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How Secondary Principals View New Zealand's Leadership Preparation and Succession Strategies: Systematic professionalisation or amateurism through serial incompetence?

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ABSTRACT: Age demographics in the New Zealand education workforce require substantial numbers to fill leadership roles from 2010 when Baby Boomers will accelerate their retirement. Appropriate preparatory strategies would help ensure basic competency on being appointed. Effective succession strategies would help ensure ongoing professional development, organisational learning and systemic capacity building. One potentially helpful source concerning apt preparatory and succession strategies is the knowledge and experience of current practitioners. This research note reports the current attitudes and intentions of an opportunistic sample of 14 secondary principals towards preparing for, and succeeding into, educational leadership roles at different levels. The provisional and indicative data collected by survey suggest that New Zealand largely relies on educational leaders 'learning on the job' at team and executive leadership levels and then promoting them about the time they achieve competence. This suggests that phase one of the nation's leadership professionalisation strategy is based on serial incompetence. During phase two, the respondents reported their shallow and uneven access to a limited range of preparatory and succession learning opportunities for principals. This suggests that leadership professionalisation could be resulting in amateur capacity. Five issues identified for follow up research and leadership development policy include (a) catering for the diversity of career paths, (b) providing role-specific skills training by designation, (c) integrating skills development with deeper learning about leadership, (d) offering extrinsic motivators of engagement in leadership, and (e) the need for national investment in leadership development infrastructure that is coherent, career-related and evidence-based. The tentative findings suggest that New Zealand's new Professional Leadership Plan 2009–2010 may begin to meet many of the requirements for systematic professionalisation and challenge the traditions of amateurism through serial incompetence.

Practical and Theoretical Context

This is the first report of the National Review of Preparatory and Succession of Educational Leaders for Aotearoa/ New Zealand.[i] The review was triggered by the age demographics that

require substantial numbers to fill leadership roles in the period 2010 to 2020 when about 30% of teachers will retire (Ministry of Education, 2008b). One policy problem here is that the predictable, predicted and emerging crises in quality and quantity of supply of leaders (Brooking, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c) may result in a further worsening of the professionalisation of leaders in New Zealand school education, if the approach and levels of investment used in the past do not change. This article shows that the current attitudes and intentions of secondary principals point to the need for substantial and sustained policy development informed by research.

As in many other countries (Macpherson, 2009b), the level of investment in educational leadership preparation and succession in New Zealand has been piecemeal and parsimonious. Five outsourced and separate Ministry of Education provisions in recent years have included (a) preparatory skills short courses and networks for leaders, (b) a pilot preparatory programme for aspirant principals, (c) competency-related induction training for first-time principals, (d) on-line support for practicing principals, and (e) a week-long Principals' Development Planning Centre (PDPC) course for experienced principals.

The problems of quality and quantity in leader supply are not new to New Zealand. The Ministry of Education's *Background Report* (2007) to the OECD's Improving School Leadership (ISL) Project explained that the preparatory and professional development infrastructure for leaders traced from a Ministerial Taskforce (2003) that found that the supply of leaders was drying up. Salary units for management services were introduced. Regarding quality, in 2007 the then Labour Minister of Education called for the development of an indigenous policy of educational leadership; Kiwi Leadership for Principals (KLP). Consultations were used to collate 'expert' opinion concerning what should count as content in the KLP. It was declared that the KLP would be the basis for New Zealand's 'Professional Leadership Strategy' (PLS) for the next three to five years in school education (Ministry of Education, 2008a).

Fortunately, the Ministry had already commissioned a 'Best Evidence Synthesis' (BES) of the leadership of learning (Robinson, 2007). The BES relies heavily on a meta-analysis of 11 studies that measured the effect of educational leadership on student learning, although oddly, not on teacher learning, organisational learning or capacity building in education systems. More worrying, however, are the differences between the KLP and BES methodologies.

