



# SPANZ

SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INC.

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**President**  
Graham Young  
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Thursday, 16 November 2006

## President's Comment 35

Dear Colleague

### School Leadership

*All the Ministry of Education funded principal development initiatives (the First Time Principals' Induction Programme (FTP), the Principals' Development and Planning Centre (PDPC), and Lead Space) have recently been re-oriented so that they have a stronger focus on leadership of learning and showing evidence of their impact on teaching and learning.*

*Beyond this the New Zealand government is currently considering a range of options to further strengthen professional leadership in schools. Underpinning the choice of any policy options within education in New Zealand is a fundamental question – 'What is the appropriate role of the state in strengthening the provision of education in a self-managing schools environment?'*

*A number of stakeholders, including SPANZ, show no enthusiasm for moving away from the general principle of self-management to a more centralized model.*

*However, in the area of educational leadership, the New Zealand Government is persuaded by strong evidence that the quality of school leadership affects school outcomes (Watson cited in University of Waikato, 2005). It is committed to helping to provide targeted professional learning opportunities so that experienced teachers develop the skills, knowledge and attributes that will enable them to take up school leadership positions with confidence. In early 2006 the New Zealand Minister of Education announced a series of priorities to guide educational thinking and policy making for the next decade. One of these priorities is for all schools to have 'strong professional leadership'.*

### Aspiring Principals

The Ministry of Education's Principals' Reference Group, which has previously given advice around FTP and the PDPC, has shifted its focus to working on a "kiwi" leadership framework and to developing Aspiring Principals. Like the rest of the developed world, New Zealand is forecasting a looming crisis with respect to candidates for future principals' positions.

*There are serious concerns about the supply of school leaders in New Zealand. NZCER shows that only small proportions of secondary teachers expressed interest in becoming principals in the future.*

*Research conducted by NZCER in 2003 indicated that only 8% of secondary teachers were interested in becoming principals in the future, and a further 8% were unsure about their degree of interest, leaving 83% of secondary teachers who had no interest in becoming principals.*

*Schools have a high degree of autonomy over how leadership positions in schools are configured. This has resulted in the loss of standard management structures and clear pathways along which teachers move and gain experience before becoming school leaders. Many schools tend to have adopted flattened management structures that provide scant opportunity for middle management experience.*

*Of some concern is Brooking's 2005 suggestion that in future central government may need to intervene in the principal appointment process more than it has in the past if this inequity is to be readdressed.*

*There may also be a need to examine the principal appointment process. This may require a new provision that boards require a professional adviser when making a principal appointment, with the adviser having a right of veto.*

Source: OECD Draft Background Report New Zealand 'Improving School Leadership' June 2006

I may well expand on other aspects of this report in a future President's Comment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Young', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Graham Young  
**President**  
**Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand**