PRINCIPALSHIP AND POLICY
IN SMALL
NEW ZEALAND
PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Graham J. Collins

CANDIDATE’S DECLARATION FORM

I am the author of the thesis entitled Principalship and Policy in Small New Zealand Primary Schools, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

I confirm that this work is my own, except where reference is made to the work of others and due acknowledgement has been made. Any material in the thesis which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by any institution is identified in the text.

Full name: Graham James Collins

_____________________________________________ __________________________
Candidate Signature      Date
Abstract of Thesis for Examination

This research investigates the relationship between principalship and policy in small New Zealand primary schools. A distinctive feature of small primary schools is that their principals typically have to teach as well as manage. Overseas research indicates that in times of educational reform, teaching principals face particular difficulty and may need special support. Following the watershed educational reforms of 1989 and a decade of ‘hands-off’ policy in education (1989-1999), central policy towards school support in New Zealand is now more ‘hands-on’. The impact of this policy change on small schools has not been researched in New Zealand, where such schools make up over fifty percent of all primary schools.

The aims of this study are to analyse the impact of current support policy in New Zealand on small primary school principalship, and to evaluate the extent to which policy adjustment might be needed in the future. Using multiple methods and a case study approach to gather data, the study focuses on small school principalship in one New Zealand region – the Central Districts region. It also considers the recent policy initiatives, their rationale and the extent to which they appear to be meeting the support needs reported by the principals whose work has been researched in the study.

Broadly, the study has found that within small schools, the role-balance within a teaching principal’s work is a critical factor, as the ratio within the principal’s role-balance between the teaching role and the management role creates variation in work-demands, work-strategies and types of support needed. Teaching principals in New Zealand generally feel better supported now than they did in the 1990s and the study identifies factors associated with this change. However the analysis in this study suggests that the current policy aim to both rationalise and strengthen the small school network as a whole is rather problematic. Without better targeted support policy in this area, old style parochial and competitive attitudes between schools are unlikely to change in the future.
Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of a good number of people.

My supervisor Professor Richard Bates provided particular assistance in framing the study at the end of the Colloquium stage, and in keeping it focused during the writing up stage. The six months that I spent at Deakin University writing up, with Richard in the next office, were one of the most productive and satisfying periods in my professional life.

This time was especially valuable because my wife Keren Brooking was also at Deakin University writing up her thesis at the same time and we shared the experience of trying to turn a mass of data into a relatively coherent research report. Our extended discussions clarified many issues. Keren’s loving support made finishing ‘the beast’ always seem possible.

A number of colleagues at Massey University have assisted in various ways that are acknowledged in the text – Professor John Codd, Professor Richard Harker, Prue Kyle, Tim White. Colleagues from the School Advisory Service assisted with interview selections. I have also had expert technical assistance from a number of people – Tracey Beattie-Pinfeld (who laid out all the tables and figures and corrected the final drafts); Philippa Butler (who aggregated all the statistical data and provided an expert final edit); and Jude Tait (who transcribed the individual interviews).

