

**MAKING A BIGGER DIFFERENCE FOR ALL STUDENTS  
DIRECTIONS FOR A SCHOOLING STRATEGY**

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## Appendix 1

NZEI Te Riu Roa submission on

**MAKING A BIGGER DIFFERENCE FOR ALL STUDENTS  
DIRECTIONS FOR A SCHOOLING STRATEGY**

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**SUMMARY OF THE KEY POINTS**

- Positive aspects of the schooling strategy to provide a high-level five year framework to guide existing work and priorities, strengthen existing policies, align current initiatives and identify resources to support teaching were recognised.
- While our members welcome recognition that the teacher cannot alone ameliorate the effects on learning<sup>1</sup> of social and economic disadvantage, the recognition becomes simply platitudes if the statements are used to dismiss any further discussion on this topic and what a teacher or a school is expected to achieve is unrealistic.
- It is simplistic to define effective teaching only as “having high expectation for all students”, “believing a difference can be made” and measuring “success by the outcomes of all students”. These selected factors are only part of what contributes to effective teaching.
- Teacher registration is the first step in ensuring minimum quality. All students are entitled to be taught by a registered teacher. At the time of writing, this is not the case for Maori immersion education.
- Links between the standards developed for graduating teachers and the Teachers Council’s Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions of professional practice, professional knowledge, professional relationships and professional leadership will need to be explicit. Such clear linkages will help to ensure the continuum of knowledge, skills practice and beliefs throughout the teacher’s professional life.
- There is a role for the Teachers Council in advocating for a model that focuses on the first two years of teaching as part of the teacher education programme thereby involving the teacher education provider. This would help to ensure that the advice and guidance programmes provide by a school build upon the initial teacher education work.

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<sup>1</sup> Secretary for Education and Chief Review Officer’s presentation to the Ministry of Education initiated Schooling Strategy and career advancement forum 8-9 March 2005, Brentwood Hotel, Wellington. Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J. &

- Professional development is a crucial condition of work. Whole school approaches are generally seen as being of greater benefit to school-wide teaching and learning than individually targeted professional development. Professional learning is embedded in school priorities and teachers' classroom practices and is not undertaken in isolation but with other colleagues as a team.
- Finding time is one of the trickiest problems facing schools. Time for teachers to meet and reflect during the school day is essential to creating strong professional communities. Teachers should have time away from their classes with colleagues so as to improve the quality of their teaching in the long term. Absence of this opportunity isolates teachers from their colleagues and hinders positive change.
- Collaborative arrangements which have been made between initial teacher educators, beginning teacher and practising teachers need to be fully resourced. Such a partnership will then enable all parties to participate in informed debate about classroom pedagogy and curriculum implementation.
- What can be expected of initial teacher education courses is a strong grounding in subject and learning theories, exposure to a range of different classrooms and schools, opportunities to see what extremely effective teachers can achieve with a class of diverse students so they know the direction to head.
- Normal schools provide the complementary and essential relationships between theory and practice and what it looks like in a classroom and a school. Normal schools have a vital role to assist student teachers make the transition towards being an effective teacher by providing student teachers with a model of what can occur in a classroom with optimum conditions.
- It was surprising to find the absence of the role of the principal as a focus in the ministry's consultation document. When the principal is engaged in serious and visible professional learning important messages are being given to teachers about commitment to ongoing learning.<sup>2</sup> Their presence, their talk and their actions play a major role in building a learning culture.
- Literacy and numeracy learning remain at the heart of primary school programmes. Literacy is a key predictor of later schooling success and is also tied into the student's self esteem. Currently the government has a large investment in programmes to advance the Literacy and Numeracy strategy.

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Biddulph, C. (2003). *The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand Best Evidence Synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

<sup>2</sup> Hill, J., Hawk, K., & Taylor, K. (2001). 'Professional Development: what makes it work?' A paper presented at the NZARE conference, Christchurch, December.

With the essential support and time to practice new learning these professional learning programmes can help teachers develop a deeper understanding.

- There are tensions associated with three important concepts associated with assessment – validity, reliability, manageability. Within any one assessment a balance between the three concepts must be found.
- The Assessment to Learn advisers schoolwide support helping schools understand what information is worth collecting and analysing for assessment. Unfortunately the number of advisers is inadequate for what is required and most of the government’s resources arrived in schools without adequate opportunities for professional learning and time for teachers to reflect on, and interprets the data particularly through conversations with colleagues.
- Many teachers have developed ways of working which include the study of Māori language and culture. These are intended to reflect and respect tikanga Māori. Giving emphasis to tikanga Māori in schooling is an initial way of establishing a kaupapa which acknowledges the Māori people as the tangata whenua of New Zealand. NZEI’s position is that te reo Maori should be compulsory for all students in early childhood and primacy education.
- Resources have to improve to maintain and strengthen New Zealand’s unique approach to recognising diversity by catering for an individual student’s needs from the first day they start school.
- Improvements to teacher pupil ratios would allow for more quality interaction between the student and teacher and in goal setting, monitoring and assessment with each student taking an active role in his or her learning.
- Accountability is not the issue. The issue is resourcing schools so that the teacher’s workload is reduced sufficiently to allow them to plan, teach, review, assess, analyse, consult and involve colleagues without burnout. This can be achieved through release time, improved teacher pupil ratios, professional leadership time and release time.
- Some schools have developed into a full service model, where families come to expect extension options for the school day and a range of support services. The growth has come from the outsourcing of what were once parental responsibilities. This new role has never been debated.
- Primary teachers as a group, often do not see themselves as researchers. Their skills in implementing the curriculum have not always led to engagement with the expert craft of research.

Translating research into practice is not as straightforward as it appears. While research can reveal information about how to teach it is often at a high level of abstraction. Research does not tell us what to teach and why to teach it.

## **INTRODUCTION**

New Zealand primary schools are a success story and New Zealand teachers are recognised internationally as being successful. Both the teacher and the student are engaged in learning. Both are at different points in their development. Just as students learn better when they are challenged; similarly teachers respond with enthusiasm and commitment when their work and expertise is valued, when they are respected as professionals and when they have adequate and appropriate resources to teach well.

Primary education is a crucial stage in students' lives. It builds on early childhood experiences and shapes students attitudes for life. It focuses on literacy and numeracy, the essential tools for all other learning, and provides for learning opportunities in a broad curriculum according to the needs of students. Essentially it is about students learning to develop as learners, to discover their strengths and weaknesses and learning to work with and respect others.

Discussion of the schooling strategy provides for an examination of the role of the primary teacher in learning. This fits with the wider view that an understanding of the teacher's role as a professional person would not come from a study of the classroom alone. While a teacher's work and interaction with students in the classroom setting is the most critical aspect of a teacher's work but teachers are often required to engage in other activities, which however worthy, are often distractions from their teaching role.

### **Profile of NZEI Te Riu Roa**

The New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI) is the 120 year old professional and industrial union representing 43,000 members working as:

- teachers in the early childhood, primary and composite education sectors
- support staff in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools
- Group Special Education staff in the Ministry of Education
- advisers and reading recovery tutors in the teacher support services.

The main object of NZEI Te Riu Roa is to advance the cause of education generally while upholding and maintaining the just claims of its members individually and collectively.

NZEI members have a long history of playing a positive role in the education sector contributing to policy and research and, of course, as critical contributors to the implemented curriculum and the provision of learning opportunities for students.

### **Consultation and scope of response**

At NZEI's invitation groups of teachers and principals engaged in discussion on the second phase of the schooling strategy from November 2004 to March 2005. This response draws on discussion of these NZEI focus groups. Notes were taken at each meeting and the quotes used are taken directly from the discussion. This response also builds on, and complements NZEI's earlier response on the first phase of the schooling strategy and considers the literature to provide a wider international frame for the discussion.

Most questions related to education are interrelated and inevitably overlap occurs. Many issues reflect more than one question and sometimes it is an arbitrary decision under which question the discussion is placed.

Although our members saw the five priorities under the Strategic Objective : Effective Teaching as part of the school's role, they believe that some were more important than others. They argued that the content of priorities covering: ongoing professional learning, affirming and developing student identity and comprehensive preparation for teaching was their core business in a classroom and also part of their professional duty. Strong school-home links and using, sharing and developing knowledge were acknowledged as important but of lesser status to those priorities mentioned earlier. Strategic Objective: Families and Whanau covered issues beyond their role but they provided brief comment on the priority related to integrated social services as experienced in schools. Evidence based investment also received brief comment. This response reflects our members' emphasis.

### **General comment**

NZEI welcomes the intent of the second phase of the discussion on the schooling strategy. In particular NZEI supports the ministry's role in making public the feedback on the first phase and building on the earlier discussion.

NZEI introductory comment to the first phase highlighted the positive aspects of the development of a schooling strategy recognising it would

- provide a high-level five year framework to guide existing work and priorities
- engender public discussion on schooling and gain broad agreement about priorities for action
- strengthen existing policies
- develop a consistent strategy that encourages lifelong learning
- align and refine, while appropriate current initiatives within the strategy

- continue an evolutionary approach to change.
- present a framework in which resources can be identified and planned for to support teaching and learning in schools.

### **Limitations of the document**

In this second phase members were expecting to be consulted on a draft implementation plan which had a plan of action and timeframes. This has not occurred and result may be a lower level of 'buy in' by teachers at this second phase. To maintain the momentum the implementation plan including timeframes to be met and identified resources must be included. NZEI is keen to be part of that discussion.

Missing from the strategy are questions about a seamless education system, school leadership, and school organisation.

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### **IMPROVING STUDENT OUTCOMES**

*Schooling strategy goal: excellence and equity of outcomes for all students: to this end all students will leave school with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and sense of identity they need to enrich their own lives and become contributors in a 21<sup>st</sup> century world*

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Teachers we consulted with were in awe of the goal. While some believed it was not achievable others acknowledged that it was worthwhile working towards. Overall they felt it was a vision rather than a goal. Their starting point was that the schooling strategy should be to ensure that the conditions in which teachers teach and students learn are in place and building on strengths already evident in the system to create a joy of teaching and learning.

They did not disagree with the worthiness of what the ministry's consultation booklet set out but questioned how realistic the strategic goal was:

*How exactly, for example, are schools to achieve "excellence and equity of outcomes for all students?" We need to be very clear about what resourcing would realistically be needed to achieve 'equity of outcomes for all' especially given the diverse population that characterises many of our schools and the increasing gap between rich and poor in our society.<sup>3</sup>*

Teachers agree with the view that all students in our schools should succeed and be positively engaged in effective learning. They argued that all their efforts are focused on this goal.

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<sup>3</sup> Horgan, E. (2004) 'Education, motherhood and apple pie' NZEI Rourou, December

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**Strategic Objective: Improving Student Outcomes**

*Significantly improving outcomes for students currently underachieving, while continuing to improve outcomes for high and average achievers, across all dimensions of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and identity*

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**1a How can we strengthen the kinds of approaches that benefit diverse learners (all learners, including high and low achievers) at the same time.**

**Diverse learners**

To respond to the kinds of approaches that benefit diverse learners our members maintained there was a need to understand what diversity means in the New Zealand classroom<sup>4</sup>. To take one example, we know that there are increasing numbers of students at many schools, especially those in low socio economic areas, who are disproportionately affected by inadequate nutrition, poor health and housing, unemployment, family disruption and social factors. These disadvantages contribute to under achievement, behavioural difficulties, as well as outcomes such as suspension and expulsion. Schools are obliged to ensure that these students attend school and that they have the opportunity to learn, regardless of family or individual crises. At the same time it is clear that students who manifest these problems cannot learn effectively and are sometimes disruptive to their peers. Typically these students are served by schools in areas and suburbs that have lower levels of investment in people, lower average incomes and higher levels of unemployment.

While our members welcome recognition that the teacher cannot alone ameliorate the effects on learning<sup>5</sup> of social and economic disadvantage, the recognition becomes simply platitudes if the statements are used to dismiss any further discussion on this topic and what is expected a teacher or a school can achieve is unrealistic.

It is not surprising that some students arrive on their first day of school at different stages of readiness. All will have experienced different learning opportunities and have different learning needs. We also know that Māori and Pasifika students are disproportionately represented in this bracket of school learners.

For many decades the range of 'readiness' of new entrants has been recognised by New Zealand primary teachers and catered for in the literacy and numeracy teaching programmes. New entrant teachers are recognised world wide for their ability to provide the right of every child to enter formal

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 1

<sup>5</sup> Secretary for Education and Chief Review Officer's presentation to the Ministry of Education initiated Schooling Strategy and career advancement forum 8-9 March 2005, Brentwood Hotel, Wellington. Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J. & Biddulph, C. (2003). *The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand Best Evidence Synthesis*. Wellington:Ministry of Education.

school on his or her fifth birthday. This is a unique feature of the New Zealand education system and is also the beginning of catering for diversity. The individual needs of the child become the focus of teaching.

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

Resources have to improve to maintain and strengthen New Zealand's unique and early approach recognising diversity by catering for an individual student's needs from the first day they start school. Improvements to teacher pupil ratios would allow for more quality interaction between the student and teacher, goal setting, monitoring and assessment with each student taking part his or her learning.

#### **Literacy and numeracy a priority**

A New Zealand Treasury working paper (01/03)<sup>6</sup> set out preliminary thinking about priority policy areas and strategies to strengthen the Government's "reducing inequalities" strategy. The writer concluded that policy should address its primary efforts to improve outcomes for those Māori and Pacific people who do worse than the median for the population while, at the same time assisting others who have similarly poor outcomes. It suggests that improving literacy and numeracy skills of Māori and Pacific students at primary school level is a priority for further development. It also recommends programmes in health, employment and housing sectors to back this up.

This analysis fits well for primary schools where literacy and numeracy learning remain at the heart of primary school programmes. Literacy is a key predictor of later schooling success and is also tied into the student's self esteem. Currently the government has a large investment in programmes to advance the Literacy and Numeracy strategy. By providing the essential support and time to practice new learning these professional learning programmes help teachers develop a deeper understanding..

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

The government's focus on literacy and numeracy professional learning programmes must continue on a national level so that new teachers can be included and others refreshed from time to time.

#### **A minimum guarantee of teaching quality**

Teacher registration is the first step in ensuring minimum quality. Registration incorporates a guarantee that a teacher has successfully completed a recognised initial teacher education course and has proven themselves to be proficient in the classroom. All students are entitled to be taught by a registered teacher. At the time of writing, this is not the case for Māori.

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<sup>6</sup> Crawford, R. (2001) 'Reducing Maori and Pacific Inequalities' A companion paper to the Treasury Working Papers *Towards the Inclusive Economy; Human Capital and the Inclusive Economy and Geography and the Inclusive Economy: A regional Perspective*.

Until January 2006 now teachers in kura kaupapa Māori are exempt from the Education Act 1989 requirement that only teachers who hold a current practising certificate or a current Limited Authority to Teach can be employed in teaching positions. The exemption recognised the shortage of people who were fluent in te reo Māori and were also qualified and trained to teach. The exemption lapses on 31 December 2005 but the ministry has done little to publicise the change or develop support strategies for teachers in kura kaupapa Māori to gain registrations. The ministry claims that there are only 19 teachers who need to upgrade but a survey by NZEI's Te Reo Areare indicates that there may be more than 100 employees affected.

It is not appropriate that an at-risk group of students may not be taught by a registered teacher. Teacher supply is a government systems issue and this one has not been managed well. The implications and solutions need to be actioned urgently. The shortage of teachers who are fluent in Māori is exacerbated by the proliferation of small kura operating within short distances of each other. Although rationalisation is a difficult subject it must be faced if Māori students leave kura are to have adequate access to registered teachers.

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

Strategies must be planned and implemented to inform schools about the January 2006 deadline requiring all teachers in kura kaupapa Māori to be registered; and, where necessary assist those teachers to meet registration requirements.

#### **Mix of entrants**

It is in the best interests of New Zealand society as a whole, and of the teaching service itself that there should be recruited to teaching a better mix of entrants which have regard to the changing ethnic, socio-economic and cultural composition of our society. This was recognised in a Review of Teacher Training in 1978.<sup>7</sup> We still have not got it right!

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

Teaching scholarships targeting the minority group which are represented in our schools go some way but more are needed.

For identified groups incentives need to be offered, such as: waiving student fees, providing living allowances. In return these teachers could be bonded.

#### **Professional learning**

Key is the development of school and teachers' own professional ability to lead and sustain improvement and commit to a programme of professional learning and development which is aligned

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<sup>7</sup> Hill, C. (1979) *Review of Teacher Training*. Report of the Steering committee associated with the Ministerial conferences of November 1977 and August 1978. Wellington:Department of Education

with the school's improvement for all their staff. This is discussed more fully under our response to priority 3a.

**1b What would schools need to do to demonstrate that students are developing desired skills, attitudes, values and identity as well as knowledge?**

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2 **Assessment and monitoring**

The New Zealand Curriculum Framework makes clear that the main purpose of school based assessment is to improve students' learning and the quality of learning programmes.<sup>8</sup> More recently, the Ministry's assessment strategy<sup>9</sup> has confirmed that assessment is to promote learning, that is, formative assessment.

The research<sup>10</sup> indicates that improving learning through assessment depends on five deceptively simple, key factors:

- the provision of effective feedback to students
- the active involvement of students in their own learning
- adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment
- a recognition of the profound influence assessment has on the motivation and self-esteem of students both of which are crucial influences on learning
- the need for students to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve.

There are tensions associated with three important concepts associated with assessment – validity, reliability, manageability. Within any one assessment a balance between them needs to be found

To make judgements about the progress and achievement of individual students and groups of students the teacher needs to know what students know and can do when they first come into the class. The teacher also needs to be able to compare student achievement in different ways using class, school and national data. Assessment information can also be used for reporting progress and providing summative information

Teachers recognise and accept the need to gather information about students in a structured and rigorous way. The increased accountability of schools, and the acceptance of the importance of demonstrating value added, means the nature of evidence has also changed. Evidence now tends to be less ad hoc and instead includes statistical data about an individual student's academic achievement and qualitative information about their particular learning needs and their attitudes to learning.

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<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Education. (1993) *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework*. Wellington: Learning Media p7

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Education. (2004). 'Curriculum Update. Using Assessment Tools'. Issue 54, April

<sup>10</sup> The Assessment Reform Group. (1999) *Assessment for Learning. Beyond the Black Box*. University of Cambridge: The Assessment Reform Group

### How to make a bigger difference

Primary classroom teachers said

- not everything is measurable and nor would you want to measure everything
- demands for measurement of learning should not be too prescriptive
- teacher confidence in their professional judgement needs to be rebuilt
- the government and ministry need to establish a climate of trust
- learning programmes and high quality interactions with students should take precedence over measuring
- assessment is not precise and should not be promoted as such, teacher judgement is an important factor and provides a richer picture of what the student knows and can do

The need for classroom teachers to understand school-wide levels of achievement is becoming more of a feature of primary schools than in the past. Knowing the 'big picture' enables classroom teachers to set their students' progress and outcomes within a wider school context and to compare them to national information. Teachers, however, are not always sure about what information they should collect and why it should be collected. Some information is not necessary and not used. Gathering information without a specific purpose and an understanding of that purpose is a futile exercise it leads to teacher resentment over the amount of time that the recording and analysing of assessment takes away from teaching time.

*The case studies showed that becoming "assessment literate" could be a struggle. Schools needed help to develop or select appropriate assessment tools, interpret the data and use the data to improve learning.*<sup>11</sup>

There is already schoolwide support from the Assessment to Learn advisers to help schools understand, collectively, and provide practical advice on what is worth collecting, and what is worth analysing. Examples of different sorts of assessment and vignettes are included to show what is already working well for teachers. In addition, the government has provided many useful nationally validated assessment tools. Unfortunately the number of advisers available is inadequate to provide the support needed, and most of the government's resources arrive without adequate opportunities for professional learning. Teachers need time in which to reflect and interpret the data particularly through conversations with colleagues. This has been the case with, for example, School Entry Assessment, assessment resources from the National Monitoring Project<sup>12</sup>, the Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning, the Assessment Resource Banks, the exemplars. It cannot be expected that teachers will use these assessment tools if they are not conversant with what they have to offer.

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Mitchell, L., Cameron, M. & Wylie, C. (2002) Sustaining school improvement – ten primary schools' journeys. Wellington: NZCER, p23

<sup>12</sup> Although the National Monitoring Project provides considerably opportunities for teachers to be engaged in professional learning as administrators and/or markers on an annual basis, only a relatively small number of teachers can be involved. Most teachers need assistance with how to use the annual reports in their schools to inform them on what students know and can do in comparison to a national sample of students at years 4 and 8.

*Assessment remains an area which teachers particularly value external support and advice to develop or select appropriate assessment tools, decide what data to collect and analyse and use the data to plan teaching programmes and improve teaching.*<sup>13</sup>

### **How to make a bigger difference**

The classroom teacher release time negotiated in the last primary teachers' collective agreement is a start to providing time for teachers to make the best use of assessment data allowing them to analyse and interpret the data collaboratively with colleagues. This is a time allowance for each individual teacher and amounts to a total of 10 hours per term.

A reduction in the teacher pupil ratios would go a considerable way to provide schools with the flexibility to arrange staffing to gather evidence of student achievement and progress, and carry out formative assessment.

The completion of the implementation of the Professional Leadership Time allowance for primary would allow school principals and middle management teachers to assist with the planning, monitoring and interpreting trends for groups of students.

### **1c How do we know we are making progress?**

The Education Act 1989 section 60A defines the National Education Guidelines and section 61 sets out planning and reporting requirements.

Currently schools are required consult with and report to their communities on an annual basis.

The legislation provides guidance on the minimum practice expected from schools particularly when reporting to parents. Currently the National Administrative Guidelines require schools to plan, set targets for, monitor and report to:

- students and parents on the achievement of individual students;
- the school's community on the achievement of students as a whole and of groups of students including the achievement of Māori students.

Boards of Trustees must also develop and make known to the school's community their policies, plans and targets for improving Māori students' achievement. They are required to report on the achievement of Māori students and to consult with the school's Māori community.

The Ministry of Education has published *Better Relationships for Better Learning. Guidelines for Boards of Trustees and Schools on Engaging with Māori parents, whanau and communities*. The guidelines aim to help schools establish an effective partnership with parents and encourages greater involvement of parents in their child's learning. It includes practical suggestions to enhance giving and gathering information.

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<sup>13</sup> Mitchell, L., Cameron, M. & Wylie, C. (2002) Sustaining school improvement – ten primary schools' journeys. Wellington: NZCER p15

### How to make a bigger difference

The issue is not more accountability rather it is resourcing schools so that the teacher's workload is reduced sufficiently to allow them to plan, teach, review, assess, analyse, consult and involve colleagues without burnout. This can be achieved through release time, improved ratios and professional leadership time.

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#### ***Strategic objective: Effective teaching***

*Effective teaching practices for diverse students are used and developed by teachers who have high expectations of all students, who believe they can make a difference for all of their students and who measure their success by the outcomes of all their students*

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## **2 General comments on this strategic objective**

It is simplistic to define effective teaching only as "having high expectation for all students", "believing a difference can be made" and measuring "success by the outcomes of all students". These selected factors are only part of what contributes to effective teaching. As with all lists they are incomplete and those selected reflect a particular agenda. Even other factors currently being debated at the national policy level, such as teacher qualification, teacher academic ability and experience do not complete the picture. Other key factors such as enthusiasm, creativity and the ability to convey ideas are greatly valued but these factors are more complex to measure and are therefore largely ignored allowing the focus to settle on the more easily identified but perhaps less commonsense factors.

The success of literacy gains made by Mangere and Otara students within the *Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara* initiative is often lauded. The research accompanying this initiative found that "professional development should focus on raising teachers' expectations of what their students can achieve."<sup>14</sup> Teacher expectations do matter but this claim linking it to solving the student underachievement problem is inflated. What is always underplayed in the Mangere-Otara initiative is the large amount of additional resourcing that accompanied the initiative contributing almost entirely to its success.

While research<sup>15</sup> is unequivocal that "quality teaching for diverse students is the largest single education system influence on student achievement" what is often not taken into consideration is that at the same time the climate within which teachers' work has changed their jobs have also changed.

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<sup>14</sup> Mallard, T. (2003) 'Literacy project helping young South Aucklanders'. Media statement by the Minister of Education, 24 July

<sup>15</sup> see for example literature reviews: Alton-Lee. (2003) Best Evidence Synthesis. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Hargreaves, D. (1993) 'The Nature of Quality in Teaching.' OECD-CERI project on teacher quality.

*Society now expects schools to deal with students from diverse backgrounds, to be sensitive to culture and gender, to promote tolerance, to respond well to students who are disadvantaged or have learning or behavioural difficulties, to ensure new technologies and prepare students for life long learning.*<sup>16</sup>

Health and community groups increasingly see primary schools as a means of early intervention to fix the societal problems. To illustrate, most recently a \$40 million health programme to cure cancer has been extended to give school children a piece of fruit a day as part of preventative care.

*This scheme makes it easier for children from all backgrounds to make healthy choices and that will have long-term positive spin-offs in many health areas not just cancer prevention. Schools must have programmes in four areas of cancer prevention – nutrition, physical activity, sun smart and smokefree to be eligible.*<sup>17</sup>

While a commendable cause, schools moving into this programme will also have to set up policies, systems and integrate the knowledge into their regular programmes. Alongside this, schools will have to put in place systems about how they intend to store the fruit and how they will dispose of rotting fruit to ensure they do not encourage a wasp problem.

The issue of all that is required from primary schools over and above the academic and social task has been the subject of recent media headlines.<sup>18</sup> Depth of teaching and learning is being sacrificed to make room for add-ons to the curriculum. Currently the New Zealand Curriculum Project is grappling with what can be expected from schools so that the achievement objects reflect: the purposes of the curriculum/nga marautanga; what is critical learning for all students; future focused curriculum themes of social cohesion, bicultural and multicultural awareness and critical literacies.

### **How to make a bigger difference**

Expectations of what schools can do must be realistic if the strategic objective of effective teaching is to be met.

### **Teacher quality**

New Zealand case study research<sup>19</sup> commissioned by the Ministry of Education as part of an OECD study focused on the capacities and behaviours of quality teachers and policies and practices which supported quality teaching. Ramsay (1993) identified 15 capacities and behaviours as being characteristic amongst the five quality teachers who were observed in action. Prominent amongst these was the conclusion

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<sup>16</sup> Sharma, Y. (2004) *Times Educational Supplement*, Nov 26

<sup>17</sup> Health Minister Annette King quoted in '\$40 million to help control cancer' *Horowhenua Kapiti Chronicle*, 8 March 2005

<sup>18</sup> See for example, 'Primary schools loaded down' *The News*, Westport 8 March 2005, 'Schools receive \$400 grants to promote health issues' *The Courier*, Ashburton, 8 March 2005, 'Lessons our kids need-but not at school', *Sunday Star Times*, 13 March 2005, 'Lifeskills get in the way of teaching' *The Dominion Post*, Wellington 7 March 2005

<sup>19</sup> Ramsay, P. (1993). 'Teacher Quality. A case study prepared for the Ministry of Education as part of the OECD study on teacher quality.' Hamilton:University of Waikato.

*...that these teachers were highly intelligent individuals with outstanding powers of observation, reflection and analysis. They had strong philosophies of education, were theoreticians and practitioners simultaneously, had developed a bicultural approach, possessed a strong sense of humour and had a well developed social conscience. They worked long hours, but had struck a balance between work, home and re-creation. Above all else they cared about the learning outcomes of their children, and had a deep and passionate commitment to their career as teachers.*

### **How to make a bigger difference**

Teacher confidence in their practice could be raised if: many of the managerial accountability measures set by agencies outside the school were removed; if the spotlight of “being the best” was removed: and if the context for teaching was in learning communities rather than competing communities.

Prior to the education reforms the national advisory services introduced and disseminated new knowledge and practice. They shared new ideas with each school that they covered. These advisers had expertise in a particular area and were designated professionals in, for example, junior schools, rural schools, or in particular learning areas such as mathematics, reading, science, art. They had an impact that was sustainable because the service was regular and ongoing and mostly school based. The service was nationally and properly resourced.

