The expectation and the reality: the challenges for primary principals in leading learning

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ABSTRACT

Principals in New Zealand Primary Schools are aware of an increased emphasis on their role as educational leaders. The expectation is that they are leaders of learning, whilst also meeting the requirements of the day-to-day operational running of the school. This creates challenges for principals that were worthy of investigation.

The research examined what is expected of primary principals as leaders of learning and who sets these expectations. This research also investigated why principals are challenged with the expectation that they lead learning. The study also considered how principals could be supported to overcome the challenges inherent in the expectation that they effectively lead learning.

A qualitative methodology was employed for this research using the methods of documentary analysis and individual interviews. The information gathered from documents regarding the expectations of primary principals served as a backdrop and a point of reference for the findings from the interviews. Eight primary school principals from schools with rolls between 300-600 students were interviewed using a semi structured interview format.

The literature review and the documentary research showed a complexity of terminology surrounding the leading of learning. The findings of the research revealed that the expectations prioritised by the principals in leading learning were the need for them to ensure professional development for themselves and staff and to ensure that strategic planning is informed by student assessment data. This aligned with the documents analysed and with recent research reviewed in the literature.

Due to their vast workload and the duality of their role the principals believed that they did not devote as much time as they would wish to the specific facet of leading learning. Uncertainty and confusion emerged through the course of the interviews regarding the principals' understanding of the term 'leading learning'. The findings led to the recommendations that principals require greater support to meet the challenges presented by the duality of their role and in depth professional development to clarify the meaning of 'leading learning'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The role of a primary school principal is diverse and complex. The principal is required to be the educational leader of the school and as such is required to lead teaching and learning. Through my experiences working as a member of Senior Management teams in primary schools I have seen the daily demands that the principal is required to meet. Locke (2009) writes of the challenges as well as the opportunities that principalship at the beginning of the 21st Century presents to experienced as well as newly appointed principals. This leads to my interest to research why principals in primary schools are challenged with the expectation that they lead teaching and learning.

A rationale for this study

Background

Good leadership is critical to a school's success. An effective school that does not have an effective principal is rare to find (Sergiovanni, 2001). Most pertinently and central to the reason for this study, is the increasing emphasis given to the role of principalship in current research. This is that the principal's main role is to lead learning. The shift of emphasis in school leadership has been apparent in research over the last two decades. Robinson (2004) argues that there has been a shift in educational leadership research from generic to educational leadership. Educational leadership is different from generic leadership because it focuses on teaching and learning. There is agreement in the literature (Blase & Blase, 2000; Bush, 2003; Robinson, 2006) of the uniqueness of educational leadership since it comprises of the aspects of leading curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and student learning that make it distinct from generic leadership.

Educational Leadership

Hargreaves and Goodson (2005) argue that the focus for leaders in education in the 21st Century is to connect leadership to learning and is seen in the way that the improvement and

renewal of leadership is being increasingly connected to the improvement of pupil learning and achievement. The importance and significance of effective leadership to influence student attainment is agreed by Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2004), whose research found that as leadership improves so does student attainment. In the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand amongst other countries, there is a belief in the positive influence that principals have on improving student achievement and that the quality of leadership positively enhances teaching and learning (Harris, 2005).

Despite the focus within research on educational leadership, researchers (Robinson, 2006, Woods, Bennett & Wise, 2004) argue that further research is needed to understand what educational leadership looks like in schools. Research regarding educational leadership completed by Cardno and Collett (2004) in New Zealand and Lingard, Hayes, Mills and Christie's (2003) in Australia are in the context of the secondary school sector. Gunter (2002) cites the lack of research regarding the daily working practice of primary school principals. Through initial scanning of the literature there appeared to be a lack of research regarding why principals in primary schools are challenged with the expectation that they lead learning. Therefore, my interest lies in researching this topic in the particular context of New Zealand primary schools. This research topic is prompted by the topicality of the issue of educational leadership in the field of education and the importance given to the principal's role in effectively influencing student achievement. 'Learning in the lead' is the heading of an article in the New Zealand Education Gazette (2009) outlining a forthcoming Ministry of Education initiative to support principals as educational leaders. The term 'educational leadership' is given prominence at a time when in the field of educational leadership research and practice the focus is placed on the influence that the principal has on improving student outcomes.

The historical context for this study extends back to the Picot Report of 1988, that argued for decentralisation of educational decision-making within a framework of national objectives. The Government provided funding for schools to realise their educational goals as laid out in their Charter documents. The detailed decisions about how funds were to be spent would be made by the board of trustees. Bennett (1994) argues that the Picot Report saw the principal's main role as being an instructional leader, focusing on the leading of teaching and learning. The expectation of the Picot Report was that the school boards would "buy in" managerial

expertise along with an emphasis on collegiality in management processes. However, as Bennett (1994) states this picture of the role of principalship with its workload today as then is not recognisable. Since the inception of '*Tomorrow's Schools*' in New Zealand in 1989 when the Reform of Education Administration in New Zealand was legislated and self-managing schools were established, the role and responsibility of the primary school principal has expanded. The old Department of Education and Regional Education Boards were removed and a more compact Ministry of Education was established. *Tomorrow's Schools*' devolved almost all administration functions to the school level. As the educational leader of the school the principal became individually responsible for the quality of teaching and learning and as the chief executive officer of the Board of Trustees, directly accountable for school outcomes supported by a senior leadership team. The system of self-managing schools created a new and enlarged role for principals (Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2007; Piggot-Irvine and Cardno, 2005). Thus the role grew to have many dimensions. The breadth and diversity of the primary principal's role is laid down in the Principal Performance Management document (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Performance management systems, though previously in existence as systems developed in many schools, have been mandatory in New Zealand since January 1997. Stated in the document is the belief that the principal is the most important factor to influence the performance of the school. The expectation within the Principal Performance Management document is that the principal needs to deliver high quality education to students and to organise people and resources in order to make the school effective. The Interim Professional Standards for Principals introduced in 1998 were followed by the current Professional Standards in 2008. The stated purpose of the Professional Standards was to enhance the strategy of developing and maintaining the quality of teaching and leadership in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Apparent in a sample job description included in the Principal Performance Management document (Ministry of Education, 2008) is that the principal is responsible for all aspects of school governance and management. The job description includes the expectation that the principal will foster positive relationships with staff and and parents and develop a climate of trust. The clearly stated end result of these actions is that the progress of student achievement

is reported on. The principal is held accountable for this progress. There is a possible dilemma for principals in meeting the expectations stated in the sample job description between the context in which principals work and the conditions required to make them strong educational leaders. This mismatch is due, in Robinson's view (2006) to the heavy administrative workload of principals and to the loose link between the work of the classroom and the organisation, where individual teachers decide detailed decisions on what is taught, and when and how it is evaluated.

A particular problem and therefore point of interest for the study lies in the concerning amount of literature regarding the workload of principals (Fullan, 2008). There is a possible dilemma for principals in meeting the breadth of the expectations in the Principal Performance Management document (Ministry of Education, 2008) especially with the heightened focus on the role of the principal as leading learning and ensuring positive student outcomes. As well as meeting the daily diverse demand of managing a school the principal is expected to set the scene for effective teaching that supports every student to achieve their potential. Robinson (2006) sees a misalignment in reality between the context in which principals work and the conditions required to make them strong educational leaders. This study seeks to investigate the expectations and challenges facing the primary school principal as an educational leader and how this may be successfully achieved while not burdening the principal with an unmanageable workload.

The principal's workload and the multi-dimensional aspects of the principal's role are highlighted in the findings of a report to the New Zealand Principals' Federation researched and written by Hodgen and Wylie (2005). Under the auspices of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research their study offers pertinent data relating to the issues surrounding principals leading learning. Their study suggests that workload issues are not simply the long hours worked, but rather the multi-dimensional aspects of the principal's role. In relation to the primary and secondary principal's role, the lack of time to focus on teaching and learning was identified as having a high stress impact for over half the principals. This study claimed that fifty-nine percent of the principals surveyed described the impact on them of the lack of time to focus on teaching and learning as high or breaking point on their stress levels. They found that principals were working excessive hours, and that the majority categorised a major

part of their work as management. Only a fifth felt on top of their work and a majority experienced high levels of stress from their inability to focus on leading teaching and learning. Amongst the challenges presented in this report was for ways to be found to provide more balance in the role of principalship.

The term 'balanced leadership' is focused upon and given weight in the research of Waters, Marzano and McNulty (McREL, 2003). They created a leadership framework based on the belief that effective leadership means more than just knowing what to do. They argue that effective leaders know when, why and how to push for change while at the same time safeguarding important and worthwhile aspects of culture, values and norms.

> They know when, how, and why to create learning environments that support people, connect them with one another, and provide the knowledge, skills and resources they need to succeed. This combination of knowledge and skills is the essence of balanced leadership. (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003, p. 2).

The literature shows the dilemmas of increased principal workload, principal stress and well-being. These are apparent at the same time as the emphasis is increasingly placed on the principal's role as being primarily one of educational leader. This prompts me to research what challenges the role presents for principals in meeting current expectations and how primary principals are being supported, and in future may be supported in their role. This is a timely research study in the context of the Ministry of Education in New Zealand proposing a professional leadership plan referred to as a Professional Leadership Strategy (PLS) the starting point for which is the Kiwi Leadership for Principals model (Ministry of Education, 2008). It is intended that the strategy will provide a plan intended to strengthen and support leadership in New Zealand schools over the next three to five years. One of the challenges that the plan is proposed to aim to address is in answer to the research findings of Hodgen and Wylie (2005) that suggests that the many demands of leadership and administration can be a source of tension for the principal when deciding how to prioritise time and attention. This problem is set in the context of a time in education when the main role of the principal is considered to be one of an educational leader who should focus primarily on quality teaching and student attainment.

The research aims

The purpose of this research project is to scrutinise the expectations and the reality surrounding the challenges for principals leading learning in middle-sized primary schools. The setting is Auckland. An aim of the study is to understand what is expected of principals as educational leaders and who set these expectations. The research investigates why principals in middle - sized primary schools are challenged with the expectation that they lead learning. Gunter (2002) suggests that there is a lack of research regarding the daily working practice of primary school principals and limited research to show how principals lead teaching and learning in practice and the issues that they face. The purpose of this study is to create new knowledge and understanding related to why principals in primary schools are challenged with the expectation that they lead learning. Additionally, the study seeks to explore how principals could be supported to overcome the challenges inherent in the expectation that they should effectively lead learning.

Research questions

Questions that are addressed within the context of this study are as follows:

1. What is expected of principals as educational leaders and who sets the expectations?

2. Why are principals challenged with the expectation that they lead learning?

3. How could principals be supported to overcome the challenges inherent in the expectation that they should effectively lead teaching and learning?

The outline of the thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters, each dealing with a different aspect of the research project.

This first chapter provides an overview of the research topic, defines educational leadership and gives a rationale for carrying out research in this area. It provides the background for the research and the aims and research questions that shape the thesis.

The literature reviewed in chapter two acknowledges the limited amount of literature regarding active educational leadership – the leading of teaching and learning - in the primary sector in New Zealand. Major themes are examined and critiqued using the literature surrounding the expectations and challenges for principals in leading learning in New Zealand. This is followed by a review of relevant literature from overseas.

Chapter three discusses and justifies the methodology that underpinned this study. It describes in detail the research design and methods used to collect data and explains how theoretically they should be used to maximise the validity and reliability of the findings.

Chapter four analyses the documents gathered for the documentary research that specifically focus on the expectations of principals in leading learning. These documents provide the scaffolding for the next chapter.

Chapter five discusses findings from the individual interviews conducted with the participating primary principals. Main themes are identified in relation to the principals' views regarding their perceptions of expectations and challenges for them as principals in leading learning and issues of support.

Chapter six presents the discussions of findings. This includes discussion of the data gathered through documentary analysis surrounding the expectations of the role of primary principalship and the key findings from the individual interviews regarding the principals' views of what is expected of their role. The other key questions of why principals are challenged with the expectation that they lead learning and how principals could be further supported to effectively lead learning are critiqued and discussed in relation to the literature and the main themes that emerged in the research.

Chapter seven presents the conclusions of the research. Recommendations and potential areas for further research are addressed.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There is agreement in the literature (Fullan, 2008; Huber, 2004) that the leading and managing of schools is complex with diverse demands and challenges. Over the last two decades there has been a shift in emphasis in educational research from generic leadership to educational leadership (Robinson, 2004). This chapter reviews the literature from New Zealand and overseas surrounding what is expected of principals as leaders and who sets these expectations. The literature relating to the challenges that principals may face as a result of these expectations is also reviewed. The final area addressed is a review of the literature regarding how principals may be supported to overcome the challenges inherent in the expectation that they lead learning.

Educational leadership

Educational leadership is one of the various terms found in the literature to describe leadership that focuses on teaching and learning. Bush (2003) argues that it is difficult to have a single definition of educational leadership and management. Most importantly he states that educational leadership and management stands as a discipline in it's own right. It is unique to educational settings. It is a term that has been used to describe the leading of teaching and learning in the New Zealand document *Kiwi Leadership For Principals* (Ministry of Education, 2008) that is subtitled: *Principals as Educational Leaders*. However, through the literature different authors favour different terminology to describe the influence that leaders exercise in specifically leading teaching and learning. In the literature commonly found terminology to describe the practice of leading teaching and learning includes instructional leadership; learning centred leadership and professional leadership.

Bush (2008) describes the way in which instructional leadership increases the emphasis on managing teaching and learning as the school's core activity. While Coleman and Earley (2005) agree with the stress being on learning at the centre of instructional leadership, they favour 'learning centred leadership' as a more appropriate term, to show the focus on good

teaching, effective learning and achievement. This term introduced by Southworth (2004) defines learning–centred leadership as a process that focuses on changing teachers' professional practice through development and refinement. Professional school leadership as described by Huber (2004) is purposeful and shares leadership responsibility and involvement in, and knowledge about, what happens in the classroom. Emphasis is placed on the participation of others in leadership tasks. Huber (2004) argues that effective professional leadership focuses on teaching and learning, using the school's goals as benchmarks. Whilst various terms are used to refer to educational leadership there is agreement in the literature (Blase & Blase, 2000; Bush, 2003; Robinson, 2006) of the uniqueness of educational leadership since it comprises of the aspects of leading curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and student learning that make it distinct from generic leadership. For the purposes of the research conducted in this study in the context of New Zealand the review of the literature begins by detailing the whole role of the primary school principal in New Zealand.

The role of the primary school principal in New Zealand

Background

The introduction of school self-management in New Zealand in 1989 created a new and enlarged role for principals (Piggot-Irvine & Cardno, 2005). Within the reforms Boards of Trustees were established to govern each school. The Boards' governance role, including the development and overseeing of school policy, incorporated the employment of the principal as well as all other staff. The principal was appointed as chief executive officer of the Board and was given responsibility to ensure the implementation of Board policies for day to day school organisation and management. Piggot-Irvine & Cardno (2005) argue that since the reforms there has been a lack of clarity surrounding the boundaries of the governance responsibilities of the Board and the management responsibilities of the principal.

Principal Performance Management

Performance management systems, though previously in existence as systems developed in many schools, have been mandatory in New Zealand since January 1997. Guidelines for Performance Management were published to reinforce the legislated requirements for Boards

of Trustees to ensure the appraisal of staff including the principal. The purpose of effective performance management was described by Howard Fancy the Secretary for Education in 1998, as being to ensure that the expectations of boards and principals were clearly understood. Also that it would provide an opportunity to plan changes that would make positive differences to school performance and student attainment. The legislative requirements of the principal's role and responsibility are set out in Section 76 of the *Education Act* (1989). It states that "the principal is the chief executive officer of the board and that as such has complete discretion to manage the school's day to day administration." The major elements of the principal's performance agreement are the job description; the Professional Standards for Principals; performance objectives; and development objectives.

A sample of a job description for a principal

A sample job description provided within Principal Performance Management documentation (Ministry of Education, 2008, p.21) states:

> It is the principal's role to brief staff on all aspects of school governance and management, to ensure that effective communication networks operate within the school, to foster positive staff relationships, and to provide staff with the opportunity to participate in decision- making within the school.

> The principal will endeavour to develop a climate of trust and co-operation between the school and the community it serves. The principal will encourage and facilitate parental involvement in the school. It is the principal's responsibility to report regularly to parents on their children's progress at school, and to the community at large on the school's progress towards the achievement of charter goals.

Apparent in this sample job description is the breadth of areas that the principal's role is seen to encompass, through the expectation that the principal will be able to brief staff on all aspects of school governance and management. Governmental expectation is that the job description is reviewed annually to ensure that it reflects any changes in circumstances and board expectations (*Principal Performance Management*, Ministry of Education, 2008). According to this document in some schools job descriptions are based on charter goals and

are driven by the strategic plan, whilst other schools group the principal's tasks in alignment with the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) (Ministry of Education, 1999a). Alternatively, the Ministry of Education's Performance Management document states that the principal's job description may be based on recognised areas of expertise related to the dimensions of the Professional Standards.

Professional Standards for Primary Principals

Professional Standards sit within Performance Management. The Government introduced the Interim Professional Standards to enhance performance management systems already operating. This supported its strategy to develop and maintain the quality of teaching and leadership in New Zealand schools (Ministry of Education, 1998). The breadth and diversity of the primary principal's role was laid down initially in the Interim Professional Standards for Primary School Principals (Ministry of Education, 1998). This was a consultative document from the Ministry of Education that formed part of performance management systems in schools. It was viewed by the Government as a strategy to develop and maintain the quality of teaching and leadership and was to be integrated into schools' existing performance management systems. The Interim Professional Standards for Primary School Principals stated the expectations that principals were expected to meet, and was divided into the categories of Professional leadership; Strategic management; Staff management; Relationship management; Financial and asset management; Statutory and reporting requirements.

Professional Leadership

Aspects of pedagogy, systems and culture are included in the components stated within the area of professional leadership. Within the pedagogical aspect of the role the expectation is that the principal would show a clear understanding of current approaches to effective teaching and learning across the curriculum; encourage vision and innovation in classroom practice the principal would provide professional direction for other staff; effectively analyse and respond to school reviews, external audits and outcomes of student learning. The area of systems is included within professional leadership through the principal as chief executive officer of the Board of Trustees applying effective management. A cultural aspect included in

the professional leadership component is that the principal should demonstrate a commitment to on-going learning and reflects on his or her own performance appraisal.

Strategic management

Aspects of pedagogy are strong also within this section, where focusing on continued school improvement; fostering high student achievement; addressing barriers to learning are all highlighted as part of the principal's role. A systems aspect is seen through the expectation that the principal will employ teachers of the highest quality available.

Staff Management

In the area of staff management the area of pedagogy includes motivating and supporting staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Aspects of pedagogy and systems are apparent in the expectation that the principal will staff the school to support effective delivery of the curriculum, the implementation of the school charter and improved learning outcomes for students. Effective systems are also given focus through the perceived expectation for the principal to establish procedures and practices to maintain and develop staff effectiveness through appropriate recruitment. A strong link is seen here with strategic management.

Relationship management

This is a crucial section and highlights the significance of the principal forming partnerships and networks between the school and its community. The stated expectation of this aspect of the principal's role is that the principal will demonstrate an understanding of and will be responsive to, the diverse needs and concerns of students, parents, staff, board, community, government, and non-government agencies. The principal is also expected to effectively and actively work to achieve solutions to problems.

Financial and asset management

This section of the Interim Professional Standards for Primary Principals focuses on systems and the need for the principal to effectively use available financial resources and assets to support improved student outcome. The principal is expected to work effectively with the Board of Trustees to control, monitor and report on the use of finances and assets and to operate an effective budget plan.

Statutory and reporting requirements

This final section states the need for the principal to comply with all relevant statutes and regulations and to monitor and report as required. The closing broad statement is that progress needs to be made towards achieving the school vision through the effective management of available resources.

Performance Objectives

Performance objectives describe the results that a principal is expected to achieve. Set at the beginning of the principal performance management cycle they need to take into account the priorities from the charter goals and objectives identified in the school's ongoing and regularly reviewed strategic plan; the tasks and responsibilities identified in the principal's job description; the Professional Standards for Principals. The Ministry of Education's Performance Management document (2008) states that both the board and the principal need to be clear about the results that the principal is expected to achieve in leading the school and managing the quality of teaching and learning.

Development Objectives

Development objectives focus on areas identified in the principal's appraisal process to increase the principal's knowledge and skills. Performance agreements should include at least one such objective each year to ensure that the principal continues to continually gain professional knowledge and skills to provide effective leadership in the school (Ministry of Education, 2008). Emphasis is placed by the Ministry of Education on the importance of linking the principal's development objectives to the school's strategic plan as this is central to the school's development. It is seen as an important link for the principal as one of the prime functions of the principal's role.

The issuing of the document was followed with consultation between the Ministry of Education, principals and boards of trustees. The amendments suggested, may serve to highlight the problematic issues for those consulted. They asked for, clearly defined responsibilities of principals in relation to their boards; an emphasis on the importance of the school community; greater focus being placed on approaches to teaching and learning rather

than understanding curriculum areas in detail; an acknowledgment of the constraints within which principals operate; a new standard to be introduced to create a safe learning and teaching environment.

The Interim Professional Standards for Primary Principals was not amended in accordance with principals' suggestions. However, there has been a full consultation process with principals on the development of the new Professional Standards for Primary Principals. (New Zealand School Trustees Association, 2008). Similarly to the Interim Professional Standards the diversity of the primary principal's role is recognised and documented in the current Professional Standards for Primary School Principals (New Zealand Staff and Trustees Association 2008). However, the key difference between the two documents is that the current Professional Standards focus on educational leadership.

Current Professional Standards for Primary School Principals

The current Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008) (Appendix 4) provides a baseline for assessing principals' satisfactory performance. These expectations are divided into four Areas of Practice, culture; pedagogy; systems; partnerships and networks that are based on the *Kiwi Leadership For Principals* (Ministry of Education, 2008). The content of these four Areas of Practice may be explained through reference to and a description of the *Kiwi Leadership For Principals* model (2008).

The Kiwi Leadership Model

Clear alignment is seen between the Areas of Practice constituting the Professional Standards document and The Kiwi Leadership Model (KLP) (2008) shown below:

Figure 2.1 The Kiwi Leadership Model p. 12

The KLP presents the areas and issues of active educational leadership clearly along with the expectations of the principal's role as seen in the Areas of Practice of the Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008). The four Areas of Practice show the wide scope of the principal's role. Through these dimensions it argues that principals lead learning, manage change, build coherence, develop self and build capability in their educational setting. The expectations of the role of principalship may be considered through examining each of the dimensions.

The first of these areas is culture. The expectation in the KLP model is that principals will develop school cultures focussed on improving learning experiences and outcomes for all students. How principals show educational leadership to achieve this is by having the skills to develop and implement a shared vision and goals. The KLP model supports the theme of distributed leadership in order to build supportive networks through the school. The culture is one of effective teams, and where the principal has the ability to facilitate change and to create opportunities to celebrate success as a result of teachers focussing on teaching and

students on learning. The KLP model asks school leaders to reflectively consider, firstly what the school's shared vision and set of values are and secondly, how they are building a team.

The second area is pedagogy. The key reflective question offered for consideration in the KLP model with regard to pedagogy is crucial to the research and literature surrounding educational leadership. It states that school leaders need to reflect on the extent to which they participate in as well as promote effective teacher professional learning. Also the KLP model states that for the leaders to have sound pedagogical knowledge is essential in order that they can discuss changes and have meaningful dialogue with teachers with regard to classroom organisation, resourcing and assessment procedures. This concurs also with the key messages that Robinson (2006) highlights from the Best Evidence Synthesis.

The third area is systems. In any organisation it is structures and systems that form the base of the ground rules of how that organisation works for all in the organisation. In the educational setting the KLP model suggests that school leaders should ask the reflective questions of, firstly to what extent do I make sure that resources are aligned to strategic goals and secondly, does the system at the school support quality teaching and learning. The importance of the need for school leaders to have the professional knowledge is to instigate systems is highlighted. The model supports the principal delegating the running of systems to appropriate staff.

The final area is partnerships and networks. The extent to which school leaders are able to form positive relationships with the community outside the school has a substantial influence on improving educational outcomes for students, through engaging parents' in their children's learning. The model states that principals need to show interpersonal skills needed to build strong relationships with other key stakeholder groups such as local businesses, whanau and trustees. It also emphasises the importance of principals to maintaining strong collegial networks, focussing on enhancing the learning of all students across school clusters. The KLP model advices that school leaders need to reflectively question how they would do these things.

The expectation from Boards of Trustees as the employers, is that principals will be leaders of vision and influence. Principals are expected to promote a culture in which teachers are encouraged by the principal to take on leadership roles and to work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning. In addition to creating a pedagogical climate in which students realise success the expectation is that principals will effectively manage the operational day to day running of the school by developing and using effective management systems. In the area of partnerships and networks principals are expected to work with the Board to facilitate strategic decision-making and to strengthen communication and relationships throughout the school community. The clearly stated end goal for each of the Areas of Practice is to enhance student learning.

The expectations surrounding the primary role of the principal as educational leader

The emphasis on the expectations surrounding the primary role of the principal as an educational leader is a significant theme in the literature and government legislation. The term educational leader also sits at the centre of the KLP (2008) model. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) state that the principal as instructional leader is expected to understand the components of quality teaching and to have sufficient curriculum knowledge to know that students are being taught appropriate knowledge. The expectation is that the principal is able to provide constructive feedback to lead to improved teaching practices or is able to design a system in which others provide this support. Robinson (2005) argues that for educational leadership to be effective it needs much more than any one individual can offer alone and has the potential to be greater than the sum of each leader in an organisation. This leads to a consideration of some of the dominant themes in the literature that debate how effective educational leadership may be applied.

Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership has various meanings. "At the start of the decade, Peter Gronn and James Spillane, working separately, popularised the concept of distributed leadership in the field of educational leadership." (Mayrowetz, 2008 p. 424). Harris (2005) suggests that the distributive perspective on school leadership offers a means to study leadership practice. At

the centre of the notion of the distribution of leadership is the idea that leadership is the property of groups of people, rather than an individual (Woods et al. 2004).

Spillane and Diamond (2007) acknowledge that many comment on the small amount of empirical knowledge on distributed leadership. However they suggest that this is to be expected considering that the ideas are relatively new. They argue that more theory-building is crucial before measuring the effects of distributed leadership on teaching and learning. In Spillane and Diamond's (2007) opinion what needs to be researched and clearly understood in realising the effects of distributed leadership is not that leadership is distributed but rather how leadership is distributed. Spillane and Diamond (2007) suggest that distributed leadership offers a means to bring together objectives that have been set through leadership and are then played out through organisational management. The role of the principal as described presents challenges to effectively lead and manage a school. "The leadership of the principal is known to be a key factor in supporting student achievement, but how that leadership is experienced and instructionally enacted by teachers is much less clear." (Wahlstrom and Louis, 2008, p. 458). This view is concurred by Mayrowetz (2008) when he claims that there is no strong link between the two main goals of the educational leadership of school improvement and leadership development and distributed leadership. Research undertaken by Wahlstrom and Louis' (2008) suggests that when teachers are involved in making decisions that affect them, they tend to strengthen their teaching practice. Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) add to the discussion surrounding the ways in which staff may be encouraged to participate through distributed leadership and the greater benefits therein. They argue that, " Distributed leadership creates pools amongst classroom teachers from which future higher-level leaders come" (p. 96). Through teachers sharing in leadership and participating in collective responsibility for student outcomes they are preparing also for promotion, which if in the same school supports sustainable leadership succession. Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) make the interesting point that distributed leadership does not necessarily mean that the majority always decides. There may be occasions due to time pressures or confidentiality when the principal makes decisions having the staffs' trust that it involves the best outcome for the school as a whole in relation to the school's agreed purpose.

Direct and indirect leadership

Direct educational leadership as defined by Cardno and Collett (2004) occurs when the leader focuses directly and practically on how the teacher teaches in the classroom and how this directly influences student learning. Indirect leadership in the educational setting occurs when the leadership role and responsibilities are shared through delegation or distribution. Robinson (2006) states that educational leadership is based in subject specific knowledge. Leaders who have such knowledge will show greater competency in leading instructional improvement. This is a substantial shift from the previously held stance that leaders in schools should be judged on their ability to manage the organisation in order that student learning would occur. Robinson's (2006) model supports an indirect form of instructional leadership where the outcome is achieved through others. This model of educational leadership comprises of three steps of: firstly, school leaders requiring the opportunity to increase and up-date their pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge; secondly, the need for professional preparation and development to support them in this new work; thirdly, the need for existing leadership practices to be adapted so that they are better aligned to the overall goal of instructional improvement rather than treating instructional leadership as an additional responsibility.

Weber's (1987) model, that also shows an indirect form of instructional leadership through its' consideration of systems and culture. Weber (1987) suggests six interrelated functions that an effective education leader performs. These are: setting school academic goals; maximising effects of instructional organisation; hiring, supervising, evaluating teachers; protecting instructional time and programmes; setting standards for achievement and setting the learning climate; monitoring achievement levels and evaluating programmes. Through his synthesis of the literature regarding educational leadership in the 1980's Weber concludes that principals are certainly expected to be instructional leaders.

Blase and Blase, (2000) use the terminology of instructional leadership. They consider to what extent school principals positively influence classroom teaching and what effect school principals' strategies, attitudes, behaviours and goals amongst other characteristics effect classroom instruction. The model of effective instructional leadership used by Blase and

Blase, (2000) consists of two major views that supports both Robinson's (2006) and Weber's (1987) research. It consists of two major views firstly, the need for educational leaders to talk with teachers to promote reflection and secondly, the need for leaders to promote professional growth amongst the staff.

Southworth's (2004) introduces the terminology of learning centred leadership rather than educational or instructional leadership in order to emphasise 'learning'. Southworth (2004) argues that this is a highly sophisticated form of educational leadership with its focus on the classroom. Southworth's (2004) cube model comprises of three dimensions and introduces the idea of leadership density wherein principals should aim to maintain a leader-follower ratio. The three dimensions are firstly school size; secondly, leadership effects – direct / indirect; thirdly, leadership patterns – distributed leadership, shared leadership, personal/individual leadership. This model argues that as a school's roll increases the number of leaders should grow proportionally. An integral part of the model is that as the number of leaders increases so too does the need for the principal to develop learning –centred leadership within the school.

The first major focus in the research findings of Blase and Blase (2000) is leaders talking with teachers to promote reflection. In practical terms Blase and Blase (2000) state that the way to realise this is through professional dialogue consisting of making suggestions; giving feedback; modelling; using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions and giving praise. The data collected in their study shows that the use of these strategies increased teachers' reflective behaviour and teachers reported a greater sense of motivation, self-esteem, energy, satisfaction and feelings of support. The feedback provided by principals following classroom observation was specific, provided praise and expressed care and interest. It responded to concerns about students and stressed the principal's availability for further discussion thus sustaining the process. Modelling is seen in this study as being a strong influence with teachers gaining professional growth through observing and reflecting on the principal's classroom practice. As well as the strategies mentioned principals contributed towards teachers' reflective behaviour through opportunities of professional development including making professional reading available, encouraging teachers to attend professional development courses and encouraging learning conversations amongst teachers.

The second major focus in the research of Blase and Blase (2000) is promoting professional growth. According to the study principals used six strategies to promote teachers' professional growth. These included emphasising the study of teaching and learning; supporting educators working collaboratively; developing coaching relationships among educators; encouraging and supporting redesign programmes; applying staff development to all phases of staff development; using action research to inform instructional decision making. Blase and Blase (2000) argue that their research found that the principals who were seen as effective instructional leaders by teachers were inclined towards frequently using a wide range of the strategies mentioned and that these strategies enhanced one another. The practical implications of their research Blase and Blase (2000) see as the need for principals and aspiring principals to receive training in how to develop professional dialogue and collegiality among educators. They argue that action-research, change and reflective practice should be at the base of this training. Similarly to Blase and Blase (2000) in his cube model Southworth (2004) focuses on the need for school leaders to facilitate teacher' professional learning through modelling classroom practice, teacher monitoring and professional dialogue with reflection of classroom processes and students' learning with pedagogy at the core of teaching and learning. These views concur with Robinson's (2006) educational leadership model that emphasises the need for training of school leaders as previously described with instructional leadership aligned to the overall goal of instructional improvement and improved student outcomes.

In the literature and the models examined the expectation from the government, the school community and the wider community is for the principal to maintain a learning focused environment in which all students will experience success in learning. The principal is expected to be an effective leader with vision, who will successfully foster strong professional relationships with the Board and school community. The expectation from the Boards of Trustees and the school wide community is that principals will show leadership that results in the effective day to day running of the school at an operational level. Principals are expected to manage areas of finance; personnel; property; health; safety systems. In addition the principal is expected to provide the Board with information and advice on school operation and student learning. Within and in addition to this diverse and complex workload it is apparent in the literature that there is a growing consensus that educational leadership and

practice needs a greater emphasis on the leadership of teaching and learning (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). In the past educational leaders were expected to provide an effective setting for learning in their schools through effective financial management and good organisation (Firestone & Riehl, 2005). Now leaders are expected to be accountable for student outcomes and achievement. Firestone and Riehl (2005) argue that this stronger focus on leadership of learning has come about through a greater public expectation regarding what students should know. Critical thinking and problem-solving have taken precedence over surface level regurgitation of facts. This is seen clearly in the newly introduced New Zealand curriculum to be fully implemented in 2010. Principals as effective leaders of learning are expected to have an in depth understanding of pedagogical strategies and curriculum content. This leads to the consideration of what the literature says are the expectations of the role of primary principal in New Zealand.

What is expected of primary principals as educational leaders in New Zealand?

There has been a significant shift in the focus on educational leadership over the last decade. The quote below encapsulates this new focus.

> The new focus on the leadership and improvement of teaching and learning sets a very ambitious agenda for school leaders and for those who prepare and develop them. The leadership goal is no longer to develop a vision, build a good school-community relationship, or manage the school or department efficiently. The new goal requires leaders to do all those things in a manner that improves teaching and learning. (Robinson, 2004, p. 40).

This view is supported by Robertson (2005) who asserts that educational leaders are leaders who focus on improving learning opportunities as their main purpose and that they strive to develop their own educational leadership ability and that of their learning community. This type of leader current literature suggests is needed in education today. The expectation and the need is for leaders who can be effective in a complex and ever – changing environment. Educational leaders are expected to continually search for more effective ways to facilitate learning; to have a strong set of values and beliefs that focus them on social justice; to model the types of practices that they consider important in the learning community and to lead by

example; to be prepared to make a difference and to believe that enhancing the learning opportunities of others is the core business of their work and that of others.

Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) refer to performance expectations surrounding the role of the principal as well as all other teaching staff. "The term performance expectations is used to describe a set of statements related to the job a person is employed to do." (p. 129). They further argue that the performance expectations form an annual, dynamic job description and would include the professional standards described earlier along with an annual performance agreement. Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) state that the job description provides a foundation for performance management and that in most New Zealand schools the professional standards are used as a generic job description, with specialised tasks added as appendices.

In the sample job description referred to earlier provided within Principal Performance Management documentation (Ministry of Education, 2008) a shift of emphasis is seen towards school leaders concentrating on the improving teaching and learning and improved student outcomes rather than focusing on a generic leadership role. The support of this shift of emphasis is seen in the limited literature regarding active educational leadership – the leading of teaching and learning - in the primary sector in New Zealand. Robinson (2006) researching the field of educational leadership in New Zealand states that the research is becoming more focused on the role that school leaders play in the leading of learning and improved student attainment. This is a shift away from the generic form of leadership espoused in the Picot Report (1988) in New Zealand. The Picot Report's recommendations followed a business model in which the expectation was for principals to be visionary leaders, but lacked considered emphasis on the educational content of the vision.

The principal's role in actively leading learning is seen in the models and reviewed. Robinson's (2006) model supports an indirect form of instructional leadership where the outcome is achieved through others. This takes the mediated form of leadership through providing, managing and enabling. Robinson (2006) argues for educational leadership that influences valued student outcomes and agrees with the six functions of Weber's (1987) model. Whilst not denying the importance of generic leadership Robinson (2006) states that

in moving away from generic leadership to educational leadership the emphasis for leaders is to meet the leadership goals of developing a vision, managing an organisation efficiently, and building strong school – community relationships in order to improve teaching and learning. The expectation faced by principals as seen in their Performance Management Programme is that they will show competence in educational theory and practice.

Within the context of educational leadership Robinson (2004) emphasises the shift away from leadership *style* to leadership *practice* and the need for researchers and educational leaders to focus on the educational practices that will improve the quality of teaching and learning. "The challenge now is for leadership researchers and practitioners to identify more of the leadership practices that support high-quality teaching and learning so that educational leadership can be more effective and more widely exercised." (Robinson, 2004 p. 42).

The New Zealand Ministry of Education's Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES) (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007) programme that began in 2004 was designed to support a more evidence based policy making process and to make relevant research findings accessible to practitioners (Robinson, 2007). Circulated to schools in New Zealand in September 2009 the BES involves significant research in the study of educational research. The leadership synthesis analyses national and international evidence on the impact of leadership on a wide range of student outcomes. In practical terms Robinson (2007) argues that the BES provides school leaders with a possible approach to effective instructional improvement. Robinson argues that it sets out the expectations of the knowledge and understanding that school leaders need in order to lead the improvement of teaching and learning, as well as identifying features of school culture that support those leading learning. Within the synthesis Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe (2008) discuss the findings regarding the impact of five identified leadership dimensions on student outcomes. They categorised the dimensions as:

- Establishing goals and expectations – including staff and others in process of goal setting for students, monitoring and assessing, setting standards and expectations
- Strategic resourcing – aligning resourcing to teaching goals. Recruiting staff with appropriate strengths and expertise

- Planning, co-ordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum – direct involvement of formative and summative assessment to teachers through regular classroom visits. Direct oversight of curriculum through school wide co-ordination across classrooms and year levels and alignment to school goals.

- Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development – the principal participating in formal or informal professional learning

- Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment – inside and outside classrooms. Protecting time for teaching and learning in an orderly and supportive environment that reduces external pressures and interruptions.

Robinson et al. (2008) discuss the statistical results that show that the leadership dimension 'Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development' has the greatest mean effect size against student outcomes at 0.84. This is significantly greater than the influence of the other dimensions with regard to student outcomes. This dimension is followed on an equal second by 'Establishing goals and expectations' and 'Planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum' with a mean effect size of 0.42. Fourth is the leadership dimension of ''Strategic resourcing' with a mean effect size of 0.31. The leadership dimension that was found to have the least impact on student outcomes was entitled 'Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment'.

The most significant dimension in relation to the effect on student outcomes of 'Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development' was described as such because more is involved than providing opportunities for staff development (Robinson, 2007). The leader joins in as the leader or learner or both. This may be in formal contexts, for example staff meetings, professional development or in informal contexts, for example discussions about specific teaching problems. Robinson (2007) suggests that possible reasons for this leading dimension being so powerful are firstly, that the leader's promotion of and participation in teacher professional development is an indicator on how much value they give professional learning and how much they are focused on teachers and teaching. Such a focus should result in improved student outcomes. Secondly, that possibly the principals that join in will have a greater understanding of what the staff has to do and so will be more able to provide support in making the changes required to embed their new teaching practice. In the 2009 publication

of the BES an additional three leadership dimensions were included (Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd, 2009). Described as leadership dimensions from indirect evidence they are categorised as: Creating educationally powerful connections; Engaging in constructive problem talk; Selecting, developing, and using smart tools.

In identifying what leadership practice has the most impact on student outcomes the BES, Robinson (2007) discusses the features identified within the Best Evidence Synthesis Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung (2007) that indicate the extent to which professional development is likely to improve student outcomes. In the context of professional development effective opportunities with respect to context were characterised by providing extended time and using it effectively; getting external experts; making sure that teachers were engaged in the learning; challenging problematic discourses especially around low expectations for students; providing opportunities to participate in a professional community that was focused on teaching – achievement relationship; ensuring opportunities were aligned with current policy and research; and involving school leaders who supported the learning by setting and monitoring targets and developing the leadership of others. The content of professional development associated with greater student impact were found to be integrating practice with theory; a clear emphasis on how teachers contribute to student learning and well-being; and the use of assessment to enhance teacher self-regulation.

Robinson (2007) discusses the features of the learning processes involved in more effective professional development as researched in the BES. Emphasis is placed on the importance of practitioners understanding precisely what is involved in effective professional development. Robinson (2007) suggests that when new learning challenged teachers' existing understandings, deep understanding was needed, so that a co-constructed alternative theory of practice could be developed. Of significance to principals as educational leaders is Robinson's (2007) statement that the facilitators of the professional development need to be highly skilled in facilitating teacher learning.

Stakeholders' perspectives of the expectations of the role of the primary principal

Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) consider the roles and tasks of the primary school principal in alignment with the expectations of the role as defined in Section 76 of the *Education Act*

(Government of New Zealand, 1989) that states that the principal is the Board of Trustees chief executive in relation to the management and control of the school. Within this section the principal is expected to comply with the Board's strategic policy and has complete autonomy to manage the day to day administration of the school. In accordance with The National Administration Guideline 1 (Ministry of Education, 1993) principals along with Boards of Trustees are expected to govern and manage schools effectively in the areas of curriculum, personnel, finance and property. Accordingly, Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) identify the two separate roles of the primary principal, the management role of controlling the operation of the profession and the leadership role of promoting development and change. The expectation from the Ministry of Education and so in turn from Boards of Trustees is that all primary principals in New Zealand will perform this dual role, whilst some may have a third dimension to their role, that of teaching. This may be through choice or necessity.

Since the introduction of self-managing schools in 1989 parents have been directly involved in schools as board members. This has brought a greater awareness of parents of how schools operate. As Bennett (1994) comments parents have expectations of what they want from a school. The expectation of parents as stakeholders is quantified in relation to contributing to principals' stress levels in Hodgen and Wylie's (2005) Report to the New Zealand Principals' Federation. Their research found that the stress caused by parental expectations varied significantly between principals, with overall 21 percent of principals reporting high or breaking- point levels. The highest percentage feeling pressured were those in decile 9 or 10 schools.

New Zealand principals understandings regarding expectations of the role of principals as educational leaders

Research in New Zealand surveying principals' views regarding active educational leadership is limited to the secondary setting in a study completed by Cardno and Collett (2004). Principals' understandings of the expectations of the role of leading learning are seen in Cardno and Collett's (2004) study. The principals surveyed gave examples of activities that they considered as showing direct educational leadership. These were observing teachers in the classroom; leading curriculum team meetings and curriculum development and sustaining

a close practical involvement with operational matters related to curriculum. Teaching on a regular basis was also given importance with regard to direct educational leadership. This is also seen in research carried out by Blase and Blase (2000) when principals modelled good practice in order to promote reflective questioning.

In the survey as part of Cardno and Collett's (2004) research principals gave examples of activities showing indirect educational leadership including, using effective management structure to delegate responsibility; holding regular meetings with middle managers responsible for curriculum; supporting professional development and appropriating a budget; keeping up to date with latest research in teaching and assessment. They saw their role as indirect educational leader as taking a broad overview of the curriculum. The appointing of excellent staff and influencing their development as curriculum leaders was seen as critical to effective leadership of learning and teaching. There is agreement here also with the research of Blase and Blase (2000) whose findings show that principals encourage teachers to attend courses for professional development and encourage reflective discussions with colleagues.

Cardno and Collett (2004) found that principals maintain that they see educational leadership as a high priority for school leaders and that they did consider curriculum leadership to be their primary role. Their research found that principals see educational leadership as being performed both directly through maintaining a close involvement in curriculum at an operational level by the means described above and also indirectly by distributing leadership to other levels of management. This view would seem to concur with the Ministry of Education's expectations of primary principals in New Zealand critiqued by Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) of the expectation of the dual aspects of operational and strategic planning within the principal's role. This leads to the possibility of an inherent problem related to the dual aspect of the principal's role particularly with the increased emphasis and expectation of the principal to primarily lead learning.

The literature reviewed has shown that the expectations of the role of principalship require the principal to be an effective leader with vision who successfully fosters strong professional relationships with the Board and school community. The expectation for the principal to maintain a learning focused environment has been considered along with the pedagogy of

creating a learning environment in which all students will experience success in learning. The expectation from the Boards of Trustees and the school wide community is that principals will show leadership that results in the effective day to day running of the school at an operational level. Principals are expected to manage areas of finance; personnel; property; health; safety systems. In addition the principal is expected to provide the Board with information and advice on school operation and student learning. The central facet for all of these aspects and an emphasis and expectation that has increased in educational research this decade is of the principal's role to enhance students' learning. The vastness of the principal's role leads to a consideration of the challenges that the principal faces in achieving a focus on leading learning.

Challenges surrounding the expectation of the principal's role as an educational leader

Seldom does an organisation have only one leader to whom its members turn for inspiration and direction (Gronn, 2003). Gronn suggests that schools are a good example of an organisation that operates through distributed leadership – through for example, curriculum leaders or the senior management team. Despite the practise of distributed leadership the principal is seen as responsible for every aspect of the operational running of the school in a self-managed system. This is a key issue in the challenge for principals in leading learning. The principal is expected to be 'all things to everyone'. The challenge that this brings to the role of principalship is agreed in the literature (Bottery. 2004; Brooking et al. 2003; Cardno & Collett, 2004; Williams, 2003). Brooking et al. (2003) comment on the changing role of principalship in New Zealand since 1989 and the introduction of self-management. Bennett (1994) argues that this presents a frustration to principals when time given to administrative tasks lessens their time have an impact on teaching and learning. The commonly held view in the literature is that self-management has brought a greater workload (Bennett, 1994; Cardno & Collett, 2004; Fullan, 2008; Hodgen & Wylie, 2005). Brooking et al. (2003) state that such are the challenges of the role that there is an accepted crisis in New Zealand of preparation, recruitment, professional development and retention of principals. Factors contributing to this crisis they suggest include, the principal's work relating more to management and administration than to leading of learning; an increase in workload, due to self-management especially for teaching principals; principal turnover being higher for teaching principals than

for non-teaching principals; principalship not being seen as an appealing career move; many first-time principals leaving the job because of a perceived low level of support.

It may be suggested that the challenges for principals are intensified with the emphasis on the expectation that they will lead teaching and learning. It is a challenge that the research completed by Cardno and Collett (2004) in New Zealand secondary schools suggests is very apparent. They found that principals maintain that they see educational leadership as a high priority for school leaders and that they did consider curriculum leadership to be their primary role. However, Cardno and Collett's (2004) research findings discuss that "… it was evident that it was a challenge to maintain a clear focus on this professional role while at the same time carrying out the functions of a chief executive officer."(p.24). This picture is reinforced through Hodgen and Wylie's (2005) research findings that state that fifty – nine percent of the principals involved in their study described the impact on them of the lack of time to focus on teaching and learning as high. Hodgen and Wylie's (2005) state:

> We have seen that the principals are largely working excessive hours, the majority see that a major part of their work is management, only a fifth see a chance to get on top of their work, a majority experience high stress levels from their inability to focus on teaching and learning, and a third because of the multi – tasking nature of the job. (Hodgen and Wylie, 2005, p. 29).

The challenge to lead learning is presented to principals (Robinson, 2007; Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd, 2009) from the research results of the Best Evidence Synthesis. Within the initial five dimensions from direct evidence discussed by Robinson (2007) the aspects of leadership that most positively influence student attainment and those that were found to have less effect were shown. The findings showed that the dimension involving the principal promoting and participating in teacher learning and development as having the most impact on student outcomes. The aspects of leadership that were shown to have the least influence were goal setting; strategic resourcing; ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. The aspects that had moderate influence were planning, co-ordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. The core of these findings that the closer the leaders are to teaching and learning the more they are likely to make a difference to student attainment presents a challenge to

principals. An additional document that forms part of the Best Evidence Synthesis that arrived in New Zealand schools towards the end of 2009 (Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd, 2009) includes a further three leadership dimensions that are categorised as dimensions from indirect evidence. As Hodgen and Wylie (2005) conclude in their study of principals in New Zealand workload and role emerge from the data as key sources of stress for principals. Hodgen and Wylie support the view that there is a tension between educational leadership and management and the administrational aspect of self-managing schools that presents a challenge to the principal as a leader of learning. A challenge lies in finding strategies to allow for their maximum involvement in promoting and participating in teacher learning and development whilst being realistic about the workload demanded of principals.

The challenge to principals would seem to be heightened by the issue of accountability. (Bennett ,1994; Odhiambo, 2007; Wiseman, 2005). In the New Zealand context Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) state: "The principal is accountable to the Board of Trustees as the chief executive of the board, and is responsible for the professional leadership of the school" (p. 85). The school community and the wider community see the principal as accountable for student performance and attainment. Through research in Australia, Odhiambo (2007) views that many school principals are spending considerable time on managerial responsibilities and addressing accountability requirements. This is not to suggest that these tasks are unimportant but the issue is again raised about time to complete these tasks taking time away from the principal leading learning. An issue and challenge suggested by Southworth (1995) faced by principals is that they are encouraged to distribute leadership yet the expectation from the government, board and community is that they are accountable for all school outcomes.

The debate regarding challenges faced by principals in leading learning is broadened by Duignan and Collins (2003) as they present the ethical dilemma within the principal's leadership role. Duignan and Collins (2003) agree with the commonly held view that the principal's view is complex and multi-dimensional. They suggest that the most difficult challenges facing principals would be tensions that are people centred and involve differing values. They focus upon the relational aspect of the role. Relational trust and building relationships is a predominant theme running through the literature about the leadership of learning. (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Robinson, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Its

significance to learning is expressed by Coles and Southworth (2005) when they argue: "Learning communities are characterised by high levels of relational trust" (p. 163). Robinson (2007) states that the determinants for relational trust are interpersonal respect; personal regard for others; role competence; personal integrity. The leader's ability to problem solve, to set standards and to persist for results Tschannen-Moran found to be teachers' expectations of a trustworthy principal. Bryk and Schneider's (2002) study of Chicago elementary schools found that principal respect and personal regard for teachers, competence in core role responsibilities, and personal integrity are associated with relational trust among all adult members of the school community.

Their findings show a strong statistical link between improvements in relational trust and student outcomes. To build relational trust principals need to actively foster professional relationships with and between colleagues and also across the school community, including Board of Trustee members and parents. This is seen as an expectation within the performance management system for primary principals in New Zealand, as previously mentioned. The challenge for the principal is to build relational trust across the school community with building of healthy relationships being a central issue to school improvement (Odhiambo, 2007).

The challenge to those agencies who's responsibility it is to support principals in their role is recognised by Hodgen and Wylie (2005), in the following statement:

> The challenge is now to see if we can find some creative ways to provide more balance in the role of the principal, and to find ways to create common ground between the needs of individual schools and the government agencies that fund, support, and review them. (Hodgen and Wylie, 2005, p. 65).

This leads to an examination of the ways in which according to literature principals may be supported in meeting the challenge of leading learning.

The development of and support for principals in leading learning

With the increased focus on leadership and management development and the focus on improving schools and student attainment has come the inclusion of the development of educational leaders. (Cardno, 2005). Essentially, how can student attainment be improved unless educational leadership is improved? Leadership as an activity is reflective (Southworth, 1995). Reflection and critical thinking are common themes in the literature and models surrounding the development and support of principals. Increasingly in the literature (Duignan & Collins, 2003; Southworth, 1995) and in government backed initiatives such as the Kiwi Leadership For Principals model (Ministry of Education, 2008) educational leadership is seen as being concerned with ethics and morals as well as technical matters. In New Zealand our society is becoming increasingly demographically diverse. Principals it may be argued, will need to have the kinds of educational leadership skills that enable them to reflect critically helping them to maintain the optimum conditions for teaching and learning and to build community confidence in the school. Southworth (1995) suggests that the development of principals needs to focus on reflection and educative enterprise with a moral component. This view is developed further by Duignan and Collins (2003) when they suggest a formation programme that should develop principals to be emotionally mature and able to facilitate others in mutually beneficial relationships; to be capable of understanding complex value related issues; to be intuitive and spiritually mature; to be culturally sensitive and able to respond with empathy to different individuals and groups especially within their school community. All of these areas are in addition to the other aspects that Duignan and Collins (2003) include in their suggested programme of formation. These aspects relate to the importance of principals having a disciplined mind; to be knowledgable; to show rigour and competence in skills of leadership and management.

In the New Zealand setting the publication *Principal and Teacher Performance Management* (Ministry of Education, 2008) states: "We believe that the principal is the single most important factor that impacts on the performance of the school. Therefore it is obvious that the appraisal of the principal is an important function of the board." Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) state that the Board needs to be aware of its responsibility to support the principal to effectively lead and manage the school. The purposes of the principal's appraisal

process are as the ascribed processes for teachers, accountability and professional development. The principal's appraisal has the added dimension of their management role. However, for the purposes of this study consideration is limited to the ways in which principals may be supported to lead learning and the part that the appraisal process may play in this.

The Integrated Appraisal Process Model

The Integrated Appraisal Process Model is suggested by Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005). This cyclical model aims to address professional development along with accountability through an integrated approach and may be applied across the teaching staff though in this instance the principal is used as the focus. The appraisal cycle devised by Piggot- Irvine and Cardno has the three main components of the appraisal meeting; development and monitoring activities; the appraisal interview. At the appraisal meeting the intention is for the principal and appraiser to plan for the propose development and to identify the developmental mentor. This is the person whom they consider to be the most appropriate person to assist with the development. In creating the plan for areas of development the principal may be supported to identify a problem and then further supported to address the problem thorugh the ensuing action plan. The associated support such as time or material resources our also identified in this first step of the cycle. This meeting is followed by the principal implementing the action plan with the on-going monitoring of performance by the mentor. This may include for non-teaching principals documentary evidence and self evaluations but also teaching observations for teaching principals. The final step of the appraisal model, the appraisal interview, the principal and appraiser discuss the results of the monitoring and development cycle. The interview Piggot – Irvine and Cardno emphasise as being the most crucial part of the cycle with careful preparation of materials and the need for both the principal and appraiser being skilled in interview for the process to be most effective.

In addition in order to maximise the effectiveness of the appraisal process Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) accentuate the need for a detailed set of performance expectations describing the job that the person is expected to do. This description they argue should include professional standards and an annual performance agreement that focuses on change

initiatives or development objectives. This links and relates to the expectations surrounding the role of principalship discussed earlier in the chapter.

Coaching leadership

A coaching leadership model that is based on empirical research with leaders across a range of educational settings and sectors is presented by Robertson (2005). Developed from the premise that self-management required new approaches to the leadership of learning Robertson (2005) justifies the coaching leadership model as supporting the principles of lifelong learning, capacity building and continual improvement. Robertson argues that coaching is a dynamic process that develops uniquely to meet the changing needs of educational leaders. Within this model the coach, similarly to the mentor in the previous model described, is the facilitator of the process. The coach does not comment on the rights or wrongs of an action unless invited. Also the same as in the mentoring approach suggested as a way to complete appraisal, the coached person takes responsibility for his or her learning. The coached person sets the agenda and goals and so feels ownership of the process whilst the coach assists them to reflect critically on their leadership practice. Agreement with the mentoring model is also apparent through the recognition of the need for those involved to have strong interpersonal and communication skills and for the coach to have the required coaching skills. The model for coaching leadership also agrees with the sustaining element inherent in the cyclical model for appraisal with educational change, innovation and improvement developing and sustaining over time.

First Time Principals Programme

Becoming a principal for the first time can be argued to be a considerable step-change in a school leader's career (Paterson & West- Burnham, 2005). The literature reviewed has shown the challenge inherent in the demands and expectations of the role. The main objective of the First Time Principals Programme is to develop educational leadership. It aims to give first time principals though self assessment the means and opportunity to reflect on their own capabilities and those that are required to become effective leaders of learning. As described by Robinson et al., (2008), a mentor worked alongside each first time principal to develop a Professional Learning Plan (PLP). This plan comprised of three to five SMART (Specific,

Measured, Achievable, Relevant, Timed) developmental goals. These goals linked to a self – evaluation tool on which the programme is based. The purpose of the tool is to assess principals' self assessed capability as leaders of learning, and is called the Self Assessment of Leadership of Teaching and Learning (SALTAL). The focus of SALTAL is on educational leadership in line with the main objective of the First Time Principals Programme. Within this objective SALTAL serves several purposes. These include providing clear benchmarks to new principals regarding recognised good practice in leading learning; providing new principals with opportunities for systematic reflection through self-assessment and discussion with mentors; providing information to the project development team of the cohort. Finally, the information was reported back to the Ministry of Education, informing policy makers of the support that principals require in the leading of learning. As Southworth (2005) comments leadership development involves a considerable amount of public money and practitioner time and energy. The reward is for principals to make a positive difference to students by effectively leading learning.

In summary, educational leadership focuses on the role that the principal plays to improve teaching and learning. Through the literature reviewed the picture emerges of the role of principalship as being challenging and complex. Authors have raised the alarm concerning problems of recruitment and retainment. There is agreement that the central role of the principal is to lead learning and that the principal is ultimately accountable for the improvement of student outcomes in the school. However there is also agreed recognition that the principal's role carries a considerable and diverse workload. There is a dilemma surrounding how the principal meets the requirements of being the chief executive officer of the school and also gives priority to leading learning. The literature and present political climate supports distributed leadership as a means for the principal to attempt to meet the challenge of leading learning in ever-changing learning communities. The models and programmes to support those in principalship focused on the need for principals to be helped to develop skills of reflection, self-assessment and critical thinking to lead learning communities into the schools of tomorrow.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

The central aim of this study is to examine what is expected of primary school principals as leaders of learning and to research why primary principals are challenged with the expectation that they lead learning. As has been shown in the previous chapter the role of the principal as educational leader is complex, thus the study also seeks to explore how principals could be supported to overcome the challenges inherent in the expectation that they effectively lead learning.

This chapter describes the qualitative methodological approach to research and justifies this approach for this study that is concerned with research in educational leadership. The employed research methods of documentary analysis and semi-structured individual interviews that sit within a qualitative research paradigm are described and their choice for this study is justified.

Research methodology

Methodology is critical in that it provides a rationale for the ways in which researchers carry out research activities (Morrison, 2002). The methodology rationale provides the reason for the researcher choosing a particular method or tool of research to gather information for a particular research study. For example the underlying reason for completing individual interviews or for gathering documents for documentary analysis.

In making sense of research information and presenting it as data, researchers draw either implicitly or explicitly upon a set of beliefs or a paradigm about how research analysis may be patterned, reasoned and compiled (Morrison, 2002). "The term paradigms is used in social science to describe an entire way of looking at the world." (Davidson & Tolich, 1999, p. 26). Two classical paradigms generally shape educational research. The positivist, scientific, quantitatively oriented approach and that of the post-positivist interpretive, qualitatively oriented approach. (Bryman, 2004a; Davidson & Tolich, 1999). There is a lack of agreement

as to whether these paradigms are completely distinct from each other or whether they lie on a continuum leading to a mixed methods approach to research in which the research tools of the quantitative and qualitative methods may compliment one another (Bryman, 2004a: Creswell, 2002; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Bouma (1998), suggests that the critical point is for the researcher to choose which approach is most appropriate for the questions asked.

A qualitative research approach

The choice of which research approach to use is based on the research problem, personal experiences, and the intended audience (Creswell, 2002). A qualitative approach was chosen for this study because this approach to research seeks to provide answers to such questions as 'what is going on here?' and places emphasis through textual analysis on words rather than numbers. The epistemological position of qualitative methods offers the opportunities to ask questions to prompt in-depth answers regarding peoples' actions, feelings and experiences. This research approach interprets how people create and maintain their social worlds and through the direct study of people in natural settings the interpretive approach systematically analyses socially meaningful actions.

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) offer a generic definition of qualitative research as the study of things in their natural setting. Involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world, qualitative research attempts to make sense of things in terms of the meanings people bring to those phenonema. The goal of the qualitative researcher is to show the complexities of the focus of the study in sufficient depth and detail so that a reader who has not experienced it will understand it (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002). Qualitative research focuses on reflecting the quality of something. Depth within a qualitative study comes about through the researcher asking how an individual involved in a certain event felt rather than limiting the research to how many times the event may have occurred (Davidson and Tolich, 1999). Morrison (2002) describes what she considers to be the key features of qualitative research, beginning with strategies that take the subject's perspective and aiming to investigate the chosen topic from the inside.

This may present a challenge to the qualitative researcher who is endeavouring to deeply understand the participants perspectives but does not have the time for a lengthy study

involving numerous observations or more than one interview. Nonetheless the aim is to achieve an empathetic understanding. The next key feature described is that the qualitative researcher uses description with richness and depth. Additionally, that qualitative research gives detailed consideration to the holistic picture that sets the context of the research. Morrison proceeds to draw attention to the emphasis that qualitative research, being interpretive in nature, places emphasis on words rather than on numbers. The qualitative researcher uses words to compare, contrast, analyse, and interpret data to find patterns and meaning. Regarding the chosen design of the research, Morrison (2002) argues that it may be tightly structured or loose and emergent. The research design chosen for this study was emergent through the choice of gathering data through documentary analysis and semi-structured individual interviews. This allowed for in-depth answers from the participating principals regarding their experiences as educational leaders that could then be analysed against the relevant documents, allowing for themes to emerge.

Using a qualitative approach the researcher seeks to learn from the participants in the study with the views of the participants being of primary importance. (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Creswell, 2002). In a qualitative study the aims and questions are flexible and emerging, using description to develop themes. The researcher asks open-ended questions so that the participants can express their views, with themes then being developed from the data. A qualitative study is exploratory and understanding oriented and flexible, allowing for the replies and views of the participants to influence the course of the interviews. Characteristically a small number of participants are used to conduct a qualitative study that has the capacity to explore a topic in depth.

Qualitative research in educational leadership

In considering leadership research Antonakis, Schriessheim, Donovan, Gopalakrishna–Pillai, Pellegrini & Rossomme (2004) state that qualitative approaches are beneficial in order to gain a better understanding of complex issues. The suitability of using qualitative research to study complex topics is agreed by Conger (1998). Conger (1998) argues that qualitative research must play an important part in researching leadership because of the complexity of leadership. Conger (1998) states that " leadership involves multiple levels of phenomena, possesses

dynamic character, and has a symbolic component" (Conger, 1998, p. 109). Conger (1998) argues that qualitative research is able to draw effective links across multiple levels, such as behavioural, interpersonal, organisational and environmental levels in order to explain leadership events and outcomes. Thus, a qualitative approach is able to address the richness of the issues that run through leadership research and assists in the understanding of the deeper structures of leadership phenomena. Bryman (2004b) in reviewing a large number of articles deriving from qualitative research on leadership shows that qualitative research has made important contributions to certain areas of leadership, such as the role of leaders in the change process. Bryman (2004b) comments that through qualitative approaches to research surrounding educational leadership a deep sense of the real experiences of leaders are given to the reader. He states:

> The many studies of educational leadership (and other public service leaders) express well the difficulties teachers and principals face in seeking to confront multiple constituencies amid tight budgetary constraints and the leadership strategies they employ to deal with barriers. (Bryman, 2004b, p. 763)

This research study revealed the realities of the vastness of the expectations of the principal's role along with the dilemma and challenges surrounding the duality of that role. The duality arises from the expectation that the principal will focus on leading learning and will also be the school's General Manager ensuring the smooth daily operational running of the school. The need for principals to receive support through on-going professional development was also revealed in order to update their own pedagogical knowledge and provide them with the skills to most effectively lead learning.

The choice of a qualitative research approach for this study

The choice of this research approach for this study is justified in that it was exploratory and understanding oriented and was suited to a focus on the participants' beliefs about the expectations of principals leading learning and the principals' experiences of the challenges that they face as a result of this expectation. The eight primary school principals who participated in the research were asked open–ended research questions that allowed them to give detailed answers. The aims and questions related to a study that was flexible and

emerging with the views of the participants being central to the research. By using the qualitative approach the intention was to achieve findings with depth and quality. The holistic characteristic of qualitative research was beneficial in attaining the emerging picture of what strategies primary school principals use in leading teaching and learning with its assumption that human behaviour is context bound. The intention was to achieve a rigorous piece of research through choosing to use a qualitative approach to research the problem.

Research methods

Research methods can be defined as the tools, instruments, techniques, procedures or approaches used by the researcher to collect data that is then used for interpretation, explanation and prediction (Cohen et al. 2007; Creswell, 2002). In examining why principals are challenged with the expectation that they lead learning, two qualitative research methods were used. The decision as to which methods for gathering data were to be used followed from the earlier decision regarding the choice of research methodology to be employed. The methods used depend on the theory involved, the questions to be asked, and the amount of time and money available (Davidson and Tolich, 1999). However, for this study fiscal considerations did not contribute to the choice of research methods. Cohen et al., (2007), refer to the match of research methods to the purpose of the research as 'fitness for purpose'. For the purpose of the study eight medium-sized primary schools in one area of Auckland were researched. The research sample was carefully considered. As Cohen et al. advice, "The quality of a piece of research stands or falls not only by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy." (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 100). Sampling decisions need to be made in the early stages of planning research. In qualitative research samples are not randomnly selected but rather are selected from 'essential and typical' units (Davidson & Tolich, 1999). For the purposes of this study primary principals of a certain size bracket of schools were targeted. The reason for selecting schools within a certain size range was to reduce the number of likely variables influencing the challenges faced by principals. Schools within one area of the city were chosen for the greater convenience of completing the research and greater economy of time resource. In the first instance twenty primary school principals were invited to participate (via e-mail 'fliers') in

individual interviews as part of the data gathering aspect of the study. Eight principals replied positively thus the required number to undertake the research was met.