The development of the KLP relied on compounded personal experience and opinion, at best collated expertise, at worst advanced ideological agendas, but lacked the customary guarantees of rigour. It did not commission or draw evidence from non-experimental, descriptive or case control studies of leadership effects. Instead, it asserted coherence with the effects on leadership on student learning that had been estimated in the BES.

Leadership development strategies used in other countries indicate other limitations to the approach to leadership development used in New Zealand. For example, career-based learning frameworks for educational leadership commonly underpin provisions used at regional level (e.g. Cornwall, see Greenhalgh, 2009), at state level (e.g. Queensland, see Anderson et al., 2008), and at national level (e.g. England's National College of School Leadership, see Higham, Hopkins, & Ahtaridou, 2007). All of them conceptualise systematic and evidence-based leadership professionalisation from the classroom to system levels.

It might be timely for New Zealand to give greater weight to international leadership professionalisation strategies in education. There have been two major attempts to gather and

synthesise national case studies in recent years, with another unfolding. First are the *Background Report*s, case studies and recommendations of OCED's Improving Schools Leadership (ISL) policy research project (OECD, 2008). New Zealand participated but did not appear to apply the general findings. Even more detailed analyses were published in the *International Handbook on the Preparation and Development of School Leaders* (Lumby, Crow, & Pashiardis, 2008). The International Study of Principal Preparation (ISPP) has provided preliminary case studies and has foreshadowed international surveys of principals in their first three years of service (Webber, 2008), again with New Zealand participating. A recent literature review of leadership professionalisation strategies in education is also available (Macpherson, 2009b).

The planned professionalisation of leaders is a policy issue that could easily be overlooked in the haste to develop low cost solutions to the supply and quality crises long predicted in educational leadership in Australasia. To illustrate, Scott's (2003) education workforce projections in New South Wales showed about 75 per cent of secondary principals and about 60 per cent of primary principals would separate from the system in the 10-year period from 2003. The *Teacher Census* in New Zealand reported broadly similar patterns (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 5). *Teaching Australia* reiterated Scott's projections and the strategic implications of a growing shortfall in teaching and leadership numbers (Zammit et al., 2007). Dempster (2007) pointed out that the inadequate numbers coming forward to prepare for principalship and other school executive roles required an urgent systemic strategy of searching for 'the treasure within" the profession for its next generation of leaders.

Such a search, it had been demonstrated, requires a subtle understanding of the perspectives of aspirants (Lacey, 2002). It is strategically inappropriate for assistant principals in Victoria to neglect their own career planning in deference to the short-term needs of their schools (Thompson, 2009/10). Grooming leaders-in-waiting effectively, as Gronn (2007, p. 7) explained, requires a complex strategy that replenishes the pool of talented personnel, and needs to include the identification, preparation, selection and engagement, appointment, induction and on-going support of team, executive, school and system leaders. It is also suggested below that such a complex strategy needs to cohere with career-based leadership development policy in order to promote evidence-based practice related to student, teacher, organisational and systemic learning.

It is a major step forward that New Zealand's new *Professional Leadership Plan 2009–2010* (PLP) (Ministry of Education, 2009) now comprises learning objectives and opportunities in a career-related structure for middle and senior leaders, aspiring principals, first-time principals, and experienced principals, and moreover, focuses on the development of evidence-based educational leadership intended to improve educational achievement and social justice.

To clarify, middle and senior leaders are expected by the PLP to prepare as educational leaders in order to (a) implement National Standards in literacy and numeracy, (b) improve the achievement of every student with a particular focus on Maori, Pasifika, and students with special education needs, and (c) embed teaching practices which are culturally responsive and based upon the evidence of what improves outcomes for diverse students. The funded opportunities provided for these middle and senior leaders will include (a) study leave, prestigious awards, and sabbaticals, (b) within-school professional development (PD) in literacy, numeracy and curriculum, (c) management units, allowances, and release time, (d) leadership and management

advisers, (e) specialist classroom teachers, (f) online tools and resources through the Educational Leaders website, and (g) professional networks.

