

Who will lead? Principal succession in New Zealand's faith-based integrated schools

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Abstract

One of the most challenging tasks for any school's board of trustees is leading the process to employ a new principal when a principal change is impending. The importance of this task cannot be underestimated as there is an integral relationship between school leadership and student achievement. Globally, research indicates that this task is becoming increasingly difficult as an aging population of principals is heading towards retirement and fewer teachers and middle managers are aspiring to lead a school. This challenge is further complicated if the school has specific employment criteria such as those found in integrated faith-based schools. The pool of applicants is smaller than for state schools and this requires that strategic succession planning occurs to develop a well-prepared leadership pipeline for future leadership roles. This paper draws on doctoral research focused on principal succession in faith-based schools in New Zealand and suggests a model to successfully manage the principal succession process.

Keywords: *Principal; succession; leadership; special character*

Introduction

Leadership succession in New Zealand schools is an area of strategic thinking and planning that has not experienced much input over the past two decades. The purpose of this study was to investigate the ways in which principals and boards of trustees used succession planning in New Zealand's faith-based integrated schools to ensure the building of leadership capacity and the continuity of vision, culture and special character. It focused on faith-based integrated schools in New Zealand; however, clear parallels can be drawn to the problem of principal recruitment, retention and replacement in state schools and private schools (Bennett, 2015).

Leadership succession is a timely and significant topic for research because of the increased demands of the role of principal, the projected shortage of future leaders in schools, the loss of many current leaders to retirement and the perceived reluctance of many younger middle/senior managers to take on the role. The nature of school governance in New Zealand puts the process in the hands of locally elected boards of trustees, all of whom are volunteers and not necessarily familiar with the challenges of employment policies and practices.

Principal succession is a complex phenomenon. The role of the principal is multi-faceted, and effective leadership by the principal is pivotal to school success (Bush & Glover, 2003; Fullan, 2005). Principal succession is of interest to those who study leadership, those who appoint principals, those who work in schools and the members of the school community, all of whom have different but complementary interests. There is greater accountability to all stakeholders and increasing societal expectations are placed on schools to have 'wrap around' services which meet all student and family needs. A high degree of skill is required for principals to manage personnel, property and finances, while, at the heart of the role is leading and managing a teaching and learning community.

Faith-based schools face additional challenges when recruiting staff for teaching positions and this is even more problematic when trying to fill senior leadership roles (Scott & McNeish, 2012). Prospective principals applying for a position in a faith-based school need not only to be professionally competent but also be active participants in the faith base of the school. Belmonte and Cranston (2009) note that:

Successful leadership in Catholic schools is highly influenced by the cultural and spiritual capital that a principal brings to a school, signifying a fundamental importance of appointing principals who are not only professionally competent, but who are spiritually competent as well. (p. 294)

Therefore, leadership in faith-based schools requires the capabilities and competencies of a principal in any state school with the added dimension of being recognized as the faith leader of the school.

Leadership succession

Leadership succession planning has been part of the business world for over 50 years (Carlson, 1961). However, in the education field it has only been in the last 25 years that it has emerged as a response to a significant concern, as schools globally have experienced increased difficulties when needing to appoint a new principal (Hargreaves, 2003; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2004). Succession planning in education is a relatively new concept with much of the related literature emerging only this century. Succession planning and leadership development should ideally be synonymous in a long-term process for managing potential leaders across the organisation. "One of the most significant events in the life of a school is a change in its leadership. Yet few things in education succeed less than leadership succession" (Hargreaves, 2005, p. 163). For this study, succession planning is defined as intentionally developing a strategic plan to recruit, identify and develop leadership talent within a school to ensure organisational readiness for future senior leadership roles.

