

# ARE YOU ON BOARD THE 'CHANGE PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS OF INVESTING IN EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

DIANNE SMARDON AND JENNIFER CHARTERIS UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND, ARMIDALE, NSW, AUSTRALIA

ARE YOU CHANGE-INVIGORATED, change-weary or just pedalling to keep up with recent Ministry of Education (MoE) moves? However you are travelling, it must be apparent that Aotearoa/New Zealand school administration is undergoing significant change through the current schooling reform process termed *Investing in Educational Success* (IES). But what is it all about?

Two years ago, in January 2014, the NZ government launched IES. Under the umbrella of IES, the MoE framed a school administration structure and funding model that aims to provide targeted tools and resources to build teaching capability and improve learning through the establishment of three initiatives: Communities of Schools (CoS), a Teacher-led Innovation Fund and a Principal Recruitment Allowance. (The third arm of this strategy is described by Professor Ivan Snook (2014) as performance pay for senior leaders.)

As 'the engine room' of IES (MoE, 2014), CoS is framed in social justice terms as an approach to target the most disadvantaged young people in NZ.

Communities of Schools are groups of kura/schools that come together, along with their communities, to raise achievement for all tamariki and young people by sharing expertise in teaching and learning (ako), and supporting each other. (MoE, 2015, p.3)

The MoE acknowledge that in many regions there are highly successful clusters.

Your kura/school may already be part of a network or cluster. These professional groups do great work and it is likely that such a grouping will translate well into a Community of Schools. This will depend on how well it already reflects the educational pathway from primary through to secondary level. (MoE, 2015, p.6)

Although it is not acknowledged in this CoS literature, there is a significant difference between the nature of networks and clusters. Networks are needs-based collaborations that are generated on a voluntary basis through interactions of like-minded people who have a shared aspiration. On the other hand, clusters tend to be a geographical connection by location. This does not preclude the development of shared goals, yet the collaborative focus is not the driver for their constitution. The CoS initiative fits the latter notion and, with their funding contingencies, there is a mandated aspect to them.

In a 2014 cabinet paper, the Minister of Education, Hon Hekia Parata, provided a rationale for the initiative through highlighting that 'capability is inconsistent' in school leaders and

teachers throughout NZ and IES would universalise practice. It marks a significant swing from the local, contextualised curricula of the Tomorrow's Schools ethos toward a 'tight-loose-tight[er] system of school governance' (Fiske & Ladd, 2001, p.540).

Evidence demonstrates that investing in the profession to raise the quality of teaching and leadership provides the best opportunity to deliver the improved educational outcomes we seek. There is sufficient capacity in the system and we have some of the best teachers and leaders in the world. Capability is inconsistent however, and there are barriers to ensuring best practice is universal practice. (Cabinet Paper: IES design and implementation, 2014, p.3)

Curious to know how primary and secondary principals in Aotearoa interpret the IES initiative, we conducted 31 interviews. The school leaders articulated a range of perspectives, alluding to the rich potential of cross-school collaborations, the desirability of a progressive career trajectory but also concern that the proposed changes may be detrimental to school communities. Representative comments from principals (pseudonyms provided) are included here. The range of issues identified by the principals include: fiscal motives; accountability and control; loss of responsiveness and lack of local knowledge; hierarchical considerations; and uncertainty in the face of change.

## Fiscal motives

The policy is viewed as an economic strategy for reducing Education expenditure.

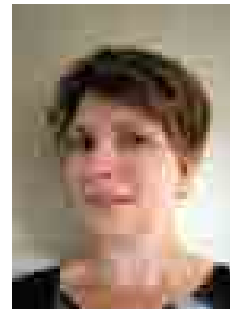
I think that they just brought something over and plonked it on top of us and that's been a result of wanting to save money. (Trina)

Concern is expressed that money may not be available to schools that are not fast to access incentivised funding when it is offered. Kate alludes to the coerciveness of needing to apply for PLD funding as a CoS or risk missing out. She alludes to the potential for the initiative to change the nature of an existing cross-school collaboration.

