Chapter 3

Leadership Makes a Difference
CHAPTER 3
LEADERSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE

I’ve seen a bad principal destroy a good school in less than a year. I’ve seen a great principal turn a bad school around in a couple of weeks. It’s frightening that so much can depend on one individual, but it needn’t be that way.

(John Marsden: A matter of principal Sydney Morning Herald 05/03/2005)

While there may be no single factor that makes a ‘good school’, most people would agree that the one that appears to make the most difference is leadership.

Principals play a vital role in schools and hence their leadership and management of the school is a key to the student and school outcomes. (Federation of P&Cs’ Association of NSW)

Principals of public schools across the state of NSW are passionate about and loyal to public education. A high level of commitment and pride was evidenced in many written responses and at meetings held across NSW:

For many of the students I have taught, public education remains the key to their pathway to life and work. The opportunity provided by their public school was significant in creating the belief that they could achieve in modern Australia. They recognise that the school did more than prepare them academically, it gave them citizenship and social skills. (School principal)

The major issues about leadership to emerge from the consultation were:

• the strong desire of principals to provide expert educational leadership in schools and the factors which they and others perceived to assist or impede them in doing this
• the current lack of alignment between the principal’s level of authority and level of accountability and the pressing need to address this for public education to maintain the confidence of the community
• the need to recognise and develop leadership capability at all levels in schools and throughout the Department of Education and Training in order to support quality teaching and learning and meet future needs.
THE PRINCIPAL AS EXPERT EDUCATIONAL LEADER

INTRODUCTION

The Department’s expectation of school leadership is spelt out in the policy document Leading and Managing the School. Clearly, responsibility for the delivery of quality education day in, day out, whatever the context of the school and the level of available staff and other resources requires highly capable leadership.

Many submissions emphasised the critical role of the principal in leading and managing change for continuous improvement.

At a school level it is the principal who determines the effectiveness of any change. They determine the allocation of resources (human or material), the morale of the staff and shape the culture of the school. They determine the climate for interactions between and amongst students, staff and parents and they may actively encourage or passively resist any initiative as they choose. (Federation of P&Cs’ Association of NSW)

Considerable research, including the recent Australian studies reported by Bhindi and Dinham and Groundwater-Smith and Kemmis in their papers included with this report, identifies the capabilities demonstrated by excellent leaders and the important role they play in establishing the conditions and maintaining the climate in which teachers and students can soar. Dinham and Bhindi (2005) wrote that:

Principals in schools where ‘outstanding’ outcomes were being achieved were relentless in their quest for enhanced student achievement. They do not become distracted and ‘bogged down’ by the administrative/managerial demands of the Principalship, finding ways to concentrate their energies on educational leadership. They constantly remind students, staff and the community that the core purpose of the school is teaching and learning. (Dinham and Bhindi, 2005: 171)

LEADERSHIP

The Scope of Leadership

The scope of leadership was recognised in many submissions.

Principals occupy a unique place in the education system. They link the broader system and society with the effective ongoing delivery of quality learning for students. It is they who, more than any others, mediate between any call for change and what actually happens in response to that call in the classroom. It is principals who must lead the processes of improvement and innovation and who are primarily accountable for the outcomes of these processes. (Secondary Principals’ Council)

Future and current school leaders need to be able to manage change, have knowledge of curriculum and outcomes-based education and know what is best for their school. Leaders need to have effective interpersonal skills to deal with students, teachers and parents and the community. They need to know how to manage a school site. They need to know how to access the information they need and be willing to ask for assistance when needed. (Regional staff member)
At numerous school and community consultation meetings, parents stated that principals had a powerful influence on the degree of their confidence and trust in their schools as well as the quality of school/community relationships.

Parents also perceived the principal as the most important influence in establishing an inclusive culture and a welcoming environment. In multicultural communities, the principal's role in liaising with parents and the community was seen as very significant. In many cases, it was complemented by specialists such as community liaison officers and representatives of particular language and ethnic groups.

Why Be a Principal?

Many submissions recognised the increasing complexity of the principal's role, with more accountability and interference and less control and support and provided examples to support their perceptions. Examples included the administration associated with Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) issues, school finances, complex personnel and community issues, dealing with communications, bureaucratic red tape, drawn-out processes for dealing with inefficient teachers, dealing with individual and community welfare issues, changes in curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements and bureaucratic and political intervention.

Some respondents felt that the cumulative impact of these issues had escalated to such a degree that the positions of principal and other executive were no longer perceived as attractive career options.

Many responses proposed the establishment of a bursar or similar high level administrative position as the solution to support the principal in managing many of these issues. This proposal is not new and has been advocated by principals’ groups for some time. Under the present staffing formula arrangements, principals have little flexibility to create such positions.

A number of respondents perceived that principals in non-government schools had higher levels of administrative support than those in government schools and that this could result in a loss of good school leaders from the government system. The small differential in pay between a teacher on the top of the scale and an executive was seen by many to be insufficient incentive to take on the additional tasks and responsibilities of a promotions position.

To make the job more attractive, a significant number of submissions simply called for increases in pay for school executives. Some argued that principals’ salaries needed to be comparable with salaries of leaders in the corporate sector with:

... remuneration packages similar to private enterprise or equivalent trade-offs such as car, laptops etc. Streamline the job so the principal is not torn between student/staff/education and administration. (School staff meeting)

Pay alone was not the only message. Adequate support, leadership training, trust and recognition from senior Departmental officers, the community and media were seen to be very important and needing to be addressed.
Invest time and money in leaders. Encourage people to move through the executive ladder, learning skills and gaining experience at each level … (School community meeting)

It educational leaders are to respond to the challenges and opportunities open to them, the ‘system’ needs to offer support, encouragement, constructive and timely feedback and trust. (Dinham and Bhindi, 2005: 172)

There were many submissions which promoted the value of professional learning opportunities such as sabbaticals, study visits, scholarships and support for higher degree studies not only for their intrinsic value but also as incentives for difficult-to-staff areas and as rewards for high performance and ways of attracting aspiring executives.

Strengthening Educational Leadership

Principals desired to be educational leaders, first and foremost. Many submissions referred to the primacy of the educational leadership role and the core business of teaching and learning. They perceived a high level of educational expertise to be essential for an effective principal. Many of the submissions about recruitment and selection of school leaders emphasised the need for credibility, experience and higher degree qualifications in educational leadership.

