to get this right.

Every capable middle leader needs endorsement, guidance, and practical academic knowledge to support quality learning and leading (Malcolm, 2012). The diagramme, Figure1, gives us a sense of the many capabilities leaders need when they put children's learning at the center of what they do.

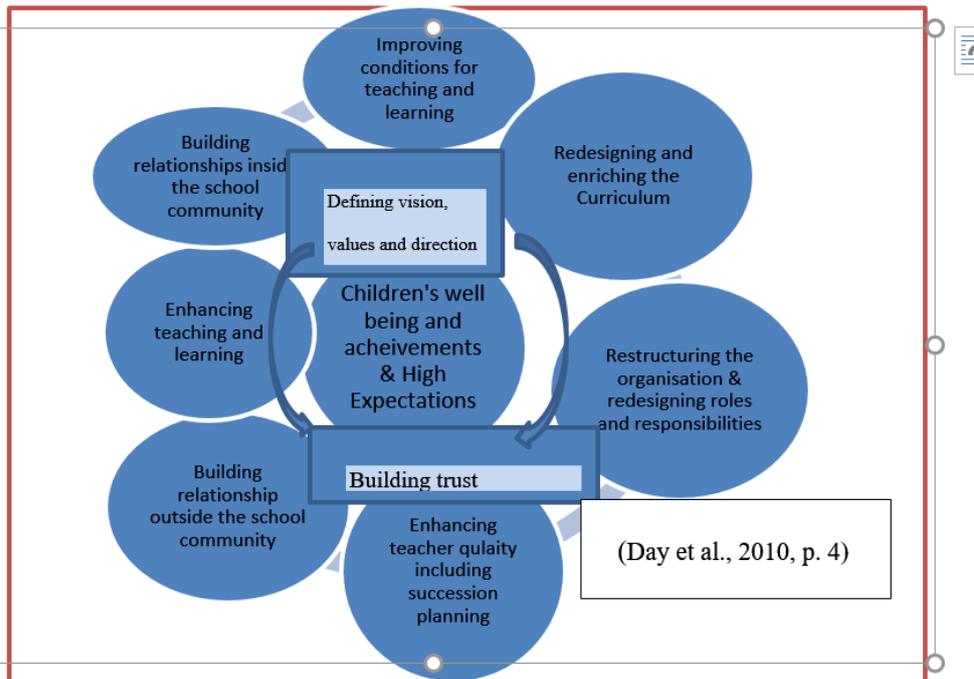


Figure 1 Leader capabilities (Day et al, 2010,p.4)

I believe strongly that principals have a responsibility to identify and nurture leadership capacity in their schools. Increasing opportunities for leadership across a school supports the development of leadership skills and knowledge. Explicit mentoring by the school leaders provides for all levels of leadership. I believe that active participation in leadership roles enhance school wide leadership and supports the principal in their role.

Encouragement to participate in formal directed leadership programmes is identified in my research, as an important way to learn. There is also a body of research that recognises much professional learning happens informally, it comes from practice, socialisation and in the main does not link to any formal curriculum (Colley, et al., 2004; Eraut, 2000; Knight, 2006). Moreover, understanding what educational leadership is, provides philosophical and theoretical knowledge to decision making. The New Zealand FTTP programme participants I worked with as a mentor 2010-2017 (was replaced 2017 by Evaluation Associates Leadership advisor model) determined that those who had formally studied educational leadership had greater confidence in their role in their first year.

I continue as a mentor in the new beginning principal guidance model, but there is no professional development for me as I had in the past, and I am an at the end of the phone mentor. I am paid \$250.00 a term to seemingly do very little. I give a bit of quick needed advice that could be gained for free from a local principal network. However, I do not want to sink to a low level of cynicism at least until I see a review of the new model.

This paper explores developing a contextual leadership strategy linked to both formal and informal learning. Sabbatical<sup>1</sup> apprenticeship cover is identified as a way to support the middle leader learning continuum. I hope to establish some parameters of what is best learning, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> section in this, limited by time report, are some conversations that have come from both this sabbatical and past personal research.

This paper supports learning from an adult learning theory perspective. Principals require relevance and the ability to make decisions about what and how they learn. The study concurs with literature espousing the need for coherent pathways in order to learn the role. Acceptance that qualifications or the direct study of leadership provides consolidated learning. Moreover, it validates that middle leaders are self-directed learners who work best when they feel safe to share their learning and problem solve together. What I want to advocate for is learning from the voices of New Zealand's practitioners.

## **1.0 A potential model for developing middle leaders to principalship.**

### **1.1 Identification of middle leaders**

In 2015 the Education Council commissioned five think pieces on leadership for Kāhui Ako (Bendikson, Robertson, Wenmouth, Durie, & Gilbert, 2015)<sup>2</sup>. They found that research increasingly demonstrates the prevalence and impact of dispersed forms of leadership in middle-level leadership roles, with many of these teachers leading curriculum areas, syndicates of year level teachers or other systems level leadership.

*“The middle leadership model in Leading from the middle (Ministry of Education, 2012) outlined that all middle leaders have responsibility for leadership functions including: leading pedagogical change; providing leadership that is responsive to student identity, culture and language; liaising with the community; providing an orderly school environment; developing staff; and building relationships. The role of a middle leader is crucial in this era of distributed leadership and change focused on the personalisation of learning and employing modern, culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy.” (Highfield, 2018)*

There is much written about the multiple roles of middle leaders but little practitioner evidence around how leaders became leaders and what supported them to grow as leaders in their leadership developing phase.

To be a leader there are no mandatory requirements for undertaking explicit professional development programmes, and no formalised qualifications required, other than being a qualified teacher. Preparing to be a middle leader is

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for a detailed overview of my thinking around sabbaticals.

<sup>2</sup> <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/Education%20Council%20Five%20Think%20Pieces%200612.pdf>  
A summary document

largely the responsibility of the individual. Many middle leaders I have spoken with believe that they became leaders through identification by their school. In a teaching shortage era however that is highly problematic because it can sometimes be, who is available, and not who is best for the job.

Middle leaders are generally developed through an apprenticeship model where executive senior school leaders coach and mentor up and coming leaders of curriculum areas and or teams. There is no doubt the coaching consultant's bandwagon is peaking and being well funded by schools. Yet another area, for government policy- driven support. This is definitely an area that could be contract out and provided free to schools. Thus making the provision system more equitable. At the moment it is up to the school and their budget process as to how much is spent on leadership development.