The breadth of the study’s findings would not have been possible without the co-operation of the various research participants, in particular the sixteen teaching principals and the six policy officials whose work and ideas are analysed in Chapters 5 and 6. In particular I appreciated the rapid clearing and return of interview transcripts by these 22 major research participants.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title Page</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate’s Statement</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preamble</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Initial Introductions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing the Research and the Researcher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing the Research Setting and its General Bearing on the Study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing Some Recent New Zealand Policy Development</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Principalship and Small School Principalship</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principalship</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small School Principalship</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Policy for Small Schools and Policy for Principal Development</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Policy Analysis</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small School Policy</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Development Policy</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Research Problem, Methodology and Research Design</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Research Problem, Aims and Questions</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on Methodology</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on Research Design</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A Continuum of the Degree of Devolution in Selected Educational Systems</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>A Template of Key Organisational Features in the Job of Principalship</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>A Template for Analysing Professional Approaches of Principals</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>A Template of Indicators for Market and Democratic Approaches to Accountability</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>A Template for Examining Small School Principalship</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>A Three Level Conception of Policy Ideology using the Example of Assessment</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>A Materialist Conception of the Policy Text</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>A Technical-Rationalist Conception of Policy Analysis</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Comparative Views on Contribution of Small School Head/Principal to School Quality</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>A Template for Analysing Small School Policy</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Two Principal Career Pathways</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>A Template for Analysing Views on Principal Development</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Where Specific Activities Fall on the Principal Development Grid</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Creswell’s Research Problem and Study Matches</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Analysis of the Research Problem</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Gillham’s Sources for Research Evidence</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Nature of Evidence Sought to Answer Research Questions Posed in this Study</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Marshall and Rossman’s Research Strategy and Study Match</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>A Continuum of Qualitative Data Analysis Strategies</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Marshall and Rossman’s Data Gathering/Analysis Range</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>The Research Strategy and Sampling Decisions</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Project Plan for 2002/2003</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Triangulation in Principalship Data-Set</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Triangulation in Policy Data-Set</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Small School Policy Texts</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Small School Elite Interviews</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Focus Group Responses: Situation and Suggestions</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Principal Development Policy Texts</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Principal Development Elite Interviews</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Focus Group Responses: Reaction to Principal Development Initiatives</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Variation in Professional-Career Strategies</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Variation in External Strategies</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Principal Role and Support Need</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Professional-Career Belief/Value Sets</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Internal and External Community-Building Strategies</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hay Group Findings on Comparative Competencies of Novice and Experienced Principals</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>The Problem - Theory Match in This Study</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Analysis of Twenty Five Small School Head/Principal Studies</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Hayes’ Hopes and Realities in Teaching Heads’ Work</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Distribution of Smaller Primary Schools in New Zealand and the Central Districts</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Questionnaire Respondent Breakdown</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Use of Time: Release Time</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Use of Time: Time Outside Term Time</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Reasons for Becoming Teaching Principal</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Overall Rating of Experience of Teaching Principalship</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Current Motivation</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Future Aspirations</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>Type/Value of Pre-Principal Training</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>Type/Value of Support Since Current Appointment</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>Desired Changes to Improve Position of Teaching Principals</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>Qualities Expected for School Success</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>Qualities Expected for Principalship Success</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>Interviewee Breakdown</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>Principal Situation, Strategies and Plans (Novices)</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>Principal Situation, Strategies and Plans (Mid – Experienced)</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>Principal Situation, Strategies and Plans (Seniors)</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>Classification of Leadership Strategies of small school principals in New Zealand</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>Classification of Leadership Strategies in this Study</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Community/Neighbouring School Strategies reported by interviewees</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Recent/Present Personal Supports of Interviewees</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Current Impact of Principal Development Policy</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Community/Neighbouring School Strategies reported by interviewees</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Comparison with Results in Earlier Principalship Studies</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Comparison with Results in Earlier Policy Studies</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Variation in Personal-Professional Strategies</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preamble

This study is about the relationship between principalship and policy in small New Zealand primary schools. To make the study manageable by a single researcher, a case study approach has been adopted, with the data in the study largely being drawn from cases of principalship and policy impact in small schools in New Zealand’s Central Districts region. For the purposes of focusing the study, the major aspect of principalship dealt with in this study is the work strategies and associated thinking of the study participants.

Similarly, the focus on policy in the study is on recent principal development and small school support policy in New Zealand. The study aims to explore the present pattern of relations between principalship and policy with the hope that analysis will allow reasonable conclusions to be drawn about a more appropriate future policy arrangement.

Following this preamble there are seven chapters and an endnote. An outline of the contents of these is below.

Chapter 1       Initial Introductions
Chapter 2       Principalship and Small School Principalship
Chapter 3       Policy for Small Schools and Policy for Principal Development
Chapter 4       The Research Problem, Methodology and Research Design
Chapter 5       Findings About Principalship
Chapter 6       Policy Findings
Chapter 7       Conclusions
Endnote         Results of Rural Forum

The appendices to this thesis provide primary evidence to support some of the key statements made about aspects of the study in the body of the text.
This chapter provides an initial introduction to the study. It examines three foundational elements of the study:

1. Introducing the research and the researcher.
2. Introducing the research setting and its bearing on the study.
3. Introducing some recent New Zealand policy development relevant to the study.

The chapter concludes with a brief look at some relevant demographic data for the New Zealand primary school setting, and with a recapitulation of the key policy issues that will be examined in the study.

1. INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH AND THE RESEARCHER

This first part of the chapter outlines the research focus and introduces the researcher. It explains what the research is about, why it is important for New Zealand education at present, and how I have come to be doing it.

a) The General Focus of the Study

(i) Some Recent Educational History and its Influence on the Study

Small primary schools were a dominant organisational feature of most Western education systems in the nineteenth century. However, over the first part of the twentieth century average school sizes grew in most Western systems and the proportion of smaller to larger primary schools within each system generally dropped dramatically (UNESCO, 1972, p. 56-57). Today New Zealand is one of the few Western education systems where the majority of primary schools remain small (ERO, 1999a, p. 46). In most other Western educational systems the proportion of small schools has dropped because of
the combination of two factors – urbanisation and consolidation (OECD, 1983, p. 35-36). As New Zealand is also highly urbanised (Chittenden, 2002, p. 26-27), the preservation of the network of small schools from the early days of the twentieth century to recent times is usually explained by New Zealand educational analysts in political terms – in particular, as an indication of the influence of the farming vote on politicians in a society with an economy still largely dependent on primary production (McLaren, 1974, p. 66). However in the last fifteen or twenty years the New Zealand economy has diversified significantly (Belich, 2001, p. 453). It is therefore not surprising that in the last ten or so years the possibility of rationalising the New Zealand small primary school network has been repeatedly raised in the New Zealand news media (see Appendix 1). This possibility is the contextual factor which has had the predominant influence on the findings in this study.

(ii) A Cross-cutting Current Educational Issue

New Zealand is a small country (with a total population of just over four million) and it has a relatively small primary school system (with a total of roughly 2,200 primary schools throughout the country). Since 1877, when provinces were abolished and a relatively centralised administration system was introduced for primary education, a persistent issue within New Zealand education has been the extent to which policy for education is determined at the centre or is devolved to local communities (Codd, 1990). The central educational issue with which this thesis is concerned – the issue of what state policy for principalship in small New Zealand primary schools should be – is located within the current debate in New Zealand about this persistent larger issue. In particular, the study examines the issue of how far the state should involve itself in principal development, or how far this is an individual responsibility. As principalship in small schools has been the first step in the traditional career path for principals in New Zealand (Nash, 1980), the possibility of rationalising the small school network, as discussed above, may have an unintended counter-influence here by limiting future career opportunities for aspiring principals.
The Particular Focus of the Study

This study examines the relationship between principalship and policy in small New Zealand primary schools. As has already been indicated, since colonial times small primary schools have remained an important part of the New Zealand primary schooling system. Sixty percent of all New Zealand primary schools currently have a roll of less than 200, and, in the self-managing administrative environment that was initiated for all New Zealand schools following a major restructuring of educational administration in 1989, many smaller schools experienced a high degree of initial stress (Robertson, 1991). Much of this stress arose from the dual role of the ‘teaching principal’ in small schools and their efforts to try to maintain quality in their teaching, and at the same time respond to the new administrative and managerial demands arising from self-management (Wylie, 1997a). In the first half of the 1990s, teaching principals in New Zealand faced both a range of new administrative responsibilities and a sweeping curriculum reform process. In the second half of the 1990s, as workloads remained much higher for teaching principals than for other principals, their job dissatisfaction rose and principal turnover increased (Whittall, 2002).

Starting in 2001, the New Zealand Ministry of Education has initiated a number of initiatives to try to alleviate some of the strains arising from the first decade of self-management. Some of these initiatives have focused on small schools, others have had principalship as their focus. The impact of these initiatives have not yet been studied in any detail and there seems to be little official concern about the possible policy cross-cutting described briefly above.

This study looks in particular at the impact of recent support policy on the work-strategies and general attitude of teaching principals in one region of New Zealand (the Central Districts region). It also considers the recent policy initiatives, their rationale and the extent to which they appear to be meeting the needs reported by the principals whose work has been researched in this study.
b) Background of the Researcher

(i) Initial Contacts

The genesis for the focus of the study can be traced to contacts I made in England in September 2000 with English researchers on principalship, Geoff Southworth and Gerald Grace. Both suggested that examining principalship in small schools was a much under-researched aspect and could do with a major study, especially in a schooling system such as New Zealand’s, where the majority of schools are in fact small schools. Southworth was concluding such a study in England and was interested in the extent to which his findings were replicated in the New Zealand environment. Grace, who had worked in New Zealand earlier in the 1990s, mentioned that in his most recent research English secondary principals were re-engaging much more than they had earlier in the 1990s with the teaching aspect of their role, with many attempting to teach for at least a small part of each day. In addition Grace suggested that any such study also needed to examine the policy environment and how it was influencing the practice of principalship in small schools. Following these contacts I visited Deakin University and began the process of enrolling in a Ph.D., with a focus on small school principalship in the New Zealand policy setting.

(ii) Personal Rationale

I currently work at Massey University College of Education in Palmerston North, the largest city in New Zealand’s Central Districts. The Central Districts region is the region in the lower half of the North Island of New Zealand, north of Wellington.