Permeating many consultation responses was the distinction between educational leadership and the overall management of the school. The tone of responses was that principals wanted very much to be seen as the educational leaders of their schools but were obstructed by the mass of administrative tasks.

Understand that properties and financial management deter leaders from applying for principals’ positions. It is not that they lack training in these areas. They are deterred by the fact that they will not have educational leadership as their sole focus. (SEA staff meeting)

Principals and executives stated that a lack of high level clerical and administration support was the major obstacle standing between them and the full expression of their educational leadership. Apart from the creation of a bursar-type position, other solutions proposed included creation of an administrative manager position at principal or executive level and employment of non-teacher professionals, though not all agreed.

In the main, these suggested roles were to support the principal with administration, not to take over the entire responsibility. There was a very strong view that whatever solutions were to be found, the top leadership position in a school should always be filled by a teacher.

There were many suggestions for strengthening principals’ educational leadership capability other than the establishment of administrative support positions.

Respondents advocated the need for a comprehensive and strategic leadership strategy with many components, implemented at all levels – school, School Education Area (SEA), region and state. It was noted that many of the suggested strategies were already being implemented to some degree by the Department.
Suggested strategies included improved selection processes, mandatory higher degree qualifications for principals, incentives for teachers to undertake further study, provision of coaching and mentoring opportunities, increased professional development opportunities, establishment of a Leadership Centre to promote research and best practice, induction programs at the right time, setting clear performance standards, linking accountability to standards and regular performance monitoring.

**CHOOSING LEADERS**

**Selection of School Leaders**

A very strong theme was the need for a major overhaul of the current merit selection process. The criticisms levelled against it came from both staff and community members and related mainly to the inadequacies of an interview process to gauge performance.

Many submissions called for some form of on-the-job observation or assessment as a more authentic way of assessing suitability and competence. There was a fairly widespread belief that under the current arrangements persons with skilled interview techniques and a good CV could be, and were being, selected for promotions positions without the skills or knowledge required to perform the role effectively.

*The current promotion process involving CV’s and interviews advantages personnel who have outstanding written and oral abilities but may, in fact, not be either experienced or exemplary practitioners.* (School staff meeting)

Some submissions called for a return to the former inspection process. A few submissions also called for a return to the List system which was essentially a seniority system or wait-order list of applicants determined as being eligible for promotion through the inspection process.

It was not always clear in submissions whether it was the List (seniority) system or the inspection process, or both, that were regarded favourably. Taking into account the context of comments, the main message seemed to be that on-the-job assessment was the element that was favoured.

A small number of submissions suggested some form of peer assessment be incorporated in the selection process.

Other criticisms of merit selection related to inconsistencies in the application of the process itself including obtaining information from referees, the low level of training or interviewing skills of some panel members and the potential for panels to be ‘stacked’ with compliant panel members.

Many submissions recognised the important influence of leadership on school culture and school/community relations and criticised the current practice of filling large numbers of leadership positions by transfer on the grounds that it did not meet the needs of particular schools and communities.

*All promotions positions should be by merit. Seniority gets in the way of excellence. Transfer system gets in the way of*
Recruitment processes should be less bureaucratic and restrictive. Appointments should not be made on the grounds of system hierarchy or career longevity but rather on merit. (School P&C meeting)

I am amazed at the constant striving for perfection at our school but I have to wonder what many other innovative ideas our principal would find if she were a little freer to move. I think it comes down to more incentives for outstanding leaders so we can trust in their initiatives. (School P&C meeting)

... need to have a sound set of values, be capable of drawing on the potential of others ... sensitive to differences in culture and family backgrounds. (Retired teacher)

Principals should have life skills to deal with location and position. (School staff meeting)

Recruit leaders that are not conservative, that are innovative, exciting, effective communicators ... Look for ideas, attitude and energy. (TAFE staff member)

Change culture from ‘blame’ at the senior level to risk taking. (Primary principals' meeting)

Development of independence should be treasured. (School staff meeting)

They need to be masters of what are commonly called people skills in relation to adults and young people. (Personal submission)

Leaders should only be from within the state system. (School community meeting)

excellence and the need for the best fit for a school. (School principal)

Many respondents raised the need to consider more significant incentives for attracting principals to hard-to-staff schools. These included increasing the quantum of existing incentives such as allowances, housing and motor vehicles, and adding some new ones such as sabbaticals, study opportunities, status and recognition, childcare subsidies and changes in superannuation arrangements.

**Personal Attributes of Leaders**

Many respondents also raised the issue of personal attributes desired of leaders and the extent to which these could be recognised and incorporated into the selection process or in development programs for principals and executive.

The desirable attributes included values, ways of thinking, and a broad experience of life. Specific characteristics mentioned included strong commitment to public education, independence, resilience, moral and emotional intelligence, lateral thinking, ethics, enthusiasm and ability to lead change.

Different leaders have different strengths. We should not produce a series of robot principals doing the same things the same way. One of the strengths of our system is the diversity in leaders. This produces innovative ideas and ways to approach education. (School staff meeting)

Risk-taking was identified as a valuable characteristic.

Innovative schools and communities require the space and trust to take calculated risks and to experiment with new approaches and systems. (Vocational Education in Schools Directorate)

Dinham and Bhindi refer to this as “informed risk-taking”.

Even when things are going well, they are prepared to experiment and to support those proposing taking initiatives. They risk time, money and failure, and empower others to do the same. They don’t say “yes” to every request but do use “yes” to empower and recognise others. (Dinham and Bhindi, 2005: 169)

School staff and parent groups emphasised the need for principals to have high level interpersonal and communication skills – “people-skills” - the ability to get the best out of staff and students. In recognition of the importance of these skills, many submissions called for principals to have formal training:

Managers and leaders should complete a program where they are taught communication skills ... and should be involved in working with teachers and students in their classrooms. (School staff meeting)

The great majority of respondents endorsed the necessity for leaders to hold teaching qualifications and experience. Some stated that this should be gained from within the state system, others saw benefit in
widening the eligibility criteria so as to have a larger pool from which to recruit.

*Opening up the process to those outside the system, particularly with attractive salaries, should attract the best people.* (Secondary principals’ meeting)

### Qualifications for Leaders

Submissions suggested a strategy for raising the level of skills, knowledge and professionalism of leaders would be to mandate a postgraduate qualification in education as a criterion for promotion. It was recognised that this would need to be phased in over time and provision of support to undertake further postgraduate study would act as an incentive for leadership positions.