The relevant literature, some more than 10 years old, which is a little worrying, defines effective middle leaders as educators/teachers:-

*with personal qualities and relationships whose commitment, energy and enthusiasm for teaching motivates those around them.*

*who establish themselves as experienced and effective teachers who possess depth and breadth of knowledge and a sound understanding of curricula and of current developments in their field*

*Who consistently demonstrate pedagogical leadership of teachers in their department, centre or syndicate with strong academic and social outcomes for learners*

*who influence evidence-based department/team. school planning and organization, ensuring resources are well used and they take a leading role in programme design*

*who facilitate national and school/centre based- policy and processes with their staff, which aids effective communication.* (Dinham, 2007; Harris, 1998, 1999; Harris, Jamieson, & Russ, 1995; Sammons, Thomas, & Mortimore, 1997)

This list of skills and attributes could provide schools with some starting guidelines in developing leader job descriptions. I would add to this list as my priority, that everything the leaders does has to be focussed on student development, student improvement and student wellbeing.

Teachers I have spoken with talk about being motivated personally or by mentors, sometimes outside of their schools, to complete post graduate leadership learning, but there were too many comments about the cost and time barriers. The teachers and middle leaders I spoke with wanted to ensure work and life balance. One person, referenced RTLB being able to study at Master's level within their working day and being funded to do papers. Classroom teachers do not have that luxury and cannot do that without study leave? So perhaps, equity issues really have to be high on the discussion table.

In summing up how middle leaders are identified; some self- select and put themselves forward for roles; some are encouraged by their schools to apply for and take on leader roles and others fall into positions often because they are the most experienced or sometimes because there is no one else. Dare I say it, but in one conversation, the leader talked about favouritism and principal pets, being those who were promoted? That for me is very scary.

## **1.2 A possible framework for development**

High quality leadership is acknowledged as one of the most important requirements of an effective school (Bush & Jackson, 2002b). Less understood is the preparation and development of the successful skilled and knowledgeable school leader. There is no doubt in my mind that leaders need to access a range of informal and formal learning, and that for schools to be successful the load has to be spread.

Distributed shared leadership is perceived, as one possible way to decrease principal workload and make leadership jobs more do-able (Court, 2003b; Harris & Spillane, 2008). However, in saying that we have to ensure this is not “task dumping” but genuine leadership development. The question is how to ensure quality distributed leadership in every school? Changes to the way school have been led in the past was inevitable as workload increased Post Picot and with the introduction of self-managing schools. Distributing leader roles with clear job descriptions and agreed to outcomes, with defined levels of accountability, supports principals to cope with their comparable higher task load as recognised by the OECD in 2007.

‘Learning leadership’, I have come to the realisation is also not just about teaching and learning. Leaders and schools should be encouraged to purview better ways to do their job. Business people are especially receptive using experts to support reaching peak performance. The business world recognises the need to be well grounded in techniques to harness positive stress and develop their attention and focus capabilities (Carnahan et al., 1981). High performers whether they be lawyers, surgeons, managers, sports-people or school leaders, typically must be “reasonably bright, physically fit and have a sense of calling” (Hays & Brown, 2004, p. 47). Physical fitness can be taught, as can cognitive forms of mental imagery that are currently “associated with motivational aspects of behaviour or self-efficacy beliefs” (Giacobbi, Tuccitto, Buman, & Munroe-Chandler, 2010, p. 491).

Brown and Hay contributed to the range of recommendations to assist high performance. I have added to the descriptors to provide more detailed explanation, and there is no doubt in my mind that many have relevance to the capabilities schools should be developing in their middle leaders: -

- Learning to address specific concerns – identification, actions leading to possible solutions- requires change management skills and systems such as the cycle of inquiry.
- Mental skill training – such as attention focussing, stress management, goal setting, self-talk, centering and relaxation, and imagery.
- Technical learning i.e. inter-group and interpersonal skill development capability, communication, coaching, relationship and relational trust development, collaborative practices
- Assessment and feedback skills for self and others – personal feedback and feedforward; courageous conversations; improvement conversations and the use of data and theory to inform
- Support and career guidance which involves understanding notions of quiet leadership, mentoring and coaching, appreciative inquiry and knowledge of options.

We need our middle learners to understand that time to learn is created through understanding and creating personal space that recognises the importance of being a learner (Barth, 1990a). Creative and strategic leaders who understand the importance of learning will make their and other's learning a reality.

Making time and sourcing appropriate learning are closely linked in the adult learning literature, which is too extensive to review fully, for this paper. However, my research determined some key determinants required to be successful as an adult learner.

*Adults do not learn in isolation. Learning is a complex interaction between the adult and their world. Learners are both independent and interdependent Adults as learners, require empowerment, a say in determining their learning. Motivated adult learners need to feel safe to share their ideas. As well, Ashubel's acquisition of knowledge theory (2000) proposes that learning is more meaningful when it is scaffolded by past experience( Malcolm,2012).*

Recognising principals as adult learners provides some insight into what motivates them to learn.

I have been increasingly worried this year with talks of a leadership centre for New Zealand and with a draft framework that is aspirational but as yet has not been articulated for school leaders to show the practical ways of enacting the vision.

In summary the draft strategy identifies 6 domains: - The Treaty of Waitangi as the foundation; connecting research to policy; drawing on current and emerging knowledge; aligning policy and practice with longer term stability 5 to 10 years; providing clarity around capabilities; and promoting and supporting leadership.

# INSIGHTS FROM THE ACADEMIC FORUM

## ON LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

### 01 FOUNDATION

Position the Treaty of Waitangi as the foundation for the strategy. Create a vision that seeks equity and excellence in education and social change.

The vision must capture the idea of a leadership ecosystem. In this context, the term 'ecosystem' is used to capture the complex network of connections, relationships, stakeholders and opportunities within the leadership space. Children's and young people's wellbeing and learning must be central to the vision and capture our goal for educational equity and excellence.

The leadership strategy should be deeply woven and constructed around biculturalism. For example, the Māori concepts of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, ako and mahi tahi, which frame the way we approach educational provision in the New Zealand context, might also provide the foreground for the leadership strategy.

### 02 STRATEGY

Take account of the wider education ecosystem to create a strategy aligning with policy that will serve the profession for the next 5 to 10 years.

The leadership strategy sits within a complex system. It is a system where everything is connected and constantly moving. Align the strategy as well as possible within the current system, particularly with policy. Ensure the strategy signals a proactive stance to influencing and reshaping policy development. Coherence and alignment are critical.

The leadership strategy must incorporate:

- a shared direction for the profession
- influence in policy development
- a system-wide spirit of productive inquiry, including other agencies
- transformative, system-level change for achieving greater equity.

### 03 CONNECTION

Connect research, policy and practice with a focus on the intersection of these areas. Understand the multiple perspectives to build collective ideas and reduce the gulf between research and practice.

Bring together the different knowledge perspectives.

In shaping the future, the leadership strategy needs to signal the importance of:

- policy coherence – setting goals for the system that align and add value to each other
- investment in disciplined innovation through high-impact research and development in New Zealand
- more powerful connections between the significant players such as leaders, iwi, academics and policy developers.

### 04 CLARITY

Be clear about key leadership capabilities required for everyone working in a future-oriented profession. Capturing the valued leadership capabilities will be the focus for professional learning.