Aspiring principals are to be identified and developed for principal positions in hard-to-staff schools with a focus on developing Maori and Pasifika teachers as principals and to ensure a pool of quality applicants. The opportunities provided for aspiring principals will have the same profile as for middle and senior leaders with one difference. The National Aspiring Principals Programme will continue to be funded as a part of the PLP, and will provide professional learning nationally for up to 230 aspirants each year.

First-time principals (FTPs) are to be inducted into their role as educational leaders in order to (a) manage school operations effectively and efficiently, (b) lead change to create the conditions for effective teaching and learning for every student with a particular focus on Maori, Pasifika, and students with special education needs, and (c) engage with family and whanau to improve student outcomes. The funded opportunities provided for first-time principals will include (a) the First-time Principals Programme, (b) release days for primary FTPs to attend undergraduate university courses at U1 and U2 levels and achieve graduate status, as a part of their collective agreement, (c) regional office induction programme, (d) leadership and management support, (e) within-school professional development, (f) schooling improvement, (g) support for schools at risk, (h) online tools and resources through the Educational Leaders website, and (i) professional networks and management advice.

Experienced principals are to have their knowledge and skills further developed to lead change in order to create the conditions for effective teaching and learning, with a particular focus on (a) those who are leading initiatives to raise Maori achievement, (b) achieving measurable gains for all student groups in participating schools, and (c) engaging with family and whanau to improve student outcomes. The funded opportunities provided for experienced principals will include (a) sabbaticals and study awards, (b) within-school PD, (c) schooling improvement, (d) support for schools at risk, (e) professional learning groups, (f) online tools and resources through the Educational Leaders website, and (g) professional networks and management advice. The week-long PDPC for experienced principals was scrapped in late 2008 and its $2 million per annum budget redirected into the implementation of the Kiwi Leadership Framework and the BES (McGregor, 2008, paras 21-29), that is, to fund the PLP. This indicates that modest and 'steady state' funding of leadership professionalisation is to continue in New Zealand primary and secondary education.

The findings below can be used to examine the assumptions and scope of New Zealand's PLP, once the methodology has been explained to indicate limitations to interpretation.

Methodology

The preliminary research reported here was driven by a simple question; what do secondary principals regard as appropriate preparatory and succession strategies? A survey instrument was developed to relate career patterns to how respondents prepared for and succeeded into leadership roles, to gather their views on a few forms of provision offered in some other countries and to elicit suggestions. The structure of the instrument is evident in the presentation of data below.

An opportunistic sample was surveyed in June 2008 at the annual conference of a regional association of secondary principals. The purpose, process and objectives of the National Review were explained and the participants were invited to provide their views. All participated. The following sections summarise their responses, develop tentative propositions for further research into attitudes and intentions, and highlight issues for further policy research.

The 14 respondents comprised 11 male and three female currently serving secondary principals, two leading area schools. Two were aged 30-39 years, three were aged 40-49, seven were aged 50-59 years and two were over 60 years old. Nine self-classified as NZ European/ Pakeha and five as Maori, which gave disproportionate voice to the Maori principals. Three had completed a teaching diploma, four a teaching degree, six a postgraduate degree and one a doctorate. Their engagement in preparatory programmes for leadership had also varied considerably. Five had participated in the First Time Principals (FTP) Programme, two in the PDPC programme for experienced principals, and five had completed other unspecified preparatory programmes.

With the exception of ethnicity, these characteristics broadly match the characteristics of all secondary principals nationally regarding gender, age and qualifications (Ministry of Education, 2005, pp. 4-7). The size of the sample, however, determines that the findings can only be regarded as indicative.

Career and Leadership

The career paths of these 14 principals were very different. Five had less than four years experience as a (basic) Scale A teacher, five had served for 5-9 years, and four for 10-15 years before being promoted to a team leadership role. Eight of the 14 had served between 4-9 years as a team leader before moving onto executive or institutional leadership, two for 10-15 years, with another two serving 16+ years prior to advancement. Since only two had served less than four years as a team leader, most commonly as a head of department (HOD), it may be that boards of trustees are selecting principals who have completed at least five years in team and/ or executive leadership roles. In the absence of leadership qualifications, mandatory training, standards and performance evaluation data in New Zealand, boards apparently have to assume that the potential leadership competence of principals is indicated by reasonable periods of service at prior levels of leadership.

This degree of diversity of preparatory experiences and professional development, higher learning and career paths, reflected a long-term challenge to the FTP Programme (Robinson, Eddy, & Irving, 2006). The diversity implied the need to offer flexible preparatory and succession strategies that minimise the use of prerequisites, maximise the number of entry and exit points in training and higher education provisions, and to better integrate middle management responsibilities with stair-cased experiential and higher learning. The diversity also suggested that the criteria for promotion were not as standardised across schools or by role as they had supposed, potentially adding to the vulnerability of aspirants found in other research (Gronn & Lacey, 2004).

There were two different patterns of service of executive leaders found; ‘stepping stoning’ and ‘fast tracking’. Half the respondents had used senior management roles to ‘fast track’ into

principalships. They had been in such roles for less than five years before being promoted to principal, some with relatively short or no prior service as HODs. This 'fast tracking' may further intensify as the Baby Boomers begin to retire in large numbers from 2010, and the size of appointment pools in the cohorts aged 45-60 contracts (Galvin, 2006, p. 6).

The other half of the sample were time-serving 'stepping stoners'; four had served as executive leaders for 5-9 years, two for 10-15 years, and one for 16+ years, all with longer prior service as HODs. This second half of the sample also had longer periods of service as principals; three had been in the role less than four years, seven for 5-9 years, four for 10-15 years, and one for 16+ years.

In sum, while prior team and senior management service for more than five years appears to be a critical but insufficient condition to winning a secondary principalship, there is early evidence of two distinct career paths blending; the traditional 'time serving' being displaced more recently by 'fast tracking' associated with accelerating churn. This adds weight to Brooking's (2008b) findings.

When asked how many years to when they intend to retire, two indicated they that intended to retire in less than four years, five between 5-9 years, four in 10-15 years and two in 16+ years. Further research is needed to clarify the turnover dynamics that can be expected from 2010, given such intentions, although a lot depends on personal motives. To this end, respondents were asked about the main factors that would inform their decision about when to retire. Ten (34.5%) of the 29 references were to forms of job satisfaction, seven (24%) to health issues, seven (24%) to aspects of job performance, three (10%) to age, and one each (3% each) to timing and economic security issues.

It therefore appears likely that the decision to retire will largely be determined by personal views of job satisfaction, health and performance. These factors are all intrinsic in nature, that is, they trace to internal values and perceptions about self and service. This also implies that these respondents may be seeing themselves serving largely as self-determining leaders of self-managing schools, rather than as leaders serving a self-governing school community or as leaders serving in a national system of schools guided by electorally mandated education policies.

Such intimations of professional insularity may be a cultural artefact nurtured by the Tomorrow's Schools policy (Department of Education, 1989) which legitimated self-governance by school communities while actually enabling substantial degrees of self-management by principals. Further research should therefore examine such perceptions and attitudes at team, executive and institutional levels of leadership in order to better understand how preparation and succession strategies might better address national priorities.

Preparation for Leadership

The first issue explored concerning preparation was the process by which *potential leaders*, that is, teachers currently undecided about offering leadership, became *aspirant leaders*. The respondents were asked to recall the main factors that *discouraged* them from becoming an aspirant leader, when they were still potential leaders. Three references made were to excessive workloads, two to

self doubt, and one each to 'being responsible to a wide range of stakeholders', 'commitment to whanau [family] leadership', and 'being unsure about stress'.

When asked about the main factors that *encouraged* them, as potential leaders, to become aspirant leaders, the responses stressed four main attractors; becoming an educational leader (10 of 29, 34.5% of all references to factors), the challenge of leadership (10, 34.5%), engaging in positive leadership experiences (5 or 17%), and receiving positive feedback (4 or 14%).