Contracting out advisory support is not the answer. Quality follow-up and sustainability is not guaranteed.

For schools which have difficulty getting relievers to enable professional development to take place the reintroduction of the pool relief scheme particularly for schools in low socio economic areas, would ensure teachers were able to refresh their practice without the stress of finding suitable replacement teachers.

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### **Priority – Ongoing Professional Learning**

*Supporting the knowledge, skills, and practices of teachers to achieve sustainable improvements in outcomes for diverse students, through professional learning, development, and participation in communities of professional practice.*

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#### **3a What types of professional learning and development have the most positive and sustainable impact on the practice of teachers and of student outcomes?**

Before considering the type of professional learning and development that have the most positive impact on teacher practice the conditions which support high quality professional learning opportunities in schools need to be considered alongside what research considers is effective ongoing professional development.

#### **Sustainable school improvement**

Research<sup>20</sup> conducted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research sought to expand understanding of factors involved in sustainable school improvement in New Zealand and to see whether there is now a common understanding of “school improvement” in schools and the external agencies and organisations which support or frame their work. Professional development was regarded as a crucial condition of work, with whole school approaches generally being seen as of greater benefit to school-wide teaching and learning than individually targeted professional development. Schools found it useful to identify professional development needs from analysing data on student learning. Most professional development was related to improving achievement in curriculum areas. The research found

*The government plays an important role in creating conditions to support schools, through its infrastructure for planning, funding, staffing, advisory support, monitoring, training, research and development.*<sup>21</sup>

The researchers went on to state:<sup>22</sup>

*Broader economic and social policies were significant, especially for low decile schools. Some staff thought government education and housing policies since 1999 had brought a less competitive environment between schools, a less transient population since the introduction of income-related rents and more parents in paid employment. These changes benefited student well being and led to great stability.*

Aspects which need to be considered because of changes to methods of learning and teaching include: the physical environment and organisation of the classroom, use and organisation of resources for learning, technology, the place and value of resource based learning, patterns of timetabling, the school day, the value of education outside the classroom and visual and non verbal ways of learning and teaching.

There are many researched articles and books on professional learning and development. Definitive lists abound offering the final word on a particular angle. Guskey<sup>23</sup> cautions after examining 13 recent lists of characteristics of “effective professional development and concludes that they vary widely and that the research that supports them is inconsistent and often contradictory.

### **Effective professional learning in New Zealand**

Our members argue that in New Zealand we do have agreement on aspects that comprises effective professional learning. Research experience which has successfully linked into the practicalities of the classroom has a long history. To select a few examples: Stewart & Prebble at Massey University in the 1970s, the Learning in Science Project run by the University of Waikato in the 1980s to more recent research findings<sup>24</sup> link to the professional learning strategies being promoted today such as the literacy

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<sup>20</sup> Mitchell, L., Cameron, M. & Wylie, C. (2002) *Sustaining school improvement – ten primary schools’ journeys*

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p4.

<sup>23</sup> Guskey, T. (2003) ‘What makes professional development effective?’ *Phi Delta Kappan*. June pp748-750

<sup>24</sup> See for example, Phillips, G., McNaughton, S., MacDonald, S. (2002) *Picking up the Pace*. Wellington:Ministry of Education

professional development model and the numeracy model. Professional learning in New Zealand is seen as effective when it

- focuses on what students expected to learn and the strategies and teaching to assist them
- is based on analyses of student performance and the goals for student learning
- involves teachers in identifying what they need to learning and how they would like to be involved
- builds on the day to day work of teaching and therefore is school-based, ongoing and involving follow up, support and provides feedback
- is organised around collaborative problem solving
- provides opportunities to gain an understanding of theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned
- plans for at least a two year timeframe to allow changes to be embedded and, therefore, sustained
- uses many sources of information for evaluation.

Teachers recognise an increasing variety of ways of learning and adapt their teaching style in order to promote the type of learning that is required. Methods of teaching are varied in response to the wide range of student differences in ability, in ethnicity, in rates of learning. The varying demands of different areas of learning also require different teaching methods. Implicit in any approach to the curriculum is the need to evaluate methods of learning, methods of teaching and student achievement.

### **Best Evidence Syntheses**

The distinguishing characteristic of the Best Evidence Synthesis series from literature reviews is the focus on student achievement which also includes social outcomes to facilitate improved standards of student outcomes for all students regardless of their ethnicity, gender or abilities. In essence the Quality Teaching<sup>25</sup> synthesis identifies the need to

- have high expectations of all students
- optimise student outcomes
- facilitate high standards for diverse student groups
- know *how* to teach (have content knowledge, teaching models and effective strategies)
- know *what* to teach (student needs relative to expected outcomes)
- use quality tools and resources
- reflect and learn from own and colleagues experience.

### **Educational Leadership**

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<sup>25</sup> Alton-Lee, A. (2003). *Quality teaching for diverse students in schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis*. Wellington:Ministry of Education.

It was surprising to find the role of the principal was absent as a focus in the ministry's consultation document. When the principal is engaged in serious and visible professional learning important messages are being given to teachers about commitment to ongoing learning.<sup>26</sup> Their presence, their talk and their actions play a major role in building a learning culture.

To date the ministry has focused on principals' development as a leadership strategy. Whereas NZEI agrees there is a need for 'distributed leadership' this does not negate the principal's critical role and maintains that in primary schools principals need to be 'lead learners' focused on student outcomes as well as exercising any formal management role.

NZEI's Principal Council, a national network of principals, has forwarded its own submission on the consultation document.

### **How to make a bigger difference**

Primary classroom teachers said

- all professional learning contracts come out a huge speed, better to do less and do better; do something well and in depth before another focus is demanded
- teachers need a shared vision and need to know that professional learning will improve student outcomes
- teachers need ownership. This can be achieved by making the professional learning relevant to classroom practice and the school culture
- good professional learning needs to be resourced, given time and ongoing support
- Professional learning needs to be led from the top and teachers need to take it on board too, they have a responsibility
- teachers should be open and energetic
- teachers need to participate in communities of professional practice
- teachers need a stress free environment and realistic demands.
- the board and parents need to be supportive.
- professional learning needs to be accompanied by good facilitation, collegial support and reflection
- professional learning needs to be ongoing, not a one-off or an add-on
- professional learning needs to be schoolwide with a whole school focus; should be cyclic reviewed, reflective and ongoing
- numeracy model is good but needs to be resourced adequately; cannot have expectations of schools without supporting resources
- time is needed to implement; observe good practice, take risks by trying something new
- all teachers should have access to opportunities for high quality professional learning

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<sup>26</sup> Hill, J., Hawk, K., & Taylor, K. (2001). 'Professional Development: what makes it work?' A paper presented at the NZARE conference, Christchurch, December.

### Professional judgement

Teachers have a vital and unique role in education. They are constantly making decisions on student learning needs based on their professionally informed opinion.

A teacher's professionally informed opinion has been described in various ways, for example, professional judgement. Other descriptions such as 'gut reaction' or 'intuition' deny the professional basis to a teacher's decisions on student learning. Working with students on a daily basis means teachers have insight into students' learning needs. Teachers use their theories of learning, knowledge gained from professional learning and development, observations and results from assessments as the basis of their judgements on students' work. In order to motivate students and ensure achievement, teachers need to be aware of both the social and academic needs of students.

Teachers, therefore, must have high levels of curriculum knowledge as well as the ability to use evidence to make decisions about student achievement. These decisions must be based on:

- more than a single performance
- achievement in more than one context, and
- reliable data acquired in a fair and challenging way<sup>27</sup>.

It would be expected that criteria for success will have been identified and shared with students as part of the teaching/assessment process.

Effective teachers bring the following decisions to any assessment process:

- deciding the key elements of the learning - and therefore what evidence to gather,
- identifying what the evidence means alongside other knowledge of the student(s),
- and making decisions about the next learning step for that student or group of students.

In addition there is an increasing expectation that teachers will be able to articulate their rationale for each of the above decisions to both colleagues and parents.

Planning for learning is critical and teachers must judge how best to manage assessment so that learning is maximised and over-assessment avoided. If assessment data is generated but not used, serious questions should be raised about how to identify better uses of learner and teacher time.

In formative assessment teachers' judgements about student learning can be used to improve learning programmes and processes by providing feedback on what has been going well or was done well<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Lambert, P. 'The professional judgement of teachers. Standards-referenced assessment in primary schools' as retrieved from [www.bosnsw-k6.nsw.edu.au/parents/k6standards\\_teachers.html](http://www.bosnsw-k6.nsw.edu.au/parents/k6standards_teachers.html) on 5 July 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Gipps, C., McCallum, B & Hargreaves, E. (2000) *what makes a good primary schoolteacher? expert classroom strategies*. London: Routledge-Falmer, P6.

To maintain their knowledge teachers must be learners too. They need to participate actively in continuous learning to keep up with changes in curriculum and assessment knowledge.

James Irving<sup>29</sup>, formerly Manager of the Educational Assessment Secretariat in the Ministry of Education, reminds teachers to ensure that assessment decisions and judgements are carefully planned so they are realistic and feasible, taking into account the normal constraints of classroom interaction and other requirements. He says the tasks and procedures also need to:

- be suitable for the age group
- assess what they set out to assess (ie be valid)
- be consistent over time in measuring what they set out to measure (ie be reliable), and
- be purposeful in improving learning.

### **Being part of a professional team**

Professional learning is embedded in school priorities and teachers' classroom practices and is not undertaken in isolation but with other colleagues as a team. But, if the school team is not routinely used to working together, trusting each other and providing mutual support, specific professional learning initiatives are likely to fail. Mentoring systems or peer coaching relationships among teachers tend to be more effective where giving and receiving help are already accepted and valued practices among teachers in the school as a whole. Otherwise, getting help is seen as a sign of weakness. Similarly school development planning can be stilted and contrived if not undertaken as a team in a climate of trust.

Hargreaves<sup>30</sup> argues that strong professional communities:

- *promote risk-taking and willingness to experiment with new teaching strategies among teachers*
- *create higher senses of efficacy among teachers, who feel more able to make a difference for students*
- *encourage commitment to continuous learning and improvement in an occupation that is seen as inherently difficult*
- *build consistency of expectations for student learning and behaviour that are embedded in teachers' day to day understandings and behaviour and not just in paper policies and procedures*
- *foster and value norms of collaboration, mutual support and reciprocal help giving that improves the school's capacities for problem solving.*
- *see student problems as things that teachers can solve together not as things to tell stories about or things to blame on teachers' own ineffectiveness.*

### **How to make a bigger difference**

Primary classroom teachers said

- release time for professional learning should be an entitlement not an add-on nor administered through the classroom release time concept
- a variety of professional communities' models should be promoted.

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<sup>29</sup> Irving, J. (1997) *The Big Picture. School-wide Assessment* Wellington: NZCER

<sup>30</sup> Hargreaves, A. & Evans, R. (1997) eds. *Beyond educational reforms. Bringing Teachers back in.* Bristol: Open University Press. p118

Communities of professional practice need to be set up so it can work without stress. Resourcing is a major factor if workload is too heavy there will be no professional learning, no reflection and the trying out of new learning will not happen.

Every professional group recognises refreshment and improvement as being critical elements for successful practice. For example New Zealand writers aspire to Katherine Mansfield fellowships which allow for a year's reflective development and the production of new work in Menton France. For the past three years there have been 75 full time equivalent opportunities for some 22 000 New Zealand primary teachers and principals to apply for the opportunity to take study leave. This study leave is to complete advanced academic studies. More recently primary principals gained access to sabbatical leave. These are small steps towards providing, as of right, opportunities for primary school teachers and principals to be released from the classroom on pay to undertake refreshment and study.

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

Teachers must be learners too and the opportunities for them to undertake study should be part of their entitlement as a teacher. They need to enhance their professional knowledge and practice by

- working within a learning team
- working with a critical friend or coach
- participating in collaborative teaching,
- planning and assessment
- observing colleagues
- teaching/sharing teaching approaches with teachers from other schools
- taking an active part in self evaluation
- engaging in peer review
- observing, collect, interpret student responses to learning activities
- developing resources with colleagues

### **3b In what area of knowledge, skill, practice and beliefs is professional learning and development most pressing?**

#### **Knowledge**

Where teachers have good subject knowledge they are more confident in planning and implementing learning programmes, more skilled in asking relevant questions and providing explanations and more successful in providing demanding work from all students.

*Effective teaching reflects the principles of the subject as well as particular skills pupils need to learn about subjects effectively<sup>31</sup>*

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<sup>31</sup> MacGilchrist, B., Myers, K. & Reed, J. (1997). *The intelligent school*. London:Paul Chapman, p42

The minimum requirement is that teachers have an understanding and knowledge of the curriculum statement. But primary teachers need more than that to be effective. Apart from a thorough grasp of the essential learning areas and progression and continuity<sup>32</sup> teachers need to know how the essential learning areas fit together in order to achieve balance. This has to be done without losing the integrity of the particular area of learning. In addition effective teaching requires teachers' subject knowledge to be translated into teaching programmes to meet the learning needs of students. This means teachers have to be able to design the learning experience – the activities and opportunities for students – in all essential learning areas. The purpose of the learning, the structure of the experience, the organisation of the experience and the match with students' prior knowledge of the traditional primary school system has rested on the classroom teacher to cover all key components. Having a good plan for learning is critical.

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

Teachers need to know how they have made a difference to student learning and how to identify the difference.

Teachers need help to deal with the fact that within a single class students will be operating at different levels of learning. Matching work to each student's capacities and previous achievement is immensely difficult.

#### **Curriculum expertise**

There have been moves towards some degree of specialisation at all levels of the primary school, for instance, in programmes dealing with reading recovery, music, physical education, or Maori language. This has been through the organisation of variable space teaching and building on the strengths of other generalist teachers. The staffing available to full and contributing primary schools, however, limits the scope for specialist staff. The consequence is that subject expertise becomes the defining characteristic of the skills required by primary teachers to do their work effectively. This is just not possible in every essential learning area

#### **Recognition of Māori needs**

It is a matter of deep concern that comparisons between Māori and non-Māori achievement show the substantial differences in performance evident at year four have not decreased by year eight<sup>33</sup> The potential of Māori students is barely touched upon.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Education (1993). *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework*

<sup>33</sup> Crooks, T., Hamilton, K. & Caygill, R. (2001). 'Maori Student Achievement'. A paper produced on the combined NEMP results for year 4 and 8

<sup>34</sup> Education Review Office (2003). *Maori Students in Mainstream Schools*. Wellington:ERO

It is essential that the Māori student's self image is enhanced by his/her knowledge that cultural differences are understood, accepted and respected by all. Māori students must be encouraged to feel confident in themselves in schools. Ways must be found to help them build up and maintain pride in themselves and their achievement.