Leadership is a way of being and doing, rather than a hat to wear, and involves:

- having a deep knowledge of the areas of responsibility and influence
- having a strong sense of the moral purpose of education
- deliberate, informed and purposeful action
- being adaptive and agile
- being culturally responsive
- having a strong sense of self-knowledge and care
- the ability to be humble, listen and learn
- courage to set expectations and support people to meet these.

### 05 KNOWLEDGE

Draw on the evidence base of current and emerging knowledge about leadership practices, acknowledging the gaps in that knowledge, the uniqueness of New Zealand and the dynamic nature of education globally.

The strong evidence base of leadership activities with the biggest impact on student learning needs to be visible in the leadership strategy.

Effective leadership practice is evolving. A prominent development is the importance of collaborative practices, working and learning collectively. Demonstrating the importance of contributing to the overall wellbeing of the education system is key.

In shaping the future, the leadership strategy needs to signal the importance of:

- acknowledging evidence on emerging knowledge and practice and where there are gaps in understanding
- being responsive to the uniqueness of New Zealand
- understanding the dynamic nature of education nationally and internationally.

### 06 SUPPORT

Provide an environment that promotes and supports leadership learning for all registered teachers while providing targeted support for those in leadership roles and those aspiring to leadership roles.

Key features of effective professional learning opportunities include:

- engaging with the evidence
- intellectual challenge
- personalised and adaptive approaches
- actively experiencing the research-practice dynamic through relational and evaluative learning
- support from other experts who can challenge, ask hard questions and be collaborators.

Figure 1 Insights from the Education Council's academic forum's proposed strategy

<https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/Insights%20from%20Academic%20Forum.pdf>

I have drawn on models from McPherson 2008, and my own thesis 2012, which are identified below to perhaps consider how we could grow leaders from middle through to experienced principal in order to realise the Education Council strategy.

Table 1 identifies the potential progressive leadership learning framework that drew on my research and Table 2, identifies the McPherson 2008 proposed learning matrix. Following on is Table 3, my 2018 learning matrix.

**Table 1: Progressive learning - a possible future (Malcolm,2012)**

Levels of Leadership	Defining leadership levels	Informal learning opportunities that are added to over time.	Formal Learning Opportunities	Expected learning outcomes
Middle Leaders with periods of time released but still involved in classroom teaching and learning for at least 60% of their time	E.G. School wide curriculum Team leaders Project leaders school initiative  COL AST or IST	School team networks Principal identification Leadership opportunities Mentoring by senior management/ principal Encouraged self-reflection Online opportunities Learning groups.	Encouraged to attend courses on leadership. Encouraged to begin study towards a leadership qualification Board leadership growth plan identifies budget component	School based meeting of leadership expectations

Middle leaders released a minimum of 70% from their direct classroom teaching roles	Deputy Principal Assistant Principal Associate principal Dean Director of school project Col Leader	Principal mentoring Local networks Conferences/ local courses Support for middle management leaders Encouraged to present learning to a wider audience–parents/ staff/ community Online opportunities Expected self-reflective practices.	Encouraged to begin Master’s level learning about leadership.	Leadership learning diploma course prerequisite for principal or COL leader positions  Minimum Diploma of Educational leadership or equivalent.
Early Career Principals	1 <sup>st</sup> to end of 3rd year principals	Cluster and Association networking. Conferences Principal breakfasts Online leadership sites PERSONAL reading COL involvement	FTPP. Papers towards Master’s or Professional Learning Diploma	FTPP
Consolidating Principals	4th to 10th year principals	All of the early career activities except FTPP Fellowships Study leave Study sabbatical PLC/G groups Col development/ support wider educational vision	Master papers Coaching papers	Completion of Master’s Degree by 7 <sup>th</sup> year of principalship
Experienced Principals	10yrs+	Sabbatical as of right Leadership of local associations/ groups Overseas educational experiences Mentoring	Mentorship professional certification	

**Table 2 McPhersons’ 2008 Preliminary Matrix of learning.** (Note to compare to Figure 12 Team leaders are middle leaders with 60 % or more time in the classroom; Executive leaders are released 70 % or more from classroom duties and Institutional leaders are principals. It is interesting to note in the McPherson model how many initiatives have been discontinued in the last 8 years and we must ask, replaced with what?

Team Leaders	Middle management roles. Syndicate leaders & year level coordinators.	Team and project management.	Work shadowing, team leader identification, recruitment programmes. National Aspiring Team leader programme(not currently available).	Annual induction and development conference. Coaching and mentoring. Leadspace & Post graduate scholarships in educational leadership.
Executive leaders	Member of senior management team, assistant principals, deputy principals.	Educational management and leadership.	Work shadowing a principal & NAPP.	Annual induction conference. Coaching and mentoring. Leadspace & Post graduate scholarships in educational leadership.
Institutional leaders	Teaching and non-teaching principals.	Educational management and leadership.	Shadowing & Recruitment programmes. NAPP.	FTPP. Annual development conference. PDPG equivalent. PPLGs& Leadspace Master’s and Ed.D scholarships.

Table 3- A Proposed 2018 Matrix for Primary Leadership Learning to include both formal and informal learning (extrapolated out to beginning/ early career principals up to 4 years).