These responses suggest that none of the respondents had encountered extrinsic and systemic efforts to identify potential leaders and to encourage them to become aspirants. Instead, the key motivators that triggered the aspiration to become leaders were, again, mainly intrinsic; the result of developing a personal commitment in response to a challenge, serendipitous opportunities to lead or receiving encouraging feedback. This suggests that a fresh national approach should emphasise extrinsic motivators.

The principals were then asked to recall the main methods they *actually* used, as aspirant leaders prior to appointment, to prepare for leadership. Five (25%) of the 20 references were about accumulating relevant experience by 'moving through the ranks'. Four (20%) referred to observing, engaging with or being mentored by 'proven leaders'. Four referred to relevant post graduate study. Three (15%) recalled effective professional development short courses. One respondent recalled the value of participating in the Aspiring Principals courses, another to the worth of a year spent in the Education Review Office, and two to making no preparation.

When asked how they might have prepared *better* as aspirant leaders, three referred to the effects of being mentored or networking with leaders, three referred to role-specific induction, one referred to access to a wider range of responsibilities, with single references to the need to prepare for managing the dynamics of relationships, communications, employment law and finances.

These patterns of response suggest the need for leadership development infrastructure that enables aspirant leaders to plan and accelerate their learning about leadership in a systematic manner. Pending further research, this infrastructure might provide and integrate mentoring and role-specific induction with higher learning related to pedagogical, curriculum and assessment leadership, as well as professional development in basic team management skills training.

The next pair of questions explored the main methods *actually* used to prepare for service as a team leader (department/area/year), and how each respondent could have prepared better. Of the 24 references to methods actually used, 11 (46%) were about idiosyncratic forms of 'learning on the job'. There were five references (25%) to opportunistic professional development, two instances of being mentored or working with leaders, two cases of postgraduate study, and three who recalled using no preparation methods. When asked how they might have prepared better for team leadership, six of the 13 suggestions made were for role specific professional development, three for planned and graduated experiences in team leadership, two for engagement in subject associations and professional learning circles, and one suggestion each for postgraduate study and having a mentor. Overall, the responses to these two items indicated a paucity of systematic support to help prepare for team leadership in middle management roles, and how much they would have appreciated the provision of professional development that enabled role-specific skills training and learning.

The respondents were asked to recall the main methods they *actually* used to prepare for executive leadership service as a member of a senior management team. Two respondents reported

never having been a member of a senior management team and one recalled making no preparation at all. Of the 24 references to actual methods, 13 (54%) indicated forms of prior management experience that had later and fortuitously proved to be helpful: having an executive position in a union or professional association; designing and running professional development on appraisal, collecting feedback and teacher support; serving on a board of trustees; 'moving through the ranks'; 'stepped into it'; and 'just by osmosis'. Most 'learned on the job'. There were five references to casual forms of mentoring, coaching or learning by 'working with leaders'. There were three references to systematic reading and postgraduate study, and three to participating in professional development courses focusing on leadership.

However, when these principals were asked how they could have prepared better for executive leadership service, four respondents indicated that they should have 'completed uni papers', 'pursued [a] degree', engaged in 'more professional reading' and joined 'more professional learning circles'. Two indicated forms of mentoring or coaching, and another to learning financial management. Overall, these patterns suggest that none of these principals had prepared systematically for an executive leadership role or had regarded it as their terminal career position. Pending further research, it also appears that they had realised in retrospect the limitations of 'learning on the job' and that systematic and advanced learning of functional management and executive leadership skills *prior* to appointment would have been very helpful.

With regard to methods they had actually used to prepare for institutional leadership, three of the 14 respondents reported that they had made no specific preparation, relied solely on past experiences or learned by 'stepping up' from small to larger scale positions. There was one reference to preparing for engagement in school governance, by becoming a representative on a board of trustees. There were five references to forms of mentoring, coaching and consulting other principals. The biggest change to the profile of preparatory experiences at institutional leadership level, compared to others, was seen in the seven references to post graduate study and 11 references to participating in professional development short courses (e.g. 'beginning principals week', 'PDPC', 'Wolf Fisher', and 'Aspiring Principals'). Learning 'institutional leadership' was significantly less serendipitous than learning team or executive leadership.