In New Zealand there has been little research that focuses on succession in principalship or the changing nature of school leadership. Brooking (2004, 2007) investigated a potential principal recruitment crisis in state schools and Macpherson (2009) investigated leadership succession practices and strategies within secondary schools. Two studies investigated the ways in which boards of trustees selected and appointed school principals. Morrison (2006) investigated the capacity of five boards of trustees to appoint highly effective principals. She noted that their ability to appoint a principal who was likely to be highly effective in the role occurred more by chance than through careful planning and consideration. Morrison (2006) found that boards generally lacked the educational expertise required to identify and appoint a suitable applicant to the role. She concluded that, "if they are to appoint principals who are highly effective in adapting their leadership to new, complex and rapidly changing circumstances ... it is essential that a current and evolving educational leadership discourse dominates their thinking" (2006, p. 110). Brooking (2008) investigated the future challenges of principal succession in primary schools and the implications of quality and gender. Drawing on her earlier work in 2004, Brooking identified that boards tended to appoint men to principal roles disproportionately to women and there were some problems regarding the quality of some younger, less experienced, male applicants. In 2006, 53% of senior leaders of all state and state-integrated schools were over 50 years of age and 31% were over 55 years old. The challenge not only concerned the supply of teachers or getting the required number of leaders in place but also in ensuring candidates' suitability for the role.

A recent report (New Zealand Herald, 2017, p. 2) noted:

The shortage of potential principals has been blamed on teacher shortages (the Post Primary Teachers' Association says it is at its highest level since 2008) and the expected swathe of retirements among principals in coming years (their average age is in the high 50s).

Headlines such as *Nationwide principal shortage forces rural Waikato school to creative lengths* (One News Now, 11th November 2016) and *The job too hot to handle* (New Zealand Herald, 29th July 2017) indicate that this is an area of significant concern.

Taylor (2012) identified a potential problem in leadership succession within the field of education for the deaf. Noting a critical shortage of leaders within deaf education facilities and an absence of people pursuing a

leadership career in this field, he advocated for the development of planned succession strategies for this ‘niche’ sector. Avuva’a (2008) highlighted the difficulties that Pacific Islanders aspiring to leadership roles encounter. He recommended that career pathways be created to ensure the development of Pacific Islander principals for the future. Avuva’a (2008), Macpherson (2009) and Taylor (2012) all highlight systemic gaps in areas of education within New Zealand, and suggest the need for strategic planning for the future development and replacement of leaders in New Zealand schools. The paucity of New Zealand studies into the area of principal succession implies that it has not yet become as significant a problem as has been seen internationally, to warrant much interest or research.

International trends

International literature indicates that the desire to lead a school in the 21st century no longer holds the attraction for teachers that it did in previous decades. Today’s principals encounter many challenges as they navigate their schools through educational environments that are subject to continual change. A report by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 2013) describes the role of the principal as:

being in the hot seat of heightened expectations. They not only need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, but public relations experts, budget analysts, legal, contractual and policy overseers and broker the conflicting interests of parents, teachers and students. (NASSP, 2013, p. 2)

At the same time schools must remain strategically focused on improving educational outcomes for students.

There are changes in the ways middle managers and younger teachers are viewing the teaching profession and their place in the future leadership of schools. The shortage of new principals in the UK, USA and Australia is exacerbated by the reluctance of middle management to aspire to leadership positions (Cranston, 2009; Fink, 2010; Lacey & Gronn, 2006; Mulford, 2008), and by younger teachers choosing to stay in the classroom rather than assume leadership roles (Watson, 2007). As experienced principals leave their positions there are fewer role models to provide the mentoring and guidance that has traditionally been part of a principal’s responsibility in developing leaders (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Mulford, 2008). Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei (2003) suggest that lifestyle choices are taking precedence over the time and energy required by those in the role of a principal: “Generation Xers are likely to be more ‘outwardly’ rather than ‘upwardly’ mobile, with a preference for keeping their life options open rather than committing themselves to one particular career path” (p. 10).