Type & Definition of leader	Core generic skills (Note schools will have contextually based criteria)	Informal Learning expectations <i>Anything that is not formal so does not result in a recognised qualification/ certificate of learning</i>	Formal Learning Expectations <i>Although nothing is mandated the listed qualification are therefore suggestions only.</i>	Responsibility to ensure learning provided <b>Accountability Framework</b>
<p><b>Middle Leaders</b></p> <p>with periods of time released but still involved in classroom teaching and learning for at least 60% of their time</p> <p>Includes team leaders /Curriculum leaders / ACET leaders/ CoL IST and AST</p>	<p>Lead change and improvement</p> <p>Lead people</p> <p>Lead innovation projects</p> <p>Work collaboratively on school initiatives, Charter targets/Theories of improvement.</p> <p>Actively show that the Treaty of Waitangi guides their work.</p> <p>Connects theory and practice in day to day work- references emerging theory</p> <p>Clear communicator with clarity of purpose</p> <p>Supports school leadership</p> <p>Builds strong relational and ethical trust</p> <p>Mentor/ coach teachers as per need</p> <p>ICT communication capability</p> <p>Specific skills related to role are developed together with the Principal/ Col Leader.</p>	<p>Team meetings</p> <p>School senior management meetings</p> <p>Across school meetings</p> <p>School team networks</p> <p>Mentoring by senior management/ principal</p> <p>Encouraged self-reflection and reading</p> <p>Online opportunities</p> <p>Learning groups of interest.</p> <p>Learning that happens on the job</p> <p>Acting in higher duty roles</p> <p>Discussing ideas and actions with colleagues and seeing what they are doing</p> <p>Mentoring and coaching</p> <p>Staff meetings</p> <p>Teacher only days</p> <p>Suggest minimum Level 1 -Te Reo learning</p> <p>Conferences</p>	<p><b>As there is no mandatory learning requirement this is a suggested progression</b></p> <p>Start Master's degree with a focus on leadership- All major universities offer programmes. Programmes subsidised by MOE through school application to ensure equity (eg \$2,500 per annum to middle leader on completion and passing)</p> <p>Or at minimum complete a Certificate/ Diploma level papers in an aspect of leadership or language acquisition (Te Reo)</p>	<p>Self- directed</p> <p>School supported</p> <p>MOE partial funding for papers that contribute to academic qualifications (Could possibly be subsumed into fee education for 2 years at university policy)</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>Release by middle leaders not in a classroom 60% +</p> <p>Principal has to report to the bi- annually, outlining the programme for leadership development in the school – reviewed by ERO on visits.</p>
<p><b>Middle leaders</b></p> <p>released a minimum of 70% from their direct classroom teaching roles</p> <p>includes Deputy Principals/ Deans/ Sencos/Heads of areas -if released 70%+.</p>	<p>These leaders need to build the skills outlined for all middle leaders but as well, they need to: -</p> <p>Show strategic capability</p> <p>Build in appraisal systems school wide</p> <p>Develop formative and summative practices for feedback and feedforward for students and teachers.</p> <p>Develop and support the school wide consistent practices.</p> <p>Mentor early middle leaders to build capability</p> <p>Strong goal setting capability</p> <p>Reporting- Present to Board and staff around areas of policy and practice.</p> <p>Philosophical thinking</p> <p>Collaborate and consult with families.</p> <p>Student well- being and student voice a high school wide responsibility for these leaders</p> <p>Data collection and analysis of that data looking for trends to inform school and Col theories of improvement.</p> <p>Act in the role of principal when required.</p>	<p>All of the middle leader opportunities for informal learning</p> <p><b>As well as:-</b></p> <p>Attending networking meetings with the Principal</p> <p>Attending Board and parent meetings</p> <p>DP or Col network meetings</p> <p>Wider community engagement meetings eg transition to school meetings</p> <p>MOE training meetings</p> <p>Aim to belong to a PLG to discuss theory impact.</p> <p>NZEALS or similar professional leadership networking</p> <p>Professional curriculum groups</p> <p>Conferences</p> <p>Work shadowing</p>	<p>Postgraduate leadership level leadership learning at a minimum. Partially supported annually by MOE to the school for growing leadership capacity</p> <p>Or continue to work on Master's degree in school leadership</p>	<p>Self- directed</p> <p>School supported</p> <p>MOE partial funding for papers that contribute to academic qualifications</p> <p>Principal role in principal absence ( and if an experienced 10year + principal responsible to provide acting up to principal apprenticeship for 5 weeks)</p> <p>Principal mentoring as mandatorily articulated in school Charters</p> <p>Principal has to report to the bi- annually, outlining the programme for leadership</p>

	Begin to build financial and property knowledge base			development in the school – reviewed by ERO on visits.
<b>Early career/ beginning principals</b> 1-2 years	Need to have established, and be able to demonstrate the skills required of middle leaders. Understand and articulate vision Use student and school wide data to formulate school inquiry and direction Timely response, especially with communication/ MOE requirements/staff requests Be able to access HRM skills such as, the Ladder of Inference Know how to appraise staff performance Know where to go for help. Property and financial knowledge developed	School team and staff meetings Board training Principal network meetings Curriculum learning meetings Continue building Te Reo and Tekanga capability Beginning principal support through current provider. <sup>3</sup> Beginning principal leadership advisor Beginning principal mentor Conferences as agreed with the Board	Minimum qualification a postgraduate diploma in leadership. Preference a Master's degree in leadership  Would like to see a compulsory 2 year beginning principal programme certificate based on contextual and individual needs.	Self- directed School supported MOE Beginning programme supported Experienced principal self -chosen, as day to day support person (an expectation of all 10 year+ principals
<b>Developing career/ principals</b> 3-4 years	Systems analysis skills Recognise and establish ways to realise potential of staff Ethical and moral leading skills- understanding what that means Strong change management practices Reading and review skills- especially emergent thinking, knowing how to support your thinking Networking skills well developed Review of practice skills well developed. The Board and appraisers will often have very specific skills they want to see developed as part of a performance agreement.	Principal networks Leadership organisation networks e.g. NZEALS Conferences as agreed with the Board Specific leadership learning programmes within own school	If Master's degree not completed this is the time to set that as a goal.	Self- directed School supported Leadership advisor MOE funded If required can still access 10 year + principal expert advice.

Inherent in this development matrix is the clear understanding that experienced principals, every 10 years of service are provided automatically with a 5 week refreshment sabbatical, in which a released middle leader, most likely a Deputy Principal or principals are mentored as principals in the role. (Appendix 1 What really is a sabbatical? Malcolm,2018).

As well, all 10 years + principals can choose to complete a principal mentor 1-year Diploma programme and if they pass this rigorous Diploma (To be developed by Leadership Centres in universities) can then be appointed to act as principal experts to principals in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year of principal learning or where a school is failing and needs support. A salary increment would be essential to recognise the extra training and the work they will do supporting other leaders. This would revitalise principals I believe at the potential 10-year disenchantment phase (See Appendix 1 to consider principal learning phases).

<sup>3</sup> I do not support the direction MOE has gone by disbanding the FTTP and NAPP courses. A private company offering leadership advisors and mentors at the end of the phone could be subject to fiscal drivers as opposed to academic outcomes. NAPP was completely dropped and nothing has replaced it. As a mentor in the FTTP, I was given professional learning and our focus was on getting leaders to really consider key learning goals in their schools as well as working with MOE advisors to make sure beginning principals were completely knowledgeable about fiscal/ property and strategic needs. As a mentor now I am at the end of the phone for day to day needs only. I believe that FTTP should have been a formal programme with qualification status as outline in my thesis (Malcolm,2012)

My final comment relates to a proposed government funded leadership centre, assuming it is again policy borrowing from Britain. I attended the National College of School Leadership(NCSL) in Britain and reviewed their headship and Pre Principal programmes. If consistency is the expected outcome, then what I reviewed was a good option but our strength in New Zealand is personal choice, and not one size fits all. I again reference the adult learning literature, personal choice and high levels of autonomy are motivators for learners. We have superb post graduate and Master's leadership programmes offered by our universities and accessible by all, albeit expensive, offering a raft of learning methods, e.g. face to face; incremental qualifications; holiday programmes and extramural options are just some of what is offered. As well, as they are not pre-set curricula, a leader can choose papers to build their skill set. The issue of cost could so easily be ameliorated, as recommended in Laurie Thew's Doctoral work in 2002; a leadership qualification has an increased salary payment that over a few years will cover the learning costs.