When asked how they might have *prepared better* for institutional leadership, the responses focused on the gaps in or limits to current provisions. Two respondents called for intensive induction and financial management training. Four would have appreciated more support contact, recognition, encouragement and mentoring from 'critical friends', implying that institutional leadership had proved surprisingly lonely. Another four reported the need for more systematic and ongoing learning in the role, for example, by completing the First-Time Principals Programme *prior* to postgraduate study and more advanced learning.

The overall pattern of these responses suggests that preparation and succession into secondary principalships from team leadership, or more commonly, from executive leadership, is seen to be far better supported than the move from potential to aspirant leader, from aspirant into team leadership, or from team leadership into executive leadership. The greater availability of role-specific short courses for principals appears to facilitate greater participation and attend to many induction needs.

On the other hand, the helpful nature of these learning experiences related to principalship uncovered hitherto latent perceptions of deficiencies in preparatory provisions at earlier levels.

The professional development opportunities these principals experienced and valued also appear to create a partially-satisfied demand for wider and deeper learning as well as a taste for recurrent and critical reflection on the challenges of institutional leadership. There also appeared to be a positive correlation between participating in mentoring and in postgraduate learning, and the value ascribed to such forms of participation. The degree and implications of correlation need follow up research.

The general impression gained by this preliminary study of national preparatory strategies for educational leadership experienced by 14 practitioners is that provisions were experienced unevenly, as having little coherence or depth, as being serendipitously accessed, and being less responsive to the diversity of career paths than they might be. When these uneven and shallow patterns of leadership preparation are combined with accelerating 'fast tracking,' it suggests that competence and confidence in each leadership role will barely be achieved before promotion to the next level occurs, limiting leadership professionalisation to amateurism through serial incompetence.

Attitudes to Preparatory Strategies

Respondents' attitudes to seven preparatory strategies selected from those trialled in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia (Dempster, 2007) were measured by asking them to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a proposition, and to comment if they wished to explain their decision. None of the respondents took the opportunity to add any propositions. Table 1 provides the propositions provided and the frequency of respondents' ratings.

The small numbers did not warrant the calculation of means. A notable feature of the table was the bimodal distribution of responses to the first four items, probably due to their rejection of making requirements compulsory which would constrain their career opportunities. The sole comment made concerning the first proposition was that it was a 'good idea but not mandatory.' Support may have been even more marked if the proposition had been presented as 'Role skills training should be available at each level of leadership (classroom, team, executive, institution)'. Two of the three comments concerning the second proposition, again explaining disagreement, made much the same point. Further research might propose that 'A National Aspiring Team Leaders' Programme should be available as a preparatory opportunity' and that 'A National Aspiring Principals' Programme should be available as a preparatory opportunity.'

The fourth proposition concerning graduate status drew three comments, two questioning it being a 'prerequisite' with one that 'this should increasingly be the standard.' Future research might instead test the proposition that 'Graduate status is appropriate for middle management teachers'. Since comments regarding the fifth proposition replicated those made regarding the fourth, future research might test the proposition that 'Postgraduate status is appropriate for senior management and principals'.

TABLE 1: RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDES TO PREPARATORY STRATEGIES

Proposition	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
1. Role skills training should be mandatory prior to promotion to each level of leadership (team, executive, institution)	1	3	1	7	2	-
2. Completion of an Aspiring Team Leaders' Program should be a prerequisite for all applications for team leadership	1	6	1	5	1	-
3. Completion of the Aspiring Principals' Program should be a prerequisite for all applications for principalships	1	5	2	3	3	-
4. Graduate status should be a prerequisite for all applications for team leadership	2	3	2	3	3	-
5. Postgraduate status should become a prerequisite for all applications for executive and institutional leadership	3	4	3	2	2	-
6. Training each Board of Trustees just prior to the selection of an institutional leader should be the norm	1	1	2	6	3	-
7. The Kiwi Leadership Model should the basis for preparation strategies	2	2	6	2	1	1

Three of the four comments explaining agreement or strong agreement for the sixth proposition suggested that such training would need to have 'credibility'. The fourth comment explaining disagreement suggested 'inviting an experienced advisor instead'. Future research might test support for the proposition that 'A board of trustees should be provided with quality training and an experienced advisor to help them select their principal'.

