



President's Comment 19

23rd June 2010

Dear Colleagues

ERO Differentiated Review Cycle Indicates Wider Systemic Issues

I believe it is of concern that in the last year 20% of schools were placed on a 1-2 year review cycle. While not excusing that Principal performance and leadership is a major contributing factor it does point to systemic issues which need to be addressed.

Carol Anderson, in 'New Zealand Principal' (June 2010 Vol 2 No 2) summarized the results of a nationwide survey last June, 'the Principal's experience of the Board as employer'.

While most Principals found boards supportive of them as employer, the survey revealed concerning data including:

- In the case of the small, rural, low decile school categories around 70% of respondents said the Principal performed most governance tasks. As Carol Anderson noted, this has significant implications for Principal workload.
- 50% of all school boards are willing and supportive but simply do not have the time or the confidence to ensure that key governance tasks (particularly in relation to strategic management and monitoring) are performed.
- 65% of all schools thought it was the Principal who managed risk, including legal.
- 24% of Secondary Principals said that the Principal decided financial priorities, including property.

The above data adds considerable weight to the two views we have consistently received from Principals in the current Collective Agreement Negotiations "Is the job doable?" and "Is it normal to be working 60-70 hours a week?"

Clearly the architects of the Tomorrow's School regime did not foresee this imbalance in workload and responsibility between Principals and Boards. The situation is made worse by a demand that Principals refocus as leaders of learning (where it should be) while at the same time increasing compliance and reducing resources.

The only glimmer of hope in all of this is that ERO is trialing an approach that partners with schools on a 1-2 year review cycles, giving advice, establishing milestones and linking with other agencies. There is a little merit in clobbering a school with a poor review, casting them adrift for a year or two and returning to do the same thing again.

Previous Comments

Comment 18 - 17.06.10

Review of the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions, Professional Supervision for Principals, Secondary School Principals Collective Claim, President's Availability for Regional Meetings.

Comment 17 - 10.06.10

Neita Regional Teaching & Leadership Awards, Joining the Dots - An Imperative for the MOE, Effective School Leadership, The Paradox of Principalship.

Comment 16 - 03.06.10

Leaders of Learning Profile, Effective Teaching Profile, Lockdown Procedures, School Leadership, Restricted Entry to Universities.

Comment 15 - 27.05.10

May Budget, Updates - Compliance Costs, Search & Seizure, Initial Teacher Education, Homework, New BOT.

Contact Us

PO Box 11541
Elliesslie Auckland 1542

Phone: 09 571 2233
Fax: 09 571 2244

Email: office@spanz.school.nz
www.spanz.school.nz

Increasingly, there are calls from researchers, educators and professional organizations for a full and honest review of 'Tomorrow's Schools'. The evidence is mounting that for at least a significant minority of schools, there has to be a better way of governing and managing schools. It should include a review of the role and expectations of Principals. One of the respondents in the research put it well,

"Should there be a proper nationwide review? The way the system is described and the way it works in practice in many schools is completely different".

NB: Full report, including graphs and Principals comments can be found at www.sgsl.co.nz or NZPF website.

Observable Characteristics of Effective Teachers!

Begins class promptly and in a well-organised way

- Treats students with respect and care
- Provides the significance/ importance of information to be learned
- Provides clear explanations
- Holds attention and respect of students and practices effective classroom management
- Uses active hands-on student learning
- Varies instructional techniques

Search and Seizure

Richard Harrison and Gretchen Stone of Harrison and Stone, SPANZ lawyers, have provided a brief policy on search and seizure which is attached to this President's Comment. We hope to get clearer guidelines from the Ministry of Education in due course.

Useful Information for Beginning Principals

- Most of the people in your community are intelligent, decent, sincere individuals; the others are usually elected to your Board;
- The teacher who does the least, complains the most;
- When a problem student moves away from your school, two problem students will move in;
- The first student you suspend will have parents who are lawyers;
- The day, before you are about to go on your long overdue holiday, there will be a major drugs bust in the school;
- You will discover that the most irritating and complaining of parents will live in the same street as you.

Kind regards



Patrick Walsh
President