Developing middle leaders cannot be a "one size fits all", but it is vital that middle leaders access both informal and formal learning methods especially if they are to meet the proposed Education Council Learning Strategy and the registered teacher criteria/professional standards for teachers in NZ.

Thew, from his study of Auckland practitioners, makes several recommendations regarding professional development:

That the leadership component of development programmes should recognise and develop each principal's philosophical understanding of leadership rather than promote forms of best practice. Professional development programmes should be funded and provide salary incentives. They need to develop to individuals' needs and understanding (Thew, 2002, p. 255).

Brundrett (2001) found evidenced in the literature the tensions surrounding principal training and development are multi-layered. Leadership is highly contextualised. Optimising learning must therefore involve understanding of the importance of context, learning timeliness, and the influence of maturation in the role.

Deputy Principals Susan Robins and Sanjay Rama from Ponsonby Primary will use some of the work we are trialling in our school to present a paper at the ACEL Conference in October, to consider the ways we can grow and sustain middle leaders. I think it is important middle leaders do present and or, write up their work.

## **2.0 What is our current reality?**

There are concerns that middle leader learning is often out of touch with the reality of the role, (Farkas, et al., 2001). Preparation programmes are not adequately preparing middle leaders to be *principals* who can face the challenges that will be required of them (Day, 2003). For instance, a programme on its own struggles to address the real-life situations in which *principals* find themselves.

Michael and Young(2006) believe that effective principals' learning for appointed principals in the first years of their career should involve simulations, case study work, and critique to augment theoretical learning. Mentoring and networking help mitigate stress and isolation and, the use of seasoned administrators to design and deliver meaningful professional development to new leaders enhances early experiences.

Hill (1999) found, “primary school leaders who had been recently appointed (with 0-2yrs’ experience) placed the highest value on peer-assisted forms of learning such as mentoring, peer coaching and work shadowing. As well, Day (2003) determined professional learning programmes for novice principals need to be trans-disciplinary and to include aspects of leadership and administration or management capability.

A respected primary principal I caught up with talked about much learning coming from involvement, but the principal had a cautionary word.

*“Principals, most principals say they learn most from other principals but I am rather sceptical that only participating in informal learning is possibly frightening, even incestuous.”*

This wise person, with over 20 years principal experience also said this, which really resonated with my experience: -

*“A teacher with a degree does not necessarily make a very successful principal, however all principals and teachers needed to demonstrate the capability to learn. The selection of principals needs to come under scrutiny, to ensure the selection of the right person for the job. If you’ve got the wrong person in the first place, all the training in the world, no academic qualifications in the world, are going to fix the person.”*

## **2.1 What do principals say helped them in their first or beginning years?<sup>4</sup>**

The question that emerged for early career principals was, “Can you ever prepare someone fully for principalship?” The 7 responses emphatically said no: “They can’t,” “You can’t,” “No,” “Definitely not,” “You can’t give it to them,” “No,” There was also a sense that you cannot learn principalship from a textbook.

*You can have all of the leadership knowledge in the world, in theory and so on, but it is putting it into context that’s the biggest challenge. (Mary)*

Beginning principals have very clear concepts of what works. Mentorship, strong role models, personal fit with the school was a big item, and the desire to build positive relationships were some of their articulated beliefs.

There was a sense that if you know people, that if you are relationally intelligent you will know how to unlock expertise. Knowledge gained through being part of a senior management team was invaluable as was studying leadership either formally or informally.

*I focus a lot of my leadership around relationships, and have found that that’s very successful when moving into Principalship. (Jerry)*

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<sup>4</sup> Pseudonyms used for individual comments.

The idea of, 'bringing your knowledge with you,' came with the caveat, only if you had moved through senior teacher to deputy principal<sup>5</sup> to principal. Early career principals felt strongly that experience was more important than study, so that apprenticeship notion was strong, however if a person had not had a strong principal role model they felt quite let down.

*I was very fortunate to have an extremely strong principal and mentor who got me involved in things like property and finance meetings, but as you say it doesn't really make sense until it is in your own school and you are confronted with the ultimate decisions. In an acting role, you got of sense of what it would be like. (Christie)*

There was strong consensus also around succession planning.

*It should be an ethical responsibility of principals to plan for succession. Not necessarily in your own school, but within the profession. (Mary)*

The aspect of 'fit with school', needs consideration. In particular, the idea that Boards of Trustees 'take a gamble' employing untested principals. This is what Mattie said:

*I could feel the fit was there, because I'd come from a similar school, similar decile, I was able to talk to them about having been a teacher, on a Board as a parent, in the same sort of decile community, so that they could see that I had the fit in terms of the, type of person.*

Brooking (2008), aired her concern with the Board appointment process not giving more credence to demonstrated leadership skill, but it seems that this is a two way process. Principals I talked with felt strongly that they did need to fit with their community.

Principals described how early on in the role they often felt out of their depth. It was apparent the principals were all at different stages of need, but unanimously they agreed that small groups with specific learning were one way of 'plugging the gaps.' They also felt that a range of learning was required.

*There is research overseas saying that we need a combination of university and government type courses, and your own learning. (Larry)*

*The networking was probably the biggest thing. Thinking, "Yes, I could put that into the school, yes I could do that." You know it was the practical ideas I took away with me. (Karena)*

The main challenge identified by early career principals centred around getting to grips with the 'nuts and bolts' needs. They felt at times they were fire- fighting and had to quickly know what to do in an amazingly diverse range

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<sup>5</sup> The terms deputy principal, associate principal, assistant and vice principal are used quite loosely in New Zealand schools to denote the person or in some cases people who work as part of the school's executive leadership team. Some schools still differentiate deputy is above assistant but self-managing schools use the terms they choose so there is no one rule for each school.

of situations. Some of the examples cited were pupil suspension, power outages, angry parents, staff needs and technical issues. It worried them that they spent so much time not focussed on curriculum and learning. In particular, those new to principalship all had to learn how to cope with property and finance. Maggie made a great comment:

*My mentor (from a personal network) kept telling me; when referencing finance and property, it won't make sense until you have to work with it, and that was exactly spot on.*

So it is evident from just a small sample that the transition from middle leadership to principalship can be made less stressful and that the notion of being an imposter<sup>6</sup> in the role ameliorated, if there has been explicit leadership learning. This is a comment from a highly experienced principal thinking back to when he started. I think this reminds us all why we do the leadership job we do.

*It suddenly hit me, here are all these kids coming to their school, this is their school, they've been coming here since they were five. They turn up here every day, and this is their school. All of a sudden, I'm their Principal; I had better know what I'm doing. The essence of that message is, ever since that day, there's been a constant search to know what I'm doing, and what is it I should be doing, and how do I know that, and how would I know if I'm doing it? My search continues because I am the kids' Principal. I'd better make sure their school is working for them. (Ewan)*

Again this paper has a very limited data set but it provides I hope, a sense that learning leadership is an imperative. I keep thinking what do we do, what do we need to do and who is accountable? Currently we send our middle leaders to coaching courses, to conferences, to curriculum upskilling; we recommend doing postgraduate courses BUT there is no mandated fiscal government support directed at growing middle leadership in our schools. I suppose one could argue the CoL huge spend could be used to do this in pockets but where is the equity in that. A school with no money certainly cannot afford the conferences and payment of university fees. There is a real need in this area and I would love to have more time to explore what is happening in the pockets of great practice.