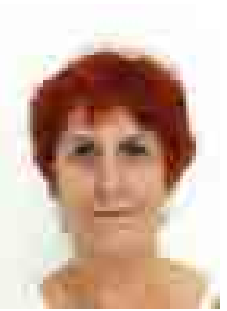
And the government has made it so that if you don't [join], you don't get professional development (PD) funding and PD is fundamental to our survival. If you don't join you're just going to get starved. We have to believe in ourselves enough, in our relationships to believe that we can actually survive the structure and make it work for us. We have to. (Kate)

However, Noah, a principal from a disadvantaged area of

# TRAIN' STING IN



Jennifer Charteris



Dianne Smardon

Aotearoa, notes that the potential for pooling of funds is a positive way to collaboratively access MoE funding.

[It] is about pooling your resources as a grid of schools and buying professional development or [having] buying power for an innovation that you want to do in your little school district. (Noah)

## Accountability and control

Principals described an increased pressure for centralised power over school administration and management. They suggest that this intensified control may be filtered through the executive principal to provide an additional layer of administration to the existing system.

The model is like Sydney schools where you have much less autonomy in the school and you have a district supervisor. [The minister] talks about career pathways and creating these super principals who will have oversight of a number of schools. And that's sort of adding another layer of management that's really unnecessary. She's calling it a career structure, but then she is laying another layer of control over the schools. (Dana)

They want somebody to be accountable –somebody to beat over the head. They want somebody to say 'here's your target, you're going to improve.' They need a direct line of authority. (Kate)

The potential for intensified accountability through increased scrutiny of student achievement data was noted. Through this monitoring, it is perceived that schools that are not thriving will need to be brought into line with the rest. Some leaders suggest that this targeting of underperforming schools, and by extension practitioners, through the CoS project is an unwarranted, draconian measure imposed on all schools.

They are forcing it on us. They have titles like 'lead principal' and 'change principal'. I think that the Ministry is trying to get more control because they're all independent schools. By encasing us in a community, it might be easier to manage the random [schools] that are out there . . . If you're a s\*\*\* school and you are fighting your data or hiding your data, you're going to be 'got' in the CoS. (Magnus)

I know that some schools are not functioning very well. Now if they aren't, then the Ministry needs to be able to deal with it. However, when schools are functioning extremely well, they shouldn't have to put on the control. (Dana)

The principals we spoke with aligned the intensification of the audit culture with league tables where data is gathered and

published. A link is also drawn between a model of governance of a cross-school Board of Trustees and moves to implement performance pay.

I think it's just totally achievement driven not learning driven and we are going to get hyped up about results, which actually is league data . . . I think that's how we'll be judged and I think it's quite an ideological focus from this government and this particular Minister and I don't think it's a good idea. (Trina)

The agenda may become five schools to be run by one principal with one board of trustees taking over all of those schools . . . I have an issue with teachers being paid on the results. (Nigel)

## Loss of cultural responsiveness and lack of local knowledge

A general governing body responsible for a number of schools was considered an issue for the social and cultural uniqueness of a school community. Dana expressed concern that responsiveness to each school's context and community would be lost in the push for universalism.

When you've got somebody who doesn't fit in the community, making decisions for the school, they're not necessarily going to have the knowledge of those norms that make or break a place, you know, those cultural understandings and beliefs. (Dana)

Suzanne points out that less affluent schools may not have a presence amongst their more wealthy counterparts and therefore may be underrepresented in the CoS.

I think they're going to have us all under an umbrella and I don't necessarily think that it will be in the best interest of everybody . . . In affluent schools, the parents are much more engaged and they have those skills that you would hope to have on your board, you know, lawyers, accountants, people who are senior business people. I think that a school like mine could easily get lost and therefore the kind of interests or the direction we're working towards will get consumed by those other schools. (Suzanne)

Aligning collaboration with a business model is an issue for Trina, a secondary principal. She sees that both resourcing and the logistics of coordinating with a large group of schools may be a distraction from the 'core business' of leadership in her own school.

Well, I love the idea first of all that schools collaborate,



but I just don't think it's being resourced properly and in a way that's going to allow [collaboration] to happen. It's a communal collaborative process with the business model put on top of it. I think the reality of actually getting together with several other schools to come up with some common goals would actually distract me from my core business, which is leading the school that I am in. (Trina)

### Hierarchical considerations

There is concern over the hierarchical nature of the CoS structure where there is a well remunerated executive principal who has authority over other principals. Kate considers a hierarchical model would jeopardise the existing collaboration.