A number of respondents referred to the potential for leaders to be accredited at the Professional Leadership level within the Institute of Teachers.

While respondents suggested increased educational qualifications would enhance leadership, they commented that presently there was little support for or recognition of leaders and aspiring leaders undertaking postgraduate study. Some respondents compared this situation to other professions where postgraduate study was seen to be encouraged and rewarded.

### Standards and Accreditation

Throughout submissions and consultations principals, executive and others expressed a keen desire to have a clearly articulated set of standards for leadership against which performance could be measured and which would also underpin development programs.

This was regarded as an important element in strengthening principals’ educational leadership and professional status. Some respondents referred to the possibility of building on the level of professional leadership in the standards developed by the Institute of Teachers and requiring principals and aspiring principals to become accredited at that higher level.

Many other submissions, including those from the representative principals’ organisations, referred to the Leadership Capability Framework as a preferred source of standards to underpin both leadership development programs and accreditation processes. The Framework describes domains of leadership and is currently used in Departmental development programs for principals.

### PROVISION OF QUALITY EDUCATION

Many respondents to the consultation process perceived the provision of quality education to be a shared responsibility between individual schools, the community, the Department and Government. The role of the Department was seen to be that of providing support and the Government’s role to be the provision of funds.

The issue of funding for public education was raised frequently in individual submissions and meetings. Comparisons of funding levels were drawn between NSW government and non-government schools

*….. recent changes which allow recruitment from outside the DET including interstate have been an outstanding move forward … on this issue and need to be applauded.* (DET staff member)

*Agree with the idea of completing a recognised qualification before being appointed.* (School principals’ meeting)

*Greater emphasis and recognition of formal academic training.* (Regional principals’ meeting)

*The Department needs to establish a financial incentive program to attract the best leaders and to encourage further tertiary education. Higher qualifications to be acknowledged through salary package.* (School staff meeting)

*The future status and quality of the profession is dependent upon clearly articulated standards of leadership and a code of ethics.* (Primary Principals’ Association)

*The DET at all levels needs a framework of qualities and capabilities required of effective leaders.* (Secondary Principals’ Council)

*The use of the Leadership Capability Framework as a basis for guiding continued professional development of aspiring leaders should be encouraged.* (DET staff member)

*We should think not of a three way partnership, involving students, teachers and parents, but rather a four way partnership with the government a vital and committed participant in the education process.* (School staff meeting)
and between Australia and other OECD countries. There was a strong perception from many respondents that public schools in NSW were under-funded.

Many respondents also linked level of funding to the declining market share of public schools. It was felt that some of the reasons for parents leaving or not choosing public education included perceptions of schools being run-down, not having adequate facilities, not having enough resources and generally not being able to meet the high expectations of ‘aspirational’ parents.

For some respondents the issues of funding and flexibility were juxtaposed:

… to ensure all schools are quality schools we must very clearly reject the agenda of devolution of responsibility – only government-funded intervention and resource distribution can break the cycles of poverty and educational disadvantage. No devolution! (Personal submission)

While many respondents stated that public education required better funding, most also felt that there were other important factors that contributed to quality education. The many factors that were seen to contribute to quality teaching and learning education are explored in other chapters of this report. Of these factors, the leadership of principals and others is regarded by many to be critical.

**IN SUMMARY**

Respondents recognised the key role played by highly capable leaders in establishing and leading a learning culture in their schools. This concept has been described in the papers by Groundwater-Smith and Kemmis as “learning-centred leadership” and by Fullan as leaders working “to improve the bottom line of student learning”:

*Two things stand out in our work. One is that we need to re-define quality leaders as those who work to improve the bottom line of student learning, while at the same time develop leadership of those around them. The other key finding is that leadership is best learned “in context”. Put another way, changing the culture of the system and learning as you go must be built into the day-to-day learning of leaders. Qualifications frameworks are valuable, but they represent only about 30% of the solution. The remainder of the solution must be built into the culture of the school and district.* (Fullan, 2005: 233)

The development of school leadership and the recruitment of future leaders were identifiable challenges to be met in order to strengthen the foundations for the future of public education in NSW. The development of a leadership strategy will be central to delivering leadership of the highest standards across the Department and in lifting the performance and professional status of principals in schools. This will need to encompass a framework based on clearly articulated standards for leadership with an associated accreditation component; the provision of mechanisms to acknowledge, support and develop leaders; a review of the qualifications required for leadership; and an improved process for the selection of school leaders.

The determination of agreed leadership performance standards is fundamental to ensuring school leaders have a clear framework against which their performance is measured. The Leadership Capability Framework developed by the Department in collaboration with Secondary Principals Council and the Primary Principals Association provides a basis for developing such standards. Expert practitioners need to be identified using the leadership performance standards and acknowledged through a range of mechanisms designed to provide greater autonomy and to ensure their expertise is shared more broadly across the system. Principals requiring support may also be identified against the standards and programs put in place to ensure development and improved performance.
The increasing complexity of the principal’s role and identified issues impacting on the principal’s capacity to deliver quality education also need to be carefully considered in designing school leadership provision for the future. Support in meeting management responsibilities is essential to ensure principals are able to devote themselves more fully to educational leadership while providing high order school management.

The importance of leadership in shaping school performance was recognised in relation to the appointment of principals. The requirement for higher degrees and accreditation should be considered as a means to raise the level of skills, knowledge and professionalism of school leaders. Along a similar line, respondents identified the process for the selection of school leaders as being inadequate and requiring a workplace component in order to achieve a more authentic way of assessing suitability and competence.
WHAT SHOULD BE THE LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY OF PRINCIPALS?