The initial method used was documentary analysis that provided documentary information that related to the chosen topic. The second research tool of individual interviewing was conducted with the first eight principals who replied to the request to participate in the research. Intrinsic to the qualitative approach of the study is the need to research the topic in depth and to draw out rich findings. Individually interviewing eight participants allowed for a large enough group to make significant and valid findings within the available time frame. However, it was not so large that it became unworkable for the researcher to draw worthwhile and in-depth conclusions. The research was characteristic of a qualitative study in that a small number of participants were used to explore a topic in depth (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Creswell, 2002).

Documentary research

For the purposes of this study the initial method of research was documentary analysis. "Documentary analysis is a form of qualitative analysis that requires readers to locate, interpret, analyse and draw conclusions about the evidence presented" (Fitzgerald, 2007, p.279). While Cortazzi (2002) states, "Documentary analysis has a long tradition in research" (p. 196). Wellington (2000) comments that the amount of literature available describing documentary analysis as a tool for gathering research data is limited. Wellington (2000) succinctly defines documentary research as a means of research using secondary sources as opposed to using primary sources such as interviews or case studies. 'Documents' for educational research may be paper, electronic visual or aural sources. These may include government papers; policy documents; curriculum documents; as the main focus of educational research (Wellington 2000). Text can be seen as evidence of past and present practices and future plans. Documentary research can be used as a main focus for educational research or as an adjunct (Wellington, 2000).

For the purposes of this study documents that related to the New Zealand education system were analysed as a means to provide a frame of reference and scaffold the main research method of individual interviews. The documents that were analysed were the National

Education Guidelines and The National Administration Guidelines; The Professional Standards for Primary Principals; The Kiwi Leadership for Principals model; The Professional Standards for Primary Principals; examples of job descriptions of principals participating in the interviews; Process Indicators used by the Education Review Office. Analysis of this documentation allowed the researcher to fully understand the history and development of the expectations surrounding the role of primary school principalship. This method was chosen because it provided data that established an expectation platform for the research surrounding why primary principals are challenged with the expectation that they lead learning.

In conducting documentary analysis Fitzgerald (2007) alerts the researcher to key aspects that help in attaining reliable data through documentary research. Firstly, who wrote the document and when was it written. Also what was happening politically, socially or economically at the time that the document was released. This may provide a prompt as to what may have influenced the writer and the contents. Through analysis of the document the researcher should consider the intended audience and whether it has a particular agenda.

Wellington (2000) suggests eight areas for interpretation and analysis in which questions may be asked as a checklist when analysing documents. However, Wellington (2000) comments that not all of these questions need necessarily be asked when analysing every document. The possible questions suggested by Wellington surround:

- Authorship: What is the source of the document? Who wrote it? What is their bias?

- Audience: Who was it written for?

- Production: When and where was it produced and by whom? What were the social, political and cultural conditions in which it was produced?

- Presentation: What 'image' does it portray?

- Intentions: What was the purpose of the document?

- Writing style: What is the writing genre?

- Content: What values are conveyed? What sort of language is used? What is not included?

- Context / frame of reference: When was it written? How does it relate to documents that came before or after it?

The advantages and disadvantages of documentary research

Following reflection of the literature by Wellington (2000) and Fitzgerald (2007) surrounding documentary analysis the advantages of this research method for the chosen research topic were considered to be that the documents chosen provided a frame of reference for the expectations of the role of primary principals as leaders of learning. Consideration could be given as to the way in which each of the documents did or did not relate to the others in this regard. The documents provided a good source of data and could be researched both cost-effectively and with efficient use of time. Additionally, the documents used were publicly and easily accessible with the exception of some sections of the principals' job descriptions that were provided on request from two of the participating principals.

However in using documentary analysis limitations were appreciated. Wellington (2000) comments that in applying this range of questions the researcher brings his or her own epistemological background to the analysis of the documents. Additionally the documents themselves may be subjective. The researcher needed to be aware that documents may have been created with a particular agenda to present a particular point of view requiring the researcher to 'read between the lines'(Fitzgerald, 2007). This view is supported by Wellington (2000) who emphasises that there is no single meaning to be sought in documentary analysis. Documents have multiple meanings and the key activity is one of interpretation.

Individual interviews

The second chosen method of researching the expectations and challenges faced by principals in relation to leading learning was individual interviews. Seidman (1998) states that the basis of in-depth interviewing lies in an interest in understanding the experiences of other people and the meaning that they make from that experience. This relational aspect of interviewing is

evident in the writing of Fontana and Frey (2005). "Increasingly, qualitative researchers are realising that interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but rather active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results" (Fontana and Frey, 2005, p. 698). Interviewing provides a method of enquiry for the educational researcher to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience. Seidman (1998) argues that interviewing provides a powerful way to gain insight into educational issues through understanding the experiences of those whose lives are deeply involved in education.

The contemporary view is that the focus of interviewing leads to the exploring and understanding of the hows rather than the whats in peoples' experiences. The hows being the context, people involved, particular situation in which interview interactions occur. The what being the substantive findings of the interview. Fontana and Fey (2005), emphasise the changing nature of interviewing where it is no longer seen as a neutral tool, which they argue it could never be. It is not an objective process, but rather one in which the interviewer and interviewee are influenced by their own world view and experiences. Fontana and Frey (2005) see the interview as a means for the interviewer and interviewee to work together to build greater knowledge regarding a particular aspect or aspects of their life experience.

In qualitative studies such as the one proposed the interview is increasingly seen as a discourse between the interviewer and interviewee, and is constructed jointly by the interviewer and the interviewee. "Interviewers are increasingly seen as active participants in an interaction with respondents, and interviews are seen as negotiated accomplishments of both interviewers and respondents that are shaped by the contexts and situations in which they take place" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 716).

Interviewing may take various forms, including face-to-face group interviews and telephone surveys. For the purpose of this study the most common form of interviews that of individual face-to-face interviews were conducted. Creswell (2002) argues that one–on-one interviews are ideal for participants who speak confidently and articulately and who are comfortable to share ideas. This appeared to be good match with the intended target group of primary principals. Therefore following the analysis of the documentary research individual face-to-

face interviews were conducted with the first eight principals approached who agree to participate in the study. Open-ended questions provided a guide to the interview that followed a semi-structured format that is compatible with a qualitative interview. As Bryman states "The qualitative interview tends to move away from a pre-structured, standardised form towards an open-ended or semi structured arrangement, which enables respondents to project their own ways of defining the world" (2004a, p. 182). The semi-structured interview comprises of a series of questions that serve as an interview guide that may be asked in a different sequence. It sits between the unstructured approach to interviewing that is conversational in type, wherein the questions arise from the situation and the structured interview, designed for the specific purpose of getting certain information from the participants. (Ary et al., 2006). Through the semi-structured approach the intention is to provide a framework with flexibility so that the participants can relate their own experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The questions tend to be general in their frame of reference allowing for points of interest that may emerge to be followed through in the conversation.

The advantages and disadvantages of interviewing

Interviewing is a powerful way to gain knowledge of educational issues through understanding the experiences of those working in the field of education. It affirms the importance of the individual whilst also appreciating the importance of the possibility of community and collaboration (Seidman, 1998). Interviews provide in-depth data that include insight on the participants' perspectives on the topic being researched, contextual information about the site, and possibly information on anticipated problem areas or issues. The researcher is able to immediately follow up on a given answer and to gain clarification on a participant's response (Ary et al., 2006).   Specifically, semi-structured interviewing as used for the research in this study, offers the scaffolding for the interviewer to ask the participants to reflect on the processes leading up to or following an event (Bryman, 2004). This approach was chosen for this study since the interview guide was devised to serve as a base for the conversation while the semi-structured aspect allowed the how aspects of the discussion to emerge. It provided a suitable means to meet the objective of exploring and to understanding the context in which each of the principals was expected to meet the challenges of their roles

and their experiences. The questions were based on the significant expectations placed on primary principals as seen through analysis of the documentary research. The purpose of each individual interview was to gather rich data regarding the principals' perceptions of what their role as principal involves. Also what they perceive as the challenges facing them as a result of the expectation from the Ministry of Education; the Board; the school community and themselves that they lead learning

A disadvantage of the interview as a method of gathering data is that interviewees may not always be willing to share information or indeed may provide false information. It may also be seen as a disadvantage that the whole process of interviewing requires time to complete. "The researcher has to conceptualise the project, establish access and make contact with participants, interview them, transcribe the data, and then work with the material and share what he or she has learned." (Seidman, 1998, p. 6). Additionally, the researcher needs to exert tact in asking the questions and skill in realising when to probe further to engender the deepest answers. Careful listening is crucial to achieving a successful interview (Ary et al., 2006).

Data Analysis

Documents

To implement the first research method of documentary analysis for this study documents relating to the expectations of primary principals in New Zealand were located, interpreted and analysed. The research method of documentary analysis provided the contextual background to the topic to be explored and formed the basis of the semi-structured interviews that served as the second method of research. Information was gathered and analysed from a range of sources that held relevance to the expectation of principals leading learning. These were:

- The National Education Guidelines defined by Sections 60A of the Education Act 1989 – specifically The National Administrative Guidelines, NAG 1 and NAG 2;

- The Kiwi Leadership for Principals model (2008);

- The Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008) that form part of Principal and Teacher Performance Management;

- Job descriptions of two of the principals interviewed that showed additional delegated tasks to those shown in the Professional Standards for Primary Principals;

- Evaluation Indicators for Education Reviews in Schools – specifically the Professional leadership Indicator.

In working through the process of locating, interpreting and analysing data and drawing conclusions to complete the documentary analysis, the researcher used some of the eight areas of question devised by Wellington's (2000) as a guide, choosing those suited to gain required information from the documents researched. The documents were pre-selected on the basis of whether or not they included the terminology used to define leading learning of professional leadership, educational leadership, curriculum leadership, pedagogical leadership. Also whether or not they included the terms strategic planning, distribution of leadership, evaluating and developing staff, implying a focus on leadership. References to the dual task for the principal of leading learning and managing the school were also selected for consideration. The documentary data was examined under the headings of (1) source of the document; (2) audience – for example the Board of Trustees or Principal; (3) relevant text to expectations for principals leading learning; (4) analysis – an interpretation of what each document is saying to the intended audience. This involved considering the clarity of the message of each of the documents. Following the documentary analysis, the document Professional Standards for Primary Principals was selected to form the basis of the second research tool to be used, that of individual interviews. This line of research was followed with the rationale that the Professional Standards for Primary Principals form the basis of New Zealand principals' job descriptions (Piggot-Irvine & Cardno, 2005) and therefore hold the expectations of the role.

Interviews

Bryman (2004a) states "Qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities" (p. 459). Typically in

qualitative research, data analysis begins during the data collection process (Bryman, 2004a). The practical reason for this is the amount of data that is collected through the qualitative research process. It is easier to steadily sort which data is significant for future focus. The qualitative researcher needs to be aware that texts gathered are multi-layered and are open to different interpretations. It was important while analysing the data from the individual interviews not to fragment the answers by over interpreting. It was necessary to keep the context of individuals' comments in order to retain the flow and meaning.

The data for this research was organised by grouping the answers for each interview question from the individual interviews. This allowed for patterns, relationships, comparisons and qualifications across data types to be investigated clearly and thoroughly (Bryman, 2004a). Analysing by research question allowed all of the relevant data that was of concern to the researcher to be drawn together. Through cross- checking data findings from the documentary research, and the findings of the individual interviews common themes and differing themes were sought. These themes were in regard to what the documentary research suggested were the expectations of the role of primary principalship and what the interviewed principals saw as the expectations and why they were challenged by these. Who sets the challenges was also addressed and a comparison was drawn between the documentary evidence of how principals could be supported to overcome the challenges and the principals' view on this aspect of the research.

Reliability, validity and triangulation

The meanings of the terms reliability, validity and triangulation vary according to the view of the researcher. Whilst the terms 'reliability' and 'validity' may almost seem to be synonymous they may be defined differently in relation to the evaluation of measures of concepts. Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept and differs from validity that refers to whether the gauge used to measure a concept really does do this (Bryman. 2004a).

Davidson and Tolich (1999) comment, "Achieving either one or the other of reliability or validity does not automatically guarantee the other; measures can be reliable but not valid" (Davidson & Tolich, 1999, p. 33). The researcher needs to be aware of this when considering

whether research undertaken will stand up to outside scrutiny and whether it will be seen as credible.

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept. In qualitative research reliability relates to consistency of methods over time and the qualitative researcher treating all groups the same when gathering data. It concerns the fit between what the researcher records as data and what actually happens in the natural setting (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Whilst it is debated whether total reliability is possible in qualitative research (Wellington, 2000) in my research study in order to attempt to maximize reliability the sampling process was planned and systematic and all of the individual interviews were guided by an interview schedule.

Validity refers to whether the gauge used to measure a concept really does do this (Bryman, 2004a; Bush, 2002). Validity is used to ascertain whether the research accurately describes the phenomenon that it is intended to describe. The methodology of a piece of research, the methods used and the conclusions drawn all need to show validity (Bush, 2002). During this study validity rather than reliability was ensured and strengthened by triangulation of the two research methods of documentary analysis and individual interviews.

With regard to validity and documentary analysis, Wellington (2000), comments that essentially an eternal problem is presented regarding internal validity in research since we only know reality by observing it or by measuring it. He asks how do we know that our measurement or observation is reality? However, he argues that within documentary analysis and specifically with regard to publicly accessible documents, such as those researched in this study, validity is realised. Essentially the majority of documents for this study, with the exception of two principals' job descriptions, are the fundamental reference documents regarding the expectations of principals as leaders of learning in New Zealand.

To strengthen validity in the interview process the qualitative researcher needs to be aware of bias. Cohen et al., (2007) suggest that the sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondent and the substantive content of the questions. Such bias, Bush (2002) suggests is endemic particularly in semi-structured interviews as

employed in this study, as well as in unstructured interviews. As the interviewer I approached the interviews for this study with an awareness of the sources of bias stated by Cohen et al., (2007). These comprise of: the attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer and the possible tendency of the interviewer to view the respondent in her own image; the possibility of the interviewer to look for questions that support her own preconceived ideas; the interviewer misunderstanding the meaning of the interviewee and also the interviewee misunderstanding the question. In order to minimise bias as the interviewer I sought primarily to listen carefully and to probe for more information without offering my own opinion. Validity was supported through checking that the questions of the interview schedule aligned with the aim of the research and the key questions and by piloting the questions.

Triangulation is the comparing of sources of evidence in order to determine the accuracy of information or phenomena. Essentially it is a way to improve validity by cross-checking data. (Bush, 2002). Of the two different approaches to triangulation, for this study triangulation between methods rather than within one method was employed. The findings surrounding the principals' views regarding the expectations of their role and their perceived support in that role were compared with the expectations of their role and sources of support found in documents through documentary analysis.

Ethical considerations

It is important to remember that the point of research is to improve a situation for people (Davidson & Tolich, 1999). Research may be seen as a search for truth. It is this commitment to truth that is ethically imperative. Mertens (2005) comments that ethics in research should be integral to the planning and to the implementation process. The major ethical issues of which the social researcher needs to be aware are clearly described by Bouma (1996). These centre around gaining an appropriate form of informed consent, respecting individual privacy and confidentiality, ensuring that the research design and tools are adequate to answer the questions being asked and that there is an awareness of the power dimension of the relationship between the researcher and the subject of the research.

The research for this study was undertaken and completed with full regard to the ethical principles of ensuring complete confidentiality and anomymity and non-disclosure of any

information that may damage any individual participant. All participation was voluntary and the researcher informed the participants that the purpose of the research was to complete a thesis towards a Master Degree under the auspices of Unitec, Auckland. Characteristic of qualitative research a high level of consent was required of the participants in the in-depth interviews (Bouma, 1996) in which significant information was supplied. As Creswell (2002) states educational researchers need to communicate their findings with other researchers and educational practitioners so inquiry will be encouraged and used. A direct benefit suggested to the principals approached is that the study may result in a clearer understanding of why primary school principals maybe challenged with the expectation that they lead learning. Another benefit was the suggestions that may come out of the study regarding how principals may be supported to overcome the challenges. This may lead to further research and discussion. Each participating principal has been promised a copy of the findings of the study by the researcher as part of the agreed benefits of their participation. The data was analysed and reported accurately. Following the analysis of the findings the researcher has an obligation to share any methodological weaknesses in the study in the written results.

Limitations of the research

Due to the time constraints for this study it was not possible to conduct a longitudinal study including observations of the principals during their working day that would have provided richer data surrounding how in practice principals lead learning. The research in the field was limited to the eight individual interviews. There was a weakness in the answer regarding present and suggested support for principals since the participants answered these issues broadly. They did not focus specifically on support with regard to leading learning.

There were also limitations within the research method of documentary analysis in that a number of the documents analysed did not contain references specifically to the principals' role facet of leading leading.

CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS - DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter provides and analyses the documents researched that show ministerial, governmental and local school expectations of the principal's role as an educational leader. The expectations specifically related to the principal's role as a leader of learning are highlighted.

Documentary analysis findings

The first method of gathering data was documentary analysis. Documents were gathered that provided a contextual background surrounding the expectations of primary principals as educational leaders with the facet of the expectations surrounding the principal as a leader of learning highlighted. Wellington's (2000) suggestion for undertaking documentary analysis was used as a starting point from which to decide upon a means to research the relevant documents for this research study. The source and date of each document is given followed by the identification of the intended audience. The sections of the whole text that are relevant to the expectations of principals leading learning are described and critiqued along with the implications for principals' practice. The leading of learning is expressed in various ways through the documents. The specific terminology scrutinized for the purposes of this analyses were firstly, the terms used to define leading learning – professional leadership, educational leadership, curriculum leadership, pedagogical leadership. Secondly, the terms implying a focus on leadership were examined, those of strategic planning, distribution of leadership, evaluating and developing staff. Additionally, references to the dual task for the principal of leading learning and managing the school were explored. The following documents were examined:

1. The National Education Guidelines

1.1 The National Administration Guidelines (NAGs)

2. Kiwi Leadership for Principals Model (KLP)

3.   The Professional Standards for Primary Principals

4.   Examples of job descriptions of principals participating in the interviews.

5.   Process Indicators used by the Education Review Office (ERO)

1.   National Education Guidelines

The National Education Guidelines are defined by Sections 60A of the Education Act 1989. They serve to inform Boards of Trustees, principals, all stakeholders and the wider community of Crown expectations regarding the delivery, content and standard of education in New Zealand. The National Education Guidelines comprise of the components of The National Education Goals; Foundation Policy Statements; National Curriculum statements; National Standards and The National Administration Guidelines. Of these components there is a minimal amount to analyse with regard to what they state as the expectations of principals in relation to the chosen terminology and leading learning. With regard to The National Education Goals it is worth commenting that Governmental expectation of principals as educational leaders would be adherence to and achievement of The National Education Goals (NEGs). Whilst the Foundation Policy Statements include statements of policy concerning teaching and learning and the way in which curriculum and assessment responsibilities are to be managed in schools this is not mandatory until February 2010 and so will not be further analysed.

It is only in the final component, The National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) that significant reference is found to the terminology stated above and the expectations of principals in this regard are reflected. The implications for principals is that under the governance of the Board of Trustees within the whole scope of their role as educational leaders principals are expected to lead and to ensure the implementation of the National Administration Guidelines 1-6. Whiles these cover the areas of curriculum, self-review, personnel, finance and property, health and safety, legislation, most specifically the expectations of principals in regard to leading learning are found in NAG 1 and NAG 2.

1.1   The National Administration Guidelines (NAGs)

The National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) are guidelines relating to school administration.

Extracts from NAG 1 and NAG 2 are provided that specifically relate to the principal and the chosen terminology.

NAG 1

Each Board of Trustees is required to foster student achievement by providing teaching and learning programmes which incorporate the New Zealand Curriculum (essential learning areas, essential skills and attitudes and values) as expressed in National Curriculum Statements.

Each Board, through the principal and staff, is required to:

(i)   develop and implement teaching and learning programmes:

(a)   to provide all students in years 1-10 with opportunities to achieve for success in all the essential learning and skill areas of the New Zealand curriculum;

(ii)   through a range of assessment practices, gather information that is sufficiently comprehensive to enable the progress and achievement of students to be evaluated; giving priority first to:

(a)   student achievement in literacy and numeracy, especially in years 1-4;
and then to:

(b)   breadth and depth of learning related to the needs, abilities and interests of students, the nature of the school's curriculum, and the scope of the New Zealand curriculum (as expressed in the National Curriculum Statements);

(iii) on the basis of good quality assessment information, identify students and groups of students;

(a)   who are not achieving;

(b)   who are at risk of not achieving;

(c) who have special needs

and

(d) aspects of the curriculum which require particular attention;

(iv) develop and implement teaching and learning strategies to address the needs of students and aspects of the curriculum identified in (iii) above.

The extracts from NAG 1 that are shown provide the governmental expectations of principals as they work with the Board and staff to provide quality education aligned with the New Zealand national curriculum, that results in successful student outcomes for all students. Assessment is repeatedly mentioned in the NAG 1 statements, with the need for principals to ensure the development and implementation of teaching and learning strategies that result from good quality assessment information. The expectation of the principal to be a leader of teaching and learning is implied through the requirements of NAG 1. NAG 1 focuses on the expectation that schools will provide teaching and learning programmes that are aligned with the New Zealand curriculum that result in student achievement and all students' specific learning needs being addressed. The implication is that the principal will be a leader of teaching and learning in ensuring that the school meets the requirements of NAG 1.

NAG 2

Each Board of Trustees, with the principal and teaching staff, is required to:

(i) develop a strategic plan which documents how they are giving effect to the National Education Guidelines through their policies, plans and programmes, including those for curriculum, assessment and staff professional development;

(ii) maintain an on-going programme of self-review in relation to the above policies, plans and programmes, including evaluation of information on student achievement;

(iii) report to students and their parents on the achievement of individual students, and to the school's community on the achievement of students as a whole and of groups.