It has the capacity to kill the sort of collaboration where everyone has a responsibility for the initiative and people all have different roles. [However], when you look at that executive principal, you're saying: 'Well, you're getting 25 grand, you do it. You're getting the money!' . . . I don't think we need that in our cluster –somebody having 25 grand and the authority to come around, you know, beating their chest and saying I need this. (Kate)

### Uncertainty in the face of change

Uncertainty in the face of profound and far-reaching change is an issue that concerns school leaders. Jackie uses a maze metaphor for the introduction of IES.

It just seems like [the Ministry] are wanting to do something but we just don't quite know what it is that they're wanting to do. It kind of makes you feel like they know the way out of the maze but we are stuck in the middle of it . . . And we are meant to be leading and innovating and collaborating but nobody is to get a newer map to get out. (Jackie)

Eliza also comments that, although she likes the collaborative focus on shared goals for student learning, there is a lack of clarity about the wider agenda for the educational changes taking place.

I have got no issue with principals working as a cluster collectively to plan professional learning and development, focusing on our shared achievement challenge. [However], the level of transparency and the level of clarity around the [CoS] vision is not there. The issue is that we've got this snippet of it but we haven't got the big picture of what the Ministry intends around the CoS. So we don't actually have a concrete understanding of what we're signing up for. We see the benefit of working for our kids and working collegially with a learning focus. But, what we don't know is how much bigger this is going to get. (Eliza)

Our initial research findings suggest that NZ principals are critical interpreters of policy and are cautious of the implications for accountability and control mechanisms associated with IES. It is apparent that we are witnessing a swing away from the decentralization marked by Tomorrow's Schools yet this also differs from the centralised accountability of the Departments of Education of the 1980s. The IES move can be seen as the intensification of an audit culture through the additional layer of administration. There is clearly a need for greater clarity in sharing the big picture vision for schooling change and a need for further consultation with school leaders and communities.

As illustrated by the comments of Eliza and others above, NZ educators are interested in undertaking influential and positive collaborations. Over the last few decades, we have seen generative and generous collaborations throughout NZ with initiatives like Extending High Standards Across Schools (EHSAS), Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs), and Digital Opportunities. Recognising the significance of the proposed change, it is appropriate for a principal to have the last word in this article. Kate highlights the pressure for leaders to 'get on board' with recent changes to schooling administration, the weight of influence inherent in powerful professional collaborations and the perils of 'stepping off' or being 'left behind'.

I liken it to a freight train. You get on that and all those carriages are bearing down. All those schools are a carriage each. And the momentum for change toward a goal is huge. You dare not step off the train because you will be run over. You will be off it and it'll carry on and you will be left behind. So, there is a lot of pressure, peer pressure or professional pressure, to keep on the change train and working together to mould change together and make it work. (Kate)

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to thank the principals across New Zealand who generously contributed to this research.

### REFERENCES

- Fiske E., & Ladd, H. (2001). Self-governing schools and accountability in New Zealand. *School Autonomy And Evaluation Prospects*, 31(4), 537-552.
- Investing in Education Success: Design and implementation. (2014). Cabinet Paper 28th May 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Investing-in-Educational-Success/ies-cabinet-paper-28-may-2014.pdf>.
- Ministry of Education. (2014). Investing in Educational Success: Communities of schools – Expressions of interest. Retrieved from <http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/specific-initiatives/investing-in-educational-success/communities-of-schools-eoi/>
- Ministry of Education. (2015). Community of schools. Guide for schools and kura. Retrieved from <http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Investing-in-Educational-Success/Communities-of-Schools/IESCommunitiesOfSchoolsGuideForSchoolsAndKura-web-enabledV2.pdf>.
- Snook, I. (2015). Ivan Snook – Academic perspective. IES JOINT FORUM NZPF & NZEI. Retrieved from [http://www.nzpf.ac.nz/sites/default/files/IES\\_Forum-Ivan\\_Snook\\_10\\_June\\_2014\\_1.pdf](http://www.nzpf.ac.nz/sites/default/files/IES_Forum-Ivan_Snook_10_June_2014_1.pdf)



At Waikato we're preparing educational leaders like you to become experts in your field, while positively influencing tomorrow's great minds.

Lichfield School Principal Anthony Biddick is using his Master of Educational Leadership to become a stronger advocate for the students, colleagues and school he leads. His investigation into Socially Just Leadership gives him the foundation to empower his colleagues in developing the next generation of strong and diverse individuals.