Many teachers have developed ways of working which include the study of Māori language and culture. These are intended to reflect and respect tikanga Māori. Giving emphasis to tikanga Māori in schooling is an initial way of establishing a kaupapa which acknowledges the Māori people as the tangata whenua of New Zealand.

Accepting Te Reo into the school means accepting the culture. This has implications for all aspects of the lifestyle of the school. The revival of Māori language within New Zealand, of which programmes in schools are a part, necessitates community support from a range of agencies and media. It implies a commitment by the school, the parents and the community.

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

NZEI's position is that te reo Māori should be compulsory for all students in early childhood and primary education. As part of the government's obligations under the Treaty o Waitangi te reo Maori is already being woven into the primary and early childhood curriculums. But teachers and support staff need to be given more confidence in using Māori words in the classroom and school setting.

Māori communities' aspirations for their children to be confident in their language and culture will not be possible until the government provides resourcing, both human and printed, to comprehensively support the 74% of Māori students in the general education system. The recent implementation of a 1:20 ratio for Māori immersion students is welcomed as a move towards a ratio of 1:15.

Advisers Māori and Resource Teachers Maori are limited in number. They should be in regional teams in order to maximise professional support and resource usage.

**3c How can all teachers and school leaders, especially those in small schools, participate in professional communities which contribute to sustained improvements in student outcomes?**

#### **Sustained improvement**

The challenge for any professional development is to maintain continuity during the period of development and encourage ongoing positive effects beyond the focus time. Poskitt's research<sup>35</sup> evaluated the professional development proposals and milestone reports of 44 projects in the Professional Development Funding Pool throughout New Zealand in 2000. Her research found that to implement sustainable systems, minor adjustments to time-tabling can make a significant difference, as

can the deployment of staff responsibilities, alterations to the agendas of regular meetings, or staff expectations. Factors evident in the milestone reports were:

- several small bites are more effective than one-off big bites
- this needs long term planning to encourage continuity
  - smaller seminars/staff meetings on the topic
  - expectation that all staff lead/share experiences at staff meetings
  - inclusion of regular professional reading (manageable amounts, high interest)
  - discussion of professional reading
- incorporation of professional learning and development into agenda of regular staff meetings
- employing a facilitator or coordinator to assist
- having some notion of continuity or maintenance in the top.

All schools, regardless of their size use these strategies.

Poskitt's analysis also identified how schools translated the professional learning into professional practice in very practical ways.

In rural areas in particular, cluster arrangements seemed to enhance great sharing of expertise, resources, administration and access to providers. These clusters require well developed communication skills and effective management strategies in order to function collaboratively.

### **Lifelong learning**

In a world in which rapid change and globalisation are seen as transforming individual relationships the theme of lifelong learning is echoed across the world by governments and educators alike. The challenge for teachers is to create an environment conducive to life long learning and considerable refocusing of efforts towards the idea of the student as central to the process of cognitive growth and its direction. The role of the teacher will be to facilitate that process.

*The concept of learning throughout life emerges as one of the keys to the twenty-first century. It goes beyond the traditional distinction between initial and continuing education. It meets the challenges posed by a rapidly changing world. This is not a new insight, since previous reports on education have emphasised the need for people to return to education in order to deal with new situations arising in their personal and working lives. That need is still felt and is even becoming stronger. The only way of satisfying it is for each individual to learn how to learn.<sup>36</sup>*

Teachers participating in the focus groups concurred. Their understandings and beliefs show a positive and practical recognition of what is required.

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<sup>35</sup> Poskitt, J. (2000). 'Towards successful school-based professional development'. Paper presented to the NZARE conference, Christchurch, December.

<sup>36</sup>Delors, J. et al (1996) *Learning the treasure within*. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. UNESCO publishing;The Australian National Commission for UNESCO. p22.

### 3d What are the implications of this priority for school leaders and boards?

#### **Time to create professional learning communities**

In designing their learning environment, schools are being urged to cultivate a strong sense of community by developing norms for the school and the classroom and by making connections to the outside world that support core learning values. The important first step is recognising the values and philosophical systems the school community embraces.

To develop a strong professional learning environment where teachers talk about teaching, think about teaching, reflect and analyse data on the effects of their teaching, look at other people's teaching and search for ways to improve their own teaching - takes time. A critical aspect is to move from the individual to collective professional learning and to place collegial learning at the heart of professional development. Learning with and from other teachers allows teachers to examine their own expertise and move forward.

Finding time is one of the trickiest problems facing schools. Time for teachers to meet and reflect during the school day is essential to creating strong professional communities. Teachers should have time away from their classes with colleagues so as to improve the quality of their teaching in the long term. Absence of this opportunity isolates teachers from their colleagues and prevents positive change.

The recent settlement of the Primary Teachers' Collective Agreement 2004-2007 secured, for the first time, a small amount of classroom release time for every fulltime permanent primary schoolteacher. What the best use of the small resource might be to alleviate teacher workload issues linked to enhanced learning is a matter for schools to work out. The expectation must not be that the classroom release time is to carry out extra duties. Suggested guidelines and support need to be provided to assist schools to maximise the time according to the needs of their students rather than the perceived needs determined at a national level.

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

Professional learning is most effective when it is planned with support and draws upon the advice of teaching staff, mentors, coaches, critical friends, advisers.

Time to plan, act, evaluate, reflect and modify practice and encourage risk taking and further learning are all features of schools which are focused on student and teacher learning.

### 3e How will we know we are making progress?

Primary schoolteachers said that we will know we are making progress when

- teachers feel valued and confident

- student and teacher outcomes are improved
- motivation is enhanced
- professional learning and development plans are cohesive and long term and increased numbers of teachers apply for study leave
- appraisals reflect that professional learning is ongoing, worthwhile, and useful.

And they argued that this is most likely to be achieved by

- resourcing; adequate time, reduced pupil teacher ratios, and access to high quality relievers
- setting the budget to fund adequately professional learning programmes without expectations for individuals to fund it
- equity of access for rural and small schools
- focusing on needs of the schools and the individual teacher's needs
- barriers such as the impact of compliance, appraisals, Teachers Council requirements are minimised
- an enhanced national advisory service and fewer professional development contracts.

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#### **Priority – Comprehensive Preparation for Teaching**

*Comprehensively preparing beginning teachers for their roles as effective teachers of diverse students through initial teacher education.*

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It is unrealistic to expect beginning teachers to be “effective teachers of diverse learners” as a result of their initial teacher education. Experience in the classroom, working with the students, understanding their needs and valuing their differences is part of the experience given in a classroom. What can be expected by their initial teacher education course is a strong grounding in subject and learning theories, exposure to range of different classrooms and schools, opportunities to see what extremely effective teachers can achieve with a class of diverse students so they know the direction in which to head.

The priority should be reworded with a qualifying phrase such as “developing to become increasingly effective teachers of diverse learners” to recognise the beginning teacher stage of development.

Primary classroom teachers said beginning teachers need to have

- skills in managing class and student behaviour
- a strong blend of theories and how these can be turned into practice
- strong understandings of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the importance of these critical literacies for students' future schooling success
- experienced a range of practicums and particularly critical was their end of year placement

**4a For beginning teachers what areas of knowledge, skill, practice and beliefs need to be strengthened the most?**

Beginning teachers need to have

- pedagogical knowledge of learning and teaching within the context of changing environments, professional knowledge of the curriculum and the Treaty of Waitangi.
- the knowledge and skills to be able to create an environment where diverse students are respected, where high expectations valuing learning are established, and where student behaviour is managed in a positive way through knowledge of a range of approaches.
- ethical understandings and skill in developing positive relationships with students, families/whanau, colleagues and others in the educational community.

Beginning teachers must have beliefs which allow them to become part of a collegial environment. Initial teacher education cannot fully prepare newly qualified teachers for their school life. Therefore beginning teachers need an awareness of the importance of teaching and learning in a supportive and shared environment.

Alignment between the current initiatives in the school sector, and the teacher education programmes is essential. Beginning teachers must have knowledge of, and some skill and practice in, the implementation of the major initiatives occurring in the sector in which they choose to work so that they have a firm grasp of the philosophies and strategies before they moved into the school context.

The achievement through the negotiation of the Primary Teachers Agreement of 0.1 fulltime teacher equivalent to support a beginning teacher in their second year leading to full registration was a positive move.

The work to be undertaken by the New Zealand Teachers Council in 2005 to develop standards for graduating teachers will provide further opportunity for the education sector to debate what student teachers should know and be able to do.

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

Links between the standards developed for graduating teachers and the Council's Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions of professional practice, professional knowledge, professional relationships and professional leadership will need to be explicit. Such clear linkages will help to ensure the continuum of knowledge, skills, practice and beliefs throughout the teacher's professional life.

**4b How do we strengthen the links between initial teacher education including school-based practical and support for beginning teachers?**

The links between initial teacher and support for beginning teachers could be strengthened by including provision for the development of a personal learning plan within all initial teacher education programmes. This plan would allow for individualised professional learning as well as sector specific curriculum based professional learning. It would also take some of the pressures of time off providers as the plan could include practice based professional learning in some areas.

Access to such a plan is complicated by the following issues:

- Providers do not uniformly include development and implementation of professional learning and development as part of initial teacher education
- One of the exit standards could be the development of such a plan and some measure of whether the newly qualified teacher could complete such a plan.
- If there is a professional learning plan developed there would need to be connection, evaluation or support between the provider of the qualification, the school and the individual teacher with regard to that plan.
- Not all student teachers commence full employment immediately after gaining a qualification and therefore may not have access to a comprehensive professional learning plan for some time.
- Some newly qualified teachers are employed as relievers.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be employed in the same school(s) for the period leading to full registration.
- Not all schools have the capacity to deliver such a plan and assistance would be required.
- Providers may object to any attempts to encroach on 'academic freedom' with regard to plan content or exit standards.

Despite these complicating factors there may be considerable merit in attempting to establish an expectation for beginning teachers that a plan for professional learning is a critical element throughout their teaching career. Such a plan could be incorporated into the advice and guidance programme for beginning teachers as they move to full registration.

#### **Primary classroom teachers said**

- college lecturers need to observe students more
- associates need more guidance on what to watch and look for
- all those involved need to know how to give constructive feedback and feed forward
- Beginning Teachers need to see more modelling of lessons

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

Collaborative arrangements which have been made between initial teacher educators, beginning teacher and practising teachers need to be fully resourced. Such a partnership will then enable all parties to participate in informed debate about classroom pedagogy and curriculum implementation.

The partnership would provide associate and tutor teachers who are working with student teachers or newly qualified teachers with time and space to make observations and insights known to teacher educators to continue to improve initial teacher education.

The teacher's role would be to articulate her/his practice of weaving together curriculum requirements, pedagogy and the learning environment to ensure learning occurs.

The issue of too many providers impacts heavily on how strengthening the links can occur. The proliferation of providers has added complexity to any approach and means that some schools may have a number of providers to liaise with. This adds to the school tasks, and with current workloads, may mean less time for interactions, resulting in less effective links.

Smaller providers are likely to have less flexibility within their resources to provide linkages, and the commercial base of initial teacher education may mean providers are less interested when the teacher is a beginning teacher in a school and no longer a fee-paying student.

There is a role for the Teachers Council in advocating for a model that focuses on the first two years of teaching as part of the teacher education programme thereby involving the teacher education provider. This involvement would help to ensure that the advice and guidance programmes provided by a school builds upon the initial teacher education programme.

The role of the school is of great importance and schools need support for this work. Schools involved in school based practicum need staffing and funding for release and support at an appropriate level, and clear guidelines from providers about the theoretical background, the purposes and goals of each practicum.

Resourcing for face to face sessions, (or at least teleconferences) between providers and the associate teachers is essential. Such communication allows a sense of teamwork to develop. The expectations of both groups can be clarified and strengthened.

A similar approach to ensure tutor teachers have a good understanding of the teacher education programme from which the beginning teacher has just graduated would greatly assist.

**4c How do we ensure that teachers who support student teachers and beginning teachers are well prepared for their roles?**

There needs to be clarity of the roles and the expectations for student teachers, for the beginning teachers and for the associate and tutor teachers. If the status of the associate teachers and tutor teachers were increased then the role would more likely attract effective and experienced teachers.

Greater status could be developed through

- time allowance allocated for the release of the associate and tutor teachers
- salary allowance
- free (no fees) quality professional development
- reduction of other school responsibilities to allow for a focus in the induction work as a priority

- recognition as a step in a career pathway.

The professional learning of the associates and tutor teachers must be addressed. Induction to the profession must be led by competent and well informed professionals. To continue without some specific training and guidelines does a disservice to the profession and to those who are entering it.

To expect all classroom teachers to play a part in the induction programme, with little help, and no training is not helpful. Newcomers to the profession must have modelled for them the work of the most skilled and competent practitioners.

The provision of greater guidance and clarity for the roles of associate and tutor teacher is crucial. The anticipated work by the Council on the Graduating Teacher Standards will help. The Teachers Council has a major professional leadership role, to provide greater guidance for Advice and Guidance programmes for beginning teachers with clear links to the initial teacher education programmes.

The development of peer networks for associate and tutor teachers, facilitated by Initial Teacher Education providers and the Teachers Council, and funded by the Ministry of Education would be a valuable way of strengthening the links between the providers and the schools.

#### **Normal schools**

Normal schools were set up to be models of exemplary practice. Experienced teachers are appointed to demonstrate good practice to student teachers. Normal schools provide the complementary and essential relationships between theory and practice and what that looks like in a school and a classroom. Normal schools have a vital role to assist student teachers make the transition towards being an effective teacher by providing student teachers with a model of what can occur in a classroom with optimum conditions.