As statements of policy concerning teaching, learning and assessment the statements give direction to:

(i) The way in which curriculum and assessment responsibilities are to be managed in schools

(ii) National curriculum statements and locally developed curriculum

In NAG 2 the terminology scrutinized i.e. strategic planning, professional development, curriculum and assessment are found. The implication for principals is that as school leaders, working with the Board and the staff, they will develop and ensure strategic planning that provides effective professional development that results in successful student outcomes that is comprehensively reported upon to all stakeholders. The implication is also that principals will lead and ensure the maintenance of an on-going programme of self-review in relation to plans, policies and programmes.

2.   The Kiwi Leadership Model (KLP) – a model of educational leadership

The KLP (Ministry of Education, 2008) model for educational leadership (See Figure 2.1) sets out the qualities, knowledge and skills principals need to lead 21st century schools. This Ministry of Education document is targeted towards principals, aspiring principals and boards of trustees. With educational leadership at the core of the KLP model, page 12 of the document states that educational leaders aim to:

1.   improve outcomes for all students, with a particular focus on Maori and Pasifika;

2.   create the conditions for effective teaching and learning;

3.   develop and maintain schools as learning organisations;

4.   make connections and build networks within and beyond their schools;

5.   develop others as leaders.

The purpose for each of these objectives is to enhance learning and teaching in order to improve learning experiences and outcomes for all students. Whilst the whole scope of the role of the principal as an educational leader is seen in the above objectives the specific role facet of leading learning is seen in the first two objectives. As a leader of learning as stated in the KLP model, the principal's task is to improve outcomes for all students and to create the

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conditions for effective teaching and learning. These aspects sit within pedagogical practice. Within the whole model, as educational leaders principals will provide a culture that includes a safe and learning focused environment; they will show strategic leadership that results in the day-to-day running of the school, through effective management of finance, property, and health and safety systems, in accordance with legislative requirements. Also included in the KLP model is that the principal as educational leader needs to foster relationships within the school's community and the local iwi and wider school community as well as to foster relationships and to network with other schools. Lastly, the KLP model states the importance of principals as educational leaders to ensure opportunities for professional development for staff to develop others as leaders.

The following excerpts of the text shown in table 4:1 and found on page 7 of the KLP document show the expectations that the model presents for principals.

Table 4.1 – Expectations of educational leadership in the KLP document

Educational leadership

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

Effective educational leadership builds the pedagogical, administrative and cultural conditions necessary for successful learning and teaching.

Principals do not do this alone. They use their leadership and management skills in ways that motivate and develop the capabilities of others so that responsibility for strengthening and sustaining the work and direction of the school is shared.

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

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

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

The key terminology that is relevant to this discourse is seen within this text. Effective educational leadership is explicitly described. The focus is clearly placed on improving student outcomes. Professional development is given emphasis through the accepted need to

develop the capabilities and strengths of the staff in order to sustain the development of the school, with strategic planning implied through this being linked to progressing the school along the agreed path. That principals lead learning through strategic planning is also seen as an expectation, through the reference to principals setting strategic goals to enhance learning and teaching and to ensure that resources are available to meet these goals. Curriculum is mentioned with reference to principals being responsible for the delivery of the national curriculum. Professional development is included as an expectation along with distributed leadership by the inclusion of developing the strengths of others and principals not being expected to fulfil the leadership role alone. The dual focus of the principal's role including that of being both a pedagogical leader and a day-to-day manager is emphasised with reference to policy and operational matters. The wide scope of the principal's role and the expectations of what that scope involves along with the responsibility that the principal is expected to hold in seen in the closing statement that principals are ultimately accountable for everything that happens in the day-to-day running of the school.

3. *The Professional Standards for Primary Principals*

The Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008) form part of Principal and Teacher Performance Management. The Professional Standards for Primary Principals serve as a basis for a principal's job description and provide a baseline for assessing the satisfactory performance of principals by Boards. They also serve to reflect the agreed school goals. The intended audience would be principals, principals' appraisers, and Boards of Trustees.

The document The Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008) is divided into the four Areas of Practice of Culture, Pedagogy, Systems, and Partnerships and Networks that are fundamental in the Kiwi Leadership for Principals (2008) model. Both documents are recent additions to documentation regarding the role of the primary principal. The Professional Standards for Primary Principals replaced the Interim Professional Standards in 2008, in the same year as the final KLP model. Each of the four areas has the stated purpose of enhancing learning. Each of these four Areas of Practice was analysed to identify the text relevant to the key terminology considered. The relevant text from each Area of Practice is provided followed by an analysis of the findings. (See Appendix 4).

3.1   Culture

To provide professional leadership that focuses the school culture on enhancing learning and teaching.

- *In conjunction with the Board, develop and implement a school vision and shared goals focused on enhanced engagement and achievement for all students.*

- *Promote a culture whereby staff members take on appropriate leadership roles and work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning.*

- *Demonstrate leadership through participating in professional learning.*

The term professional leadership is used to name the principal's role. Strategic planning is evident as an expectation through the implementing of a vision and shared goals with learning and teaching being a focus through the expectation that this will lead to student achievement. Professional development and distributed leadership are emphasised through the expectation that the principal will develop a culture where these are encouraged and where the principal models professional development through participating in professional learning.

3.2   Pedagogy

To create a learning environment in which there is an expectation that all students will experience success in learning.

- *Promote, participate in and support ongoing professional learning linked to student progress.*

- *Demonstrate leadership through engaging with staff and sharing knowledge about effective teaching and learning in the context of the New Zealand curriculum documents.*

- *Ensure staff members engage in professional learning to establish and sustain effective teacher / learner relationships with all students, with a particular focus on Māori students.*

- *Ensure that the review and design of school programmes is informed by school-based and other evidence.*

- *Maintain a professional learning community within which staff members are provided with feedback and support on their professional practice.*

- *Analyse and act upon school-wide evidence on student learning to maximise learning for all.*

Professional learning is a repeated term in this Area of Practice. The principal is expected to promote and maintain a professional learning community that benefits all students. The curriculum is mentioned in relation to the principal being expected to show leadership by sharing curriculum knowledge with the staff. Implicit within this expectation is that the principal will be a leader of learning and teaching. Finally within the area of pedagogy, assessment is seen to be an area in which the principal ensures that school-wide assessment data is used to inform future practice and to effectively influence student outcomes.

The two remaining Areas of Practice of Systems and Partnerships and Networks that complete the Professional Standards for Primary Principals focus on creating conditions for learning and appear to have too tenuous links with the leading of learning to be included in this study.

4.   *Principals' job descriptions*

Four of the principals interviewed provided examples of their job description to be included in the documentary research. Whilst two of these job descriptions comprised solely of the Primary Principals Professional Standards that were previously analysed in relation to expectations of a primary principal, the remaining two principals provided additional documents regarding the expectations of their role. These are current for the 2009 school year and are for the principal, principal's appraiser and the board's reference (see Appendix 5).

4.1   Job Description 1

The key issues within the first job description provided that are relevant to the sought terminology surrounding learning leading include firstly the reference to professional leadership in the Primary Objectives. The first of the Primary Objectives is for the principal, "To provide professional leadership in an environment which promotes effective learning, teaching and personal development" The placing of this statement as the first expectation of the job description gives prominence and weight of importance to this objective. The dualism of the principal's role is recognised within the principal's stated responsibility being to overall manage the school and to be the professional leader. The key issues found in the delegated tasks with regard to leading learning are those numbered (9), (10) and (11). The first of these addresses the expectation from the school's board that the principal will provide curriculum leadership that is driven by the school's strategic planning. Through the next delegated task it is expected that the principal will ensure that teachers will develop teaching programmes that align with national guidelines, the school's strategic planning and policies and thus the principal is following through on the previous expectation of providing curriculum leadership. The final delegated task highlighted is that of principal being expected to oversee staff professional learning. This delegated task reflects one aspect of the leadership dimension within leading learning that has been found to have the greatest impact on student outcomes (Robinson, 2007). This was the importance of the principal promoting staffs' professional development, however within this specific job description the aspect of the principal participating in whole staff professional learning is not addressed.

4.2   Job Description 2

The principal of Langland School provided a list of tasks delegated to him by the Board of Trustees as part of his job description, along with the expectation of meeting all of the Areas of Practice of the Professional Standards. The delegated tasks that are all subject to accurate scheduled reports are shown in Appendix 4. Of these tasks two are relevant to the key issues sought, those of a) Curriculum management and e) Managing staff performance and including establishing and implementing the Performance Management system.

5. *Evaluation Indicators for Education Reviews in Schools*

The intended audience for this document includes principals, boards of trustees, staff, parents and the wider community. One of the three '*Domains of Activity'* referred to by ERO in this document as influencing student achievement is that of Governing and Managing the School. Professional leadership is the first of the six Indicators included in the domain of Governing and Managing the School, along with the Indicators of day-to-day management, school-wide planning, review and development, resource management, personnel management (See Appendix 6). Each of these indicators was analysed to find evidence of the terminology of strategic planning, professional development, curriculum and assessment, educational leadership, professional leadership, distributed leadership. Of these indicators the Professional leadership Indicator defined professional Leadership as being focused on learning.

5.1   Professional leadership Indicator

Indicator	Rationale	Evidence could include
Professional leadership	Effective leaders can play a key role in articulating a vision and direction for the school. Professional leadership is not the role of the principal alone: leadership roles occur school-wide and contribute to school performance.	Professional leadership is focused on learning, including the use of assessment data to improve teaching. There is an alignment of resources, policies and practices to ensure quality teaching in classrooms across the school. The school has an inclusive culture and partnerships for learning with parents. The school has collaborative decision-making processes within a culture of ongoing learning. Leadership is monitored and evaluated effectively and the results are used for overall improvement and staff development. The board provides access to effective and well-targeted professional development that balances the needs of the national curriculum, the school as a whole, and the needs of the people in leadership roles.

The rationale in the Professional leadership indicator supports a distributed form of leadership where leadership roles, are undertaken by staff across the school and not by the principal alone. Strategic planning is referred to through the suggested evidence of alignment of policies, practices and resources. Distributed leadership can be aligned to the statement regarding collaborative decision making. Professional development and professional learning are seen in the statements surrounding leadership being monitored and evaluated for staff development and overall improvement. Elaboration is also given that links professional development with strategic planning and the leadership of learning through the statement that evidence may be sought to show how targeted professional development meets the need of the school as a whole, inferring student outcomes, as well as meeting the needs of those in leadership roles. The implication for principals is ensure that they operate a system of leadership that is distributive and that they provide opportunities for their teaching staff to develop leadership skills that contribute to school performance.

The other Indicators in this document detail the rationale and possible evidence surrounding day-to-day management; school-wide planning; review an development; resource management; personnel management. They have not been included in this analysis due to their lack of focus specifically on the facet of leading learning.

A summary of the messages to Principals and Boards related to the expectations of principals as leaders of learning as found in the documentation

Through analysis of NAG 1 it is evident that the ministerial expectation is that the Board through the principal will ensure the development of teaching and learning programmes. It is also expected that learning will be led by the principal and students' progress and achievement will be realised through effective assessment practices. Additionally that teaching and learning strategies will be developed and implemented to meet the needs of individual students as assessed, in order to ensure positive student outcomes. The implication is that the principal is expected to be a leader of learning in ensuring that the school meets the requirements of NAG 1.

In NAG 2 the stated expectation of the principal is that as school leader he or she working with the Board and staff will lead strategic planning that provides effective professional development that results in successful student outcomes. The same message of expectation is evident in the KLP (2008) model, where the expectation is that the principal will develop and maintain schools as learning organizations and improve outcomes for all students. In alignment with NAG 2 there is the expectation within the KLP (2008) model that the principal will ensure that staff receive professional development and that others are developed as leaders. The underlying purpose in the KLP model for these strategies is to enhance learning and teaching in order to improve learning experiences and outcomes for all students.

The aspects of culture, pedagogy, systems, partnerships and networks that are fundamental to the KLP (2008) model form the four Areas of Practice of the Professional Standards for Primary Principals. Of these Areas of Practice the expectation of the principal as a leader of learning is seen in the areas of culture and pedagogy. The expectation that the principal as leader of learning is expected to lead strategic planning and professional development that positively impacts on student outcomes is evident in the Professional Standards document and thus a strong link is apparent with the expectations found in NAG 1 and NAG 2 and in the KLP (2008).

The same expectation of the principal as a leader of learning is seen in the example of a principal's job description provided by the principal of Caswell School. An expectation of the

principal stated in this document is to lead strategic planning that provides leadership for curriculum implementation and development. The principal is expected to be responsible for the development of effective school-wide assessment procedures that enhance teaching and learning. There is also the clear expectation that the principal will oversee the staff professional learning programmes and that the principal will also ensure that all staff members are part of a school-wide appraisal system that positively impacts on student outcomes. The expectation that the principal will lead curriculum management and manage staff performance is also documented, though not as thoroughly, in the delegated tasks of the principal from Langland School.

The document from the Education Review Office specifically through the Professional Leadership Indicator shows agreement with all of the documents discussed. Here it is shows that the Education Review Officers on visiting schools would be looking for evidence through the principal's professional leadership of strategic curriculum planning that is informed by assessment data, that leads to improved teaching and learning. There is also the expectation in this Indicator that the Board will provide access to well- targeted professional development that meets the needs of the school as a whole and the needs of those in leadership roles. This would be ensured through the principal.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS - INTERVIEWS

Introduction

This chapter provides the findings from the second method of gathering data, that of individual interviews. Conducting the individual interviews with the eight participating principals was the major method of the research. Each digitally recorded interview comprising of the same thirteen questions was transcribed. The answers for each question were grouped and then analysed, with the main content for each answer extracted and recorded on a group answer sheet for each question. The answers for each question were further analysed and provided the content for interview findings for this chapter. Common themes were found from the given answers and were recorded as key findings at the end of each question's findings.

Introducing the principals

Belinda has been the principal of Broughton School for the past two years. This is the second school at which she has been principal in the total of her four years in principalship.

Matthew, the principal of Mewslade School having been a principal for twenty nine years was of those interviewed the principal with the most years experience. Matthew has been at his current school for nine years.

Garth, the principal of Caswell School has in total seventeen years experience as principal, the last ten of these at his current school. Garth had worked for the Education Review Office for a year as a Review Officer before his present appointment.

Ben has been the principal of Langland School for thirteen years. He joined the school as a first time principal.

Robert joined Rhossili Park School a year ago having previously served seven years as a principal.

Rachel, the principal of Limeslade School has been a principal for nine years in total, the last six of these being at the current school.

Sandy has been the principal at Southgate School for two years and prior to that had four years experience as a principal.

Dee was the only first time principal involved in this study. Dee was appointed principal of Fall Bay School two years ago.

As is apparent from this information the number of years experience that the principals had in the principal's role varied. This variation extended from Matthew's twenty nine years experience - beginning before the introduction of *Tomorrow's Schools* and schools' self-governance – through Garth and Ben's respective seventeen and fifteen years experience to Rachel and Roberts nine and seven years. All of these principals with the exception of Ben had been principals at other schools prior to their present appointments. Both Belinda and Sandy during their four years of principal experience were leading their second school. Dee, the only first time principal had moved from a position as Deputy Principal in a school local to her present appointment. Half of the principals had attended the First Time Principals Programme. This information shows that the majority of the participating principals were experienced in the role.

Results and analysis

Question One Responses - Describing the whole scope of the principal's role

The first question asked of principals was to describe what they considered to be the whole scope of their role as principal. All of the principals observed the vastness of the role of principalship. All of the principals referred to the different areas included in the National Administration Guidelines as part of the scope of their role. They saw themselves as needing to lead learning and within this role to have a good understanding of curriculum and curriculum delivery. They all also referred to their including the need to ensure that the day to day running of school is going along smoothly in the areas of finance, personnel, property, legislation and health and safety.

Dee explained the scope of the principal's role as she perceived it. She explained:

> *Being responsible for everything to everyone. My job is to be the day-to-day leader of the school who follows the policies of the Board of Trustees under their government…But in actual fact as a leadership role, to help guide that Board of Trustees as well, as well as obviously continually trying to improve the school for the good of the students and work with the community. The simple answer is student achievement but what impacts on student achievement are effective teachers working as a team, working with the community in partnership, guiding the Board so that their decision-making is the best it can be. So it's quite a complex role really… It's leadership.*

Dee spoke of the hugeness of the job but also stated the critical role of effective teachers being at the centre of what she has to do.

Ben agreed with the vastness of the job and the concept of 'being responsible to everything to everyone'. He said:

> *Chief Executive Officer – General Manager, I suppose. You're all things to all people.*

Belinda expressed the scope of the role through the tasks delegated by the Board of Trustees. She stated:

> *The Bot delegates the daily running, the finance, the property, teachers' development, delivering annual plan outcomes and, strategic plan, strategic development and future proofing and personnel issues are the big ones. Everything I do I have to ask if this is going to improve learning outcomes for students.*

Sandy commented:

> *Leader of learning, I think a very big part of the role is visionary so seeing that big picture and keeping sight of the vision and facilitator of other peoples learning and development of both staff and children.*

Rachel explained the whole scope of the role as:

> *Leadership and management. In depth knowledge of the curriculum in that I don't having a walking AP or DP so I'm on every curriculum team. Management in that I do all my number crunching from PATs and AsTTle and write the reports from them.*

Garth explained the scope of the role through the National Administrative Guidelines. The aspects of the role that he categorised were agreed by all of the principals. He said:

> *Ok, well probably the best way to actually start attacking it is probably through the NAGS, administration guidelines. So you've got your curriculum component which is obviously leading learning and making sure things are happening within the classroom. Then your NAG 2 which is your whole self review side of things. So you'd be looking at those particular aspects in terms of making sure your practices are up to date and continuing to improve. Then your NAG 3 is your personnel…And then your finance and property is part of the role. It's an impacting role but it's certainly not the main one.*

The key findings with regard to the whole scope of the role of principalship is that it involves:

1. meeting the demands of the vastness of the role of being a leader of learning and a General Manager/Chief Executive Officer;

2. leading curriculum initiatives and sustaining the school vision and strategic plan;

3. being a General Manager –working on areas of finance, property, legislation, and health and safety;

4. building good relationships with all stakeholders;

Question Two Responses - The key expectations of the principal's role

Question Two asked the principals what they considered to be the key expectations of their role. The key expectations that were highlighted in the data reinforced aspects of the role described by the principals in answering question one. These were leading learning, being a strategic leader and effectively managing the school and building good professional relationships. The principals' answers may be separated into those who answered with the focus upon their self-expectations and those who focused on the expectations of others.

Belinda answered the question from a self – expectation viewpoint. She saw the key expectation of her role to be a leader of learning. She explained that she delegates tasks to her Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal and commented:

> *Since I've come here I have changed the leadership role in the school.* (The Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal) *have a lot more responsibility, they run the school a lot of the time… but it's the principals' responsibility to make sure that principals are leaders of learning.*

Similarly, Garth spoke of a self-expectation that emphasised strategic leadership within the role of a leader of learning. He commented:

> *You identify the strategic direction through the curriculum – where you want to go, what you want to achieve, with review. You employ personnel to achieve it, provide funding, and make sure that property is lined up with that and any health and safety issues. They all underpin NAG 1 – the curriculum.*

...children looked after. They're wanting them safe, they're wanting them learning, they're wanting a school that's got a curriculum delivery that's good.

Whilst Robert saw the key expectation of his role as:

I think effective management of the school. The key expectation is that I manage learning and effectively day-to-day manage the school.

Matthew's self- expectation placed relationships first:

The key expectation for me would be – because of who I am – it's relationships. If you get that right, the school will be fine. And your inter-relationships are not just staff-based. They're child-based, staff-based, all the way to BOT and PTA – your community as a rule.

However Matthew also spoke of the expectations of other stakeholders. He believed that the parents' expectation was for the principal to have vision and leadership that shows commitment to a direction that benefits the children and the community as a whole. Matthew spoke of the expectations of the Education Review Office (ERO) and the Ministry of Education. He stated:

ERO had expectations of me when I first came here. That was to really sort the school out.

Ben considered the expectations of others and said that the community's expectation of him would be:

Probably to run a well organised, efficient school where meeting the learning needs of children is paramount. That's probably the key expectation. And then everything else would stem from that.

The key findings from the question regarding what the principals saw as the key expectations of their role fell into two categories as answered by the principals of a) the principals'

expectations of themselves and b) the expectations of others. What is significant is that there appears to be an over lap between the principals' self-expectations and the expectations they believe others- parents or ERO hold.

a) Principals' self expectations:

1. to be a leader of learning;

2. to lead with vision and to lead with strategic planning;

3. to run a well organised school;

4. to build and encourage good relationships amongst all stakeholders.

b) Expectations of others:

1. parental expectations for the principal to show vision and leadership that benefits the whole of the school community

2. ERO expectation that the principal would " sort the school out".

Question Three Responses - Ways in which expectations are documented

The third question asked principals to state where the expectations of their role were documented. All of the principals named their job description based on a combination of the new Professional Standards, delegated authorities, and documentation surrounding external appraisal. Some of the principals referred to their job description as a performance agreement.

The message that came through clearly from all of the principals was that the above documentation surrounding the expectation of their role all links with their external appraisal system. The goals stated in each principal's appraisal link to the school's strategic planning. Thus, the expectations of the principal's role are linked to the annual action plans. This common approach was described by Garth:

> *My job description links to the strategic plan which therefore breaks it down as to what I am doing. Expectations are documented in all sorts of forms. The performance*

agreement involves key things that the principal wants to develop and focus on within their own personal sphere and the direction of the school. That nails those expectations. The expectations of the principal are linked to the annual curriculum action plans.

Similarly, Dee described her job description as linking with the school's strategic plan. The scope of the role was elaborated on more by Dee in answering this question. Linking with strategic planning Dee commented that her job description included:

...providing professional and curriculum leadership to staff; implementing the National Educational Goals; advising the Board on policy and development review; communicating with parents and building partnerships; managing school and resources effectively.

