



SPANZ

SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INC.



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President's Comment 6

Dear Colleagues

The latest edition of the NZSTA publication, *STA News*, refers to a September 2007 report by McKinsey & Company – *How the World's Best-Performing School Systems Come Out on Top*. The report makes for interesting reading and can be accessed via the NZSTA website at www.nzsta.org.nz

Despite there being striking differences in the structure and governance systems between the selected countries, the fundamental similarities in those with a high performing school system were linked strongly to the quality of their professional staff. The high performers consistently do three things well:

- They get the right people to become teachers.
- They develop these people into effective instructors.
- They put in place systems and targeted support to ensure every child is able to benefit from excellent instruction.

Developing principals as instructional leaders is also identified as being a major influence "...to help teachers improve instruction, create awareness of weaknesses in their practice, provide them with a precise knowledge of best practice and motivate them to make the necessary improvements". The report affirms research on school leadership that links student achievement improvement to strong leadership and effective systems do the following in that regard:

- They get the right teachers to become principals.
- They develop instructional leadership skills in their principals.
- They focus each principal's time on instructional leadership.

The notion that to make a significant positive difference in a school relies on 'the people not the programme' resonates with Todd Whittaker's work and is hardly surprising.

And so, are we doing enough in New Zealand to get the right sort of people into the teaching profession? As principals of our schools could or should we perhaps be doing more to encourage our best and brightest students into a teaching career?

New Zealand was one of the countries referenced in the report. Some interesting comparisons can be made between the McKinsey & Co report and work underway here, such as Kiwi Leadership for Principals, Initial Teacher Education Review and the Stocktake of School Governance.

It will be interesting to what extent the findings of the McKinsey & Co report find their way into education policy in New Zealand.

Reminder! We have a good number attending our symposium in Nelson from 30 March to 2 April. It is not too late to register and if you have misplaced information on the symposium it is readily available from our website – www.spanz.school.nz

Regards

Peter Gall
SPANZ President