Enhance your contribution as a leader with one of our 180-point masters programmes. Find out more about online and on-campus study options at [waikato.ac.nz/go/education](http://waikato.ac.nz/go/education)

**TE KURA TOI TANGATA**  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
**Where the world is going**



You can now access the current and past issues of NZ Principal magazine online

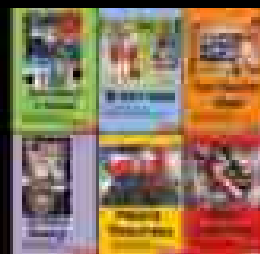


You can search by magazine issue, article name or author

visit [www.nzprincipal.co.nz](http://www.nzprincipal.co.nz)

## A PD package for educational centres

*A critical guide to Māori and Pākehā histories of Aotearoa*



This curriculum programme resource (CPR) is now available for all educators.

Is your school still struggling to effectively meet the wider goals of the Ministry and other policies, to provide responsive education for Māori as Māori with Te Tiriti o Waitangi as part of the context? Or to teach NZ histories to all ethnicities effectively? The CPR can practically support implementing these policies and NZ histories curriculum more effectively.

Mainstream and Māori pathways can successfully use the CPR. Schools can choose from a range of timeframes for reading & delivery. The CPR covers these topics in 6 Unit Booklets for staff to read and create their own unit plans, lesson plans, and assessments to deliver.

**For PD information, rave testimonials and costings view [www.criticalhistories.nz](http://www.criticalhistories.nz) or contact [tamsinhanly@xtra.co.nz](mailto:tamsinhanly@xtra.co.nz) at 09 630 2188**

*The CPR is a single programme to help schools plan and teach their approach to New Zealand's Māori and Pākehā cultures and histories in a cohesive way.*



# KNOW WHO'S ON SITE?

## You do with **VisTab!**

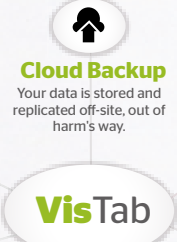
Get Started with **VisTab** Today

CONTACT US

sales@vistab.co.nz

0800 VISTAB (0800 847 822)

[www.vistab.co.nz](http://www.vistab.co.nz)



**Cloud Backup**  
Your data is stored and replicated off-site, out of harm's way.

**Secure**  
All data is password protected and transferred over a secure connection.

**Zero Maintenance**  
Sit back and let VisTab handle your visitor management.

**Customisable**  
If you require ten different questions at sign-in, or want contact details for a prize draw, VisTab handles it all.

**Brandable**  
Display your logos, upcoming events, and health and safety messages where everyone can see them.

**Easy Access**  
Retrieve your records at any time from anywhere using only a web browser.

- In an emergency know exactly who should be at school and who has checked out
- Supports repeat visitors, staff and contractors with an innovative ID system
- The system can be customised to any school with a wide range of forms from daily reliever logs to monthly contract hours
- Instant access to do roll calls by remote and on other mobile devices
- Know when relieving teachers have come and gone

- Permanent access to information stored in the cloud
- Access to statistics and respective details if required
- Frees up office staff
- Supports managing your late students and able to generate truancy records to assist in attendance
- All data can be exported in customisable Excel/CSV files



**YOU SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY. SO DO WE.**

Could your school and students qualify for our **FREE Vectorworks** offer?

How could your Drama students benefit from using **Vectorworks** in your school?



For more information, go to: [megabits.co.nz/Ed-offer](http://megabits.co.nz/Ed-offer)  
E: [EdOffer@megabits.co.nz](mailto:EdOffer@megabits.co.nz) Ph: 09 445 8480

Lighting design by Diana Kesselschmidt. Photography by Lukasz Drapala.

## Education Services.

A VALUABLE RESOURCE.

### Financial Reporting

Education Services provides a Financial Reporting Service to over 660 New Zealand schools – we are the largest provider of accounting services to school's in New Zealand – and would love the opportunity to help you.

Take all the worry out of Financial Management (Including completing your Annual Financial Statements in the new reporting format with ease) and have everything done on time, every time and done right!

We have an office and personnel near you: Whangarei, Auckland, Hamilton, Rotorua, New Plymouth, Whanganui and Wellington.