In a case study of a school in Canada, Jones (2000) included participation in principal succession by students, parents and support staff; groups that are noticeably absent in other research studies. He contended that principal succession has a profound effect on the whole school community and, therefore, the community needed to be involved in this important event: “When succession is seen and dealt with as a group process, the outcome may be personal and professional growth and development for both the school and the new principal” (p. 15).

Principal succession in integrated faith-based schools

In 2015, New Zealand state-integrated schools comprised 13% of all schools (86,000 children). Of the 331 state-integrated schools at this time, 238 were Catholic and the remaining 93 schools included Adventist, denominational and non-denominational evangelical Christian, Rudolph Steiner, Jewish, Islamic and Montessori (MoE, 2013).

Integrated schools have a philosophical ethos underpinning their respective education systems which is encapsulated in a defined special character (Norsworthy, 2014). For faith-based integrated schools, the significance of the principal’s role is deeply connected to the vision, the values and the principles on which particular schools are established and principal replacement is intrinsically linked to these factors. Those aspiring

to leadership in faith-based schools must not only have the requisite capabilities to be a principal but must also adhere to the faith ethos of the school and ensure that the special character is implemented throughout the school. The difficulties that exist in state schools when needing to replace the principal are exacerbated in state-integrated schools where the extra dimension of meeting the special character requirements considerably reduces the pool from which potential principals can be selected (Fincham, 2010; Scott & McNeish, 2012).

Studies conducted in Australian faith-based schools indicate that the same problems exist regarding principal shortage, recruitment and retention (Canavan, 2001; Fincham, 2010; Gronn & Lacey, 2006). Research conducted by the Australian Catholic University to investigate why more people were not applying for leadership positions in Catholic schools in New South Wales concluded that leadership succession was a significant problem, and with the additional requirements and responsibilities relating to the faith-based community, Catholic schools were even more affected in their attempts to find suitable successors for principalship (D'Arbon & Dorman, 2004). Fincham (2010) highlighted the challenge of leadership succession faced by Catholic schools where there has been a noticeable reduction in the number of applicants for senior leadership roles and a concern about the difficulty in attracting and encouraging suitable candidates to pursue a leadership role. There is a need for ongoing professional development in Catholic schools to encourage teachers to aspire to leadership roles in the future (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009; Fincham, 2010; Wallace, Ridenour & Biddle, 1999). For faith-based schools, succession planning is particularly important, given that it has already been identified that there are fewer applicants for senior leadership roles. There is a need for some 'grow your own' strategies and it is incumbent on principals and senior leaders to identify future leaders and encourage them in their professional development (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009; Canavan, 2001; Scott & McNeish, 2012).

Building leadership capacity in schools

One way to address this problem is intentionally to build leadership capacity. The issues surrounding principal development span international boundaries where very different preparation systems exist. In the USA, Canada and the UK there are formal qualifications which lead to principalship, whereas in New Zealand, there is no mandatory requirement for advanced training for the role. New initiatives from the Ministry of Education have seen the cessation of the *First Time Principals' Programme* and the *Aspiring Principals' Programme*. These have been replaced by other forms of professional development through new supports for leadership: Leadership Advisors, Emerging Leaders and Expert Partners (Ministry of Education, 2017).

Developing leaders is an effective means of building capacity and improving and sustaining an organisation (Collins, 2001; Fullan, 2003). While principals have some responsibility for developing potential leaders, schools should ideally be structured to allow for growth and opportunity, so that leaders can emerge. Collins (2001) identified that developing leaders from within is crucial to building great organisations. A known leadership practice found in the literature and in practice in many schools, is to build leadership capacity across the staff (Gronn & Lacey, 2006). Intentionally 'building capacity' enables the principal to share leadership in a collaborative manner that allows others to be involved in key elements of leadership within the school. Developing skills in others can increase the talent pool from which future principal appointments can be made and shared leadership can enhance school performance across all areas of school life (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). While building leadership capacity may be achieved through the use of various models of sharing leadership in schools, the responsibility for ensuring this happens ultimately rests with the principal. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) contend that, "leadership stands on the shoulders of those who go before and lays the groundwork for those who will follow" (p. 57).