#### **4d How will we know we are making progress?**

Progress could be measured by

- increased interaction between schools and initial teacher educators
- advice and guidance programmes which are randomly checked by the Teachers Council showing strong links between initial teacher education, in-school practice, and the development of reflective practitioners
- greater retention of beginning teachers in the teaching service

#### **Primary classroom teachers said**

Beginning teachers would be able to

- offer strong numeracy and literacy programmes
- relate appropriately to, and motivate, students
- able to “manage” children
- identify when additional assistance was needed

**4e Do you support this priority?**

This is a very important priority. Teaching is dependent upon capable and competent beginning teachers who work in a collegial and supported environment, with a planned and well informed induction in to the profession.

New Zealand must find ways to retain new teachers, through researching options, and implementing the findings of past and new e research.

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**Priority – Affirming and Developing Student Identity**

*Affirming and building on the experiences and identities of all students through schooling, to contribute to improved educational engagement and learning outcomes.*

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**5a How do teachers and schools know that the experiences and identities of their students are being affirmed and built on in ways that support engagement and learning outcomes?**

Teachers have a responsibility to treat all students with respect, irrespective of their: home, socio economic circumstances, ethnic grouping, ability or disability and gender.

MacGilchrist<sup>37</sup> cites the Ruddock, Chaplain and Wallace (1996) study which tracked students during their last four years of secondary schooling. Ruddock, Chaplain and Wallace emphasised the importance of asking the learner about his/her needs. As a result of their study they suggested six principles that would make a significant difference to learning. MacGilchrist et al. maintain the importance of the principles (listed below) is that they are presented from the students’ perspective and what they think is good for themselves.

Ruddock, Chaplain and Wallace acknowledged that the conditions are not new and many schools will have already incorporated them in their practice.

- 1 Respect for pupils as individuals and as a body occupying a significant position in the institution of the school
- 2 Fairness to all pupils irrespective of their class, gender ethnicity or academic status

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<sup>37</sup> MacGilchrist, B., Myers, K. & Reed, J. (1997). *The intelligent school*. London:Paul Chapman

- 3 Autonomy – not as an absolute state but as both a right and a responsibility in relation to physical and social maturity.
- 4 Intellectual challenge that helps pupils to experience learning as a dynamic, engaging and empowering activity.
- 5 Social support in relation to both academic and emotional concerns.
- 6 Security in relation to both the physical setting of the school and in interpersonal encounters (including anxiety about threats to pupils' self esteem).

In addition Ruddock, Chaplain & Wallace (1996) suggest

*...students need to have a sense of themselves as a learner, status in the school, an overall purpose in learning, control over their own lives and sense of their future<sup>38</sup>*

These principles are applicable to the primary school situation.

#### **Primary school teachers said**

- in terms of Maori the protocols and learning are there from the start. Students use their whakapapa to identity themselves
- know that they are achieving by the students ability to recite, explain, use what they have learned
- if you look deep enough you will find a connection
- appreciating the differences and looking for similarities
- cultural, ability, values, gender, languages, behaviour, social, family traditions, expectations

#### **5b How can families, whanau and communities contribute to the achievement of this priority?**

#### **Primary classroom teachers said**

- significant adults in the schools that mirror the culture ethnicity in the school.
- when you see the parents coming to interviews willing to share, cultural capital of our students and what they bring; build on it
- good models were needed
- school buildings needed to accommodate different cultural groups of parents

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#### **Priority – Strong School-Home Links**

*Supporting teachers and schools to develop and maintain strong learning-focused links with families and whanau*

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Schools should be an integral part of their communities and should be encouraged and assisted to respond positively to the responsibilities and challenges such as partnership demands. To Maori, the family, local community, the marae, the spiritual dimension and the school have complementary roles

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p35

and functions. Collectively they form local points for cooperation between parents, community members and schools.

### **Engaging parents in the learning process**

Teachers at the focus groups were positive about involving parents in the education of their child. For many primary schools the involvement of parents has been a natural development of existing practice. The size of the school, the nature of the curriculum and the needs of students depending on their age and stage of development has made parent involvement an essential aspect. But parent involvement in schools is too often defined narrowly as being attendance at formal meetings or student performances, and support for other activities held at school.

*However, it is not easy to develop and maintain partnerships. Both time and commitment is required. Teachers are often asked to spend considerable amounts of their professional life in new kinds of contact with parents but they do not always receive training to take on these new roles (OECD 1998).*

In New Zealand, one of the key aims of the Tomorrow School's reforms was to increase parental involvement in education. Wylie's longitudinal studies<sup>39</sup> show that this seems even further away from realisation that it was before the reforms began.

Research<sup>40</sup> demonstrates the influence of families and communities as a key factor for high quality learning results and the extent to which achievement is enhanced when schools are able to involve parents in their children's learning. Biddulph quotes Esler (2001) who recognised that a child's achievement is determined in part by family background, non-parental care experiences, school experiences, biological characteristics and the interactions between and among all of these. Biddulph wisely advises that these influences are very complex, inter-related and unpredictable and for individual children the actual outcome is likely to be idiosyncratic.

Teachers recognise the need to involve parents if their students are to make greater progress. This is recognition that students spent more than two-thirds of their waking lives outside school and it is clear that parents, families, friends and other environmental factors have a significant part to play in learning. There is acknowledgement that the expertise of parents and other adults in the family can be used to support learning.

Lyn Bird<sup>41</sup> argues that the literature provides a mostly middle-class American perspective. She draws on Stewart's work<sup>42</sup> who found that higher achievement for Māori students can be predicted if more

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<sup>39</sup> Wylie, C. (1999). *Ten Years On: How schools view educational reform*. Wellington: NZCER

<sup>40</sup> Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J. & Biddulph, C. (2003). *The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand: Best Evidence Synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education

<sup>41</sup> Bird L. (1998) 'Parental involvement in schools-is it window dressing or a genuine step towards collaboration?' Paper presented at the NZARE conference, Dunedin.

<sup>42</sup> Stewart, A.G. (1998). 'Making good use of our parents, as cited in Bird, L. (1998), p13

attention is given to improving literacy skills in te reo Māori, and this is more likely to happen if parents are directly involved in the management of the learning process.

While in some communities it is harder to draw parents into partnership with the school, it is equally true that schools have a direct influence on the extent of parental involvement. They influence parents' perceptions of their role, enhance parents' confidence and ability to help their children and create the opportunities and extend the invitations to parents for involvement with the school.

Teachers understand that the meaning of parental involvement is of greater significance than simply responding to legal requirements. It is the right of the parent, their child and the teacher to learn from each other. It is the responsibility of all educators to recognise and support those partnerships in learning.

Any thinking about the role of parents in relation to school must equally include the child and the teacher in a three-way partnership where each party learns from the other.

#### **Engaging students in the learning process**

Researchers<sup>43</sup> found that one of the consequences of the 'top-down reforms' and the introduction of standards assessment tasks in England was that students' perspectives, their concerns and attitudes towards the assessment process, were not considered.

Self-assessment enables students to set appropriate personal learning goals and can also help motivate them to learn. Students should be involved in the setting and monitoring of their own progress towards the learning goals using clear criteria and examples to evaluate in their own work. Other teacher strategies to involve students could be through participation in peer conferencing or self evaluations.

As part of becoming aware of how to use knowledge and strategies, students learn to give themselves feedback (self-generated feedback). Teachers need to help their students to develop the habit of monitoring and assessing themselves. It is useful to develop with the students a set of shared success criteria for a particular task. Students' records and views of their own progress provide teachers with a source of further knowledge of these learners. Both the process and the outcome of the student's self-assessment add to the information that the teacher can take into account in assessing their progress<sup>44</sup>.

Having high expectations for students, does not mean that having the same expectations for all students. It does mean, however, that the teacher, along with the student, set learning goals at a level

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<sup>43</sup> Pollard, A. with Filer, A. (1996) *The Social World of Children's Learning: case studies of pupils from four to seven*. London:Cassell; Broadfoot, P. (1996) *Education assessment and society a sociological analysis*. Buckingham:Open University Press.

<sup>44</sup> Ministry of Education (2003). *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1-4*. Wellington:Learning Media

that is appropriate for that individual. It also means that students will be assisted to set high expectations for themselves and learn to support their classmates and teacher in working towards these goals.

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

Schools are a major point of contact between government and families and often the point of intervention. The nature of home-school links is crucial. School need support to identify

- how schools and families and the community can be better engaged;
- the level of investment the school has to make to bring families, communities and teaching programmes closer together;
- what strategies a school can adapt
- what type of support teachers need from outside the school.

Parent teacher partnerships are a central component of a new vision of education. Parents can be true partners when developing learning programmes for students along with the teacher, participating in the classroom on a more regular basis, making suggestions that are listened to by professionals, and taking responsibility for creating an environment in the home that supports education.

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#### **Priority – Using, Sharing, and Developing Knowledge**

*Further using, sharing, and developing knowledge about practices that support learning for diverse students.*

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*Working conditions for teachers should be such as will best promote effective learning and enable teachers to concentrate on their professional tasks<sup>45</sup> (OECD 1998:23).*

#### **Government and outside responsibility**

Teachers in the focus groups identified some common issues that were beyond their control at present but which were necessary for them to do a good job. These were the need to have

- good social, economic and political systems in place so that children come to school ready to learn
- coordinated welfare systems
- consistent advice across agencies and regions
- less emphasis on compliance
- more teacher participation in decision making
- trustees who have the skills and time to do a comprehensive job
- ways to reduce the effect of social disruption which impacts on children and leads to disruption in class
- community based schools from pre school to tertiary.

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<sup>45</sup> OECD (1998) *Staying ahead. Inservice training and teacher professional development*. Paris:CERI p230.

And they wanted access to honourable exit provisions from the classroom.

Access to resources was a constant theme raised by teachers who participated in the focus groups. Their perceptions included

*Staffing and funding concerns*

- more money is required throughout the system particularly for special needs and the employment of support staff
- fairer distribution of salary units in line with secondary
- realistic teacher resourcing to allow smaller classes
- provision of non contact time

*Need for more teacher support services*

- extensive specialist support is required
- a need for properly funded national advisory service, freely available to schools
- support systems and the procedures for obtaining them need to be known
- bi-lingual teachers need more support and training
- more student behaviour management support

*Professional and personal development*

- provision of sabbaticals for teachers
- scholarships funded by government particularly in arts, physical education and sport
- pastoral care and mentors for teachers so they feel valued.

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**Priority – Integrated Social Services**

*Developing more integrated social services for families and whanau to which schools contribute and in which the activities of other social agencies contribute to student learning outcomes*

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**11a How are the range of supports for families and whanau best mobilised and coordinated, in ways which allow schools to remain focused on teaching and learning?**

Some schools have developed into a full service model, where families come to expect a range of support services, extension options for the school day and to find information and exchange their views. This extension of service means the school has a much more diverse range of staff than it did a decade ago. The growth has come from the outsourcing of what were once parental and other government agencies responsibilities. Economic imperatives and the mobility of the families have changed the values of the school.

The dislocation of families and lack of extended family support is in part due to economic imperatives. Both parents are working, or families live far from extended family support systems so there are no

caregivers available for sick children, for children before and after school or in the term breaks. More 'take away' food is consumed by children.

Schools have responded to this situation with the development of subsidiary businesses such as, the healthy canteen, the before-and-after school care programme and homework centre, a stationery and uniform shop, and foreign fee payer student services including homestay arrangements. Other agreements allow the school to provide necessary medical care and to administer drugs.

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

All these shift the focus from the purpose of schools. Schools are for learning so that students can actively take their place in society. Schools are not places where social problems are fixed. Every other activity – canteens, social workers, counsellors, budgeting, drug educators etc – shift the focus from the curriculum and learning to learn

There have been a range of new initiatives within the last decade as education has become responsive to the stakeholders and conscious of a need to meet the market. Schools have responded to the range of challenges presented. The outcome has been a change to value systems for children and a change to the ways "schools do business". Specialist teachers and teacher aides employment is related to the developing multicultural society and the education market.

Education as a product effectively sees New Zealand schools develop as service industries for foreign fee paying students. The wealthy middle class of Asian countries have seized upon New Zealand's ability to provide cheap education in English medium from primary schools onwards and the subsequent treasure of access to a reputable university education. This has impacted dramatically on many schools where a subsidiary industry has been built into the school staffing and funding equations. Money raised from providing services for fee-paying students is used to balance shortfalls in government funding, and to provide extras for schools that take up the initiatives. Innovation and business partnership is promoted by government as a positive direction in which schools can move.

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

The government has to recognise that there is no place for private enterprise in a schooling strategy. Any such enterprise shifts emphasis from the vision for learning to commercial competitiveness. Private enterprise is governed by a profit motive rather than the learning needs of students. There is no mandate from the New Zealand public that public taxes should be spent in this way.

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**Priority – Evidence-based Investment**

*National and school-based investment decisions are driven by evidence about practices that make the most difference for diverse students*

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**12a If government were to commit additional resources to the above priorities over the next five years, how could we be assured that this would contribute to improved student outcomes?**

Teachers engagement in and with research has been very much an individual matter generally based on a teacher's drive for improved qualifications.

Research involves a dynamic mixture of empirical enquiry, experimenting with new approaches and sometimes supplemented by peer observation and support.

Primary teachers as a group, however, often do not see themselves as researchers. Their skills in implementing the curriculum have not always led to engagement with the expert craft of research. Translating research into practice is not as straightforward as it appears either. Whereas research can reveal about how to teach it is often at a high level of abstraction. Research does not tell us what to teach and why to teach it. Similarly the Best Evidence Synthesis series has remained largely untouched in our schools because teachers are busy or daunted by the presentation of the research. Yet teachers would agree that

*Good teaching, effective teaching, is not just about using whatever science says "usually" works best. It's all about finding out what works best for the individual children and group of children in front of you.<sup>46</sup>*

Teachers often observe learning challenges and immediately try to figure out what to do about it. They entertain several possible explanations and often ask colleagues for their interpretation as well. On the basis of their analyses a course of action is planned. This is usually an interventionist programme and may include outside help. It is, in fact, the collaboration with other colleagues that extends the teacher's knowledge base. Collaboration does not happen automatically.