The moderately polarised support for the seventh proposition was traced to concerns over resources and that it was a 'completely untrialled model at this stage'. Since the Kiwi Leadership for Principals model was under active consultation by the Ministry when the data were being collected, it suggested that the KLP was more controversial than might have been supposed and should be moved into the background as the BES takes the foreground in policy and programme development.

Overall, the attitudes revealed by this pilot research into preferences regarding leadership preparation suggest that New Zealand might consider a fresh blend of role-specific skills training and deep learning about evidence-based team, executive and institutional leadership - should it

seek to construct a more effective national leadership preparation strategy. Such is the apparent diversity of experiences of respondents that potential rigidities in delivery should be avoided to maximise potential participation and supply.

Conversely, given the apparently limited ongoing levels of participation, and minimal and uneven levels of preparation, encouragement must be sustained by developing integrated, 'stair-cased' and career-related structures that will enable leaders to advance by many routes to more specialised management skills and deeper levels of understanding about leadership at institutional and systemic levels.

Attitudes to Succession Strategies

Respondents' attitudes to seven succession strategies were collected using the same methods as described above and are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 indicates that the first two and the fourth and fifth propositions were strongly supported without contradiction. The more polarised views evident regarding the recruitment of appropriate leaders from overseas were partially explained by comments. One principal neutral to the proposition advised that a 'serious commitment to retraining would be needed'. Another who agreed with the proposition noted that 'current NZ demand outstrips our pool of talent'. A third who strongly disagreed argued that 'we should be training our own leaders in the same way that we should be training our own teachers'. It appears that a number of respondents were unaware of the considerable extent to which New Zealand education is already heavily dependent on annual recruitment, and that this includes attracting expatriates.

Agreement with the fourth and fifth propositions drew a few comments about the need for resources, 'certainly available, not compulsory,' and that the 'TRCC course (Wellington) very effective for DPs/APs'. The degree of ambivalence over postgraduate and doctoral scholarships needs deeper investigation. The only additional proposal was neither a preparatory nor a succession strategy; 'Expectations of principals need to be more real'.

Overall, the patterns of responses to these proposed strategies suggest relatively strong support for a fresh leadership succession strategy for New Zealand education including identification, recruitment, role induction and development, mentoring and scholarships for deep learning at each level of leadership. Future research needs to test support for these ideas. The tentative nature of the responses also suggests that this is a relatively under developed policy domain in New Zealand education and that further research might test support for other strategies employed internationally and elicit even stronger support for an expansion in investment.

TABLE 2: RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDES TO SUCCESSION STRATEGIES

Proposition	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
1. There should be a Leader Identification Programme to encourage potential leaders to become aspirant leaders	-	-	2	6	5	1
2. There should be a Leader Recruitment Programme to encourage aspirant leaders to prepare for team leadership service	-	-	1	9	3	1
3. There should be an Overseas Leader Recruitment Programme to encourage applications from appropriate personnel	2	2	6	2	1	1
4. There should be an annual Role Induction and Development Conference for each level of leadership service, in addition to the FTP	-	-	2	8	3	-
5. There should be Mentoring services available for the first year of leadership service at each level of leadership	-	-	-	7	7	-
6. There should be Postgrad and Doctoral Scholarships available to enable executive and institutional leaders to sustain their learning	1	-	4	5	4	-

Preliminary Conclusions

This pilot research did not consider the nature, scale and dynamics of provision. The actual and potential role of professional associations and university postgraduate courses has been considered in follow up studies. On the other hand, this pilot did identify a number of policy issues worthy of further study. If further research verifies a growing diversity in career paths then this may imply the need for inclusionary preparatory and succession strategies that (a) minimise the use of entry conditions, (b) maximise the number of entry and exit points in training and higher educational provisions, (c) maximise the modularisation and cross crediting of opportunities to encourage ongoing and deep learning about leadership, (d) systematically engage leaders as providers and receivers of mentoring, and (e) integrate experiential and higher learning to blend the best of local knowledge with international research findings.