Mansour (2011) and Matte (2012) investigated the importance of building leadership capacity within a school to ensure sustained school improvement and an ongoing supply of potential leaders who could become

principals in the future. Their studies showed that the identification, recruitment and training of leaders could guarantee an ongoing leadership pipeline, and the role of succession planning could be strategic and purposeful in building leadership capacity. Drawing on the work of other educational theorists, Mansour (2011) and Matte (2012) demonstrate that building leadership capacity is the key to successful succession and sustainability in an organisation. Such practice creates layers of leaders who are prepared to take over and sustain the organisation when key people leave.

Table 1. Impact model for principal succession processes in schools

| Key skill & knowledge (Criteria) | Critical application | Key results | Impact |
|--|---|--|--|
| 1. Succession practices | Planning using key elements of succession planning | Boards should be well prepared for the inevitability of a change of principal | Board appoints suitable replacement who best fits the needs of the school community |
| 2. External input | Seeking advice and input from external advisors or professional agencies | Boards are well advised from those with experience in principal appointments processes | Decisions made are founded on sound advice from experts in this field |
| 3. Appointment processes with documented evidence of policies and procedures | Discussion and planning by Board of Trustees with strategic future focus | Successive changes in Board members will not hinder or affect the process and there is a basis from which to begin | Ability to access information that will assist the process and lay a foundation for further input and discussion |
| 4. Community involvement | Involvement of key stakeholders through consultation and discussion | Fulfils the importance of community involvement in strategic planning and development in NZ schools | Community satisfaction with the process and outcome |
| 5. Consideration of the importance of the school's culture, vision and special character | Ensuring that there is a continuation of the culture, vision and special character elements important to the school | Meeting the requirements of the Integration Deed | New principal upholds the special character of the school and ensures its continued implementation |
| 6. Leadership development opportunities, building leadership capacity | Identification and development of teachers with leadership potential | There is an on-going supply of educators within the school who understand and maintain the practices essential for the continuity of culture, vision and special character | Successful changes of principal within a faith-based integrated school either through internal or external appointment |

Leadership succession is not an episodic event or exception. It is a regular and reoccurring process within every school. The impact of appointing a new principal is charged with feelings of expectation, apprehension, abandonment, loss, relief or even fear. Leadership succession events are rarely treated lightly, as they are crucial to the ongoing success of the school. The role of the principal is pivotal to the success of the school and the development of effective succession policies and practices will enable the continuation of stable school communities that promote outstanding learning outcomes for students. Schools are in a constant state of change and formalised succession planning may not necessarily resolve the predicted shortfall in principal applicants; however, the continued awareness and development of a strategic plan to augment the leadership pipeline and mitigate the effects of the shortfall, is essential for every school.

Methodology

The key indicators for a successful principal succession that emerged from the literature review for this study suggest the following criteria might guide the planning process in integrated, faith-based schools: the importance of developing succession policies and practices (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2004); the value of seeking advice from experts when looking to employ a principal (Morrison, 2006); consideration of the importance of the school's culture, vision and special character (Avuva'a, 2008); involving stakeholders through consultation and discussion (Jones, 2000) and identification and development of teachers with leadership potential (Gronn & Lacey, 2004). Using these key indicators as the *Key Skill & Knowledge (Criteria)* of a theoretical framework for principal succession, an impact model was developed which guided this study.

An interpretive, qualitative design was used to examine the experiences of principal succession. Using Brinkerhoff's Success Case Method (SCM) (2003) the study was conducted in two phases. In Phase 1, a questionnaire was sent to 157 faith-based integrated schools whose national organisations had identified as having a change of principal 2005-2011. This included Catholic Schools (135), Adventist Schools (10) and Evangelical Christian Schools (12). In Phase 2, six schools were selected based on information gathered from the questionnaire and evaluated against an established framework – the Impact Model (see Table 1).