INTRODUCTION

The major issue to emerge in the responses on school leadership was the mismatch between level of authority and degree of accountability. In the words of principals and others:

One of the most frustrating issues for principals is to be on the one hand totally accountable for everything related to his or her school while on the other hand not being given the responsibility or control over what is the most vital element – staffing. (School staff member)

… feeling that as principal I am held accountable for the actions of others while having less autonomy to use the tools of the trade more flexibly. (Personal submission)

A leader with no authority is merely a puppet and will never be able to perform or achieve the best outcomes that are achievable. (School P&C meeting)

I he need for a greater degree of local decision-making permeated responses to many of the consultation papers and is taken up in other places in this report. It is a seminal issue for the future of public education and training and clearly an issue on which the NSW Teachers Federation position indicates little room for change:

The statewide staffing system and its centerpiece, a system of transfers, is the essential element in ensuring the appointment of teachers in every school across the state and therefore a curriculum guarantee for all students. (NSW Teachers Federation)

The contrasting view:

Leaders need flexibility to meet the needs of their local school communities and should have greater responsibility for making decisions about staffing needs, hiring staff and determining how resources are allocated to programs within the school. (School staff member)

LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

Increased Flexibility and Autonomy

Parents, teachers and principals, whilst representing a continuum of views, clearly indicated a desire for more flexibility and autonomy within an overall statewide accountability framework. Many people in schools and their communities believed that there could be significant devolution of decision-making to principals. The NSW Teachers Federation, however, strongly opposed this view.

In respect of leadership in particular, this issue was outlined by the Secondary Principals Council and echoed by many principals’ groups and individuals:

… we need leaders who, whilst operating in a system framework have the freedom and support to engage their school community in local initiatives responsive to local needs … we need leaders at all levels who can promote a thriving and dynamic school that is highly regarded by the local community. We can not accept the philosophy that public education means one size fits all. We need leaders who can inspire creative solutions to address inequality of outcomes, increase
engagement of disaffected youth and the acceptance of inclusive practices in schooling. (NSW Secondary Principals’ Council)

Parents and community members frequently expressed surprise that principals had so little control over their resources:

In a business you would not expect a manager to have all the responsibility for his staff outputs and achievements yet not allow them a say in who the staff should be. (Parent)

Local Decision-Making for Staffing

Permeating the responses about leadership was the issue of increasing local decision-making for staffing. Respondents called on the Department to give principals more flexibility and discretion over staffing.

Principals and parents supported increased flexibility and local decision-making within statewide frameworks and with safeguards for hard-to-staff schools.

While a degree of flexibility within specified guidelines is welcomed, it should be noted that where excessive flexibility is provided in the use of staffing allocation or other school resources invariably there are sectors in the overall management or provision that become neglected. (Federation of P&Cs’ Association of NSW)

The PPA has a draft position ... a preference for some level of ability for principals to select a percentage of their own staff. (Primary Principals’ Association)

The opposite, however, was argued by the NSW Teachers Federation submission which claimed, in respect of the whole teaching service, that:

… the transfer system has the capacity to meet genuine school needs by closely matching the qualifications, skills and expertise of teachers with the vacant position. (NSW Teachers Federation)

The NSW Teachers Federation maintained that a statewide staffing system, with a transfer system as its centrepiece, was essential to provide a “curriculum guarantee” for all students. A “curriculum guarantee” was described as “the right of every student to be taught by a qualified teacher”. It was not made clear how increased flexibility would compromise the guarantee.

In other submissions, additional reasons given to maintain the centralised staffing system were that:

- there was the potential for principals to abuse their autonomy (eg by showing favouritism or by hiring the cheapest staff, not quality staff)
- that principals already had enough flexibility
- that principals lacked the time or skills to manage this function
- the transfer rights of teachers should be preserved.

Responses relating to flexibility and local decision-making for staffing extended to the removal of inefficient teachers. While respondents

Give them legitimate authority to run school budgets, staffing and manage resources. (Personal submission)

Principal have to have flexibility in staffing and not have to accept nominated or compassionate transfers who are poor performers. (Primary principals’ meeting)

In recognising and emphasising the value and effectiveness of school-based decision making, we also value the place of schools within a state-wide system of public education that provides both a framework and shared values for their operation ... we are not advocating total local autonomy. (Secondary Principals’ Council)

Greater flexibility for principals should not be at the cost of fair distribution of quality teachers across the state. (TAFE community meeting)

Change our system at society’s peril ... Individual contracts = death of fair/equitable and sustainable education for 70% of NSW students. (School staff member)

Greater ‘flexibility’ in the use of staffing and other resources increases the levels of corruption, cronyism and nepotism. While levels of corruption might not be high yet, this is because there is still centralised accountability. (Regional Teachers’ Association)

… there are inherent dangers in allowing too much autonomy for Principals. (School staff meeting)
Principals need more resources rather than try to do more with current resources under the guise of flexibility. (School staff meeting)

... the principal and the staff are the ones that best know where staffing and other resources would be best utilised. What works in one school doesn’t necessarily mean it works in all. (School staff meeting)

Definitely agree that principals should have greater flexibility over use of staff and resources. (Parent)

A major challenge for the North Coast is lack of mobility for teachers. In some schools the results are dysfunctional relationships, lack of challenge and innovation, unbalanced age profile and “stagnant culture.” (Regional staff member)

If we are going to compete on a level playing field … we need the capacity to be far more responsive and flexible in matching teachers and their skills to the specific needs of each school. (School staff meeting)

The current system is rigid, outdated and crushes innovation and creativity. (School principal)

The system ... must show it has the confidence in its leaders to be real leaders with a degree of autonomy to make local community-based decisions. (Regional staff meeting)

emphasised fairness and due process, there was a widespread view that the existing procedures for dealing with inefficient staff were too time-consuming, drawn out and impacted negatively on morale:

There are two separate issues here. Principals have indicated they want the right to determine the mix of staff but they do not wish to hire staff locally. In determining the mix, principals want to respond to the curriculum, welfare and administrative needs of particular school contexts. (School principal)

In relation to hard-to-staff schools, respondents emphasised that such schools have very particular needs, often requiring teachers with special attributes and they are not all the same.

This point was made strongly by respondents and also by Letts et al in their Companion Paper attached to this report:

The diversity of rural and remote settings makes it necessary to examine leadership in a variety of ways. For the rural/remote school, leadership issues are site specific and are related significantly to factors of distance, location, space and place – overlayed by local community issues. Leadership in this setting is broadly conceived – the appointed positions of Principal and school executive, but also including teachers as leaders. (Letts et al, 2005: 237-238)

Several submissions also described the negative impacts of the transfer system on education in the areas in which transferees have become concentrated over time. Added to the frustration of having limited opportunity for merit selection, the lack of mobility and turnover is perceived to have negative impacts in some schools.

**Revitalising Public Education**

Many principals see their lack of flexibility and decision-making authority as a major contributing factor to loss of market share. This view was strongly put by many respondents.