**How to make a bigger difference**

The exemplars have shown they can act as a catalyst to assist schools develop a culture in which teachers can safely take risks by sharing students' work and engage in discussion about assumptions, beliefs and practices. Schools should be encouraged to develop their own exemplars of student work.

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<sup>46</sup> Allington, R.L. (2005). 'Ideology is still trumping evidence.' in *Phi Delta Kappan*. February.

There are a number of initiatives occurring to encourage teachers to engage in research. The National Education Monitoring Project, for example, has been to the forefront in its attempt to encourage teachers' participation with research and it is worth reviewing its initiatives which have been largely funded out of the project itself.

For the past five years the National Education Monitoring Project has had two major initiatives in which it has tried to engage teachers in researched assessment tasks and information. One has been through the Teacher's Choice package and the other through the Probe Studies.

In Teacher's Choice, a small group of teachers have selected a number of their favourite monitoring tasks. The information has been unpacked to show the relationship of the task to the national curriculum frameworks as well as providing detailed information on the task itself, related NEMP tasks and ideas for classroom use. NEMP's Probe Studies' programme<sup>47</sup> provides funding for those who wish to improve understanding or provide further interpretation of student performance on individual or a cluster of tasks. Teachers and schools are encouraged to undertake a Probe Study. To help teachers understand the richness of information that can be gained by this type of activity and that research can be at the heart of their work; NEMP has also provided brief summaries of 31 probe studies undertaken since 1995. For each study, the author(s) have highlighted the primary purposes, how the study was undertaken (method), the main findings and the implications for teaching and learning.

#### **How to make a bigger difference**

The government has committed funds to encourage collaboration between researchers and practitioners, individually and in groups. The Teaching Research and Learning Initiative is not a top down activity and is intended to provide schools with the research skills. It should be maintained and extended.

Colin Tarr  
NZEI National President  
Te Manukura

30 March 2005

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<sup>47</sup> Gilmore, A., Lovett, S. & van Hasselt, C. (2003). NEMP Probe Study Findings 2003. Dunedin: Educational Assessment Research Unit

## DIVERSITY OF STUDENT POPULATION

### 2001 Census

- 23% of New Zealanders were under the age of 15 (857,740) - likely to decrease by more than 100,000 in the next fifty years. 39% of Pacific Island New Zealanders were under 15 and 37% of Maori.
- one third of households had a child/ren. An average of 1.9 children per household
- 31% of families were one parent families
- 16% of children lived in households with an annual income less than \$20,000. 61% of children in one-parent households had an annual income of less than \$20,000
- Children were more ethnically diverse than adults -18 % identify with more than one ethnic group, compared to 6 % of adults. But they were more likely to have been born in New Zealand
- 24% Māori, 11% Pacific, 7% Asian
- 15% of children could speak more than one language
- 5% of children lived in households with no telecommunications (15% of Pacific Island children and 13% for Maori)
- 22,947 children lived in houses with no heating

### Child Poverty Statistics - compiled by the Child Poverty Action Group 2003

- If the population of New Zealand was shrunk to 100 people, as 7.5 would now be children living in poverty.
- In 2001, 29.1% of New Zealand children - about 300,000 - were living below the poverty line, in households with less than 60% of the median income net of housing cost. In 1988 the comparable figure was only 12.5%.<sup>48</sup>
- The proportion of children in sole parent families below the poverty threshold rose from 18% in 1988 to 66% in 2002.
- 80% of those New Zealanders living below the poverty line are children and their parents. (Easton & Ballantyne, 2002)<sup>49</sup>
- Children in the bottom 20% of households are three times as likely to be sick than children in the top quintile. (Easton & Ballantyne, 2002)
- The third most common admission to Auckland Starship and South Auckland's Children's First hospitals is cellulitis, a sometimes fatal skin infection related to poverty and poor housing. As a contrast, in Australian hospitals, children with cellulitis don't even rate among the top 20 admissions. Asher, Parks and Dakin, 2002.<sup>50</sup>
- \*One out of every two Pacific babies living in South Auckland is admitted to hospital before their first birthday. Johnson, 2003.<sup>51</sup>
- Over 10,000 South Auckland children live in overcrowded conditions.<sup>52</sup>
- Families with the lowest 10% of incomes shift twice as often as children from wealthier families
- Nearly a third of children in decile one schools change schools in any given year - twice the rate of transience in schools which are decile three or higher.
- In 2001, less than half of students from decile 1 - 3 schools left with 6th or 7th form qualifications, compared to nearly 80% of students from deciles 8 - 10.
- There are more children in two-parent households who are poor than one-parent households, more Pakeha than non-Pakeha; more dependent upon wages than on benefits.

<sup>48</sup> Ministry of Social Development - <http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/work-areas/csre/children-young-people-indicators-wellbeing-nz.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.eastonbh.ac.nz/article229.html>

<sup>50</sup> [http://www.cpag.org.nz/backgrounders/2002-04\\_Primary\\_Care\\_and\\_Child\\_Health.html](http://www.cpag.org.nz/backgrounders/2002-04_Primary_Care_and_Child_Health.html)

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.cpag.org.nz/resources/2003-02-student-transience.html>

<sup>52</sup> (Solomon, 2002)

### Ministry of Social Development 2003

- In 2002/2003, 8.1 percent of primary school entrants (children aged five) failed the hearing screening test. There has been some improvement over the decade: in 1991/1992, 10.5 percent of children failed the hearing screening test.
- The 2002 National Children's Nutrition Survey of children aged 5-14 found that 9.8 percent were obese, according to international cut-off levels.
- In the year to June 2003, 7,361 children were assessed by CYF as abused or neglected. This was a substantiated child abuse rate of 7.4 children for every 1,000 children under 17 years of age, similar to the rate of 7.2 per 1,000 children in the year to June 2002.
- In 2002, 78 percent of households with children aged 5-14 reported that they had always been able to afford to eat properly during the previous 12 months. Twenty percent of households with children reported that they could only sometimes afford to eat properly during that period.
- In the five years to 2000, 49 children under 15 years died as a result of intentional injury. On a population basis, this represented an average of one child per 100,000 each year. The five-year average annual rate almost doubled in the late 1980s and has changed very little since then.
- Thirty percent of secondary school students surveyed in 2001 reported having been bullied at school in the last 12 months, seven percent reported that they had been bullied at least once a week, and 23 percent said that bullying had occurred only once or twice in the last year. Of the students who had been bullied, 28 percent perceived the bullying to be "not bad", 41 percent thought it was "a little bad", and 31 percent (10 percent of all students surveyed) thought it was "pretty bad", "really bad" or "terrible".
- In mid-2003, the apparent early childhood education participation rate for 3-4 year olds combined was 98 percent, an increase from 96 percent in 2002.
- Over the 1990s, there was a steady upward trend in the early childhood education apparent participation rate, which stood at 80 percent in 1991. A new measure of early childhood education experience shows that the vast majority of children entering school have had early childhood education. In 2003, 94 percent of Year 1 students had attended an early childhood education service.
- In the 2001 Census, 20 percent of Māori under 15 years, and 25 percent of Māori aged 15-24, reported that they are able to hold a conversation in te reo Māori.
- In 2000/2001, 88 percent of children and young people aged 5-17 years were reported to have participated in sport and active leisure in the previous two weeks. This was a statistically significant decline from the proportion recorded in 1997/1998 (93 percent). The overall pattern of declining participation occurred both at school and outside school hours.
- In 2001, 16 percent of children under 18 years (153,200 children) and 17 percent of young people aged 18-24 years (51,500) were living in crowded households.

## SCHOOLING STRATEGY – NZEI PRINCIPALS’ COUNCIL SUBMISSION

NZEI Principals’ Council response to the second stage of the Ministry of Education’s plans for a 5 year schooling strategy, *Making a Bigger Difference for All Students: Directions for a Schooling Strategy*.

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**NZEI PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE SECOND STAGE OF  
THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION'S PLANS FOR A 5 YEAR SCHOOLING  
STRATEGY, MAKING A BIGGER DIFFERENCE FOR ALL STUDENTS:  
DIRECTIONS FOR A SCHOOLING STRATEGY.**

**1. Introduction**

NZEI is the professional organisation and industrial union that represents the interests and issues of its 43,500 members which includes over 2, 000 principals.

The NZEI Principals' Council is comprised of twenty seven principals representing each of the twelve NZEI District Councils and also includes representatives from other national primary principals associations. The Principals' Council is making this submission on behalf of NZEI.

NZEI supports a strategic approach to the delivery of education in New Zealand and welcomes the opportunity to comment on the second phase of the Ministry's Directions for a Schooling Strategy. To this end the NZEI Principals' Council has carried out extensive consultation and discussion both within the Council and in focus meetings with groups of principals in Invercargill, Auckland and Wellington. A number of Council members were involved in the Ministry of Education's Schooling Strategy summit meetings held throughout the country. A Ministry of Education officer attended a Council meeting and reported on the summit meetings, answered questions and listened to comments from Council members.

The Council believes that the strategic objectives of *Improving Student Outcomes*, and *Effective Teaching* encapsulate the core business of the school and has focused on responding to these objectives in some detail. Although the Council is very supportive of the critical role that parents, whanau and their communities play in encouraging student achievement and frequently refers to the role of family and whanau throughout the submission, it felt that it was important and appropriate for families and whanau to respond to the strategic objective and priorities that focuses on nurturing children's learning and having higher expectations for their ongoing learning. The role of families and whanau having high aspirations for their children's educational success and actively supporting this by valuing education and ensuring students attend school regularly and are in a "fit state to learn" is critical.

On a broader level the role that society plays in valuing education and ensuring the profession of teaching is valued and respected is also important

## **2. Directions for moving forward**

For the Schooling Strategy to be successful there needs to be:

A reduced number of priorities that are clearly and simply communicated to the whole sector in a way that makes sense, has buy in from the practitioners in schools and are seen as manageable. This could be achieved by a more strategic and phased in implementation of the priorities.

Realistic resourcing of the agreed priorities

Close consultation with both practitioners and researchers as to how best to support and achieve these priorities. There needs to be a high degree of trust and professional responsibility at all levels which allows for diversity, freedom and innovation within schools.

A commitment by all engaged in the education sector that these are the main priorities for an agreed number of years.

There needs to be alignment within all areas of the Ministry of Education to support and facilitate these priorities.

There must be political commitment not to alter or complicate the Strategy by introducing additional initiatives and requirements of schools that are not aligned to the agreed priorities.

## **3. Key Comments and Observations**

The Council commends the Ministry of Education in endeavouring to make the development of a schooling strategy a collaborative process with a positive focus on achievement. The Council noted a degree of overlap between some of the objectives, priorities and questions in the phase two document. This inter-linking of objectives and priorities has at times resulted in some repetition in responses to some of the questions.

Concern was expressed that there were too many priorities and the focus should be on things that really make a difference. The Council felt that priorities should be based on what schools are doing now as a means of identifying the things that need to be changed.

For the schooling strategy to be effective the focus must be on the priorities that most directly relate to the core business of the school and that is effective teaching.

To ensure a successful outcome for the Schooling Strategy there must be realistic funding provided to enable the priorities to be implemented.

The Council felt it is important that the schooling strategy should not exist in isolation from other education and societal issues such as special education, employment policies, immigration, and concerns associated with the current rural decline. It was strongly felt that schools should not be expected to address all social issues.

Ongoing professional learning for teachers and principals should be a top priority.

There should be alignment and congruency between the MoE and other sector programmes and priorities that will lead to a shared commitment and philosophy.

The Council noted a lack of reference to the role of the principal as the educational leader and the relationship that effective educational and professional leadership by the principal has in ensuring quality teaching. While the role of the principal as educational leader may well be implied in the priorities, the Council felt that importance of the role and its relationship to effective teaching cannot be underestimated and needs to be acknowledged as such.

The main focus appears to be on the classroom teacher and an implication that they are solely responsible for improving student achievement. The Council believes that the influence of the Principal in ensuring there is quality teaching in the school needs to be more directly acknowledged

4. **The major goal of the Schooling Strategy – Excellence and Equity of Outcomes for All Students**

The concept of developing a schooling strategy based on the goal of attaining excellence and equity of outcomes for all students was supported by the Council and the other principals involved in the consultation process.

The Council however, believes that terms such as ‘excellence’ and ‘equity of outcomes’ are open to a variety of interpretations and need to be clearly defined in order to achieve a shared understanding.

There also needs to be an understanding of, and agreement on, what resourcing would actually be needed to achieve equity of outcomes for all and where this resourcing should be targeted. Equity of outcomes requires unequal inputs. This is especially relevant and important given the diverse nature of the students that attend our schools and the ever increasing gap between the rich and the poor within our society.

For equity of outcomes to become a reality in schools it is imperative that issues of equity in society be seriously addressed and alignment and coherence between the schooling strategy and other government initiatives is essential. Intersectoral support for and alignment with the priorities is essential.

5. **Strategic Objective – Improving Student Outcomes:**

***Question 1a – How can we strengthen the approaches that benefit all learners?***

*Diverse Learners:*

There appears to be some variation as to how the term *diverse* is interpreted. The Council believes the emphasis should be on **all** students and their diverse needs; every student is an individual and has particular needs.

*Identifying what works:*

In order to strengthen approaches that benefit all students and lead to the improvement of student outcomes it is necessary to have a clear idea of the types of approaches that actually do work and have proven to be successful.

This is a critical first step that will facilitate being able to identify and then prioritise what needs to be done in terms of professional development and training, and the resources required to implement and sustain change.

The Council considers professional development and training to be a high priority.

*Curriculum and resources:*

The crowded, subject based curriculum and the plethora of additional requirements that schools are expected to deliver to students places unrealistic expectations on classroom teachers and can have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning.

Having a differentiated curriculum for all learners is seen as being highly desirable by many principals and a means of meeting the needs of a diverse range of students. To successfully implement this would require specific resources to be provided and a reduction in class sizes.

Resourcing such as ORRs, TFEA and SEG is currently provided to assist in improving outcomes for some students however there are no similar resources available to target the needs of higher achievers although it is a requirement for schools to cater for the particular needs of these students.

