



SPANZ

SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INC.

Secretariat Address

P O Box 11541, Ellerslie Auckland 1542
Phone: 09 571 2233: Fax: 09 571 2244
Email: office@spanz.school.nz



Thursday 22nd May 2008

President's Comment 13

Dear Colleagues

Michael Fullan, in his book "*What's Worth Fighting For in the Principalship?*" describes a condition he terms *INITIATIVITIS* as "*the tendency to launch an endless stream of disconnected innovations that no-one could possibly manage*". *Initiativitis* has been diagnosed in the educational systems of the United States, Canada and England, and here in New Zealand we have been infected with a pretty bad dose of it in recent years and there is possibly more to come.

Here is a list of current ministry led initiatives (some may call them pathogens) that we may be involved with in our schools.

- Assessment Strategy
- Aspiring Principals' Programme.
- Better Outcomes for Children (Special Education)
- Digital Strategy
- Education for Enterprise
- ENROL
- Extending Higher Standards
- First Time Principals
- Ka Hikitia
- Kiwi Leadership for Principals
- Mission On
- Numeracy Project
- Pasifika Education Plan
- Pandemic Plan
- Personalising Learning
- Property Handbook
- School Improvement Initiative
- School Strategy
- Schools Plus
- Secondary Futures
- Student Engagement Initiative

The list is by no means exhaustive and should be considered along with other compliance requirements of our jobs. You will, of course, have the glossy publications on each of these readily available in your office and have kept your board and staff informed of how your school is positioned with regards each of them...

The issue isn't so much the requirement by schools to implement government initiatives – we expect that to happen. Rather it is the sheer number of initiatives, lack of coherence, increasing compliance placed on schools and lack of resourcing to meet expectations that causes angst and cynicism.

In his time as Minister of Education, Steve Maharay attempted to bring some coherence to the system using 'personalising learning' as an overarching vision type statement that other initiatives were aligned to. However personalising learning seems to have now fallen off the radar or, to keep the metaphor going, it has been taken from the operation table.

Michael Fullan sums things up nicely when he states:

“The politics of the day seem to conspire to produce periodic shifts that are either aimless or, more often, divorced from current or previous priorities. Successful systems focus on a small number of critical, ambitious goals, and then stay the course.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Gall". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter Gall
SPANZ President