If we are to succeed in revitalising public education in NSW we will only succeed if we have greater capacity to manage staffing processes at the school and regional level. The current system is rigid, outdated and crushes innovation and creativity. Schools and regions must have greater capacity to identify their staffing needs, identify specific criteria for a percentage of positions and select the most appropriate person based on merit. (DET staff member)

The greatest impediment to change and getting onto the front foot in drawing students back to public education, is our antiquated, regressive adherence to employment and work practices which adhere to the principle of ‘one size fits all’. A vigorous school must have the capacity to select and ‘unselect’ staff to best meet the needs of its students; an education system which champions self direction in a world of change must show it has the confidence in its leaders to be real leaders, with a degree of autonomy to make local, community-driven decisions on behalf of their particular community’s children. (Regional staff meeting)
ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability of Leaders for Quality Education

In discussing the accountability of principals, responses covered two separate but related domains:

- the personal performance domain which is essentially a private matter between the principal and the school education director
- the school performance domain (school accountability) which is a matter of public interest and draws on the collective performance of staff and students.

The two domains are intertwined in complex ways – personal appraisal of principals by their supervisors takes account of achievements of the whole school and the degree to which the principal has been able to influence the many factors that impact on student learning and achievement.

For all schools to become quality schools, every school principal must be willing to change the school culture if necessary. There must be a regular review of school targets, and principals and school leaders must be held accountable for meeting these targets. (Parent)

Both aspects of accountability were addressed in the responses to the consultation process.

Personal Accountability of Leaders

Many respondents supported the value of using an agreed set of standards for accountability purposes and provided suggestions as to how performance could be monitored, and how often this should occur.

Put in place an appropriate 360 degree appraisal system to find good leaders and the low achievers. (TAFE staff member)

Many respondents also suggested that the Capability Framework provided an excellent basis for discussions between directors and principals and could be incorporated in the existing Teacher Assessment and Review Schedule (TARS) and Principals’ Assessment and Review Schedule (PARS).

Regular (annual) monitoring and fixed term renewable contracts of 3, 5 and 10 years were suggested as ways of ensuring rigorous accountability and keeping the quality of educational leadership at the highest level.

The issue of principals’ accountability was frequently linked to the issue of principals’ authority and degree of control over resources. Many individual respondents and meetings were highly critical that the broad sphere of principals’ accountability was not being matched by the limited span of authority in decision-making about school staffing.

This raises the issue of the alignment of accountability and authority.
Aligning Accountability and Local Decision-Making

Principals advocated the alignment of accountability with local decision-making to ensure openness and transparency and address probity issues. Many respondents made reference to the current accountability requirements being supplemented by additional types of audit and monitoring by supervisors, though some felt the current requirements were adequate.

Respondents also drew attention to the fact that principals in some schools have already participated in successful trials and programs which provided them with the opportunity to make decisions locally about the best mix and selection of staff for their schools.

Frequent reference was made to the Priority Action Schools Program (PASP), in which school communities determined the best use of the resources they were allocated while meeting system accountability requirements. The evaluation of this program was very positive.

Accountability for Provision of Quality Education

Many respondents affirmed the view that public schools are providing quality education and that a poor public image was the problem, not the actual quality of education. Nonetheless, many still believed that rigorous accountability systems needed to be in place to assure parents and the community of the quality of their schools.

Many mechanisms were suggested for school accountability including more rigorous monitoring of student performance on tests, appraisal of teachers and principals, a return to inspections, target setting, formal reviews of progress and many of the elements already included in the current school accountability framework:

Self reflection and evaluation of practices within the school; seeking feedback from staff, students and community on aspects of school performance. (School staff meeting)

Limited, significant achievable targets linked to specific whole school/stage project focused on improvement in classroom practice and student outcomes. (Regional principals’ meeting)

Reviews of performance and setting of targets; whole school systems of positive reinforcement of quality practice; involving students in reviews of quality; ongoing evaluations; monitor and assess. (School staff meeting)

Each school develops a set of criteria/expectations for their school in consultation with the school community. (Joint school/community meeting)

Systemic consistency and commitment to implementing quality schools concept for at least 3 years. (Regional staff meeting)

All members of the school community should have a deep knowledge of what constitutes a quality school. (Regional staff meeting)
IN SUMMARY

The prevailing view amongst respondents was the need for more flexibility and autonomy within an overall statewide accountability framework.

... we need leaders who, whilst operating in a system framework have the freedom and support to engage their school community in local initiatives responsive to local needs ... (NSW Secondary Principals’ Council)

Indeed, a shift to greater local authority was seen as the key to a revitalisation of public education in NSW.

In relation to the contentious area of staffing, the development of a system that affords schools a range of options from the local selection of staff through to an appointment via a central staffing operation which maintains responsibility for recruitment, staff transfers and other appointments, would better meet the full range of needs.

Respondents made it clear that increased flexibility and autonomy for schools must be accompanied by increased accountability. This should include the domains of principal performance and school performance, the two being inextricably linked. Principal respondents indicated a readiness to embrace a more rigorous accountability process, provided they had greater autonomy in the design of the education provision and use of resources at the local level. Determining the most effective use of the school’s inputs in order to achieve quality outcomes is essential. In addition to providing greater autonomy at the local level, a range of proposals should be considered to ensure more rigorous accountability for principals, including regular monitoring, performance appraisal and fixed term renewable contracts.

A better level of information about the school’s operations and performance needs to be available to ensure schools adequately account to their communities. Further, accountability processes for schools should incorporate an assessment based on the meeting of performance-based targets, and include an enhanced process for appraisal of teachers and principals, a system of cyclical reviews, and the opportunity for school accreditation.

The result will be a closer alignment of local decision-making and accountability that will encourage an open and transparent education provision designed to meet local needs, operating within a state framework with clear guidelines and expectations.
DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY AT ALL LEVELS

INTRODUCTION

In addressing the issues of leadership many respondents drew attention to the role of the leadership team including executive staff, school administrative and support staff (SASS) and other non-executive staff undertaking leadership functions in the school. This is a concept well developed in the literature on leadership and is referred to in the Companion Paper by Dinham and Bhindi (2005) attached to this report.

*It's not about a leader, it's about a leadership team.* (Personal submission)

*There* needs to be recognition from the Department that “leaders” are at all levels of the organisation and emphasis should be placed on supporting current leaders as well as those aspiring to become leaders. (DET Young Professionals Network Group)

Many submissions recognised the important and satisfying role of principals in developing and supporting executive and aspiring leaders in their schools.