Ben linked the magnitude of the principal's role in with this question on documentation of the role. The Board of Trustees at Ben's school has requested that along with using the new Professional Standards as the basis of his external appraisal that he list all of his delegated authorities. He commented:

So I sat and went through the policy folder and got 26 things…. Heavens that shows the magnitude of the job. And actually it was quite good for the Board to see that… But that just actually proves the scope of your job.

The key findings regarding how the expectations of the principal's role is documented were that the documentation could be found in principals' job descriptions that included:

1. professional Standards for Primary Principals;

2. delegated authorities;

3. external appraisal.

Question Four Responses - Prioritising focus on students' learning

Question Four asked principals how they prioritised focus on students' learning. Emerging from the data, are two categories: collating data and strategic planning including reflective practice.

The key for the majority of the principals in prioritising focus on students' learning was strategic planning. This was presented in different forms.

Matthew related how at Mewslade School they prioritise the focus on students' learning through reflecting on collated diagnostic data. This approach was common to all of the school's of the principals interviewed. Matthew commented:

> *We then identify children. We have target groups. In all of those target groups you have differentiated learning for your gifted and talented and then we have other target groups for hot spots for numeracy and workshops for literacy.*

Explaining how this was reported Matthew elaborated:

> *We document that* (target groups) *and that is recorded and the Deputy Principal will report to the Board. I call it the minor curriculum review. It will be gridded and graphed showing where their weaknesses and strengths are.*

In answering this question, school – wide assessment was picked up by Ben who said that linked to the school vision and strategic plan that there was a school way to approach learning and that school – wide assessment was a dominant driver. Robert explained that he spent a large proportion of his week having conversations with staff about student learning and reflective practice across the school. Meetings were focused rather than administration that they believed could be sorted out through e-mails. Robert commented:

> *So a large part of my week is filled up just with productive meetings about reflective practice and getting a level of honesty throughout the school.*

Similarly, Dee explained that she prioritised the focus on student learning through analysing the data and then providing the support needed to improve outcomes. Dee spoke of professional discussions around data analysis and to look for the areas of need that then might result in for example, more Teacher Aides of extra hours for students with English as a second language. Data analysis provided the strategic focus of the school and identifies growth areas. Targets linked to the strategic focus then get sent to the Ministry of Education.

Rachel also focuses the priority on student learning through analysis of data. Interestingly, Rachel was the only principal to do all of the 'figure crunching' of assessment herself. She analyses the data herself and writes the reports on it. Rachel then meets with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator to discuss which students need additional support. This seemed to be a very different approach to Belinda's who was the only principal who did not directly mention collating data and strategic planning in answer to this question. Belinda placed emphasis on looking after the teachers. She elaborated that they are the most expensive resource, but by looking after your teachers well the children get the most benefit.

Her reply was:

> *It's always all about the children. I have to be careful with my staff because I always say to them it's about the children but always add that teachers are the most expensive resource, and if you're looking out for the children you have to look out for the teachers extremely well.*

Sandy explained how the strategic plan and annual goals are full of student learning. She said:

> *Every board meeting I report on learning goals. Leadership meetings are driven by student outcomes. We look at evidence and data and where we are heading with our kids. The annual plan is full of student learning.*

The key findings in relation to how the principals prioritise focus on student learning are:

1. through collating and analysing assessment data, keeping the child's learning outcomes as the central focus.

2.	using data information to inform strategic planning with regard to curriculum focus and allocation of resources.

Questions Five to Eight Responses

Questions Five to Eight relate to the Professional Standards for Primary Principals. Each question is divided into two sections. Section (a) findings relate to the initial question regarding *how* principals focus on each Professional Standard. Section (b) findings relate to any *challenges* principals believed they faced in implementing each standard.

Question Five (a) Responses - Focusing the school culture on teaching and learning

Question Five was the first of four questions relating to the Professional Standards for Primary Principals. The importance of a positive school culture was emphasised by all of the principals. Two categories emerged in relation to how principals believe they focus the school culture on learning and teaching. The first category was based around the importance of relationships that also incorporates mutual support, valuing others – everyone in the learning community - and honesty. The second category surrounded professional development and staff appraisal.

Belinda began by saying that culture within a school is hugely important – a view with which all of the principals agreed. She commented:

> *You have to affirm the culture, and it comes back to a very positive culture in the school. It has been a matter of promoting the culture to new staff and just tweaking it to further improve....So, it's very important to have the parties buy in, that you don't get your conflict...with professional learning and so on with teachers you must be careful that you don't get complacent and everyone thinks that we are a wonderful school and people put their feet on the table and just continue to do what we're doing.*

Garth described how the staff at Caswell School are supported and the focus of the school culture on learning is developed through the school's appraisal system. Garth explained:

...we train each other in giving feedback. Our appraisal system has changed accordingly. We are not being done to anymore. The senior teachers for this year are going in and observing – five minutes here and five minutes there – taking little notes. Then sitting down quite comfortably with the teacher at the end of each term and providing feedback on the observations and the things they've talked about.

Garth saw the need for balance in this process between how much support to give teachers and how much challenge. Garth elaborated on how he focuses on building a school culture that focuses on learning and teaching.

What I really focus on is professional relationships…It's about providing the support, providing the challenge and in the middle here is what I call relationships. (Garth drew a Venn diagram to show this point). *That pulls it together. And the relationship factor is the type of conversations that we have with one another. We start off every year how we want to be treated around here and the way we talk to one another and so on. And we actually train each other – this is part of what we do through professional learning.*

Robert agreed with the importance of principals encouraging staff to be truly reflective. At Rhossili Bay School he explained they aim to do this by:

…providing an atmosphere within the whole school that promotes true reflective practice. So providing forums for people to truly reflect whether that be an appraisal situation, a team meeting situation or a whole staff meeting situation and realising that different people need different forums – particularly initially when those elements of trust are growing to express how they are really going.

Ben explained how his approach to building the culture of the school to focus on learning and teaching is very "hands on". He believed that it is getting harder as principal to be directly involved in teaching and learning.

So you're actually leading by example being hands-on….And when I go to a classroom I'll actually sit down by a child and talk to them about what they're doing

and get them to share their work…And that shows teachers that you're interested in what's going on in the classrooms. I'll also lead some PD where it's appropriate. I will always go to curriculum PD with the staff. And that's partly because I like to know what's going on. And I also want to be able to understand what they're being told. I want to be able to speak from an informed basis.

Sandy discussed how focusing the culture of the school on learning and teaching at Southgate School involves 'giving out the message' to students and parents.

I use vehicles for that, like for example assembly – so every week the school meets for assembly and that's a good opportunity to push messages about learning and goals and things. We write things in the school newsletters so keeping the focus on learning with parents and keeping them all informed, parent meetings.

Sandy spoke of the culture of the school going back to the shared vision and strategic plan. She described the geese analogy of leadership being part of the culture of the school, where the person who has the most strength in an area leads.

The culture, it's all about that shared vision and just goes back to our strategic plan and that's really specific – our strategic plan and annual plan just keeps us on track really…Our leadership vision is like the geese analogy, like geese flying. And so that's my personal leadership vision where I might be head goose… and then there'll be times where then I'll go right to the back of the geese flying and it might be somebody else who for example is strong and flies to the front and leads, or it might be leadership team. So it's how you grow your team and we all fly together in that shared vision and are much stronger for that.

Both Sandy and Dee spoke of the importance of 'walking the talk', and that it was important to recognise different people's strengths. Dee commented:

I'm trying to walk the talk, to model, that that's what it's all about… There has been a lot of professional development in staff meetings since I've been here and I'm always attending them… But a lot of listening and respecting the opinions of others and really

in terms of culture for me. There have been some very wise, knowledgeable people in this school –and I've wanted to let some of their strengths flower.

The key finding that came from the principals' answers to this question is the significance of developing a positive school culture that supports teaching and learning. The main strategies suggested were:

1. professional relationships – including mutual support, valuing others and honesty;

2. targeted professional development, where teachers have ownership

3. professional conversations encouraging reflection.

Question 5 (b) Responses - The challenge for principals in focusing the school culture on learning and teaching

Principals described that the challenges surrounding focusing the school culture on learning and teaching resulted from inconsistency of staff and induction of new staff, managing change particularly with regard to building and sustaining professional relationships, and time pressures.

Garth linked the challenge of inducting new staff into the school culture with the need to improve professional conversations by way of building relationships, transparency and honesty.

Under the challenges. One of them is the induction of new staff. And other ongoing challenges is actually improving our conversation with each other so we can have these open, unfiltered conversations with each other over any particular issues. And it's the way we build relationships and so-on.

Dee found the time involved in consultation with the staff, the parents and the board a challenge. However she also emphasised the importance of finding the time to build the relationships between the stakeholders:

Consultation takes a lot of time but it is relationship building so I like that part of it that's relationship building.

Relationships and managing personnel was also emphasised as an issue by Belinda linked with managing change. She commented that the challenge involves:

Going slowly when you want to run. Setting the right pace so that people don't become fearful. It's almost impossible. Making sure your messages are really, really clear…That classroom teachers are the most important people and there would be people I'd say at every school, if they were really honest, believe that if they thought about it. And it's trying to give the children opportunities and make it as easy as possible for the teachers

It is a huge challenge…The teacher has got to be happy. And of course they've to learn, they've got shift, they've got to be challenged. But they've got to be happy. If they're not happy, the child is not going to be happy and the parents are not going to be happy and I'm going to be miserable! They'll all be on my doorstep.

Managing change in relation to focusing the school culture on learning and teaching was a challenge raised also by Robert. His comments concurred with Belinda's view that people cannot be rushed and change cannot be thrust upon them.

The challenge is around change… not just thrusting change upon people without explaining some background why you're changing and being really clear on that.

Personnel and staffing presented as a challenge also to Matthew in relation to focusing the school culture on learning and teaching and specifically changes of staff. He commented:

We've had nine changes this year so consistency of staffing is a real problem.

Sandy also emphasised changes of staff as a challenge in focusing the school culture on learning and teaching along with parental pressures.

Ben and Dee stated that lack of time presented the biggest challenge in them focusing the school culture on learning and teaching. Ben explained that what he regarded as administrative tasks are all taking him away from spending time in the classrooms.

> *It's all the admin work – plain admin! ...Pulling together property projects. Getting together applications… drawing it together, co-ordinating, liaising.*

While Dee explained:

> *I would have liked to have spent more time in classrooms and I will, but I've been a first time principal and that's an area that I know I need to do more of in the future. But it's just that the job load has been huge and you just have to prioritise really.*

Interestingly, Dee summed up her view with the following comment:

> *I've just done the First Time Principals – it's all about learning and teaching. Ha Ha, yeah right!*

The key findings regarding the challenges that the principals perceived when focusing the culture of the school on learning and teaching are:

1. managing change – setting a pace with which staff are happy;

2. building and sustaining effective professional relationships with turn over of staff;

3. time pressures due to the wide scope of the principal's role.

Question 6 (a) Responses - Creating a learning environment in which there is an expectation that all students will experience success in learning

Categories that resulted from the answers to question 6a were those of on going professional development for the principal and all of the staff; appraisal; gathering school- wide assessment data; students feeling safe and happy at school.

Matthew gave the view that was common to all of the principals, that the right pedagogy through the school is achieved through the teaching staff being supported and through the staff feeling valued.

> *Professional development is the major part of that obviously…You've got to bring them* (teachers) *in to make sure everyone is thinking the same thing. It's teaching them learning. It's mentoring and coaching so that you've got experienced teachers working alongside the less experienced.*

Rachel believed that the staff (both teachers and teacher aides) need to feel up to date with professional learning.

> *I make sure that my staff get professional development that they need. I make sure we do whole staff professional development, so they're all hearing the same message so it can be discussed, so it can be debated.*

Similarly to the other principals Belinda agreed with the critical importance of staff development. But also emphasised the importance of her own professional development in curriculum areas.

> *First of all I maintain my skills knowledge base so I am actively involved with professional development around learning so that's what I do for me…Then the biggest thing we need to do is to look at staff development and professional development.*

Garth answered this question particularly with regard to his Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal and how he delegated leading the development of learning and teaching through the school and to develop a professional learning community to them.

There was agreement amongst the principals comments that appraisal should be conducted through meaningful professional dialogue.

Ben commented:

It's all built around that professional learning community. So in doing that you're actually setting them up to practise good practice.So you'll try to set them up at success for facilitating rather than actually leading from the front.

The importance of using the evidence of the data gathered on school wide assessment to inform strategic planning was emphasised in the principals answers. Sandy brought this common agreement together in her reply.

Once again the strategic plan is quite specific with it's expectation of children at (name of school). So evidence based teaching and learning, so looking at our student achievement data and saying where are we at and where do we need to be.

The key findings with regard to what the participating principals do towards creating a learning environment in which there is an expectation that all students experience success in learning were:

1. the importance of professional development for the staff and for the principal;

2. using assessment data of students' learning to inform strategic planning.

Question 6 (b) Responses - The challenges faced with the expectation that principals create a learning environment in which all students will experience success

The two challenges that are evident in the findings are firstly, those of not enough resources – particularly time and secondly, coping with staff changes.

Belinda, Ben, Robert, and Dee all cited the lack of time available as a challenge to them to create a learning environment in which all students will experience success. Belinda commented that the main challenge for her was balancing her time in order to show commitment to leading learning. She said:

Time, making time and balancing your week…They (the Deputy Principal and the Assistant Principal) *do a good job, they are skilled in it, it would be easier to abdicate and let them be the leaders of learning and I would suggest that is the old model. I*

have worked for principals who knew nothing about learning anymore. They did all the management side. They felt they led the school.

Ben also spoke of the challenge of finding time to keep up to date with the latest pedagological practices. He remarked:

I think a challenge is just keeping yourself up-to-date with what is actually good and how does it actually work and having a bit of depth to your understanding, not just sort of picking up some little snippets of a course or a conference and then not really being grounded in how it actually happens. And I think it's also a challenge when you're not actually doing it yourself – to be real.

Dee was concise in what she saw as the challenges in answer to this question:

Never enough time. Never enough money to get in all the experts I'd like to.

Rachel stated that she found that the main challenge in creating a learning environment in which there is an expectation that all students experience success came from some teachers not 'buying into' the whole school approach and being resistant to change.

This links to the previously mentioned challenge of managing personnel.

There are some people that do not like change. There are some people that drag their feet for the first year but then they come on board the second year. I often find that the people that don't come on board the first year will come on board the second year so you just have to persevere and you just have to keep listening when they moan.

Sandy agreed that the greatest challenge was in managing change, with different members of staff working at different levels with some willing to go with change quicker than others.

Matthew spoke of the challenge related to sustaining a school–wide teaching philosophy but he saw this a stemming from staff turn over. He commented:

The challenge in that is basically the inconsistency of staff.

The key findings surrounding the challenges that the principals perceived in relation to creating an environment in which there is an expectation that all students will experience success in learning were:

1. time to focus on leading learning and keeping up to date with their own pedagogical knowledge.

2. managing change.

Questions 7 (a) and (b) and Questions 8 (a) and (b) Responses

During the interview schedule I asked the participating principals how they developed and used management systems to support and improve student learning and what they considered to be the challenges in this area. I also asked how they strengthened communication and relationships to improve student outcomes and the challenges therein. However, on further reflection both of these areas do not appear to have strong links to leading learning but rather are more concerned with creating conditions for learning, therefore these findings will not be analysed.

Question 9 Responses - The use of the Professional Standards

The ninth question asked the principals to consider what use they found the Professional Standards to be. Two clear categories emerged from the answers. Whilst the Professional Standards formed the basis for all of the principals' job descriptions, three of the principals saw this as a compliance exercise and not useful in practical terms, whereas the other remaining principals found the Professional Standards to be a useful guide for their role.

Belinda commented on the usefulness to her of the Professional Standards by saying:

I can measure my performance against them in a reflective capacity. It is a clear outline of what is expected of us. I think that they are worthwhile.

Likewise Dee, who is in her first role as principal spoke positively of the Professional Standards commenting:

> *They're marvellous – they remind you of what you are supposed to be doing.*

Ben who has been a principal for thirteen years agreed with the usefulness of the Professional Standards.

> *The Professional Standards are a guide – a stake in the sand - outlining what you are supposed to do. It is a framework in which to work. It is telling me what other people expect of me, for example, when ERO come in. It gives shape and structure.*

Garth, Matthew and Sandy had the Professional Standards as the basis for their job descriptions however, they do not use them for personal reflection. All three of these principals focused on what they considered to be the limitations of the Professional Standards.

Garth observed:

> *You can rehash them in many, many forms but what's really effective isn't it – is the people that have taken ownership – that you've actually built the standards with so they've got an understanding. If you're talking to a principal who's got no understanding of culture in their mind, then it's a waste of time putting you up against them.*

The key finding in relation to how useful the principals found the Professional Standards were:

1. the majority of the principals found the Professional Standards to be a useful guide for their role.

Question 10 Responses - The challenge of the leadership of learning as part of the principal's role

Question ten addressed the over-arching question regarding how the leadership of learning challenges the principals as an expectation of their role. All of the principals alluded to the vastness of the role of principalship. A category that emerged clearly as a challenge was not having enough time to address a wide array of tasks. A common deficit felt by the majority of the principals was that due to a lack of time they did not do as much for their own professional development as they would wish to keep ahead. Sandy expressed the challenge as:

> *Well, I guess it's ongoing and ever evolving and never ever done, it's not like a special project where you get to the end of the month and you can say I've done it. It's, the landscapes always changing and it involves relationships at so many levels like with children, with staff, with parents – there's so many stakeholders in with what we're doing. The challenge is to keep sight of that shared vision and look after everybody along the way.*

Rachel described that the biggest challenge to her in leading learning was time – specifically time for her own professional development. She said:

> *I find it quite challenging. I do most of mine in conferences in the holidays. When I did my papers I did it on top of and it just about drove me crazy when I did that small principalship.*

Belinda agreed that time was the greatest challenge and also finding effective professional development. She remarked:

> *I think again you go back to the fact as I said earlier it's finding the time, finding the quality PD.*

Robert said that leading learning *was* the biggest challenge of his role and to make sure that he was giving as much as possible of his time to lead learning. In agreement with the other

principals he explained that this was due to a lack of time to devote to it. Robert elaborated on the kind of tasks that he finds he needs to do that impinge on his time to lead learning.

> *I can easily get stuck down with the administration tasks…*

> *And the Board thing can be absolutely fantastic and it can be a complete headache. So you may have a Board that you just don't get any support from at all or you may have a Board and their management line jumps from their governance over to management. And that came take up a huge amount of your time. So I'm continually frustrated by a Board that wants lots of information but it's possibly not interested in acting on it later… So that creates a huge lot of problems for principals. And it gets in the way of leading learning.*

The key finding relating to how the leadership of learning as an expectation of their role challenges principals was that all of the principals focused on the importance of strengthening their own pedagogical leadership and the lack of time for their own professional development.

Question 11 Responses - Ways in which principals are supported to be leaders of learning

The eleventh question was concerned with finding out the professional support that principals receive for leading learning. Whilst three categories emerged from the data - mentors, networking with other principals, and support from their own staff – the findings had limitations since the principals spoke of general support rather than specifically support that they receive in leading learning.

Matthew explained that with 29 years experience as a principal he now found that he tended to do the mentoring and coaching of other principals rather than receiving the support himself. Garth spoke of support from a range of mentors, including a mentor from Australia and a mentor from a leadership centre outside Auckland. Dee, the most recently appointed principal, spoke very positively of the mentor that worked alongside her as part of an

induction for principals. Belinda valued the support of her mentor and fellow professionals. She commented:

> *I think my mentor groups. Also my formal and informal relationships with other principals is absolutely critical. I think also the relationship that I've developed with my DP and AP. I think that's critical and my relationship with the Board. And the local schools' cluster, those sorts of things.*

The support of the Board and fellow professionals were also felt by Rachel to be hugely important.

Ben related the various sources of support that he received in his role.

> *I'm supported by an extremely good administrative secretary who handles a lot of the nuts and bolts stuff. I'm supported by a very competent, loyal and conscientious DP... I'm also supported by being allowed a pretty free reign on what I go to for PD and the Board funding that. They are full of support there of PD. I'm also supported by the fact that the Board actually believe in me and have absolute confidence that what I'm doing will be effective.*

Robert also valued the support of colleagues within the school and his appraiser. He also included the importance of networking. He added:

> *And I think it is also important to regularly attend conferences etc so you get support from colleagues there by actually listening to them for a start and finding out what's happening within their schools.*

The range of ways and the range of people from whom she receives support to effectively lead learning were described by Sandy:

> *Definitely right across the staff, you know when we talked about that geese leadership, I think that we do have amazing professional learning dialogues. So great support from staff…*

Other principals, I'm part of a principals mentoring group. Over time some of the facilitators – AtoL facilitators and team solutions personnel at different times, you actually have some amazing conversations about learning. I've set up a mechanism that I go to supervision, so I go to, like I see an external supervisor so I go to supervision in school time, paid by the board and that's my time where I can share and it's confidential and discrete and I can just talk and talk and talk through issues.

The key findings related to the ways in which principals are supported to be effective leaders of learning are limited. The principals' replies did not deal specifically with the ways in which they are supported to be leaders of learning. They talked instead in general terms about how they are supported in the whole scope of their role, by the Board, colleagues or mentors.

Question 12 Responses - Ways in which principals may receive more support

The penultimate question of the interview schedule gave the principals the opportunity to suggest ways in which principals might receive more support to focus on leading learning. Whilst the principals were enthusiastic to share their views on ways in which support for principals might be improved, similarly to the previous question there was a weakness in the findings, since they all spoke in terms of support for the whole scope of their role and not specifically support to lead learning.

Belinda commented:

Working with a paid mentor each first time principal should have benchmarks to reach – in the same way as teacher registration works. The principal should choose the mentor from a group. There should be a proper funded programme. The First Time Principals programme should not be in the holidays.

Matthew made the same points as Belinda with the addition that there should be quarterly objectives for the first time principal to meet, that should all be documented. If at the end of the first year the principal was not succeeding there should be professional dialogue around this. Garth commented:

Principals need to be pro-active. They need to initiate networks and find professionals to offer support.