If you would like a no obligation quote to compare the cost of our service to what you are currently receiving, or would like to enquire exactly what our service involves, please phone:

**Pete on 06 757 5489**  
or email: [pete@educationservices.co.nz](mailto:pete@educationservices.co.nz)  
[www.educationservices.co.nz](http://www.educationservices.co.nz)

# YOU WANT TEACHING 'TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE' – RIGHT?



DR JAN ROBERTSON ACADEMIC DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ASPIRING PRINCIPALS' PROGRAMME  
SENIOR RESEARCHER, INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

I'VE BEEN THINKING about this topic for quite a while now because this statement raises many questions we might take a few minutes now to consider together.

What sort of difference or how much difference do you want to make and to whom?

How far does your moral purpose in education extend – to your classroom, your school, to students in the school down the road, to the New Zealand education system?

Can you articulate your moral purpose in education and how it guides your mahi in schools?

*Actually*, when did you last have a coaching conversation with another senior leader about your moral purpose and were asked questions like this? When did you last talk about your *own* moral purpose to your colleagues? When do you talk to teachers about *their* moral purpose?

Teachers and leaders the world over tell me, usually after my keynote addresses on this topic (e.g. see ACEL 2015), that the 'moral purpose conversation' is not a common one in their school staffrooms. So many teachers and senior leaders have told me that their principal has never talked to them about moral purpose or discussed their own moral purpose with them.

What is moral purpose and why is it such an important part of the leadership of transformative change in schools? Degenhardt and Duignan, (2010, p.17) stated that the answer to the dilemmas we face in our educational leadership '... is ultimately a matter of values, and what is understood to be the moral purpose of education.' We defined moral purpose in the following way (Robertson & Earl, 2014):

*Moral purpose engenders the shared values of equity and social justice through the values of culturally responsive leadership and pedagogy, honouring the Treaty of Waitangi and the dual cultural heritage of New Zealand, and stepping up to actively address the under-achievement of particular groups who have not been well-served by the New Zealand education system.*

## Coaching leadership

Building educational leadership capacity through partnership—SECOND EDITION

Jan Robertson

This book is for anyone interested in developing leadership—their own and others. It is for school leaders wanting to reflect on their own leadership, those working in professional development, and teachers thinking about how they can more effectively facilitate learning. It aims to get educators working with each other as coaches and mentors, creating deep learning relationships within professional practice.

Jan Robertson is a world leader in the field of leadership coaching and this book draws on more than two decades of research and practice. She is passionate about developing leaders who see themselves as leaders and leaders of learning.

This second edition contains:

- new case studies
- new thought leadership
- new research
- new coaching tools.

Since the first edition was published in 2005, the isolation felt by education leaders has not diminished. Leaders need access to collegial collaboration and shared problem solving if they are to tackle the important educational issues and grow as reflective leaders of learning. This book provides the evidence, principles and skills needed to develop leadership skills for individuals and across institutions.

Jan Robertson is an international leadership consultant, a senior researcher for the Institute of Professional Learning at the University of Waikato, an Adjunct Professor at Griffiths University and the academic director of the New Zealand Aspiring Principals' programme. She draws her professional inspiration and energy from the sustainable lifestyle of her Waiheke community.



*"In this edition of Coaching Leadership, Jan Robertson has gone deeper and added details and examples that make the book even better. It is accessible, informative and provides a model not only for thinking about coaching but a process for actually becoming a good coach and mentor in a reciprocal relationship. A must read for school leaders—formal and informal."*  
Dr. Lorna Earl, Toronto.

NZCER Press 2016 ISBN 978-1-927231-97-5 RRP: \$49.95  
Available from: The New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER)  
PO Box 3237, Wellington 6140, New Zealand  
Email: [sales@nzcer.org.nz](mailto:sales@nzcer.org.nz)  
Fax: +64 4 384 7933  
[www.nzcer.org.nz/coachingleadership](http://www.nzcer.org.nz/coachingleadership)

  
NZCER PRESS

The new *Coaching Leadership* edition (Robertson, 2016) relates a case study of how the National Aspiring Principals' Programme (NAPP) has been working to develop leaders, through coaching conversations, who do talk about their moral purpose for equity and social justice. Furthermore, they understand the importance of a strong moral purpose in leading transformative change in their schools and communities. One of our very experienced kaiarahi coaches attests: 'I have a lingering feeling of regret that I didn't have an understanding of the importance of coaching as a principal. Today I would be far truer to the model of being a leader who understands coaching conversations. I would go to work every day

with the intention of having conversations with people about learning' (Nick Major, Aspiring Principal Coach, 2015.)