The research question asked in what ways principals and boards used succession planning in faith-based integrated schools towards ensuring the building of leadership capacity and the continuity of vision, culture and special character. Extensive data about culture, vision, special character and leadership development were gathered. The connection to succession planning and leadership development was then analysed. The decision to use a mixture of qualitative methods was made because it enabled the consideration of multiple viewpoints, perspectives, understandings and positions.

Success Case Method

The Success Case Method (Brinkerhoff, 2003) was used in this study. SCM is designed to discover how well an organisation or initiative is working. SCM uses an evaluation tool for "finding out what is working and what is not, which also provides accurate and trustworthy information that can be used to make timely decisions" (Brinkerhoff, 2003, p. 3). Central to SCM is the creation of the Impact Model. The Impact Model answers the question, "If things were working well, what would be happening?" (Brinkerhoff, 2003, p. 75). It is a structured model in a table format in which intended goals, intended performance, measurement of actual performance and final results are evaluated.

Using the Impact Model as a basis for arranging the schools on a continuum from those using most of the procedures specified in the Impact Model through to those who reported using the fewest procedures, six schools were identified as case study schools. Pseudonyms were assigned to each school to ensure anonymity. To further protect the identity of the schools and participants, the number of students and decile rankings are provided as a range rather than a specific number (see Table 2).

Table 2. Schools selected for case study (C = Catholic; EC = Evangelical Christian)

| School | Classification | Students | Decile Rating |
|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| Avonlakes College (C) | Years 7-13 | 800-1000 | 8-10 |
| Broadfield School (EC) | Years 1-8 | 100-150 | 6-8 |
| St Angelos College (EC) | Years 1-13 | 1000-1200 | 8-10 |
| Christian Heritage School (EC) | Years 1-13 | 300-400 | 8-10 |
| Christ the King Primary School (C) | Years 1-8 | 100-150 | 4-6 |
| Chanel Downs Primary School (C) | Years 1-8 | 300-400 | 8-10 |

In analysing the data collected from the questionnaires, the Impact Model determined the components established as critical factors in a school's understanding of principal succession practices. A grid was designed to sort the schools into two groups: those schools which demonstrated the use of most of the six criteria from the Impact Model and those schools which did not appear to have used many of the six criteria. The three schools selected from each group were then invited to participate in Phase 2.

There are ethical issues to consider when a researcher is assigning labels of 'successful' or 'unsuccessful' to a case study school, even when using a tool such as an Impact Model. The use of this model proved difficult to clearly identify schools as successful or not successful when the baseline criteria had so many variables. While Brinkerhoff's model works well in a business setting, it needed modification for this educational context. SCM has been adapted for use by some education researchers in New Zealand to consider teacher induction; evaluation of a development programme for special education teaching and effective change leadership (Piggott-Irvine, 2009). Limiting the variables regarding school type (Catholic and Evangelical Christian only) assisted with data gathering and research analysis. Other integrated schools such as Kura Kaupapa, Montessori, Steiner, Jewish and Muslim schools were not included in this study because this group of schools is small and distinctive elements of the school would have been too easily identifiable.

In order to gain insight into the personal experiences of succession, in depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 33 participants. Participants included principals, board chairs, proprietors' representatives, teachers and senior students in schools with Year 13 students. The school charter, ERO reports, yearbooks, the prospectus, the website, newsletters and in some schools, board of trustees' minutes, provided additional information that contributed much to an understanding of each school context.

As the data was coded and compared, themes within the data began to emerge; information was then confirmed or discounted as important in theory formation. It was evident from the outset that, with the large number of interview, there would be a wealth of data to be analysed. Therefore, NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 10, 2012), coding software for qualitative analysis was selected to organise and analyse the data. Following the collation and analysis of all the data, the emergent themes formed the basis of the final report on the findings of the research.