My interest in small New Zealand primary schools was heightened early in 1998 when, following the unexpected departure of another member of the College of Education who had previously been doing the job, I was asked to take over the co-ordination of the Massey University College of Education’s School Administration Support Cluster (SASC) programme. This programme aimed to reduce the workload of principals in small primary schools by
encouraging inter-school co-operation in various administration aspects. Through 1999 and 2000 I travelled extensively talking to principals about their work and how it could be made more efficient. I gave up my role in SASC only in 2001 when my Ph.D. work began to gather momentum.

I came to be interested in doing a Ph.D. for instrumental (rather than altruistic) reasons. I have worked at the College of Education in Palmerston North, New Zealand, since the start of 1986. Until the end of 1997 this was a stand-alone teacher education institution, but at the start of 1998 the old College was merged into Massey University. As a result of the merger all former College staff with less than a Doctorate have been expected to work at upgrading their qualifications within the next five years. My visit to England, as well as trips to the United States, Canada and Australia in 2000, was an attempt on my behalf to try to find the inspiration needed for the job ahead.

(iii) Interest in Principalship

I first became interested in the role of principalship in New Zealand in the late 1980s. At that time plans for the restructuring of New Zealand’s educational administration structure had just been announced and I was asked to co-ordinate a new programme, called the Effective Principalship programme, to try to help principals of the day prepare for the new responsibilities that they would assume in the changing policy environment. Between 1988 and 1992 this programme was completed by approximately 600 principals. From 1993 to 1998 my major work involved directing contracts won by the Palmerston North College of Education from the Ministry of Education to help prepare both teachers and school managers for various new thrusts in the reforms, mainly new curriculum and accountability requirements. Following the merger with the University I became a Lecturer in Social and Policy Studies. Since 1999 I have taught in the pre-service programme and also developed two new post-graduate papers for the university’s M.Ed.Admin. programme. One of these papers, called Professional Leadership in Educational Contexts, was offered for the first time in 2001 and deals with some of the themes of this study.
Research Experience and Positioning of Researcher

Despite the title of university lecturer, I must admit that in matters to do with research I am a relative novice. In completing my Masters degree, I choose a one paper research project over the four paper thesis option. By the end of 2002 I had still not published in a refereed journal, even as co-writer with a more experienced colleague.

In undertaking this research I have chosen to adopt a multi-method approach. This has meant that the findings of the study are not exclusively reliant on either quantitative or qualitative expertise.

The positioning of the researcher in the research will be picked up again in Chapters 2 and 3. In Chapter 2 I will discuss my theoretical positioning with regard to principalship. In Chapter 3 I will discuss my methodological positioning with regard to policy analysis. I should also declare at this early stage two points of minor pecuniary interest in the matters discussed later in this chapter. As already outlined, between the start of 1998 and the end of 2000 I directed the pilot of the SASC programme in the Central Districts region - see page 23. In July, 2001, with a number of colleagues, I was an unsuccessful bidder for the research contract won by the Hay Group - see page 25.

c) Major Themes of the Study

This study seeks to investigate the relationship between principalship and policy in small New Zealand primary schools. To help orientate the reader I will attempt here to give an initial indication of the scope of the investigation that follows. The study has four major themes.

(i) Theme One: Degree of Current Strain.

The focus on the role of small school principals in the study is especially important in New Zealand because of its high proportion of small schools. Over 50% of all primary schools in New Zealand have a roll less than 180 (that is, they are ‘small’ schools) and more than 20% of New Zealand primary schools have a roll less than 50 (that is, they are ‘smaller’ small schools). About three quarters of all these small schools are in rural areas. In most of
these small schools the principal has responsibility for teaching a class for a proportion of each week, as well as having responsibility for school management. In New Zealand the shorthand reference term for such a principal, with the dual role of teacher and school manager, is ‘teaching principal’. The little research that has been previously done on teaching principals in small school settings in New Zealand paints a rather gloomy picture of principalship in these settings - principals in small schools have to work harder, are under more strain and generally perform worse than principals in other settings (for example ERO, 1999a; Livingstone, 1999). Most of this research was carried out in the 1990s, at a time when the ‘encouraging competition’ and ‘hands-off’ policies of the state towards self-managing schools were at their height (R. Bates, 1990). In the last two or three years the state has assumed a much more supportive role towards schools (Codd, 2002), so I believe that the reality in New Zealand currently may be somewhat different to what it was four or five years ago. However, at this stage there is no definitive research to support or refute my hunch. Because of this gap in our knowledge, in this study I survey all teaching principals of small schools in one New Zealand region, (the Central Districts region), to ascertain the current degrees of strain and satisfaction in their work.