*Management of student behaviour:*

Principals are very concerned about the negative impact of students who exhibit extreme behaviour on the learning and well being of other students. Teachers have to spend too much time on class management issues created by badly behaved students. More support is needed to manage and assist the increasing numbers of students exhibiting extreme behaviour disorders that in many cases cannot be managed even by very experienced and capable teachers. Often there are simply no resources available to support the teacher in these situations. The mix of needs is constantly changing and resources need to be flexible and able to be adapted to provide the most appropriate support. Models of resource teacher support which currently exist are often unable to meet what is required.

*Assisting students with special needs:*

The Council believes that resourcing for students who have special needs should be regarded separately from assistance provided to manage students who have behavioural problems that are directly related to societal issues. The Council also believes that resourcing for both special needs and behaviour management should be increased to enable schools to better meet the needs of these students.

**Question 1b – How can schools demonstrate students are developing desired skills, attitudes, values, and identity, as well as knowledge?**

**Assessing student performance and development**

Regular monitoring and assessment of students' knowledge and the development of desired skills, attitudes, values and a sense of self identity can be undertaken in a variety of ways.

- Teachers' professional judgement
- Using a range of nationally validated assessment tools such as NEMP, asTTle and ARBs.
- Problem solving activities can be used to gauge level of performance as part of a holistic and collaborative approach
- There needs to be both qualitative and quantitative data used to demonstrate progress in the above areas.
- Formative and summative assessment both have an important role
- Use of a range of other assessment strategies such as peer assessment, self assessment, feedback from families and communities.

It needs to be recognised that there are difficulties in being able to quantify students' attitudes and values or indeed in some cases be able to even gain consensus on what constitutes desirable attitudes and values.

*The influence of the home*

The Council acknowledged that the home environment of a student plays a major part in shaping their attitudes and values. The Council accepts that the school needs to know about and have an understanding of the culture of its community and the values and expectations that exist in the students' home environments. The Council also noted that sometimes the attitudes and values that are accepted or promoted within some homes are at variance to the expectations of the school and other sectors within the community.

One of the challenges the Council identified was to explore ways of engaging the "disengaged" families/whanau. This will require additional time, personnel and resourcing. Home liaison officers, Social Workers in School were suggested as possible ways of meeting this challenge. It was emphasised that such personnel need high level interpersonal skills plus a good understanding/knowledge of schools and the education system.

*Teachers' professional judgement*

Attitudes, values and identity are closely related to the culture of the school and are not as readily "measured" as more discrete aspects of knowledge and skills. The professional judgement of teachers is a critical element in this area.

Teachers' professional knowledge and judgement is acquired and developed through the experience, observation, knowledge and reflection that is developed and refined throughout one's teaching career. Professional judgement is informed through observation and interaction with students and colleagues and plays a very important role in assessing the progress and development of students.

## **Question 1c – How will we know we are making progress?**

### **Indicators of progress**

Note: This is closely linked to strategies outlined in 1b.

#### **Some expected indicators would be:**

- Students who are motivated and engaged in their learning
- Regular attendance and positive participation at school
- Students are happy and enjoy being at school
- Students experiencing success and a sense of achievement and self-worth
- Less behavioural issues in schools – positive school climate
- Students who are secure and confident with well developed social skills
- Students who are proud of their own cultural/ethnic heritage
- Students who demonstrate an appreciation for and understanding of others
- Positive relationships between staff, students and parents reflecting a consistency of understanding and support for the schools vision, values and processes.

There is no single answer to how schools will be able to show they are making progress in the areas of knowledge, skills attitudes and values. The “evidence” will be gleaned from a range of sources and strategies. In order to do this well it is necessary to have the resources and support to enable this to happen.

#### *General Comments on Improving Student Outcomes:*

In considering how to improve learning outcomes for all students the Council noted the links between this and the strategic objective and associated priorities concerned with the influence families and whanau have on the learning and achievement of students. The development of ‘home expectations’ is crucial in making a sustainable impact on student learning. This can be fostered by lots of communication and conversations with parents.

The National Education Guidelines requires schools to consult with their communities and that school practices and policies should reflect the values, attitudes and skills set down in prescribed curriculum statements. While the consultation process enables schools to work with families and whanau to promote and encourage agreed values and attitudes, tension can occur when agreement is unable to be reached between the government/school’s desired values and those of the school community.

## **6. Strategic Objective – Effecting Teaching (Question 2).**

General Comments on this objective:

- The Council believes that effective teaching is about what teachers know and do; good teachers do make a significant difference but cannot do this alone and need to be supported in the work they do.
- Students/teachers/principals/families are linked as a partnership of ‘key players’.

- Effective teachers focus on teaching and have high expectations for their students. The effectiveness of their teaching is measured by the difference they make to students learning and development.
- Comprehensive preparation for teaching, sound pedagogical knowledge, ongoing professional learning and the ability to affirm and develop student identity are critical factors that underpin effective teaching.
- Identification of inhibitors that impede effective teaching is an important step in being able to provide the necessary professional training and support that is required to develop the teacher's ability to become more effective.
- "Conditions" in which teachers work and students learn have a direct impact on teaching/learning effectiveness.

## 7. **Priority 1 – Ongoing Professional Learning**

### **Question 3a – *What type of professional learning and development is most effective?***

Effective professional learning and development should involve the whole school and/or a cluster of smaller schools; it should be long term, sustained development and have facilitators who are well trained, confident and able to model good practice in the classroom. The credibility factor of facilitators is crucial.

Effective professional learning needs to be well resourced, sustained over time and should include credible facilitation, in school modelling, peer support, feedback, evaluation and ongoing contact with the facilitator

Having a 'whole school' focus and the development of collegial support would appear to be important elements of effective professional learning.

It was noted that the loss of advisers has created a loss of expertise that once was readily available to teachers and concern was expressed about the supply and provision of capable facilitators.

The Council supported a shift away from the 'one course' model but also believed there should be provision for people to undertake development to achieve personal goals.

Further comment on effective types of professional learning and development:

- The numeracy project was seen as a very effective and relevant form of professional development, however disappointment was expressed by some people at the time it took to get on to the project. It was felt that sufficient funding should have been made available to ensure that all schools had equitable access to the project. In some cases the excessive time taken to roll out this initiative has meant that in some situations the whole staff may have changed during or following the course. This has resulted in situations where the 'school' may have had the development but the original staff had since moved on and none of the current staff have been involved.

- Specialists should be trained to work in specific areas of the school or with particular people within the school. eg there should be junior, middle and senior school advisers as well as advisers to support year 1 and 2 teachers and their tutor teachers.
- Some principals recalled the impact and difference that programmes such as ERIC and LARIC had made and suggested that these programmes needed to be revised and re-implemented.
- The AtoL contract is also very good but one year is not sufficient and the programme is too broad and does not allow for choice of focus.

**Question 3b – *What are the areas of knowledge, skill, practice and beliefs in which professional development is most pressing?***

School principals and their staff are the best people to determine the professional learning programmes according to the learning needs of their students. The importance of the professional learning of the principal should never be underestimated or under resourced. The value of initiatives such as First Time Principals Training, Principals Professional Learning Communities and the PDPC were acknowledged. However it would be fair to say that there is still some degree of reservation surrounding the model of professional learning involved in the PDPCs. Early initiatives in the area of professional development for aspiring/potential principals was acknowledged and promoted because this develops a larger cadre of professional leaders. Issues of time to pursue sustained professional learning and workload issues for principals will need to be seriously addressed if this element of principals professional learning is to be addressed. Currently the Principals personal and professional well-being is at risk.

Areas needing professional development will vary from school to school and will depend on where a school 'is at' at a given time and what the particular needs of the students may be. This is also the case for Principals who are also at different stages of development in principalship. Professional development must be needs based and take into account school priorities as well as national priorities.

The provision of professional development to up-skill teachers in the use of exemplars as tools that supported effective classroom teaching practice was seen as a pressing need.

The Council believed that a focus on the basics of literacy, numeracy and behaviour should be retained as a major element of professional development programmes but also supported schools being able to make their own decisions about their professional development training requirements in order to meet their specific needs.

The problems created by inappropriate student behaviour and the need for teachers to be provided with additional support were repeatedly mentioned during discussions.

Other points that were made in relation to professional communities were:

- The school leader's 'vision' constantly needs to be expanded.
- Beginning teacher time needs to be used correctly and effectively.
- Professional development costs need to be budgeted for, including the cost of providing release time.
- Disparities between different regions in terms of being able to afford to fund professional development needs to be taken into account. (eg The Invercargill Licensing Trust provides generous funding)
- Being located in isolated areas creates many additional costs and impacts on being able to participate in some professional development opportunities.

**Question 3c – How can teachers and principals participate in professional communities which contribute to sustained improvements in student outcomes?**

The Council believes the principal is pivotal to the success of professional learning communities. They are the lynchpin between national policies, local aspirations and the learning programmes that staff believe are most important for their students.

The Council believed that schools should have control over their own professional development arrangements and whereas it should not be mandatory for schools to work as part of a cluster there are already examples of some of this working well. Schools need to have ownership of their professional development and the principal's role is to facilitate the sense of ownership with their staff.

- The School Administration Support Clusters (SASC) scheme was suggested by a group of principals as providing a good example of schools combining to participate as a professional community. This scheme creates opportunities for schools to shape their own topics and employ a facilitator to lead sessions.
- Others suggested using the very successful and popular Principal Professional Learning Community (PPLC) project as a model that could be adapted to create effective teacher professional learning communities. (TPLC).

The Council believed the leadership of the principal was critical in encouraging and helping to facilitate successful professional development programmes. The school would grow professionally as the school leaders grew and developed a vision for the school that was shared by both the principal, teachers and the community.

Being involved with a university and immersed in professional learning was seen as yet another way in which teachers and principals could participate in a professional learning community. Partnerships with universities appear to be somewhat ad hoc and the Council believes that there is potential for further work in this area. The Teaching Learning Research Initiatives were seen as a valuable because it encourage evidenced based inquiry and action and values both research and practice.

**Question 3d – *What are the implications of this priority for school boards?***

Boards of Trustees recognise that Staff are the most valuable resource in the school. It is imperative that Boards of Trustees have an understanding of the importance and need to have an ongoing staff professional development programme and the cost of this should be adequately budgeted for. It is important that the Principal keeps the BoT well informed of this priority.

**Question 3e – *How will we know if we are making progress?***

The profile of the principal as professional leader will be recognised at both local and national level and the capacity and capability of principals as professional leaders will be evident across the education sector. Principals will be seen as a desirable career path opportunity.

Possible indicators of progress:

- When there is evidence of positive things happening in schools/ classroom.
- Through the development of shared understanding and continuity of effective teaching practice throughout the school.
- When it begins to show in school values and through the expression of shared beliefs, the development of a “we believe in” attitude.
- When other schools ask to visit in order to meet with staff and observe and discuss at first hand the positive things that are happening within the school.
- Principals support the view that teachers own assessment of the value of the professional development should be given due cognisance.

**Question 3f – *Is there support for this priority?***

Yes - the Council rated this as an extremely high priority believing that the ongoing professional learning of teachers and principals is a critical factor in developing effective teaching and improving student learning outcomes.

**8. Priority 2 – Comprehensive Preparation for Teaching**

**Question 4a – *What areas of knowledge, skill, practice and belief need to be strengthened the most for beginning teachers?***

Many principals felt strongly that the selection and initial teacher education in New Zealand has been adversely affected the market model and this has resulted in too much variability in the preparation for teaching.

The following points were seen as being critical considerations:

- The present situation is viewed from a market economy perspective and driven by economics. There are too many providers and too much variation within the provision of pre-service teacher education. There needs to be more alignment between what is happening at the college of education/university and the school where the teaching practice is taking place. There are some good existing models of this alignment
- Preparation for teaching is a complex job and cannot be achieved in a compressed time. NZEI policy is that pre-service education for teaching needs to be a four year professional qualification

- There were reservations expressed about preparation for teaching when it is provided through distance education unless it is supported with opportunities for interaction and professional discussion . Current experiences with on-line discussion has exposed the limitations this has. A mechanism is required that will allow for in-depth and rich discussion which are vital aspects for a profession which requires quality interaction with colleagues and the building of professional networks.
- A beginning teacher in a primary school is required to teach all areas of the NZ Curriculum. Beginning teachers need to be well prepared and familiar with a whole range of strategies and pedagogical practices that meet the diverse learning and behaviour needs of their students
- The current funding system based on EFTs has the capacity to compromise quality at entry point of training.
- The importance of dispositional qualities in selection of candidates for teaching was highlighted by Principals.
- Skills in the area of classroom organisation and the management of student behaviour was identified as an area that beginning teachers often find challenging.
- Teaching practice was identified as a vital component of pre-service teacher education.

The role of the associate teacher was seen as critical in assisting in the preparation for teaching. Council members also identified the need for the parameters of the responsibility of the associate teacher to be clearly defined. to avoid confusion between the roles of the school/associate teacher and the provider. Both have specific roles to fulfil while the student is on practicum.

**Question 4b – *Strengthening the links between initial teacher education and support for beginning teachers.***

Principals acknowledged there were difficulties in making and strengthening these links but that it was important for schools to have some form of partnership programme with the providers that could possibly extend into the beginning teachers first two years of teaching.

Other points made:

- There was support for the principle of having advisers running courses for beginning teachers and tutor teachers. The importance of the role of the tutor teacher needs to be recognised and supported by the provision of professional development.
- Mentoring of beginning teachers was seen as a key factor in providing support.

**Question 4c – *How do we ensure that teachers who support student teachers and beginning teachers are well prepared for their roles?***

Principals are the link between initial teacher education institutions and the schools in which students are placed. Where there are links and partnerships between Teacher Education providers and schools it has proved to be effective in addressing the continuity needs of the two groups.

The following points were noted in relation to providing support for student teachers and beginning teachers:

- Time needs to be provided to enable tutor teachers to carry out their role and responsibilities.
- Tutor teachers need to be trained for the role, they are teaching other adults not students.
- The level of payment should reflect the importance of the role and the experience and skills required to be an effective tutor/associate teacher.
- The Teachers Council folder ('Towards Full Registration') is inadequate.
- More support material for the tutor/associate teacher is needed within schools.
- There are advantages in deputy principals now being able to be paid as tutor teachers. This will increase the pool of experienced teachers available to undertake the roles of associate/tutor teachers.