*Leadership is sitting within the walls of schools. My current school has many! The fun for me is opening the door for them and letting in a little light. We cannot assume that only a few will aspire.* (School principal)

Submissions also recognised the important contribution of non-teachers to school leadership, that of administrative and support staff, parents, community members and students.

*It should be recognised that school leaders are not restricted to persons employed by the Department of Education and Training.* (Federation of P&Cs’ Association of NSW)

DEVELOPING LEADERS

Developing a Leadership Team

One of the core functions of leadership is that of providing opportunities for staff to ‘practise leadership’ prior to applying for and gaining promotions positions.

Recruitment of leaders needs to be undertaken over a period of time. Aspiring leaders need to be able to undertake sequenced in-service courses and workshops, with between meeting activities to be undertaken at their school … Capacity building needs to be undertaken – many people are unsure of their skills, under-estimate their potential. (Regional staff member)

Move away from the concept of “leaders”. Instead, ask what should be the leadership and management roles, contributions and capabilities of people at different levels … This implies a greater emphasis on collective as well as individual approaches to leadership development. (Personal submission)

Principals foster the leadership of others. They identify talent and coach and support these people, sometimes at the risk of being accused of favouritism. They realise that if change and improvement are to take root in the school culture, they need to build and distribute leadership capacity throughout the school.
and to trust people. Sharing of responsibility also assists in leadership succession. (Dinham and Bhindi, 2005: 171)

The Significant Role of School Administrative and Support staff

Throughout the responses to the leadership paper there was a significant emphasis on the role of SASS in supporting leadership and allowing leaders to focus on teaching and learning. The role of SASS in directly supporting quality education was strongly endorsed.

The contribution of the school’s ancillary staff to the successful operation of our school is enormous … and with the principal form the “engine room” of our organisation. (School staff meeting)

Despite this, there were also many comments that SASS were poorly recognised, undervalued, lacked adequate training and facilities and were often excluded from decisions that impacted on their work.

Let them know they are valued and integral members of the school; acknowledge the range of their workload and particular skills. Include them in relevant in-services. Let them share their expertise and knowledge in in-service and committee situations. Utilise their knowledge of family situations to help teachers deal with students and relevant issues. (School staff meeting)

Respondents frequently drew attention to the evolving nature of the SASS role and the impacts of educational program changes on workload and skills required:

The current structure and allocation of administrative and support staff does not meet the present and future needs of schools and the changing nature of work. In particular, the status, role, skills and salary of the most senior officer need to be reviewed to provide the required level of support for principals and schools. (Secondary Principals’ Council)

The allocation of SASS, the selection criteria for appointments, remuneration and career paths were all seen to be out of step with what schools needed. Building an effective leadership team was seen to require more flexibility in the nature and level of SASS. A solution proposed by the Secondary Principals’ Council was to have:

… a model of employment and advancement complemented by the flexibility to determine at school level, the mix of staff required to reflect existing and future school needs. (NSW Secondary Principals’ Council)

Leadership from Non-School-Based Positions

Understandably, the school as an entity was the focus of most responses about leadership. The model presented by Fullan, 2005 for creating an effective school recognises the need for collaborative effort between schools, regions and state office. Such collaboration was seen by respondents to the consultation to require shared vision, trust and respect.

The community will be confident (in public schools) if the system’s leaders can and do speak confidently about the excellent work done in public schools. (School principal)

… effective schools … develop a certain collective capacity of the full staff to make a difference in student achievement. (Fullan, 2005: 231)

A large majority of administrative staff currently feel undervalued and unappreciated in their roles. (School staff member)

In staffing the administration side of schools, it is ludicrous that, at present, a school cannot use codes or specific criteria to select SASS. Schools need to be able to select a person who might have desktop publishing skills, etc. (School of Education, Macquarie University)

Recognising administrative managers for what they are and rewarding them accordingly with commensurate wages. (SASS Network group)

The issue of leadership needs to be closely scrutinised. There appears to be an emphasis on principalship as the only form of leadership … Recognition of people in the public service and non-school based teaching positions seems to be completely overlooked. (Regional meeting)
Submissions from school staff emphasised the need for staff in regional and state offices who undertook direct support or supervisory roles with schools to be qualified and experienced educators. A number of respondents suggested that short-term secondments and opportunities to move in and out of non-school-based positions without penalty would enhance the relationships between schools and regional/state offices.

This need for regional and state office leaders to be closely connected to schools was also supported by submissions from people in state and regional offices.

**Time for Leading**

Submissions from both primary and secondary groups identified the need for more executive release time for members of the leadership team, particularly assistant principals in primary schools who have no allocated executive release.

Greater flexibility in the utilisation of staffing resources within a school could allow principals to allocate more time for specific tasks and roles.

Encourage leadership density in schools by providing more staffing flexibility in schools for principals to provide release to those teachers undertaking leadership roles. (DET staff member)

Primary principals’ groups and a number of school and individual submissions advocated for parity between executive positions in primary schools with executive positions in secondary schools. This is not a new issue and has become a national campaign of primary principals’ associations. The degree of emotion expressed by some respondents in the consultation indicates this is a highly sensitive issue for primary executive in NSW.

Give APs in primary parity with secondary head teachers. Give us time off our classes. I work 50-60 hours a week, every week and I have one extra hour off class to do the mountain of administration, professional development preparation, etc that is part of my AP role … What a joke. (School staff member)

Some submissions, including that from the Primary Principals’ Association, stated that all positions of principal should be full-time release. The problem was clearly stated by many:

It is very difficult for a teaching principal to perform both jobs to the best of their ability if they are full time classroom teachers as well as full time office managers. They need to be either one or the other. (School staff member)

This issue refers specifically to principals’ positions in small schools classified as P5 and P6 which have enrolments less than 160 students. While one implication of the abolition of such positions could be the creation of a new group of non-teaching positions for such schools, a number of submissions from both metropolitan and country areas suggested alternatively that small schools should be amalgamated with larger schools to provide better administrative and curriculum support.
Professional Learning Linked to a Capability Framework

Both the secondary and primary principals groups addressed this issue in detail, urging for higher levels of funding for professional development and a more integrated approach to development and accountability.