This comment was from a 2<sup>nd</sup> year principal,

*"I was lucky, as a DP I had a principal who involved me in everything she did. She encouraged reading, reviewing, evaluating and most importantly gave me space to innovate as a leader. Unfortunately, when I talk to other principals, they did not have that experience."*

Wouldn't it work to mandate that principals have to develop their leaders and that they were given the tools to do so? That leads to the next section to consider what middle leaders think?

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<sup>6</sup> **Impostor syndrome** (also known as **impostor** phenomenon, impostorism, fraud **syndrome** or the **impostor** experience) is a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments, and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a "fraud". Principals talk about the fear of making a mistake because they do not know what to do in the early career.

## 2.2 What do middle leaders think helps them lead?

“The potential for teachers in middle leadership roles to lead transformative teaching and learning is exciting, but unfortunately, too often the expectations and support for these roles is lacking (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013). In Aotearoa /New Zealand, national leadership development programmes have been aimed primarily at principals and those aspiring to be principals. The importance of the relationship between the professional leader or senior leader as pedagogical leader, and the practices of the middle leader where the school wide and national priorities/decisions are put into operation, is critical. (Highfield, 2018)

I am an urban, high decile principal so it was so interesting travelling through rural New Zealand. It made me realise, firstly how many small schools there are and certainly in many cases there is only one recognised leader, the principal. MLEs, ILEs or FLEs, whatever we want to call them happen naturally in a rural setting, as often there are only a couple of teachers. One teacher in a school of 40 children said “I worked in big Auckland schools but here with only 3 of us, I have been encouraged to be a leader every day. I am encouraged to daily innovate and try new things.” She felt she was more of a leader now than ever before.

In large urban schools, middle leaders with majority time classroom responsibility wanted a range of support in their roles, but time was the big factor. They wanted to get into classrooms to give teacher feedback; they wanted time to work moderating and not always after school when everyone was tired and had attended 2 meetings already in the week. They wanted the opportunity to go to conferences and network but too often the school did not have the funds to offer that. Some wanted to do academic study; they all knew they should be doing that, but family and time and “I don’t want to be a principal anyway” were cited as barriers.

Deputy principal experiences and needs were also incredibly varied. It is really up to the school principal and Board, to decide on what financially can be accessed. In some schools the deputy or associate principals were always shadowing their principal, they worked incredibly closely. In others, the DP was the behaviour person; the timetable person or the SENCO and had little to do with broadening the leadership role. Again, some said they did not aspire to principalship so they did not feel they needed to further their academic work or knowledge of finance etc. Two of the DPs I spoke with had attended a mentor course at the university alongside their principal and they found that invaluable. It was the talking on the way to and from the course and discussions around assignments which led to in school action, that they truly valued.

In my own school, the middle managers and principals run leadership breakfasts and anyone on the staff can attend. This year they have covered things like “tricky conversations, building strong relationships, understanding student differences and meeting needs”. Some of the younger aspiring leaders said it was great to listen to their middle leaders presenting. Some teachers not in leadership roles felt this might encourage them to seek out leadership.

Deputy principals who are given the opportunity to be the acting principal also had varying experiences. Some felt they had the ear of the principal any time of the day if they wanted to ask something and they felt fully supported. One DP said, “Some days I really felt like all I was doing was going from one hot spot to the next, but a chat with the principal at the end of the day was so reassuring. She said that does happen and go you, for dealing with each situation so well. I

felt reassured that it wasn't just me." Another DP said, "I didn't think the job would be any different to what I do as a DP and how wrong was I; it was like a DP role on speed."

So it was very apparent the role has to be learned on many levels.

Networks both formal and informal provide much assistance to all leaders. The deluge of paper and emails meant sometimes important items were missed but good networking ensured currency in what was going on. Sometimes, that was about team leaders in a school sharing their thinking and learning. Leaders who do not get out of their schools and work with other schools and especially those transition point educators eg Year 6 to 7, do their schools a disservice.

Kahui Ako are providing a wider school collaboration and networking with ISTs<sup>7</sup> and ASTs<sup>8</sup> middle leadership opportunities. This is still evolving in my own area but it has taken 3 ½ years to get to the stage of having appointed a Kahui Ako leader, 3 of the 7 ASTs appointed and only some of the ISTs. IT is a long process when working with a large group of schools, to get change. Personally, I would like far more autonomy to develop our leaders through a broader in- school model with opportunity to work with a few schools with similar needs. Already, I can see that the huge CoL leader funding; the teacher shortage and skill level of ASTs is variable; that the current programme will take time to be accepted as embedded policy. If it is to be 'the way' we drive middle leadership learning, sadly I believe, we would by-pass many outstanding leaders.

The macro world of leadership is as important as the micro or own- school world. I am resolute in the belief that leading requires building people around you.

I believe, after talking with many leaders, that school principals have a direct, accountable responsibility to identify and nurture leadership capacity in their staff. Increasing opportunities for leadership across a school supports the development of leadership skills and knowledge. Explicit mentoring by the school leaders provides for all levels of leadership. The provisionally registered teacher planning a syndicate unit of work through to school wide curriculum leadership are learning leadership opportunities. Active participation in leadership roles enhance school wide leadership and support the quality of learning in the school.

Encouragement to participate in formal directed leadership programmes has been identified as important. This must not take away from the importance of practice, personal reading and reflection and socialisation. Principals however describe that understanding what educational leadership is provides a deeper philosophical and theoretical knowledge. And that by studying leadership, middle leaders will have greater confidence in their decision making. I 'bang on'

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<sup>7</sup> In school Kahui Ako teachers - \$8,000 and 2 hours' release weekly

<sup>8</sup> Across school leaders - \$16,000 and 2 days to work across schools weekly

constantly to my staff, that the things we change in our school have to be underpinned by theory or replicated practice, that makes a difference for children's learning.

School leaders are required to demonstrate intelligence<sup>9</sup>, and display multi-capability. Flexibility, knowledge, and competent communication are core competencies. Understanding and coping with conflict needs to be part of any leader learning. Middle leaders need to be provided with opportunities to practice these skills or at least shadow a leader when dealing with aspects such as tricky situations.