Ben's comment focused on how staff roles might further the principal

There should be more money for a walking D.P. for every school with more than 200 students on the roll. The D.P.'s role would be to manage the curriculum. Each school should have an executive school bursar for administrative tasks.

Rachel agreed with Ben that principals should have a personal assistant for administrative tasks saying that principals can get bogged down in paper work. Rachel also saw the need for a walking D.P. to be the curriculum leader. She saw this person as working alongside the principal analysing data and self-reviewing.

Ben also focused on how support agencies might be more effective:

Team solutions should be larger and better. They should "know their stuff" one or two years ahead of principals and provide curriculum models that schools can choose from rather than every school 're-inventing the wheel'. There should be pro-forma for many policies, for example, crisis management policy.

Robert commented on the Aspiring Principals and First-Time Principals programmes:

The Aspiring Principals and First Time Principals programmes were fantastic. Need to re-introduce the week's programme run by Principals Leadership Centre in Wellington. This provided opportunity for hard professional conversations.

Sandy felt very well supported. However she and Dee both felt that first time principals should have more training in areas of property and finance. Their experience is less in these areas compared to teaching and learning.

Question 13 Responses - Time spent focused on leading teaching and learning

Before closing each interview every principal was asked what percentage of their time they felt they spent leading learning. Table 4.2 provides the results.

Table 4.2 –   The percentage of time that principals believe they spend leading learning

Name	Percentage of time
Belinda	40%
Matthew	60%
Garth	60%
Ben	60%
Robert	40%
Rachel	20%
Sandy	60%
Dee	50%

It was interesting that all of the principals commented that they found this the most difficult question to answer. Interestingly each of them commented that it depends on what is meant by 'leading learning'. They all expressed dismay that they couldn't say that they gave leading learning a greater percentage of their time. Some consistency can be seen in half of the principals stating that they estimate that they spend 60% of their time leading learning.

Selected themes in relation to the expectations and the challenges presented to principals

A dominant theme of professional development concerning the expectations surrounding principals leading learning appears to result from the interview schedule's findings. This may be divided into firstly, the principals' self expectations for the need for their own on-going professional development to improve their pedagogical knowledge and secondly, the principals' expectation that they should ensure the professional development of their staff in order to improve student outcomes. Within the theme of professional development was also the expectation that principals believe that they need to ensure that schools follow a rigorous appraisal system in relation to supporting and ensuring effective professional growth. In relation to prioritising the focus on students' learning a significant theme was the importance of principals ensuring the collating and analysing of assessment data to understand the needs of individual students and to use this information to inform strategic planning. The most

significant challenge to principals in leading learning seemed to be pressures related to a huge workload and a lack of time due to the vastness of the whole scope of the role.

In the following chapter two dominant themes in relation to the expectations of principals leading learning will be discussed. Firstly, the need for principals to ensure targeted professional development both for themselves and staff. Secondly, the importance of collating and analysing assessment data to understand the needs of individual students and to use this information to inform strategic planning. Parity or otherwise between documentary statements and the principals' views will sought and discussed. The seemingly significant challenge to principals in leading learning of the pressure of workload will also be discussed, including the sub-themes of pressures due to lack of time and turnover of staff. Present support and suggestions for support will also be considered in relation to the significant challenge of principals' workload. Discussion throughout the chapter will be enriched through reference to the literature base.

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter is organised in three sections to reflect the research aims and questions and discusses:

- Clarification of the expectations held of primary principals to lead learning

- Challenges encountered by primary principals by the expectations related to leading learning

- Issues of support surrounding professional development

Themes associated with each of these sections are discussed further in relation to the literature base.

The expectations held of principals as leaders of learning

Within the context of educational leadership Robinson (2004) emphasises the increasing focus during the last decade on the need for researchers and educational leaders to focus on the educational practices that will improve the quality of teaching and learning. The findings from the individual interviews conducted for this study suggested that one of the most significant ways in which primary principals considered that they were required to show leadership of learning was through ensuring professional development both for themselves and others that would positively influence student outcomes. This they saw as needing to include a rigorous appraisal system. This was an extremely interesting finding since it agrees with the literature that suggests that principals' involvement in teacher learning and development has the greatest mean effect size against student outcomes (Robinson et al., 2007). Additionally, the significance of this expectation in relation to principals leading learning in a manner that has a positive impact on student attainment was evident in all of the documents analysed in this study. Another significant theme that emerged from the interview findings that was also prevalent in the documents included in the documentary research was that the principals saw the need as leaders to use student assessment data to inform strategic

curriculum planning. This also proved to be a very interesting finding since *Planning, Co-ordinating and Evaluating Teaching and the Curriculum* was the leadership dimension found to have the second greatest impact on student outcomes (Robinson, 2007). This dimension includes the principal ensuring alignment of the foci of the school curriculum and the school's strategic goals agreed through school-wide assessment.

Through the course of the literature review undertaken for this study it became apparent that considerable research has been completed surrounding the characteristics of direct and indirect educational leadership (Blase & Blase, 2000; Cardno & Collet, 2004; Robinson, 2006; Weber, 1987). All of these research studies discuss educational leadership that relates directly or indirectly to instructional practice. The two expectations that the principals interviewed in this study held as being the most significant in the facet of their role as leaders of learning are both examples of indirect educational leadership. Essentially, indirect educational leadership occurs when the outcome is achieved through others (Robinson, 2006).

Using professional development to lead learning

Evaluating and developing staff was one of the specific foci scrutinised in the documentary analysis for this study. In the documents analysed there are numerous references to the expectation that principals of primary schools will ensure the professional leadership and growth of themselves and others in order to enhance teaching and to improve student outcomes. The ministerial expectation seen in NAG 2 (i) states the requirement that schools have a programme for staff professional development that forms part of the school's strategic plan. The implication is for principals, working with the Board and the staff, to ensure the provision of effective professional development that positively impacts on student outcomes. In this regard principals are focusing on the educational leadership facet of leading learning. Similarly, one of the aims at the core of the KLP (2008) model is for principals to aim to ensure opportunities for staff to receive professional development to develop others as leaders in order to improve learning experiences and outcomes for all students. The KLP (2008) model asserts that through the effective development of staffs' strengths the development of the school will be sustained.

Professional development linking with staff appraisal emerged as a dominant theme when the participating principals in this study were asked how they believed they focused the school culture on teaching and learning. All of the principals agreed with the need for them as leaders to be actively involved in and to be seen to be participating in school-wide professional development that linked with the curriculum areas identified in the school's strategic plan as requiring development. This view is supported by Weber (1987) and Robinson (2006) and is seen in the model of effective instructional leadership suggested by Blase and Blase, (2000). All of these researchers support firstly, the need for educational leaders to talk with teachers to promote reflection and secondly, the need for leaders to promote professional growth amongst the staff. In the interview findings within this study Dee and Sandy referred to this as 'walking the talk'. Similarly to Garth, Robert and Ben they attended all staff professional development initiatives. As Ben commented, '…I will always go to curriculum PD with the staff….I want to be able to speak from an informed base.' Rachel explained that one of her main reasons for ensuring whole staff professional development was, '…they're all hearing the same message so it can be discussed, so it can be debated.'

The expectation for principals to model professional development by participating in professional learning and thus contributing towards establishing a culture of on-going learning is seen in the Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008) in the Areas of Practice of culture and pedagogy. The reason clearly emphasised in the area of pedagogy for principals promote and maintain a professional learning community is to benefit all students. The expectations stated in the Areas of Practice of culture and pedagogy found in the Professional Standards for Primary Principals are significant since as Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) state, in most New Zealand schools the professional standards are used as a generic job description, with the option of additional appendices regarding delegated tasks. This corresponded with the findings that all of the participating principals' job descriptions were based on The Professional Standards for Primary Principals and that two of the principals shared documents showing additional delegated tasks. However, whilst the majority of the principals in my study found the Professional Standards very useful, for example as Ben said '…a stake in the sand', three of the interviewees said that whilst they were aware of them as comprising of the basis of the expectations of their role they did not

use them for their own reflective practice. Garth spoke of their limitations in being that they were only as useful as the individual's understanding of them. '… If you're talking to a principal who's got no understanding of culture in their mind, then it's a waste of time putting you up against them.'

The importance of educational leaders ensuring on-going professional learning for themselves and other staff is found throughout the literature (Blase & Blase, 2000; Robinson, 2006; Southworth, 2004). All of the principals in my study agreed on the need for principals to engage in on-going professional learning. This was emphasised by Belinda. She said 'First of all I maintain my skills knowledge base so I am actively involved with professional development around learning.' This expectation is agreed in the Education Review Office in the New Zealand's document Evaluation Indicators for Education Reviews in Schools. In the Professional leadership Indicator Review Officers seek evidence regarding professional development being monitored and evaluated and evidence to show how targeted professional development meets the needs of the school as a whole. Such evidence would include meeting the needs of those in leadership roles and positively influencing student outcomes.

Matthew in commenting that effective pedagogy is achieved through the teaching staff being valued and supported commented, 'Professional development is the major part of that…It's teaching them (teachers) learning.' The need for school leaders to facilitate teachers' professional learning through modelling classroom practice, teacher monitoring and professional dialogue with reflection of classroom processes and students' learning with pedagogy at the core of teaching and learning is seen in Southworth's (2004) model. This is in agreement with the research findings of Blase and Blase (2000) who emphasise the need for principals to talk to their staff regarding reflective practice and also the need for principals to promote professional development amongst the staff.

Garth and Robert drew together professional development and the need as leader to ensure that a meaningful appraisal system is followed. As Robert commented '…providing an atmosphere in the school that promotes true reflective practice.' While Garth commented that the staff at Caswell School '…train each other in feedback….this is part of what we do through professional learning.'

The views given by the participating principals in my study with regard to their influence and involvement in professional development are supported in the research of Cardno and Collett (2004) undertaken in secondary schools in New Zealand. Their findings identified supporting professional development amongst others as an activity undertaken by principals as a form of indirect educational leadership. There is agreement here also with the research of Blase and Blase (2000) whose findings showed that teachers attending courses for professional development and encouraging reflective discussions with colleagues was encouraged by principals.

Using assessment data to inform strategic planning

Through analysis of the New Zealand National Education Guidelines the specific section relating to assessment practices in school and governmental expectations surrounding the realisation of these was found in NAG 1 (ii), where it states that the Board, through the principal and staff, is required to:

> *through a range of assessment practices, gather information that is sufficiently comprehensive to enable the progress and achievement of students to be evaluated…*

Reference to student assessment is repeatedly found through NAG 1 with the expectation that the principal will ensure the use of teaching and learning strategies that are informed from good quality assessment information. The importance of linking strategic planning including self-review to curriculum needs is documented in NAG 2 (i) and (ii). This focus is agreed in the KLP (2008) model. The expectation expressed in the model is that principals will provide strategic educational leadership that focuses the school community on improving a range of student outcomes. One of the key aims of the KLP (2008) model is to improve learning outcomes for all students.

All of the principals interviewed spoke of the need as leaders of learning to ensure that assessment data was used to inform curriculum strategic planning. As leaders of learning a common strategy used by the principals to prioritise focus on students' learning was to ensure the staff reflected on collated diagnostic data. Ben encapsulated this area of requirement of leading learning. He said that school-wide assessment was a driver in approaching learning

and that this informed the strategic plan. This aligns with Huber's (2004) view that effective professional leadership focuses on teaching and learning, using the school's goals as benchmarks. Similarly, Dee explained analyses of student learning data provided the support needed to improve outcomes and how data analysis provided the strategic focus of the school and identified growth areas.

Dee and Robert emphasised the professional discussions that took place around data analysis. The importance that the principals saw in reflective practice as part of their leadership in relation to teaching practice and student attainment was seen in Robert's comment, …' a large part of my week is filled up just with productive meetings about reflective practice.' This relates positively to Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) comment on the importance of principals being able to understand what constitutes quality teaching and to have the curriculum knowledge to know the appropriate content for students' learning programmes.

Garth spoke of a self-expectation that emphasised strategic leadership within the role of a leader of learning making reference to NAG 1. He spoke of identifying the school's strategic direction through the curriculum and employing personnel to achieve it along with targeted funding. ' You identify the strategic direction through the curriculum – where you want to go, what you want to achieve with review.'

Sandy encapsulated the link between strategic planning and improving student outcomes within the expectation for principals to lead learning. She said, '…Every board meeting I report on learning goals. Leadership meetings are driven by student outcomes. We look at evidence and data and where we are heading with our kids. The annual plan is full of student learning.'

The principals' approach to leading the assessment of data was that of indirect educational leadership as found in the research of Cardno and Collett (2004) through encouraging professional conversations and reflective practice regarding assessment and using the results of the collated data to inform strategic planning. The importance of using the evidence of the data gathered on school wide assessment to inform strategic planning was emphasised in the principals answers. Sandy brought this common agreement together in her reply…'evidence

based teaching…looking at our achievement data….saying where we are at and where do we need to be.'

The principals comments all showed a clear alignment with expectations found in The Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008) and Professional leadership Indicator used by Education Review Officers in New Zealand, surrounding the principals role in relation to ensuring the use of assessment data to improve teaching and student outcomes.

The Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008) under the Area of Practice of culture states the expectations that principals as professional leaders will:

- *In conjunction with the Board, develop and implement a school vision and shared goals focused on enhanced engagement and achievement for all students.*

This expectation is revisited in this document in the Area of Practice of pedagogy where it states that principals as professional leaders will:

- *Ensure that the review and design of school programmes is informed by school-based and other evidence*

and:

- *Analyse and act upon school-wide evidence on student learning to maximise learning for all.*

In the Professional leadership Indicator used by Education Review Officers when reviewing New Zealand schools it states that evidence of effective professional leadership that focuses on the use of assessment data to improve teaching and learning would be sought. Additionally, evidence of strategic planning through the alignment of resources, policies and practices that ensures quality teaching would be sought. All of these align with the principals expectations of their roles.

Challenges encountered

Duignan and Collins (2003) argue that educational leaders need the skills to meet the complex challenges and tensions of leadership. The argument that they present is that leading learning is one part of the 'holistic' picture of the task. The main challenge identified in the interview findings in my study encountered by principals with the expectation that they focus on lead learning, was for them to meet this expectation within the 'holistic picture of the task' and the considerable workload that this presents.

Workload

In addressing the over-arching question regarding how the leadership of learning challenged the principals as an expectation of their role, all of the principals alluded to the vastness of the role of principalship. The challenge that the vastness of the workload brings to principals is strongly evident in the literature (Bottery, 2004; Brooking et al., 2003; Cardno & Collett, 2004; Williams, 2003). As a result of their huge workload all of the principals had the perception that they did not devote enough time to leading learning. Robert said that leading learning *was* the biggest challenge of his role and to make sure that he was giving as much as possible of his time to lead learning.

Belinda, Ben, Robert, and Dee all cited the lack of time available as a challenge to them to create a learning environment in which all students will experience success. Dee described the workload as 'huge'. She said that there was, 'never enough time.' Ben and Dee stated that lack of time presented the biggest challenge to them in focusing the school culture on learning and teaching. Ben explained that what he regarded as administrative tasks are all taking him away from spending time in the classroom. Ben's frustration was evident in his remark, 'It's all the admin – plain admin!' In agreement with Ben, Robert spoke of easily getting 'stuck' on administrative tasks that he felt impinged on his time to lead learning. This view is supported by Bennett's (1994) research who argues that principals feel frustrated because time given to administrative tasks lessens their time to focus on learning and teaching. When commenting that the main challenge for her was balancing her time in order to show commitment to leading learning Belinda said, 'Time, making time and balancing your week…' This comment expresses the challenge to principals that is widely agreed in the

literature (Bennett, 1994; Cardno & Collett, 2004; Fullan, 2008) that school self-management has brought a greater workload for principals. This picture is reinforced through Hodgen and Wylie's (2005) research findings that state that fifty-nine percent of the principals involved in their study described the impact on them of the lack of time to focus on teaching and learning as high.

 All of the principals expressed the expectation that they should keep up to date in their own pedagogical knowledge in order to effectively lead learning. This is supported in the literature (Robinson, 2007) in discussing the five leadership dimensions identified in the BES where principal promoting and participating in teacher learning and development was found to have most impact on student outcomes. However, many of the principals spoke of the challenge of finding time to keep up to date with the latest pedagogical practices. Describing the challenge Ben commented, '…a challenge is just keeping yourself up-to-date with what is actually good…and having a bit of depth to your understanding…' The reality of the challenge was also evident in Rachel's remark, 'When I did my papers I did it on top of and it just about drove me crazy when I did that small principalship.'

Turnover of staff

A sub-theme to emerge through the individual interviews was the challenge that principals experienced in leading learning as a result of frequent changes of staff. This is seen in Matthew's comment, 'We've had nine changes this year so consistency of staffing is a real problem.' The challenge presented to principals as leaders of learning, by frequent changes in staff may be linked to principals being expected to ensure professional growth across the staff. Matthew explained that sustaining a school-wide teaching philosophy was a challenge when there was a frequent turnover of staff.

Frequent changes in staff may also present a challenge to principals in leading learning in relation to curriculum strategic planning. As Garth commented, having identified the school's strategic direction one component of achieving the strategic goals is targeting staff to achieve them.

In focusing the school culture to enhance learning and teaching Garth linked the challenge of inducting new staff into the school culture with the need to improve professional conversations and the need to build relationships, transparency and honesty. He elaborated that the challenge surrounding the induction of new staff '…is actually improving our conversation with each other…open, unfiltered conversations…it's the way we build relationships.'

It is difficult to discuss the challenge presented to principals as a result of staff turn-over without reference to building relationships. The need for healthy relationships is viewed by Odhiambo (2007) as being central to school improvement while the findings of Bryk and Schneider (2002) showed a strong link statistically between relational trust and student outcomes. However, this is not a theme to be furthered in this discussion.

Support issues

The findings of the individual interviews in relation to the support that principals receive to lead learning and suggestions for what support they might receive were limited. This was because the principals responded in general terms, with reference to support of their whole role and not solely support in the facet of leading learning. However, some correspondence may be seen in the principals' broader replies regarding what types of support are constructive to their role with the views found in the literature. All of the principals appreciated the importance of their own on-going professional development. As Cardno (2005) observed, the increased focus on improving schools and student attainment has included the development of educational leaders.

All of the principals interviewed appreciated the role that a mentor can play in facilitating professional growth. However, they did not detail exactly what they saw as the role of the mentor. They did not speak specifically in terms of a developmental mentor such as suggested by Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) in the Integrated Appraisal Process Model. This may be identified as a gap between the literature and the information given by the principals. The principals spoke of the importance of the professional learning to be gained through performance appraisal. This is in agreement with Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) who emphasise that since the principal has the greatest single impact on the performance of the

school, the importance of effective principal appraisal is crucial. However, only one principal mentioned the term 'coaching' and there was no detail in this reply regarding a coaching leadership model (Robertson, 2005) as a way to complete appraisal.

Several of the participating principals spoke positively of the support that they received through the First Time Principals Programme in New Zealand. The research of Blase and Blase (2000) sees the need for principals and aspiring principals to receive training in how to develop professional dialogue and reflective practice. This view is broadly agreed in the literature (Robinson et al., 2008; Southworth, 2005). The First Time Principals Programme aims to provide first time principals with the means through self assessment to reflect on their own abilities and those required to make effective leaders of learning. Dee and Sandy were the only principals who expressed less concern with receiving support regarding their role as a leader of learning. Instead they focused on the wish to have had more support in the early stages of their principalship in the areas of finance and property as part of their wider role. This stemmed from their belief that they had experience in teaching and learning and that they felt confident to lead this focus.

With regard to on-going support for principals Belinda's comment regarding the challenge of finding effective professional development is pertinent. Along with the challenge of finding the time she remarked '…it's about finding quality professional development.'

The over –riding difference to be found amongst the principals replies surrounding present and future support and the literature was that the literature is specific in its terminology around support, whereas the principals replies were more vague in their terminology. Belinda spoke of 'mentoring groups' which is not referred to in mentoring and coaching models.

The principals were divided in their views regarding what kind of practical support they would wish for. Ben and Rachel prioritised having a walking Deputy Principal as a desired support, to take some of the workload. Whereas, Belinda, Matthew and Robert focused on programmes of support and opportunities for their own professional development. Whilst the principals' replies around support issues were general and specific to leading learning it may

be construed that through receiving general support they might have more time to devote to leading learning.

The final chapter presents the conclusions of the research in which recommendations and potential areas for further research are addressed.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In researching the principal's role through documentary analysis and the perceptions of the principals given in individual interviews I have reached two conclusions. Firstly, that the principal's role has the dual function of focusing on leading learning and being a general manager. Secondly, that the leading learning function is still surrounded by some confusion for principals.

The principal's dual role

The expectation that the principal's role as educational leader includes the dual functions of focusing on leading learning and also ensuring the smooth daily operational running of the school is confirmed in the documents that were analysed for this research study. The duality of the role is embedded in the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) 1-6 in that along with the areas of curriculum in NAG 1 and self-review in NAG 2, they also hold expectations of the principal in the areas of personnel, finance and property, health and safety, and legislation. The duality of the principal's role in this regard is also clearly evident in the KLP (2008) model that states, 'As well as being pedagogical leaders, principals are responsible for the day-to-day management of a broad range of policy and operational matters, including personnel, finance, property, health and safety, and the interpretation and delivery of the national curriculum.' The Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008) document that has been shown through discussion in this study to closely align with the KLP (2008) model and to form the basis of all of the job descriptions of the principals interviewed in my study, holds the expectation of the dual role of principalship. In scrutinizing The Professional Standards for Primary Principals the facet of leading learning was specifically analysed. However, in the Area of Practice within the Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008) entitled 'systems', the expectation is for the principal to show leadership that results in the effective day-to-day operational running of the school and effective management of finance, personnel, property and health and safety systems. Thus the expectation of the

duality of the principal's role is highlighted in the Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008).