There were many suggestions for enhancing principals’ professional development. Many of the specific strategies mentioned were to expand programs already being run by the Department for leaders and aspiring leaders such as Induction Programs (run at the right time), the Targeted Principals’ Preparation Program (TPPP) and the support provided for principals by Principal Support Officers (PSOs). Each of these programs was highly regarded. The range of strategies suggested are evidenced in the following submission:

- Online competency modules, with local coaches and some blended learning, to support development of management skills e.g. financial management, OH&S, child protection, critical incident management etc;

- Action learning groups, incorporating deep questioning and reflection processes;

- Online reference library of articles, audio and video tapes;

- Online sessions with international expert educators;

- Train all principals to develop executive as professional learning teams;

- Train all executive to develop faculties/stage groups as professional learning teams;

- Conduct holiday courses and pay teachers who meet attainment requirements. (Personal submission)

A number of respondents, particularly the Secondary Principals’ Council, endorsed the School Leadership Capability Framework, as a good basis for coordinating development opportunities and for providing a basis for discussion of performance between principals and their supervisors.

Apart from the expressed need for greater funding at school and regional level, many submissions also suggested that executive should take greater responsibility for their own learning, with varying degrees of subsidisation by the Department such as provision of time, payment of fees and allowances. Suggestions included providing high quality development programs in school vacations for teachers and executive seeking accreditation for leadership.

Leadership Centre

The concept of a DET School Leadership Centre or similar venture was highly favoured by principals and others as a joint activity of the Department and principals’ groups and as a way of coordinating and integrating professional development.
A Leadership Centre must be central to professional learning and practice... The current size of our system, the current fragmentation of good programs from all over Australia is perpetuating a confused sense of direction. Too many practices and, needless to say many good people, have fallen by the wayside. (School principal)

The Primary Principals’ Association recognised the work that was being done collaboratively between the DET and stakeholders through the Leadership Alliance and encouraged the continuation of initiatives that involved the principals’ groups in designing and delivering leadership training.

**Recognising Levels of Performance**

Performance pay was a controversial issue. Some respondents endorsed the concept as being the norm in contemporary society and therefore necessary to keep the best leaders within the system.

> As in all areas of life the motivation will be remuneration. To prevent loss of our best leaders and teachers they must be paid in accordance to their skill level. Otherwise they will seek employment outside of the public school system. (School staff meeting)

Others rejected it outright, on the basis that it was too difficult to measure. This was at odds with the many submissions that endorsed the development of clear performance standards being used as part of an accountability framework for principals.

> The public system has an unfortunate reputation for being unable to remove ineffective staff. (Personal submission)

A large number of submissions avoided the issue of performance measurement and differential pay, instead endorsing a range of non-salary rewards for excellent performance. These included being able to be paid at the next level without having to take promotion to a bigger school, being valued by senior officers, variations in superannuation structures, variations in working conditions, access to leadership development and further study and opportunities to contribute to the learning of others.

Many respondents emphasised the need for clarification of expectations and standards, adequate development programs and support for leaders who were having difficulties, fairness and opportunities to acquire skills and confidence.

> More in-service and reduced workload would improve over-stressed and under-achieving principals. (Parent)

> Earlier and more targeted intervention...(Secondary Principals’ Council)

In addition, respondents believed there should be more streamlined procedures for removal of inefficient leaders from schools as quickly as possible. Some respondents proposed that contracts and tenured appointments would simplify the issues of dealing with poor performance.
Mentoring and Support for Learning On-the-Job

Mentoring was frequently mentioned as an effective leadership development strategy as well as an effective means of providing ongoing support to principals, especially those in their first year of appointment. Mentoring was highly valued because it represented a personalised approach to leadership development:

A change in culture is needed. The current culture does not encourage leaders to seek help when they need it. Leaders should be supported not berated for “trying and failing” ... resilience varies over time. A strong leader at one time can become a struggling leader at another time, due to a range of factors. (School staff meeting)

Several forms of on-the-job learning were proposed as ways of supporting new principals and increasing their effectiveness. One model was the introduction of internships for principals in which newly appointed principals would undertake studies in leadership whilst under the guidance of a more experienced colleague on site.

Just as new teachers have teaching practice, new principals also require principal practice with a principal mentor. (Regional staff member)

A related model was the concept of a probationary year for principals in which confirmation of appointment would be dependent on agreed performance criteria being met. Such a model could be difficult to implement where relocation was involved.

Networks

Networks and collaborative partnerships between leaders were also suggested as significant development and support strategies with transformative power if implemented well.

... one of the most powerful recent strategies is lateral capacity building, where the state invests in and facilitates focused networks that learn from each other, as they implement priorities in the context of state policies. (Fullan, 2005: 233)

Many submissions also drew attention to the value of using the expertise of senior leaders, both in the system and retired.

The school's older teachers are a great strength ... I have seen some remarkably clever changes made by the "old dogs". (Parent)

Succession Planning

Many respondents remarked on the current age profile of principals and executive and identified the need for action to be taken immediately to prevent the so-called “crisis of leadership”.

We have age averages for Principals and Deputy Principals that are almost the same, creating an issue where we will have massive numbers of vacancies over a period of about 5 years. To ensure that we are able to build our succession planning, we need to start with recruitment of teachers and include career planning within training and development. If we are
successful in developing succession planning, the bulk of the leaders in schools could come from within the DET especially considering the numbers of staff currently employed. Keeping long term staff will be problematic in future years as staff will not be locked in by superannuation to the same extent as the current leaders in schools. In order to keep these staff, incentives will need to be available, including increased salary and better conditions. (School staff member)

A range of strategies was identified as having potential to meet future leadership needs. These included: recognising the leadership role of all staff; identifying potential principals early and providing opportunities to practise skills and access training and development opportunities; creating a leadership culture within all schools; implementing incentives for leadership positions and incentives for effective principals to stay on beyond anticipated retirement.

Succession planning was seen as both a system responsibility and the responsibility of leadership in schools.

Identification of potential must become much more sophisticated. Any large organisation will require process systems for the task but also, there will always be an element of “illogical identification” based on deep knowledge of the organisation and its particular change phase of the moment. (DET staff member)

A number of respondents emphasised the value of talent-spotting of young teachers, even if this appeared to be outside normal processes.

Opportunities for Renewal

Maintaining enthusiasm and capacity for innovation was identified as a significant issue for maintaining quality in leadership. Experience in different schools, with new contexts and with different executive was identified as a simple, low cost but effective development strategy.

Fixed tenure appointments, contracts and other variations to employment conditions were also proposed in respect of both development and performance monitoring.