Findings

Principal succession is an inevitable event in every school, yet the data showed that a documented formal process for succession planning was not a focus of attention in any of these schools, although there was evidence that

informal processes existed. As already noted, the pool of applicants for principals in faith-based integrated schools is often much smaller than for state schools. For their most recent principal appointment there were only 18 applicants across the six schools. Of those who applied, five were internal applicants, one at each of five schools. All those appointed as principal had experience in Catholic or evangelical Christian schools prior to being appointed to their current position.

No boards of trustees had considered the replacement of the principal prior to the necessity arising; neither had they deemed succession planning as an important or even necessary aspect of their role. Although most of the board chairs did not specifically mention succession planning processes, it was evident they considered there were some reasonably rigorous, planned procedures which influenced the appointment of the principal. These took various forms including surveys, psychometric testing, separate interviews with the proprietors and in most cases, interviews with the full board. Four of the six schools had well-documented processes for the appointment of the current principal.

Publications by the NZSTA (2005, 2009) to assist boards in the appointment process were not widely used in the case study schools. The Catholic Education Board has some excellent resources for schools regarding appointment processes in Catholic schools. Despite the availability of these resources, only one of the three case study Catholic schools referred to this information as part of their appointment processes or planning. Two of the schools did, however, seek input from the local Catholic Education Office, and one employed an external consultant to lead its appointment process. In only one appointment, that of an internal applicant, was there any indication that the process was not rigorous. In that situation, the appointment process was viewed as being a 'tick a box' exercise because the appointed person had been acting principal in the school for a lengthy period of time. The findings in the three evangelical Christian schools were similar. The NZSTA material was available for the boards of trustees to use but only one school used it as a reference to guide them through the process. None of these schools used a consultant or any other external advisors to assist with the process.

For all of board chairs and proprietors the inclusion of vision, culture and special character was considered central to the appointment process, the interview, and the final selection of the new principal. This was an interesting discovery as the importance of the special character did not feature as strongly in the questionnaire responses completed by the board chairs of these schools. All principal participants felt the appointment process and their interview for the position had focused quite strongly on aspects of vision, culture and special character; essential elements in integrated schools.

The degree to which the school community was involved varied significantly amongst the schools from very little involvement (information given via school newsletters – two schools), to an ad hoc casual discussion with a few parents (one school), to a general survey sent to the school community (one school), to a formal process led by a consultant where selected community members could participate (one school) to an invitation to stakeholders to participate in a forum (one school). The students interviewed felt quite distant from the principal appointment process. Of the six schools, only two had encouraged any student involvement. One used a survey, conducted by the school management team, which invited students' input about what they would like to see in a new school principal. The other was an exercise done by the staff of a primary school where the students were allowed to discuss what characteristics they would like in their new principal. One school sent an online survey to the staff which also went to the extended school community, focused solely on personal attributes and teaching, management and leadership experience. Staff consultation or involvement in the principal succession process was minimal across the six schools. There were some teachers who felt excluded. The choice of the new principal would have a direct influence on teachers and their work, yet half of the teacher participants expressed concern that they knew so little about what was happening.

The identification and development of teachers with leadership potential is a critical application of the Impact Model. Principal and teacher participants discussed the leadership opportunities within their schools as

following the generally accepted pathway to principalship. This meant teachers first having gained experience in middle management or senior leadership team roles. In two schools it was stated that teachers wishing to gain higher qualifications usually initiated discussion with the principal if they wanted support to apply for a place in the Aspiring Principals' Programme. The principals of two schools had discussed this pathway to principalship with at least one staff member during that year. Four teachers said that their principals placed some importance on developing teachers' strengths so that the teachers could then feel more confident to pick up more responsibility in the future. Three teachers indicated that they observed some intentional targeting of people for leadership roles. 'Shoulder tapping' of other staff by principals led two teachers to believe they themselves had no opportunity for further advancement as they hadn't been approached by the principal.