The apparently under-developed provision of role-specific skills training and higher learning at different designations or levels of leadership other than principalship is troubling, potentially

compounding the 'worrying trends' confirmed by Brooking (2008c). Most respondents were promoted into team and executive leadership roles for which they had little or no training or deep understandings, with professionalisation limited to serial incompetence, and, potentially, setting them up for failure. The heavy reliance on 'learning on the job' may also be creating idiosyncratic leadership theories, and when consolidated by accelerated advancement, limiting the professionalism of leaders to amateur status. Most do not appear to be accessing, mastering or valusing the sophisticated international knowledge of educational leadership refined by research.

There appears to be a near-absolute reliance on near-accidental intrinsic motivators to encourage potential leaders to become aspirant leaders. At the other end of the leadership supply chain, it seems that experienced and expert principals are allowed to leave without being encouraged to refocus their engagement and extend their service to education. There may be potential in exploring other intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and alternative career paths in a fresh leadership development policy.

The retrospective realisation by respondents that preparation for executive and institutional leadership would have been enhanced by earlier forms of deep learning, in addition to role-specific skills training, mentoring and networking, deserves follow up research. It may be that younger leaders more concerned with career advancement and coping are less likely to value the development of analytic and critical capacities gained through higher learning, than those of more mature years who have 'learned the hard way' about the more fundamental dilemmas of leadership. It might be concluded that a career-related framework is essential to the integration of preparatory and succession strategies in educational leadership.

It was surprising how distanced the respondents were from recent advances in New Zealand research in educational leadership. There were, to illustrate, no references to the meta analyses into the effect sizes on student achievement of leadership interventions (Robinson, 2007), the relative effects of forms of professional development (Timperley et al., 2008) or the relative effect sizes on student achievement of specific teaching interventions (Hattie, 2009). These world-class research programs may be better known overseas than in New Zealand secondary schools. Leadership development infrastructure is evidently needed to introduce and enable evidence-based practice from the point when aspirant leaders decide to learn about team leadership in a systematic manner, through role-specific preparation and succession training and education at all levels, to the late-career processes of refocusing and disengaging from leadership service. Seen in this light, the PLP is a 'bare bones' provision.

This pilot has shown that some of the proposals for preparatory and succession strategies used in the pilot survey need refinement. At the same time, it has also suggested that New Zealand's leadership professionalisation policy appears to have suffering from a modest level of investment and has been actually achieving careers characterised by serial incompetence and amateurism. Third, the implementation of a fresh leadership development policy will require considerable flexibility to cope with career diversity, and to be more comprehensive in technical scope and to greater depth of learning than currently conceived and experienced. Fourth, it also appears from the responses to this pilot survey that preparatory and succession strategies are of considerable interest to principals, especially if they introduce and test support for a more comprehensive array of strategies to the benefit of New Zealand education.

Finally, the tentative findings offer strong support to the career-related structure of New Zealand's new PLP and its focus on educational leadership development that is intended to improve student achievement and social justice in a context of increasing diversity in the leadership workforce. On the other hand, the findings also indicate that there may be continuing serious limitations related to the provision of role-specific skills training and higher learning at different designations, especially at levels of leadership other than principalship, implying a deficit in early and late career path planning and limited links to knowledge production regarding leadership development. The zero sum adjustment to the leadership professionalisation priorities raises doubts about the comparative level of national investment in educational leadership; an issue taken up in other research. The main and tentative conclusion of this pilot, that systematic and evidence-based leadership professionalisation is less likely to be the overall outcome than amateurism through serial incompetence, has been since supported by other research that examined the views of a wider sample of New Zealand educators (Macpherson, 2009a).

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