The expectation of the duality of the principal's role is also evident in the job description of the principal of Caswell School who was interviewed as part of my research where it states,

> The Principal is accountable to the Board of Trustees for the effective operation of the school. This includes the overall management and professional leadership of the school and the implementation of the aims and objectives of the school charter through school policies and programmes. (Principals' Chief Executive Job Description, Appendix 5).

The dual expectations of the principal's role are also evident in the list of delegated tasks provided by the principal from Langland School who participated in my study. Incorporated in the expectations of his Board of Trustees is the statement that he is responsible for curriculum management, followed by a raft of delegated tasks that are listed as contributing to the operational running of the school. Examples of these tasks are:

- Oversight and management of emergency procedures, pandemics and initial management of a crisis;

- Submitting applications for funds, sponsorship or other monies;

- Day to day management of the school property including approval for access to school buildings outside of school hours.

Of the six Evaluation Indicators for Education Reviews in Schools in the domain of Governing and Managing the School, the expectation of the duality of the role of principalship is clear. Whilst the 2009 Professional Leadership indicator focuses on the expectations held for the principal surrounding leading learning the other indicators are concerned with the operational running of the school. Their focus is upon day-to-day management, school-wide planning, review and development, resource management, and personnel management that are all clearly operational management functions.

The responses of the principals who were interviewed for my study strongly concurred with the literature (Bennett, 1994; Brooking et al., 2003; Cardno & Collett, 2004) that the primary principal's role is a dual role, comprising of leading learning and leading and managing the daily operational running of the school. The findings from the responses to the question that asked them to describe the whole scope of their role showed that they all saw the role as vast and that it involved being a leader of learning and a general manager. The tasks that they included within these roles of being a leader of curriculum initiatives and sustaining the school vision and strategic plan and also working on areas of finance, property, legislation, and health and safety align with the expectations of the documents analysed for this study. The duality of the role was emphasised by the principals who were interviewed when I asked each of them to consider the key expectations of their role. The findings again showed an emphasis on the dual functions of leading learning and effectively managing the school.

The overwhelming challenge experienced by all of the principals in this study was the vastness of their workload. As a result of the demands of the expectations of meeting the dual role of leading learning and managing the school at a daily operational level all of the principals interviewed in my study believed that they did not give as much of their time as they felt they should to leading learning. They explained that the need to complete administrative tasks allowed less time than they would desire to focus on leading learning. The challenge for principals is that as educational leaders they are expected to focus their leadership practice on leading learning to improve student outcomes yet also complete the administrative tasks of a general manager. The considerable workload of principals was a dominant theme found in the literature (Bottery, 2004; Fullan, 2008; Hodgen & Wylie, 2005). The research of Brooking et al., (2003) suggested that an increase in workload and time taken by principals on administrative tasks at the expense of leading learning, has significantly contributed to the accepted crisis in New Zealand schools with regard to the preparation, recruitment, professional development and retention of principals.

The research of Brooking et al., (2003) showed that many first-time principals in New Zealand are leaving the job because of a perceived low level of support. A considerable amount of literature is available surrounding support initiatives specifically for principals in

the leading of learning (Robinson et al., 2008). The cyclical Integrated Appraisal Process Model suggested by Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) aims to address principals' professional development along with accountability. The First Time Principals Programme focused on the need for principals to be helped to develop skills of reflection, self-assessment and critical thinking to lead learning. However, the principals who were interviewed as part of my research provided answers that focused on support that they might receive in performing the whole scope of their role, rather than specifically support for leading learning. This presented as a limitation of the findings surrounding the principals' views on support for specifically leading learning. Nonetheless, I suggest that the inference may be taken that if principals received more support in the whole scope of their role and its dual functions they would be able to devote more time to focusing on leading learning, an aim which they all expressed as desirable.

The meaning of leading learning

Many different forms of terminology were found to define leading learning in the literature reviewed for this research study. Those specifically scrutinised within the documentary analysis undertaken for my research were professional leadership, educational leadership, curriculum leadership, and pedagogical leadership. However, additional terminology was evident in the literature base for the study. Blase & Blase (2000) used the term instructional leadership, while Southworth (2004) referred to learning centred leadership. Various terminology was also found to imply a focus on leadership. Those referred to in the documents scrutinised for this study were strategic planning, distribution of leadership, evaluating and developing staff. There is alignment between these terms implying a focus on leadership in the documents that were analysed; the leadership dimensions shown to have the greatest impact on student outcomes (Robinson 2007) of the principal promoting and participating in teacher learning and development and ensuring the alignment of the curriculum to school goals; and the expectations that the principals who were interviewed in my study held as being the key expectations to leading learning. These key expectations were that principals should use professional development to lead learning and to be actively involved themselves in whole staff professional development as well as their own distinct

professional learning and also ensure that assessment data is used to inform strategic planning.

There appears to be agreement between these views expressed by the principals in the study and the documents that were analysed surrounding the key expectations held of the principal as a leader of learning. In the summary of the messages to the principals and boards common key expectations were identified from the government and the Ministry of Education relating to the expectations of the principal's role as a leader of learning. The Areas of Practice of culture and pedagogy within the Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008) that state what is expected of principals in the facet of leading learning were shown to be based on the KLP (2008) model. Both of these documents were found to align with the expectation stated in NAG 1 that principals will ensure that teaching and learning strategies will be developed that result in improved student outcomes. Alignment was also found with aspects of self-review found in NAG 2 with the expectation that principals will lead strategic planning that provides effective professional development that has a positive impact on student attainment. In the Professional Leadership Indicator it was apparent that Review Officers on visiting schools look for evidence of principals' professional leadership of strategic curriculum planning and professional development that leads to improved teaching and learning. All of the principals that were interviewed for my study identified these expectations as paramount in effectively leading learning. Since their job descriptions were based on the Professional Standards for Primary Principals (2008) there was close alignment between the documented expectations and the principals' expectations of the role of leading learning. These key expectations were also identified in the additional job descriptions provided by two of the principals interviewed for this study.

However, a dilemma is also presented. Interestingly, in answering the first question of the interview schedule when asked to describe the whole scope of their role, the principals all answered with certainty that they were 'leaders of learning'. Yet, having progressed through the interview questions and having arrived at the final question that required the principals to consider what percentage of their time they would estimate they spent leading learning they all appeared quite uncertain and confused. Many of them commented that they found it the

hardest question of the interview to answer. Without exception each commented that it depends what was meant by 'leading learning'. Confusion and a lack of clarity was apparent.

Recommendations

Through the course of this research study the need for clarity around the term 'leading learning' has become more apparent. A recommendation is that primary principals in New Zealand receive opportunities for professional development in order to clarify what is meant by 'leading learning'.

The recommendations resulting from the research are targeted for two specific audiences: the Ministry of Education in New Zealand and primary principals.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education

In proposing these recommendations it is recognised that the KLP (Ministry of Education, 2008) provided the starting point for The Professional Leadership Strategy (PLS) in New Zealand. The stated intention is that this strategy will "…provide a plan that is intended to strengthen and support leadership in New Zealand schools over the next three to five years" (KLP, Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 24).

In agreement with the literature (Hodgen & Wylie, 2005) this research study showed that principals need greater support in their role. The vastness of the workload of principalship requiring principals to meet the dual functions of the role was a strongly significant finding. It is suggested that those involved in providing leadership programmes would benefit from looking at the results of the research. The recommendations for those bodies are:

1. All primary principals need professional development concerning what it means to lead learning.

2. All primary principals need the staffing to help them to cope with the dual role of principalship, so that they may devote more time to leading learning.

3. Professional development that searches for the meaning of the leading of learning should be provided for aspiring, new and experienced principals.

Recommendations to primary principals

The main recommendation suggested to primary principals is that they are pro active in seeking their own on-going professional development. During the course of the interviews all of the principals emphasised the importance of sustaining their own professional learning. While some commented that it was difficult to find 'quality' professional development, only two principals focused on the need for principals to be more pro active in gaining it.

Future research

There were limitations in the field investigation comprising solely of self-reported views gathered only through interviews with principals. The suggestion is that further qualitative research is undertaken of a longitudinal nature whereby principals are shadowed and observed throughout their daily routine so that observations can be made regarding how principals lead learning in practice. This could specifically examine what professional development principals receive in practice, in order to show effective leadership in the leadership dimensions identified in the Best Evidence Synthesis (2009) as having the greatest impact on student outcomes. The findings of such research might then be utilised to contribute to professional development for principals surrounding the meaning of leading learning.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Participant Information Form

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

My name is Maggie Ogram. I am currently enrolled in the Masters in Educational Leadership and Management degree in the School of Education at Unitec New Zealand and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of my project is to investigate the challenges for principals in medium-size primary schools with the expectation that they lead learning.

I request your participation in an individual face to face interview, to last up to one hour. The data will be recorded using a digital recorder. You will have the opportunity to check the transcript of your interview if you so wish and to make changes up to two weeks from the date of the interview. All data will be analysed and stored for a minimum of five years, in my principal supervisor's office. Only the supervisor and I will have access to the data.

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the Thesis. The results of the research activity will not be seen by any other person in your organisation without the prior agreement of everyone involved. You are free to ask me not to use any of the information you have given up to two weeks after the interview, and you can, if you wish, ask to see the Thesis before it is submitted for examination.

I hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find your involvement interesting. If you have any queries about the research, you may contact my principal supervisor at Unitec New Zealand.

My supervisor is Professor Carol Cardno   phone 815 4321 or email c.cardno@unitec.ac.nz

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2009 - 945)

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Unitec
NEW ZEALAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka

CONSENT FORM – Primary School Principals

TO: Maggie Ogram

FROM:

DATE:

RE: The expectation and the reality: The challenges for principals leading learning
       in middle-sized primary schools.

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project for
the Master Degree in Educational Leadership and Management. I have had an
opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither
my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports, and that
I may withdraw myself or any information I have provided for this project without
penalty of any sort for up to two weeks after the date of the interview.

I agree to take part in this project.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2009 - 945

**This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date).
If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may
contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues
you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the
outcome.**

Appendix 3 - Interview Questions

1. Please describe the whole scope of your role as a principal.

2. What do you see as the key expectations of the role?

3. How are these expectations documented?

4. How do you prioritise focus on the students' learning? I am going to ask you questions on the new Professional Standards – read through the standards one at a time.

5. Thinking about the first Professional Standard - what do you do to focus the school culture on learning and teaching? What challenges you in that?

6. Thinking about the second Professional Standard - what do you do to create a learning environment in which there is an expectation that all students will experience success in learning? What challenges you in that?

7. Moving on to the third Professional Standard - how do you develop and use management systems to support and improve student learning outcomes? What challenges you in that?

8. Finally the last Professional Standard surrounding partnerships and networks - how do you strengthen communication and relationships to improve learning outcomes? What challenges you in that?

9. What use do you get from the Professional Standards?

10. How does the leadership of learning challenge you as an expectation of your role?

11. In what ways are you supported to be an effective leader of learning and from whom?

12. How do you suggest that primary principals may receive more support to effectively lead learning?

13. What percentage of your time do you spend leading learning?

Appendix 4 - Professional Standards for Primary Principals

Areas of practice	Professional Standards
CULTURE Provide professional leadership that focuses the school culture on enhancing learning and teaching.	- In conjunction with the Board, develop and implement a school vision and shared goals focused on enhanced engagement and achievement for all students. - Promote a culture whereby staff members take on appropriate leadership roles and work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning. - Model respect for others in interactions with adults and students - Promote the bicultural nature of New Zealand by ensuring that it is evident in the school culture. - Maintain a safe, learning-focused environment. - Promote an inclusive environment in which the diversity and prior experiences of students are acknowledged and respected. - Manage conflict and other challenging situations effectively and actively work to achieve solutions. - Demonstrate leadership through participating in professional learning.
PEDAGOGY Create a learning environment in which there is an expectation that all students will experience success in learning.	- Promote, participate in and support ongoing professional learning linked to student progress. - Demonstrate leadership through engaging with staff and sharing knowledge about effective teaching and learning in the context of the New Zealand curriculum documents. - Ensure staff members engage in professional learning to establish and sustain effective teacher / learner relationships with all students, with a particular focus on Māori students. - Ensure that the review and design of school programmes is informed by school-based and other evidence. - Maintain a professional learning community within which staff members are provided with feedback and support on their professional practice. - Analyse and act upon school-wide evidence on student learning to maximise learning for all students with a particular focus on Māori and Pasifika students.

Areas of practice	Professional Standards
SYSTEMS Develop and use management systems to support and enhance student learning.	• Exhibit leadership that results in the effective day-to-day operation of the school. • Operate within board policy and in accordance with legislative requirements. • Provide the Board with timely and accurate information and advice on student learning and school operation. • Effectively manage and administer finance, property and health and safety systems. • Effectively manage personnel with a focus on maximising the effectiveness of all staff members. • Use school / external evidence to inform planning for future action, monitor progress and manage change. • Prioritise resource allocation on the basis of the school's annual and strategic objectives.
PARTNERSHIPS and NETWORKS Strengthen communication and relationships to enhance student learning.	• Work with the Board to facilitate strategic decision making. • Actively foster relationships with the school's community and local iwi. • Actively foster professional relationships with, and between colleagues, and with government agencies and others with expertise in the wider education community. • Interact regularly with parents and the school community on student progress and other school-related matters. • Actively foster relationships with other schools and participate in appropriate school networks.

Job Description for principal of Caswell School

Principal's Chief Executive Job Description

Primary Objectives:
1. To provide professional leadership in an environment which promotes effective learning, teaching and personal development.
2. To ensure that high quality education is delivered to the children.
3. To ensure that children take advantage of their learning opportunities.

Responsible for:
> The Principal is accountable to the Board of Trustees for the effective operation of the school. This includes the overall management and professional leadership of the school and the implementation of the aims and objectives of the school charter through school policies and programmes.

Functional Relationships with:
> Children, staff, parents and caregivers, Education and other Agencies, Board of Trustee Members, Other community members and groups.

Delegations:
1. To be responsible for the day-to-day management of the school.
2. The Principal will work with and be accountable to the Board.
3. To participate in all NAG roles and to provide strategic and professional advice.
4. To be responsible for the implementation of job descriptions.
5. To be responsible for initiating School Wide Timetables and Term Calendars.
6. To oversee the strategic development of ICT throughout the school.
7. To ensure that adequate communication procedures are maintained within the school.
8. To follow up on all behaviour management and staff support programmes.
9. To provide leadership for curriculum implementation and development according to the strategic plan.
10. To ensure all teachers set goals and develop teaching programmes in line with national guidelines, the schools charter and policies.
11. To oversee the staff professional learning programmes.
12. To ensure appraisals are carried out on all staff members and to be responsible for the appraisals of the leadership team.
13. In conjunction with the BOT to be responsible for the appointment of all staff.
14. To be responsible for the development of effective school wide assessment procedures for identifying barriers to learning.
15. To be responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees on curriculum development and student achievement.
16. To develop and maintain systems for reporting to parents on the progress and achievements of students.
17. To oversee the Korean Student Programme
18. To oversee the After School Care Programme.

Job Description for principal of Langland School

a) Curriculum management
b) Approving trips out of the school, which are of 1 day or less duration.
c) Employment of
   - non-teaching staff
   - part-time scale A teaching staff (with a senior staff member)
   - scale A teaching staff and senior managers (with a Board representative)
   - staff required for long term relieving and fixed term positions.
d) Management of C.R.T. (Classroom Release Time)
e) Managing staff performance including establishing and implementing the Performance Management system.
f) Grant and/ or require the following:
   discretionary leave of up to two weeks
   medical certificate for an absence on sick leave in excess of five days
g) Recommending teachers for registration.
h) Providing mandatory reports to the Teachers Council as necessary.
i) Receiving and investigating complaints, apart from those received in writing by the Board.
j) Implementing competency and/or disciplinary procedures in accordance with the relevant Collective Agreement.
k) Conduct disciplinary investigations on behalf of the Board and to issue disciplinary sanctions up to and including a final written warning.
l) Privacy Officer.
m) Approval to enrol residency, mainstream and international students and determining entries onto ENROL when a pupil transfers to another school.
n) Student welfare, including monitoring attendance, behaviour management, access to students during school time, the promotion of pupils, safety and allegations of abuse.
o) Investigating accidents incurred by pupils and staff. Reporting to OSH.
p) Administering medication to pupils at school.
q) Oversight and management of emergency procedures, pandemics and initial management of a crisis.
r) Standing down pupil/s for continual or gross misbehaviour
s) Approval to keep animals in the school.
t) Engagement of contractors within budget
u) Authorizing expenditure/payments within budget, additional bankings and short-term investments. (NB: the principal is one of three signatories of the school's bank accounts – 2 signatures required for any cheque)
v) Submitting applications for funds, sponsorship or other monies.
w) Initial investigation of allegations of fraud.
x) Approval to dispose of school records in accordance with Ministry of Education guidelines.
y) Day to day management of the school property including approval for access to school buildings outside of school hours.
z) Signing of declarations on behalf of the Board in relation to information required by the Ministry of Education, Multiserve, overseas students or local authority.

Appendix 6 - Governing and Managing the School (PROCESS INDICATORS)

Indicator	Rationale	Evidence could include	Research information
Professional leadership	Effective leaders can play a key role in articulating a vision and direction for the school. Professional leadership is not the role of the principal alone: leadership roles occur school-wide and contribute to school performance.	Professional leadership is focused on learning, including the use of assessment data to improve teaching. There is an alignment of resources, policies and practices to ensure quality teaching in classrooms across the school. The school has an inclusive culture and partnerships for learning with parents. The school has collaborative decision-making processes within a culture of ongoing learning. Leadership is monitored and evaluated effectively and the results are used for overall improvement and staff development. The board provides access to effective and well-targeted professional development that balances the needs of the national curriculum, the school as a whole, and the needs of the people in leadership roles.	Links have been made (Lingard & Mills, 2002) between effective schools and leadership that: • is supportive of teachers and students; • encourages innovation and risk taking; and • maintains a strong focus on student learning. Evidence from many school effectiveness studies demonstrates that strong, positive leadership is an important contributory factor to school effectiveness (Harris, 1999). While there has been a substantial focus on effective leadership in the effective schools research literature, this is not always linked to student achievement. In the 1991 IEA Reading Literacy study, students achieved significantly more highly when their school principals were involved in the evaluation and development of their teachers' teaching of reading.
Day-to-day management	A school that is well managed is likely to use resources more effectively in support of its goals.	Day-to-day management is efficient and appropriately delegated. Mäori staff have the opportunity to be involved in day-to-day management, especially issues relating to Mäori families. Where the size of the school permits, those with high level strategic responsibilities are not diverted by excessive involvement in day-to-day matters. There is appropriate and well-targeted use of technology in supporting robust day-to-day management practices.	

		The management of the school has good processes for maintaining effective relationships with other agencies and community groups that enable the school to draw on external resources and expertise where appropriate.	
School-wide planning	Effective planning helps to provide overall directions for the school, and ensure that school activities are carried out in support of these directions. New planning and reporting requirements for schools have recently been introduced in the Education Act.	Strategic and other planning is based on the evaluation and use of student achievement data. The board and management have a robust and consultative process for developing a strategic intent and this process is followed through. The board and management have a process for planning the deployment of resources on an annual basis in a way that is compatible with the broader strategic intent. There are processes for assessing likely future changes and trends and incorporating these assessments into the planning process. The school's planning includes goals and targets relating to Mäori students. There is a process for assessing and managing risks, especially health and safety risks. There are processes for making timely decisions on long lead-time projects, such as the provision of teaching accommodation.	Research has shown that planning can lead to improved performance and service quality (La Vigna, Willis, Shaull, Abedi & Sweitzer, 1994).
Review and development	Self review is a key mechanism through which schools can gather and analyse information on the effectiveness of what they do and use the	The school uses student achievement data (including separated Mäori and Pacific student achievement data) as an explicit basis for its self review, and analyses changes over time. Other relevant data such as student and parent perceptions of the usefulness of what is taught, and student retention and destination data, are also used where appropriate.	McBeath, Boyd, Rand & Bell (1996) found that there are considerable benefits to be gained from schools evaluating their own experiences, successes and priorities for future development.

		The school collects, analyses and uses valid and reliable information for self review purposes. The school adopts a coherent approach to self review that focuses on strategic planning, and incorporates review of policies, plans and programmes, curriculum review and staff appraisal. The school uses the results of self review to feed into the planning process and contribute to educational improvement.	
results to improve the quality of their policies and programmes.			
Resource management	This indicator contributes to the efficient use of resources for well-targeted programmes.	The board complies with required financial management processes (ERO's processes for checking these are set out in the Board Assurance Statement). The board has a robust process for well targeted budgeting. Resources are allocated appropriately to meet the identified needs of Mäori students and to support the promotion of the bicultural development of all students.	Research has found that effective schools tend to manage their resources to the advantage of the whole school and to the advantage of all students (Harris, Jamieson & Russ, 1995).
Personnel management	The quality of teaching has a key role in influencing student achievement. The quality of a school's personnel management is likely to influence positively the recruitment, retention and development of high quality teachers.	The board complies with required personnel management processes (ERO's processes for checking these are set out in the Board Assurance Statement). Teaching throughout the school is effectively evaluated and monitored and the results are used for overall improvement and staff development. The board provides access to effective and well-targeted professional development programmes that balance the needs of the national curriculum, the school as a whole and the individual teacher. The school has capabilities and competencies among staff that are appropriate to the needs of Mäori students. The board's appointment procedures are robust and fair.	Teacher professional development can vary widely in effectiveness. Evaluative evidence about the impact on junior students' achievement of professional development in the Numeracy Project and the 'Picking up the Pace' flexible literacy approach has shown marked and dramatic impacts on student achievement (Phillips, McNaughton & MacDonald, 2001). Research on professional development has identified that the characteristics of robust programmes are: • systematic identification of needs; • a focus on the reality of the classroom; • links to the gathering of high quality assessment data; • the use of action research (ie the embedding of professional development into normal practice); • a school-based approach fostering collaborative

		The school's induction procedures are of high quality.	practice; • good facilitation; • the involvement of school leadership; • involvement of the wider community; and • rigorous evaluation of programme effectiveness.