The creation of new leadership opportunities within schools by the MoE was mentioned, but with inadequate funding or few opportunities within their region for training, principals of three schools felt it was not viable to encourage staff development in these roles. Financial constraints generally meant that there was an emphasis on staff development in curriculum related areas rather than for leadership. Teachers were, however, encouraged to seek out their own leadership development opportunities.

Frequent changes in board of trustees' membership caused discontinuity in processes and practices, and inconsistency within the level of expertise and knowledge necessary to guide a principal appointment process. While five of the six schools had documentation for the most recent change of principal it was evident there was a general lack of understanding of good practice in succession planning. The board chair of the sixth school could not locate any of the documentation related to the most recent principal appointment. Following their involvement in this study, two of the six board chairs intended to pursue the development of a succession plan as part of their strategic thinking.

Discussion

Principal succession and leadership development are often left to chance in schools. Many schools do not have any systematic strategies to prepare for a change of principal. While there are many challenges that face schools, there are three key areas that are critical for boards of trustees when considering their principal: recruitment, retention and replacement.

Internationally, schools have been encouraged to plan for principal succession (NCSL, 2007). In New Zealand there is no mandatory requirement for schools to include succession planning in their strategic plans. The value of having a prepared succession plan means an organisation will have considered the implications of replacing a principal prior to the event and will be strategically prepared for that event, whenever it may occur. The pressure of time, the influence of personalities around the board table and the possibility of limited expertise to guide the process, are factors that are likely to take precedence in the absence of a carefully considered and well-developed succession planning model. Documenting policies, processes and succession practices can provide immediate guidance and a framework to which the board and principal can refer. Without policies being developed in advance of being needed, the event can supersede the rationale and underpinning principles which are important to the school's vision, culture and special character. A potential problem, in the absence of any succession planning and documentation being embedded in the school's policy and processes, is that little or no thought or consideration will be given to future principal replacement until the principal resigns, retires or dies, thereby necessitating immediate action. There are numerous business models that can be easily adapted to an educational context. Schoonover (2011) provides a model of best practices in implementing succession planning which emphasises the importance of creating a clear purpose with guiding principles and ensuring it is an integrated part of the life of the organization, not just a single event.

The second criterion in the Impact Model is seeking advice and input from external advisors or professional agencies. School boards in New Zealand are comprised mainly of elected parent volunteers, many of whom may

lack understanding of the complexity of a principal's leadership role, professional developmental processes within a school and the staff selection process. Integrated schools also have proprietor representatives, who may or may not have knowledge of educational processes and practices. Seeking advice and input from external advisors or professional agencies can support and complement the knowledge and skill level of the board of trustees and ensure a rigorous and robust process that the appointment of a principal requires.

The importance of a board having clear appointment processes with documented evidence of policies and procedures is the third criterion. The study showed that despite having no formal succession planning in place, it was possible for the process of employing a new principal to be successful if the principal appointment policy was sound, the process well-managed and the board supported by external or internal advice and guidance. Two schools replaced foundation principals and the board chairs documented the processes they followed for future reference. While neither school had considered the value of succession planning prior to replacing their principals, the two board chairs recognised the wisdom of detailing the process throughout the journey, and evaluating it at the completion of the task. In doing this the board chairs have the basis for developing a succession planning strategy.

During the interviews in Phase 2, it was apparent that the idea of community input was largely viewed as being through the parent representatives on the board. In these case study schools, there was minimal or no opportunity given for the community to contribute to a consultation process regarding their new principal. Community involvement is a key requirement for self-managing schools and to ignore it does not allow stakeholders to participate in sharing their desires and aspirations. The board of trustees has the responsibility to make the final decision regarding the most suitable appointment for the role of principal, but it is critical to the process that the community also be given opportunities to participate and contribute to a decision that will influence the direction of teaching, learning and student outcomes. The Impact Model suggests that the time to work closely and effectively with the school community is not when the school board is under time pressure or at a time of important decision making. Succession planning which incorporates community consultation and involvement should ideally occur as part of the school's strategic planning.