Change management theory was perceived as underpinning much of the leader's work. Harnessing people's talents and skills, developing positive cultures and an explicit focus on student's learning need to be embedded in the job. Leaders working together in their school, with their full staff can more readily implement a shared vision and positive learning culture. Unequivocal in all the discussions was that good leaders identify themselves as on-going learners.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century New Zealand leaders often have bureaucratic-driven management roles. They are required to schedule day-to-day organisational tasks within their working week, so time management and organisational capability are also inherent in the learning. But most important in any leadership role is learning how to build high trust relationships. DPs said they can be forgiven making errors if they are trusted and work in an open door, shared thinking space. An aspect I didn't get to explore, but one I have spoken to inner city principals about, is when considering the new flexible learning environments, their belief that leaders of the future need to develop and have spatial intelligence.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the significant ideas raised by leaders, both middle leaders and principals have been grouped into three categories:

### **Identified learning opportunities**

- Formal learning is necessary; it provides a pedagogical and philosophical backbone to a leader's work.
- Informal networking and collegial support is paramount to a leader's well-being and problem solving.
- Understanding people is the largest component of the job. This involves a combination of learning. Informal learning: - watching and talking about how to deal with situations. Life experience also influences how we treat others and to ensure we do not just draw on personal experience formal learning can support decision making around methods and thinking when managing people.
- It is easy to be diverted into administrative obligations, so leadership learning, whether we like it or not has to involve understanding systems.
- Sabbaticals, study leave, conferences strongly support leaders' learning by providing them with time for reflection and deep personal thinking/learning.
- Some learning cannot be done in advance. Significant learning occurs contextually and spontaneously within the role and so strong mentors and coaches are imperative within schools.

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<sup>9</sup> Intelligence in all forms- eg emotional, intellectual, spiritual or value based and spatial intelligence when working in flexible spaces

### Identified motivators to learn

- Understanding context and building sustainability; within that context are the key drivers to feeling more successful and generating greater motivation.
- Principals recognised the importance of their role in developing new leaders.
- Boards of Trustees understanding of what drives leaders, and supporting them financially to realise their vision, is paramount to success and retention. My own Board chair and I would like to see funding for this within the Operational Grant so there was some equity for small and large school middle leaders.
- Leaders need solid data to support decision making, problem solving and change management. One leader said “we just want tools to make data gathering and analysis and reporting easier for parents, children and teachers and PACT and AsTTle have not done that”
- Leaders deeply caring about what happens to children and their learning and this is a driving motivation.
- Pedagogical knowledge is needed by leaders because they want to and need to know how to improve student outcomes.
- Time in the job leads to greater understanding of how to do the job but knowing what to do when disenchantment sets in.

### Identified barriers

- Time, which is impacted on by workload, learning, family needs and striving for balance is the single largest barrier.
- People in the organisation who create negativity (the word used by two leaders was ‘septic’), need to be advised that education is forward thinking. Schools require a balance of critique and positivity.

In this conclusion I feel obligated to reference some of the current rhetoric. It seems PLD funding; leadership trials **all** currently centre around Kahui Ako/CoLs. For example, the following is taken from the Education Council leadership section on their website

*In conjunction with the Education Council, the Ministry reviewed its centrally-funded support for leaders and designed supports based on feedback from the sector.*

*The leadership package has been tailored to the individual needs of leaders at all levels of the system and reflects a shift in the education system with the establishment of the Education Council, Investing in Educational Success (IES) and the new leadership roles of Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako (CoL). Additional to this support, leadership for learning continues to be accessed by a CoL, schools and kura through centrally funded PLD.*

*The Ministry is contracting providers to work with up to 12 CoLs for two years from April 2017. Professional support will be focused on developing emerging, middle and senior leaders from each CoL.*

*Emerging Leaders is for all potential leaders across a CoL, not just those in a formal leadership position or those aspiring to be principals. Potential leaders will be identified and helped to build their leadership capabilities as they lead aspects of their community's change and improvement actions.*

I was on the consulting group when the PLD package was being developed. PLD funding was I thought, meant to be available for school initiatives but unfortunately in Auckland there just isn't enough money for the projects, as too much money was given to one CoL in the early days, so many principals have stopped applying. It is a long winded repetitive process. Perhaps when every school is forced to being in a Col and Cols have as a challenge, to grow all school middle leaders, because deputy principals are notably left out of Kahui Ako, funding will become available.

In 2002 Laurie Thew made these five recommendations for the New Zealand Government that today, 16 years on relate closely what is needed:

- A national pre service qualification pre principalship needs to be established.
- The FPHP should be expanded and mandatory for all first time principals.
- On-going professional learning established for current principals with national guidelines for delivery. Learning needs to be flexible but to include recorded annually reported goals.
- Professional learning should distinguish between management and leadership development. Whilst both are important, leadership requires a strong philosophical approach.
- Principals' professional learning should be supported with funding, time allocations and salary incentives (Thew, 2002, pp. 255-256).

My conclusions in 2012, are relevant to principalship but if we back map<sup>10</sup> are highly relevant for middle leaders. In particular, the conclusions support a New Zealand Leadership Development Strategy:

1. Principals are required to identify, mentor and promote leadership within their schools. The principal would annually report their leadership development plan, leadership development budget, and outcomes to the Boards of Trustees. Ministry would identify in the Operational Grant, a minimum leadership learning amount for principals and other school leaders. The leadership plans would be open to Review Office scrutiny.
2. Aspiring principals need to be conversant with teaching and learning pedagogies but should also expand their understanding through Master's or equivalent level learning, with a focus on leadership and philosophy. This would support developing, informed personal beliefs, big picture strategic thinking and change management capability skills core to principalship.
3. All first time principals compulsorily attend a First Time Principals' Programme. FPHP's course work to be developed in a module format to cover prescribed philosophy, management, pedagogic and leadership aspects. Exemption from modules (which decreases time) if prior learning can be evidenced.
4. Selected FPHP modules improved to meet university standards of rigor to contribute to Master's Degree papers.

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<sup>10</sup> **Back Mapping: A Process for Results-Based Staff Development** Back mapping is a tool staff developers can use to plan results-based professional development. The process is driven by the end result we want -- student achievement.

5. FTTP to include (Ministry led) management training modules. Groups of principals with like context using actual budgets, property plans, staffing components to support understanding the mandatory expectations.
6. Each beginning principal mentored by a trained mentor. Mentoring sessions funded and Boards advised of the requirements. The opportunity for FTPs to self-select mentors, if the person identified has been trained and is available.
7. Mentorship training for school leaders that culminates in a professional learning qualification which can be cross-credited to a single Master's level paper.
8. Mandated Master's degree for principals linked to salary increment. So, if not achieved pre principalship, it was suggested that the third year of principalship would be optimal timing to expect the qualification to be started as that is post FTTP.
9. Experienced principal programmes to support experienced principals developing further transformational practices for themselves and their schools. Travel fellowships and possibly early or pre career development options factored into the learning.
10. Networking articulated by the government as expected informal principals' learning. This would articulate the expectation to Boards of Trustees.

I would add to this that principals need to fully understand the Tiriti o Waitangi and apply the principals of partnership to their schools. I would like to see principals able to speak Te Reo to a basic communication level of fluency. By 2019, at a bare minimum, to be able to mihi in a formal gathering; be able to waiata with at least 2 songs and introduce guests to their school in Maori. That would be a start.