We were interested in how leaders learn moral purpose for equity. So we conducted a research study (Earl & Robertson, 2013, Robertson & Earl, 2013) that looked at thousands of reflective journal entries and survey comments to try and understand how the aspiring principals were learning about moral purpose. We found there were four main areas that were

important to this leadership learning:

- An awareness of the equity issues in education in New Zealand today
- The examination of their own moral purpose and what their values and beliefs are about leadership for equity and social justice.
- The ability to have their views challenged or affirmed through critical reflection on practice and deep learning conversations.
- The evidence and experience of building leadership capacity with others and acting on this moral purpose both within and beyond their own schools.

But what we found was paramount to this development was a strong, trusting coaching learning relationship to enable the type of conversations about leadership practice that approach areas of vulnerability, honesty and questioning of current practice. The *Coaching Leadership case study* also offers the research-based coaching SMART tool that NAPP coaches have used to initiate and deepen these conversations.

The coaching paradigm underlines every aspect of the akonga learning in NAPP to develop leaders who have coaching skills, have experienced deep coaching relationships, and understand the potential of coaching relationships to change professional practice. Each akonga has an *experienced leader coach* – very experienced, credible past principals who know how to develop new generations of principals for New Zealand schools who will be *more* than they have been able to be themselves. This takes a special way of working through reciprocal learning coaching relationships. These past-principals describe the experience of learning leadership through coaching partnerships like this:

*‘How I wish I had known about and used a coaching approach in my years of principalship. What a difference it might have made!’*  
Nick Major, Aspiring Principal Coach, 2015.

*‘When I left principalship I took up golf and bridge and got a coach for both those activities, yet I never had a coach for the most important job I have ever done in my life . . . be a school principal.’* Graham Young, Aspiring Principals’ Coach, 2015.

Each akonga also has a *peer coach* from NAPP who works through the year supporting and challenging their inquiry into their leadership for transformative change. One then-aspiring principal- now principal – NAPP described it like this: ‘Having a buddy throughout my leadership inquiry provided an authentic and purposeful learning relationship. The questions . . . were as challenging as those provided by my Kaiarahi. This also provided me the with many opportunities to devise and ask my own challenging, open ended and reflective questions. Throughout this process I saw myself change my own perception of what an effective leader is. Personally, it was acknowledging that I don’t have the answers and I don’t need to be the one that does.’ (February 2015).

The regional professional learning groups spend time on *group coaching* around issues of practice throughout the year. The online learning communities provide ongoing, flexible *online coaching* opportunities on all aspects of the multi-faceted role of the principal as the akonga engage in deep dialogue about current and future leadership practice in New Zealand schools. Another aspiring principal described the power of the connected community in working towards



Create shade and shelter for your students



Pinehurst School



St John's School Mairangi Bay



Sunnybrae Normal School



Fresco Shades have custom designed outdoor canopies for Auckland schools and preschools for 16 years.

A Fresco canopy provides sun and rain protection for students and staff alike.

Key benefits:

- Extend your usable space
- Shade in summer and sheltered areas for students all year round
- Keep classrooms cooler in summer and increase productivity!
- Strong PVC roof blocks 99% of all UV rays
- Modern curved shape enhances any environment
- Great for pools, walkways, entrances and school shops
- Make your school Sunsmart

We have many delighted customers in the educational sector, and would be happy to provide references on request.

For an obligation free quote, please call (09) 443 3414 or 0800 Fresco (0800 373 726) Please ask for Grant or Tony.

moral purpose for equity in this way:

‘What a journey so far – It’s been like hopping into a river in a canoe in the calm and then finding there are unanticipated white waters and rapids and falls . . . thankfully finding others in canoes paddling as hard as I was, and crashing against the occasional rock wall, has helped and connections with some amazing other aspiring leaders of learning has been supportive and affirming.’