A number of submissions suggested staffing arrangements that enabled leaders to rotate through positions within a district or more options for short-term appointments in nearby schools:

More flexible staffing/transfer arrangements must be implemented to allow experienced teachers and principals to be more refreshed/challenged. The school education director should be able to appoint a targeted leader to a specific short term position in a nearby school … currently the models of short term appointments are restricted. (Regional principals’ meeting)

Other suggestions were that there should be a range of development options such as sabbaticals, exchanges, study tours and scholarships for higher degree studies to provide opportunities for principals’ leadership to be refreshed and re-invigorated. The positive benefits were clearly articulated:
Sabbaticals built into the system to allow continued growth and learning about other systems. (School staff meeting)

**Rural and Remote Areas**

The challenge for leadership development in rural and remote areas was raised by many respondents. Access to professional learning was the major issue. Solutions proposed included support for networks and more on-line learning opportunities.

Many respondents were concerned that unless more attractive incentives schemes were implemented, schools in those areas would continue to attract relatively few and inexperienced applicants. Higher remuneration as an incentive (i.e. differential pay) was identified as a strategy that works in most other contexts and should be applied to education.

**Implications for Quality Education**

The consultation responses highlighted the relationship between quality schools and quality leadership. Given adequate funding and appropriate resources, the role of leadership was seen to be the creation of a culture that supported teachers to create success in their classrooms.

*Quality schools have succeeding students ... Quality schools have teachers who teach, not just deliver lessons. These teachers make a quality school by being effective with children.* (Personal submission)

Much has been written in the educational literature about school culture. The paper by Groundswater-Smith and Kemmis (2005) included in this report reinforces what many school leaders know intuitively: they are in the business of creating knowledge-building cultures.

*... what was most needed to achieve significant and sustainable educational change in schools was learning centred leadership – leadership that aimed directly to contribute to students’ learning and to the professional learning of staff. Time and again, teachers drew our attention to events and activities that made change possible precisely because leaders had opened up conversational space, among and between teachers and students ... In many PASP schools, principals and members of school executives opened opportunities for discussion and debate not only by introducing new and interesting provocations to the staff (which they frequently did), but also by creating space for others to share ideas, explore their consequences and evaluate their outcomes openly and collaboratively.* (Groundswater-Smith and Kemmis, 2005: 178-179)

**Issues for Leadership in the Future**

Very few submissions projected a distinctly future-oriented view of leadership. Of those that did, the areas that were identified as needing to be explored for their impacts on the future role of leaders included:

- understanding the impact of technology on pedagogy
- creating new kinds of learning environments for the knowledge society

The development of networks, the use of technology and web-based learning ... Maintaining professional networks - in person, via phone or via the Internet ... are important from a personal or professional point of view in a rural setting. (Letts et al, 2005: 239)

Offer a higher rate of salary for this and make sure that a support network exists in these areas. (School staff meeting)

For all schools to become quality schools, every school principal must be willing to change the school culture if necessary. (Parent)

Develop a culture of reflection, discussions of classroom practice, learning new strategies to support the learning needs of students. (School principal)

Give teachers time to discuss, reflect and plan new classroom strategies. (School staff meeting)

Training for leadership begins the day a teacher graduates and begins teaching. Leading learners are important for our classrooms, for action-learning projects; some will go on to be leaders of teams, and some, eventually, principals. (School principal)

Leadership roles are always changing. They were significantly different 15 years ago and indeed, will be 15 years hence. (DET staff member)
The implication ... is the need to develop a futures knowledge culture that will prepare leaders to lead in the future. The assumption is that we need leaders who whilst operating in a system framework have the freedom and support to engage their school community in local initiatives responsive to local needs. (Central Coast Principals’ Council)

- achieving personal mastery and leading the integrated use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and administration
- managing the flow-on within their schools from the current leadership succession issues
- responding to trends in market share
- developing stronger community partnerships
- extending education to other sources of knowledge outside the school.

In the shift from an industrial society to a knowledge-based society, effective, visionary and innovative leadership will be vital as new processes, ideas, systems and networks are explored and developed. (State Office staff meeting)

IN SUMMARY

The importance of broad-based leadership which embraced executive and non-executive teaching staff, school administrative and support staff, regional and state office support staff, along with parents, community members and students was strongly communicated by respondents. An inclusive approach to leadership and decision-making was considered both desirable and necessary to achieving quality education in schools.

Respondents focused on the need to enhance and promote leadership in schools and throughout the Department. Many ideas were suggested in this regard. The articulation of a leadership strategy was seen as a means for providing a coordinated approach to leadership development across the system. Consideration should be given to the creation of a Leadership Centre to provide professional learning opportunities at all levels using a range of media and strategies. Flexibility was considered to be a key to such a provision.

There were many other suggestions for promoting leadership. The interchange of staff between schools, regions and state offices, for example, was seen as a way to enhance relationships at the three levels and provide an opportunity to more readily share expertise. Accredited development programs for teachers and school administrative and support staff were seen as further methods to enhance overall leadership capacity.

In relation to principals, the development of a tertiary accredited statewide mentoring program was considered to be an effective means for using the expertise of current leaders and retired principals. Mentoring, in combination with a probationary year and internship, would provide stronger support to newly appointed principals. At the other end of the spectrum, opportunities for long-serving leaders to be reinvigorated should be created.

A significant aspect of the leadership strategy should be to ensure succession planning. Identification of future school leaders and individual development plans should be a priority to make certain prospective leaders are supported and provided with opportunities to practise leadership.

The challenges confronting contemporary leaders have become apparent throughout the consultation process. Impacting on school leadership is the increased role complexity of and expectations on school leaders; the responsibilities for middle management in driving quality education; the changing demands and reshaping of roles for administrative and support staff; and the importance of partnerships with the local community, other agencies and industry. Central to this is the role to be played by students in designing their own education provision in a rapidly changing world. The development of a strategy which will provide outstanding leadership in order to deliver quality education in the future has never been so critical.

1 The Department’s age distribution data (as at 1 March 2005) indicates that, while the largest age group for principals, executives and classroom teachers is 50 – 54 years, principals and executives are particularly concentrated in this age group. The age distribution pattern for classroom teachers is more even, with 43 per cent between the ages of 25 and 44, compared with 30 per cent of executive and 12 per cent of principals. These figures indicate that effective, long-term succession planning should include the identification of classroom teachers, as well as executive staff, for the development of their leadership potential.