As well, principals would be provided with a sabbatical, as of right, after each 10-year period in the job (see appendix 1). Some principals felt five years and some ten. Some wanted 10 weeks and some 5. I felt really reenergised and raring to go after 5 weeks.

My recommendations are that we return to having a pre principalship fully funded programme available or the choice to complete a leadership post graduate programme with both recognised as pre requisite to principalship.

We need to make schools accountable for developing their leaders, but size of school needs to be of high consideration so contextually based equitable funding provided for leadership development.

A government funded coaching and mentoring programme. We need to seriously review what individual schools are paying to contractors and consultants.

PLD funding available for all leadership projects linked to strategic plans. But also a leadership amount similar to the old ICT monies paid through the Operational Grant.

If we must pay for appraisal of the principal, we need to make that an appraisal of the leadership team. The costs for appraisal are exorbitant and middle leaders get little or no benefit for it.

I do hope that before I retire I see a cohesive leadership development programme for all aspiring and school leaders. I am just one of the 70% long serving principals who will retire. For me that will be next year, but for many it will happen in the next 5 years.

I thank my Board, DPs and other middle leaders for making this possible. **[I do wonder who will read it?](#)**

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## **Appendix 1 Is it a sabbatical or is it study and how could this time be structured to support middle leaders?**

Malcolm.A.2018

I have been a school principal in an urban contributing school for 22 years and last year I thought I would apply for a sabbatical, not study leave or refreshment leave, but a sabbatical. My wonderings have developed as I have thought about the needs and processes involved in developing leaders. One recurring thought has been, that perhaps going forward, a review of current leave provisions could support a strategy for educational leadership development, growth and retention.

Firstly, I am eternally grateful to have had the opportunity to refresh myself and to provide time for my Deputy Principal to act in the role. I term this learning apprenticeship modelling.

When I started the sabbatical application process I thought, “Oh yes, I can play the game, I will just create a project,” however, with my ethical hat on I felt this was wrong. After 22 years as a Principal, with 5 outstanding ERO reviews; involvement in many leadership organisations; mentoring for new principals, that perhaps a sabbatical should be how it is defined by churches and universities: -

“a carefully planned period of time in which the person granted leave is away from his or her normal responsibilities in order to spend an extended period of time in rest, renewal and refreshment.

As an aside, the word “sabbatical” comes from the Hebrew word *shabbat*, which means “to cease or rest.”

But, and it is a big but, our collective defines a sabbatical as time to rest and time to study, to create a project that will benefit the sector or school and it must also be noted applications can be made after 5 years teaching or leading.

This generated the question, who really should be given these sabbaticals? As well, how if my doctoral research is to be considered, can we link a leadership sabbatical to upskilling middle leaders. I think my sticking point was why 5 years? I know from extensive study that this is an arbitrary figure not supported by literature. At 5 years a person is just moving out of the novice phase. Is that really when an educator needs time to look back and reflect? My personal opinion is we want teachers and leaders to apply when we know they hit that period of disenchantment, which is at around 10 years.

The view that there are career phases linked to years of service was confirmed by the Perth study (Hill, et al., 1999) and the work of others (Daresh & Playko, 1992; Kedian, 2004; Woods, 2002). The challenge to understanding principalship, as argued by Braukmann and Pashiardis(2009), is in identifying and effectively evaluating the different career stages. Day (2007), supports the notion that principals go through development phases and that different phases of headship generate different needs. He characterizes the ‘initiation phase’ or early learning phase as one of idealism and uncertainty. That phase is 1 to 4 years. Various other authors have researched the career lives of principals and have divided experience into similar phases of learning. Day and Bakioglu(1996) define them as:

- Initiation 1- 4 years
- Development 5-7 years

- Autonomy 8-10 years
- Dis-enchantment 10years+

However, my preference of descriptors is that of Woods (2002), who distinguishes three phases only: an initiation stage which lasts three to four years followed by the developmental phase, then at around ten years the principal's move into a decline and withdrawal phase unless they are re-energised. Surely a sabbatical is time provided to re-energise? And, surely 10 years, continuous service in the role would provide that release. Perhaps I would even go further to suggest that every 10 years of continuous service a school principal should be granted 4 weeks to refresh their thinking, with no requirement other than to mentor the person acting as Principal and thus enhancing the leadership framework.

## **Appendix 2**

From C. Highfield's summary paper (Highfield, 2018)

### **Recommendations for the development of middle leaders at all levels**

The success or failure of any education intervention depends upon the nature, quality and sustainability of implementation and the extent to which it is relentlessly embedded, evaluated, refined and changed (Harris & Jones, 2016).

Like the opportunities that exist for teachers within Kāhui Ako, we need to provide all teachers with opportunities for collaborative, culturally responsive leadership development – whether they are aspiring leaders or already in leadership roles, and whether they are working in early childhood, kura or schooling roles.

Recommendations for developing middle leaders at all levels of the education system include:

1.

Teachers need to understand their professional responsibility and be encouraged to engage in a wide range of professional learning throughout their career as they aspire to leadership roles across the education sector. The Education Council's Standards for the Teaching Profession will help identify development opportunities and the depth of experience they will need to build across their career.

2.

The development of leadership knowledge, practices and dispositions of middle leaders needs to occur in a setting where professional learning is valued. Formalised professional learning, coaching, mentoring and support should be available for those aspiring to leadership at every level. Time and resources must be prioritised to ensure teachers have a clear pathway for their development to grow leadership capability and capacity (e.g. the enrolment in formal qualifications to build knowledge and sound evidence developed in the form of a portfolio of effective professional practice and leadership). Professional

development strategies for middle leaders need to be well resourced and connected to examples of existing practice so that teachers have the opportunity to practice with and learn from colleagues in their own context (OECD, 2014).

3.

Middle leaders in all education sectors require a model of leadership development that is culturally appropriate to their context (such as early childhood or Māori-medium setting) and therefore identifies the individual leadership learning needs of colleagues. It is critical that there are multiple opportunities to learn that are flexible and well resourced sufficient to include a tuakana-teina model that can provide resources to develop leadership practice in a supportive yet challenging environment is critical.

The Ministry of Education's Tū Rangatira is a good example that brings together shared ideas, experiences and leadership practices (co-constructed with educators within the Māori-medium education sector). It provides insights into how effective professional development programmes can work towards strengthening leaders' capabilities, growing capacity and sustaining exemplary leadership.

4.

Professional leaders in educational settings should be encouraged to prioritise and implement formal, planned instructional leadership development programmes for senior and middle leaders. Responsibility for the identification and development of leadership capabilities should be a critical senior leader responsibility in order for them to focus on the learning needs of middle leaders for whom they are directly responsible (Rhodes, Brundrett, & Nevill, 2008).