Aspiring Principal, 2013

Why should we be talking a lot more about moral purpose for equity in schools? Educational leadership is all about the challenges and dilemmas of natural justice and fairness. Meira Levinson from Harvard University stated ‘A lot of everyday quandaries educators and policymakers face are dilemmas of educational justice, but we don’t support or even acknowledge their struggle to address these challenges and make ethical decisions,’ (Anderson, 2015). The injustices in education should be the drivers of our leadership practice. The injustices of difference in the quality of teaching within and between schools; the differences in resourcing between schools in New Zealand (Yes it is an injustice if you are in a well-resourced school and the school down the road is struggling for resources); the amount of time we give particular subject areas; the amount of knowledge in our curriculum of Te Ao Māori; the depth of partnership with iwi and community; the poverty in our communities; how well teachers’ pedagogies are in keeping with the needs of 21st century learning; the difference in quality of educational leadership between schools; the difference in academic performance between schools. And yes – it is an injustice if your actions adversely affect the wellbeing and education of students in other schools around you.

I could keep listing the injustices in our education system – but more importantly, is that leaders and teachers in our staffrooms in schools around Aotearoa New Zealand are uncovering, surfacing, acknowledging and talking about the injustices in their own regions and how they might work together with other schools to ameliorate them.

This leads us back to my first questions, and it calls us to account on what and how much difference we are really wanting to make as educators in New Zealand. Can we move from being part of the current problem to develop a new mindset and mobilise our courage to address and lead transformative change and become part of a solution?

Sir Peter Williams QC – an active and fearless campaigner for human rights and social justice in New Zealand – poignantly stated in his final year of life ‘The river of injustice has flowed since the beginning of time and will continue to flow forever. Your job will be to reduce its number of victims.’ (Chisholm, 2014).

We have to ask ourselves, is our current educational leadership practice in New Zealand education creating more victims or reducing the number of victims?

I believe this question is the greatest challenge for educational leadership in New Zealand. As Beatriz Pont from the OECD said in September last year at the leadership seminar in Zug, Switzerland, although many countries have the policies of social justice – they need further investment in developing leaders with the right skills and disposition for a moral purpose for equity and quality with the agency to lead transformative change for fairness.

The Education Council commissioned five Think-pieces

(Education Council, 2015) on the future of educational leadership in New Zealand and have developed a discussion paper for future direction for the leadership of communities of learning. The new Centre for Leadership Excellence established by the Education Council will be working to support and develop those principals who have stepped up into the system leadership roles of the Communities of Learning. Mason Durie, in his Think-piece, called for collective leadership focused on a loyalty to students:

*E hara taku toa I te toa takatahi*

*Engari I te toa takatini*

*My success should not be mine alone: it was not individual success but the success of a collective.*

Will these leaders in Communities of Learning be able to lead beyond their own school gates to create the new knowledge and capacity building with other leaders that will be needed to address their regional challenges? If they have the disposition to learn the way with their colleagues and lead together with a strong moral purpose for equity and justice their educational leadership *will* make the difference needed in New Zealand education today. What would education look like if systems were designed to be truly just?

#### REFERENCES:

- ACEL Robertson Keynote Slides Retrieved 8 April 2016 from: <http://www.acele.org.au/acele/docs/Events/Conference%202015%20Presentations/Keynote/Jan%20Robertson%202015.pdf>
- ACEL Robertson Keynote Video (partial): Retrieved 8 April 2016 from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpRdX6bCGfs>
- Anderson, J. (2014). *Getting to the root of educational injustice*. Retrieved from <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/14/07/getting-root-educational-injustice>
- Chisholm, D. (2014). The final verdict. *New Zealand Listener*, 25th September, 2014. Retrieved online 8 April 2016 from <http://www.listener.co.nz/current-affairs/profile/the-final-verdict/>
- Degenhardt, L., & Duignan, P. (2010). *Dancing on a shifting carpet: Reinventing traditional schooling for the 21st century*. Camberwell: ACER Press.
- Earl, L. & Robertson, J. (2013). *Leadership learning: Insights from the National Aspiring Principals’ Programme*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Education Council (2015). *Think-pieces*. Retrieved 12 March 2016 from <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/Five%20Think%20pieces.pdf>
- Education Council (2015). *Discussion papers on Leadership for Communities of Learning*. Retrieved 12 March 2016 from [https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/Discussion%20paper\\_leadership\\_web.pdf](https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/Discussion%20paper_leadership_web.pdf)
- Robertson, J. (2016). *Coaching leadership: Building educational leadership capacity through partnership*. (Second Edition). Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Robertson, J. & Earl, L. (2014). Leadership Learning: Aspiring principals developing the dispositions that count. *Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice*, 29(2), 3-17.