Culture and vision are fundamental parts of the lifeworld of a faith-based school as they are intricately intertwined with the layers of meaning attributed to the special character of the school. While many participants fully endorsed the importance of these factors to the appointment of the principal, it was concerning that few could accurately articulate the vision statement of their school or align the special character requirement to the principal appointment process. Within integrated schools the proprietor plays an important role on the appointments committee. Through interviews with proprietors of the schools, it was evident that they viewed their role as being responsible for the maintenance and preservation of special character but not aligned to any involvement with policies and procedures. This was unusual as each board of an integrated school may have up to four proprietor representatives who function as school trustees. Within that capacity these proprietor representatives have the right and responsibility to contribute to the strategic planning and foci for the future. Given that preservation of the special character is paramount for proprietors, it stands to reason that the appointment of future principals would be an issue of major concern.

The final criterion in the Impact Model was the importance of building leadership capacity through providing development opportunities for teachers with leadership potential that may lead to principalship. Leadership development is critical to sustain student achievement and ensure the continued improvement and development of a school. The absence of any well-structured pathways for developing leadership capacity in the case study schools was concerning. For faith-based schools to grow a leadership pipeline that will ensure the continuity of leadership in integrated schools this must be intentional rather than left to chance. With education programmes and practices in a continual state of change, it is important that principals, and those aspiring to become principals, engage in a wide range of development opportunities in the key areas of their responsibility: curriculum and leadership, culture and vision, management and partnerships.

The concept of building leadership capacity requires shared responsibility and collaboration within the school community. Capacity building is not just about building individuals but is also about school development. While capacity building through a distributed leadership model is an effective method of school development and improvement it does not necessarily follow that future principals will emerge from the teachers in these leadership roles. Leadership development is critical to sustaining student achievement and ensuring the continued development and improvement of school outcomes. Providing a supportive environment for leadership development and allowing teachers and middle managers to take risks in a safe environment, is integral to developing leadership capacity. For the faith-based integrated school, leadership development will ensure that there is an on-going supply of educators within the school who understand and maintain the faith practices essential for the life and health of the school.

A model for the future

The Impact Model used for this study could be used or adapted to fit any school, state, integrated or private and forms a ready checklist of the key skills and understandings that should be considered whenever there is a need to replace or appoint a new leader. In a faith-based school, the criterion related to special character can be further modified to meet the specific faith or ethos requirements of the integrated school. To develop an Impact Model, leaders identify the strategic goals and determine how these goals are connected to the future of the school.

The Impact Model suggests what success should look like for future principal replacement scenarios. Each one of the critical components is important as part of a comprehensive outline that can provide boards of trustees, proprietors and school senior management teams with a guide from which they can establish a succession management plan that can sit alongside the school's charter, annual plan and strategic plan. The development of a succession plan will ensure that policies, processes and practices are embedded in documentation that is readily available for the next principal succession event. This succession plan could then be reviewed regularly as part of the annual self-review process required of every school board in New Zealand by the Ministry of Education.

Conclusion

While this research focused on succession planning in faith-based schools, the findings and discussion are relevant to all schools. However, the greater challenge for the integrated school is how to remain authentic as a faith-based school in a constantly changing world where the values and mission of these schools are contested by secularism and the competitiveness of the school marketplace (Fincham, 2010; NCSL, 2009). In the Catholic and evangelical Christian schools in this study, the faith dimension pervades all aspects of the school; therefore, it is essential that principals and senior leaders are able to exercise faith leadership within their schools. To guarantee that there is a pipeline of applicants who can fulfil these roles, principals of faith-based schools need to ensure that succession planning is intentional and develop strategic models of leadership preparation and mentoring which will build leadership skills at all levels in the school to support the formation and retention of leaders for the future.

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