**Question 4d – *How will we know we are making progress?***

- Principals will report a high level of satisfaction with beginning teachers
- There will be evidence of the development of reflective practitioners.
- The beginning teachers themselves will have sense of confidence and efficacy and recognition that they have been well prepared for the role

**4e – *Support for this priority?***

There was strong support for this priority as comprehensive preparation for teaching was seen as a crucial link in the ongoing development and motivation of a teacher.

9. **Priority 3 - Affirming and Developing Student Identity**

**Question 5a – *How do we know if the experiences and identities of students are being affirmed in their schooling and that this is supporting their learning outcomes?***

The Council agreed that schools already have many practices in place to affirm and develop student identity. The point was also made that the best way to develop and affirm student identity is by ensuring that they experience success at school.

Practices and strategies that could provide evidence to affirm the experiences and identities of students and thereby support their learning outcomes include:

- the importance of integrating into the curriculum a variety of contexts and learning experiences that reflect the diversity of the student body;
- an appreciation and valuing of cultures and backgrounds other than their own is important for teachers and principals;
- recognition that affirming, building and developing student identity re interconnected with student learning outcomes;
- celebration and acceptance of differences, ensuring that all children are acknowledged, accepted and involved;
- innovative programmes such as buddy systems and bullying programmes are implemented and monitored to gauge effectiveness;

- being aware of and sensitive towards students who do not appear to be accepted and involved;
- acknowledging each person's individuality, recognising occasions that are special to individuals such as birthdays and cultural events, and by continuing to sustain this throughout the year;
- incorporating these practices not only as part of social studies and health programmes but right across the board as part of 'the hidden curriculum';
- treating each person with respect as an individual and enhancing their self esteem;
- being aware of non-desirable aspects of a student's identity that should not be affirmed.

**Question 5b – *How can families and whanau contribute to this priority?*  
(See also Priority #6)**

The Council maintained that although this was an important priority it was noted that it was sometimes difficult getting families interested and involved.

Principals believed that many families were struggling to cope with economic and social pressures and these became barriers that prevented parents and whanau having the time and motivation to contribute to their children's experiences and the development of sense of identity.

Nonetheless, the Council recognised getting parents actively involved with the school would help parents understand how the school was trying to affirm and foster their child's identity and experiences.

Council members identified a range of activities that parents can engage in together with their children both within and outside of the school. Many of these activities are already occurring and are centred around:

- the need for families/whanau to clearly understand the importance of ensuring children experience, love, security, acceptance and a sense of self worth;
- utilising agencies outside the school to reinforce the importance of this priority e.g church groups, Pasifika networks, community education groups / PTFA/ NCW/ Rotary, Marae/Iwi based groups;
- providing significant role models.

**Question 5c – *How will we know we are making progress?***

Progress can be noted through:

- the positive culture of school and community;
- students displaying greater confidence and self esteem; they become more involved and interested in their schoolwork and generally behave in a positive manner;
- students learning about and practising being tolerant, respectful and accepting of differences;
- students who may appear vulnerable are not victimised but instead are accepted and participate fully and to the best of their ability in a wide range of classroom and playground activities;
- a sense of belonging and positive engagement with fewer dysfunctional/inappropriate behaviours.

Parents and whanau will be more actively involved in school related activities and the composition of Board of Trustees and PTA members reflects the social, cultural and ethnic makeup of the school's community.

**Question 5d – Support for this priority?**

There was support for the general thrust of this priority however there was also some question as to whether it needed to be specified as a national priority. Much of what this priority seeks to promote is already an integral part of the strategic objective aimed at improving outcomes for students and is referred to elsewhere in this paper.

Principals felt that primary schools already did affirm student identity well and there was no need to formalise something that was already happening

10. **Priority 4 – Strong School-Home Links**

**Question 6a – How do we build and use effective home-school links to assist in meeting student learning needs?**

There are already many home-school links as already discussed under question 5.

There were a range of strategies discussed by the Council but some were not suitable for all school communities. Inappropriate use of strategies could be counterproductive and may even be dangerous in some situations. This has also been recognised through legislation that requires police vetting of adults who are involved in school activities.

- The range of suggestions for building effective home-school links were schools having an open door policy.
- Home visits could be arranged.
- Technology could be used to keep parents informed of positive happenings and developments – cell-phone contact, e-mails and digital photos could provide opportunities to establish and strengthen links between the school and home.
- The school being involved in community social and cultural events.
- Utilising the skills, knowledge and interests of parents and other people in the community by providing opportunities for them to come into the school and to interact with students.
- Establishing and maintaining reasonable contact between home and school so that it is not only when there is a situation of concern arises that a parent hears from the school.
- Early intervention with regard to absenteeism, truancy and discipline issues.

There was some support for the reintroduction of a similar service to the 'visiting teacher'/home liaison officer service designed to provide a pastoral link between the home and the school. Some clusters of schools employ a truancy officer but a 'visiting teacher' who has a much broader brief may have more appeal.

Other matters that assist the above include:

- effective communication strategies and channels for communication School to home and vice versa;
- seeking feedback when appropriate;
- a welcoming school culture – positive reinforcement of all that is good;
- sound interpersonal skills of all staff and especially those in leadership;
- clear procedures for complaints/concerns to be addressed;
- ensure fairness, transparency and follow up in the above;
- early intervention when issues/problems arise;
- sound orientation procedures for new families and students;
- principal/teacher knowledge of the community in which they work;
- identification of key personnel in community groups.

**Question 6b – *How can other local ‘contributors’ provide support?***

Comments:

This was not seen as a ‘home/school link by some principals.

It was agreed that schools come under pressure to be involved in a variety of community activities but needed to retain their main focus on education matters.

The occasions when schools do receive support from ‘local contributors’ often arise through parents’ involvement in business or the workforce. There were some concerns expressed about schools being sponsored by commercial organisations. Many principals commented that if government funding was adequate there would be no need to seek such additional assistance.

**Question 6c – *How will we know if we are making progress?***

The degree of success achieved in developing and maintaining strong learning – focused links with families and whanau can be ascertained by considering the effectiveness of the suggestions as listed in 6a.

Indicators of this could include:

- feedback received from ‘talk in the community’;
- positive culture evident;
- parent satisfaction;
- absence of factions or high levels of complaints;
- consistency and alignment between home and school priorities;
- an increase in the amount of community interest, support and interaction with the school may be noted and could include offers of financial support and the donation of goods;
- an increase in the number of parents and outside organisations actively involved with the school sponsorship, school camps and class trips.

Much of the above is affected by socio-economic factors and may more readily be observed in some areas than others.

### **Question 6d – Support for this priority?**

The Council gives general support for the priority but it also needs to be noted that home/school links are important not as an end in themselves but because they play an important role in supporting the core business of the school.

The question was also raised ....is it the actual “link” per se that facilitates student learning or is it the aspirations for and valuing of education that the links engender. E.g Consider the achievement of Asian students and yet generally speaking Asian parents do not have a lot of direct links with the school.

## **11. Priority 5 – Using, Sharing and Developing Knowledge**

### **Question 7a – How can capability of teachers and others be strengthened to develop knowledge and practices to support learning of all students?**

The importance of the role of the Principal in enhancing and strengthening the professional capability of both themselves and their teachers is critical. This won't just “happen”. It needs to be planned, resourced and time provided for it. Links between research communities and the professional practitioners are important. Some valuable work being done in the Teaching Learning Research initiatives

A necessary prerequisite to this is attracting quality candidates to the profession. Teaching is a very complex and intellectual activity that requires people who are capable of undertaking rigorous and challenging work along with a high level of self efficacy and a strong set of social and interpersonal skills.

The Council also identified the importance of professional reading and keeping up to date with pedagogical knowledge and current research about teaching and learning

### **Question 7b – How will we know we are making progress?**

Teachers and principals are able to talk knowledgeably about professional practice and the rationale underpinning what they do.

A well qualified and respected profession that is able to engage in vigorous and enlightened debate.

Results will be seen through a range of student outcome indicators.

New Zealand teachers will be recognised internationally for their skills and expertise ( this is already fairly strong).

### **Question 7c – Is there support for this priority?**

Yes this priority was strongly supported, but it won't happen without a clear strategy that starts prior to candidates entering the profession and then builds in a cohesive and focused way at various stages in the careers of teachers and principals and provides the opportunities for members of the profession to develop and increase their capability both individually and collectively.

The Council noted the links to Priority 3 which was also strongly supported.

## **12. Strategic Objective – Families and Whanau**

*General comment:*

The Council considered that priority 6, 'Strong School- Home Links' should be included with priorities 8, 9 and 10 as it linked more directly to issues concerning families and whanau and was more about strengthening families.

The Council believes most parents are doing their best for their children at any given time, however schools' sometimes view matters differently to parents and such situations require open discussion to generate better understanding by both parties.

Principals accept that schools have an educative function to help families understand what is expected of them and their children to support learning. Supportive, caring and interested families contribute to the strength and success of the school.

The Council reiterated that the school's main function and area of expertise was to help students to read and write. Although schools can and do manage other issues up to a certain stage, there needs to be a well defined point at which another professional should take over. In order for this to happen there needs to be greater alignment and co-ordination of social services.

## **13. Priority 6 – Building Knowledge about Learning**

### **Question 9a – How are families and whanau actively supporting children's learning outside of school?**

The Council argued that there was a high level of variability in the degree to which families and whanau "actively" support children's learning. Range of reasons for variability were seen as:

- lack of knowledge and understanding as to "how";
- disengagement from education;
- other priorities;
- pace of modern life – finding time;
- work commitments.

The Council recognised that families and whanau can play an important role in actively supporting children's learning outside of school by taking an interest in what has been learned each day at school, by encouraging their child to talk about their future and their aspirations and by getting involved with their homework. Unfortunately television viewing, computer generated

games and other similar outside of school activities often dominates student time and energy thus eroding quality time that could be spent with their family.

**Question 9b – *How can others help families to provide active out of school support for their children’s learning?***

The Council was keen to learn who ‘others’ to whom the priority refers as it often falls onto the school to provide out-of-school support.

- Sports clubs, scouts, culture groups, libraries and church groups can and do provide active out of school support for student learning.

**Question 9c – *How will we know if progress is being made?***

- Disengaged children will become more engaged in learning.
- More cohesion between school and home expectations and priorities.
- Students’ attitudes become more positive.
- More families are interacting with the school.

**Question 9d – *Support for this priority?***

General support for this priority is given by the Council on the proviso that there is recognition that all of out-of-school support cannot be provided by the school. Building knowledge about learning is not a simple task, again requires time, focus and resourcing

14. **Priority 7 – Learning Focused Links with Teachers and Schools**

**Question 10a – *How are families and whanau maintaining relationships with schools which help teachers and schools to meet the learning needs of students?***

The Council acknowledged that a relationship of mutual trust and confidentiality between the school and families needed to be established and maintained. Families need to be encouraged to keep the school informed about happenings that occur outside of the school that could impact on students’ learning and well being.

**Question 10b - *How can others help families to establish effective relationships with schools that will help schools to meet the students needs?***

This question is similar to 9b. The Council’s had discussed the importance of role of SKILLED liaison people whether it was, for example, social workers, truancy officers, GSE personnel, home–school liaison personnel, health personnel, police education officers, RTL&Bs. All are important in building learning focused links between family, whanau, teachers and schools. Accessibility and ready availability of the above is often an issue for principals

**Question 10c – *How will we know if we are making progress?***

There will be:

- more cohesion between school and home;
- evidence of active support for student learning;
- interest in and attendance at educational evenings/discussion/school events etc;
- students will attend school regularly and arrive at school ready to learn;
- a reduction in “parent condoned” absenteeism.

**Question 10d – *Support for this priority?***

The Council supported this as a priority but once again felt that it should not be regarded in isolation from other aspects of a positive and constructive relationship with families and whanau.

15. **Priority 8 – Integrated Social Services:**

**Question 11a – *How best to mobilise and co-ordinate family and whanau support to allow schools to remain focused on teaching and learning?***

Principals identified a need for experienced and skilful personnel outside of the school to be responsible for co-ordinating support for families in need. They would need to strike the right balance between liaising with the school but also leaving the school free to focus on the core business of teaching and learning. Once again these support agencies need to be quickly and easily accessible to the school and the families. They should not involve heavy layers of bureaucratic requirements. Some major issues have been identified around the capability of CYF and school experience with this agency has resulted in a lack of confidence of its ability to support the school sector.

This failure to have adequate social services support available when required by schools and families was seen as a systems failure.

**Question 11d – *Is there support for this Priority?***

The Council identified this as a critical area that needed to be developed. Discussion was largely centred on how this had not been achieved and included such points as:

- the huge raft of students/families seeking/needing support;
- the lack of co-ordination of services, agencies have different ways of operating;
- schools are not resourced to tackle this problem and it should not be the role of the RTLB to co-ordinate these services;
- a suggestion of having a ‘one stop shop’ model suggests there being an overall provider with all of the resources based in one area. The concern is that this could develop sectionalised interests that would work against the success of such a model;
- there needs to be one person working within the school or on behalf of the school (a ‘liaison officer?’) who has responsibility for the co-ordination of the appropriate services required;
- having a social worker or someone in a role similar to that of the visiting teacher is an option that should be considered.

16. **Priority 9 – Evidence Based Investment**

**Question 12a – *How could we be assured that extra resourcing would contribute to improved student outcomes?***

Always some degree of difficulty in establishing direct and provable links between outcome and investment in an area as complex as teaching and learning however, we already know that quality teaching makes a big difference so any investment in that area must be worthwhile.

While additional resourcing centred around quality teaching should/will make a difference, the difference will only be really significant if the investment is aligned with other policies designed to address some of the economic, health and social issues we know impact negatively on student learning

It is reasonable for a government to require “evidence” that any investment in education is soundly based, however, the definition of “evidence” needs to be broad enough to include a comprehensive range of indicators and not focus disproportionately on a narrow range of “hard data”.

There also needs to be a preparedness to recognise that some of the most valuable “gains” in education take time and that a desire for almost instantaneous and “provable” outcomes can often be counterproductive.

Trust in the professional judgement of principals and teachers as to the “worth” of certain investment or initiatives needs to be valued and respected.



Liz Horgan  
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31 March 2005



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Te Manukura

31 March 2005