(ii) Theme Two: Strategies for Principalship Success.

A second major theme in the study relates to the ideas that the participants have about the strategies that may have contributed to their principalship success. Recent literature, both from the United States and England, points to the importance of certain strategy-frames for principalship success in a system where policy is either emphasising school reform, (the United States), or devolution (England). This literature includes, for example, Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Grace, 1995; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999; Hay McBer, 2000. In the last fifteen years educational policy in New Zealand has stressed both devolution and school reform, so principalship strategies are likely to be important for school improvement across the system. It is also important that in New Zealand we know more about the present strategies of small school principals across a range of school settings, especially if we are
planning a principal development approach that will start by connecting to the real ideas and ‘lifeworld’ of principals in different school settings. While we have some general research findings on the strategies of primary principals in New Zealand (Wylie, 1997b), as yet we know very little about how principalship may differ in ‘smaller’ and ‘larger’ small school settings. Because of this gap in our knowledge, in this study I investigate the strategies and associated thinking of sixteen successful small school principals from a variety of school sizes and settings.

(iii) Theme Three: Policy Evolution and Policy Consistency.

A third major theme in the study concerns the recent evolution of educational policy in New Zealand and its impact on small school principalship. The study starts by exploring three premises about the recent policy environment for New Zealand primary school principalship generally:

1. That the ‘self-managing’ policy environment of the first ten years after the reforms (1989-1999) affected primary school principalship in different ways - principals in some school settings thrived while principals in other settings struggled. In comparison to principals in other settings, teaching principals (that is, principals of smaller schools), were the most adversely affected.

2. That there was a significant shift in the policy environment influencing New Zealand primary schools following the election of a Labour dominated coalition government at the end of 1999.

3. That after 2000 the state played a much more active role in trying to support and influence principalship than it had in the previous decade, particularly through a recent principal development initiative.

The major plank in the current principal development initiative is a programme called the First Time Principals’ training programme (FTP), introduced in 2002. Because the majority of First Time Principals in any year are ‘teaching principals’, this new policy is likely to have a significant impact on principalship in small school settings. However there is little published as yet on the possible impact.
In addition to the generic policy for principal support and development, New Zealand also has a number of educational policies especially tailored for small and/or rural schools. Recent state policy for small school support can be summarised under two headings:

1. Strengthening for some small schools
2. Rationalisation for other small schools

Again, little has yet been published on the impact of these two small school support policies.

Given that they were developed at different times and presumably have somewhat different rationales, the extent to which there is consistency between the policies developed to support principalship generally and those developed to strengthen small schools in particular is a third major area for investigation in the study. In this study I use data from policy text analysis and policy elite interviews to investigate policy evolution and policy consistency.

(iv) Theme Four: Appropriateness of Current Policy for Teaching Principal Needs

Consideration of the first three themes, of principalship-strain, principalship-strategy and policy consistency, leads on to a fourth theme in the latter part of the study - that is, a theme about the extent to which present policies for principal development and small school development may be appropriate for current teaching principal needs. The study attempts to reach conclusions about the inter-relationship between the professional and personal strategies of teaching principals and the support needed in small schools. It also considers possible patterns in the interaction between central policy, principal - practice and the types of network strengthening appropriate or possible in small schools. Finally, the study considers whether there are any underlying patterns in principal beliefs and values that might have implications for future policy development. In the final part of this study I bring together data from the policy analysis and the principalship interviews to reach conclusions on these matters.
d) The Specific Focus and Overall Aims of the Study

(i) Specific Focus

In exploring the four themes identified above, the specific focus of the study is on the relationship between principalship and policy. The study has a particular focus on the dominant setting for principalship practice in New Zealand - the teaching principal setting. The study investigates the relationship between principalship and policies in small primary schools in one New Zealand region – the Central Districts region.

(ii) Overall Aims

The study has four overall aims:

1. To discover what the current work situation is for teaching principals and to explore the ways those factors previously reported as creating strain are currently managed in practice in their work;
2. To explore teaching principals’ ideas about the most appropriate types of strategy to use to deal with the major issues that they perceive need addressing, and how they see these strategies contributing to success;
3. To examine the rationale for the various support policy planks initiated over recent years (whether for small schools or for primary schools more generally) and to evaluate the extent to which they demonstrate internal consistency; and
4. On the basis of the answers to 1, 2 and 3, to evaluate the appropriateness of current policy for the emerging and potential future issues and needs of teaching principals in New Zealand primary schools.

In summary it is hoped that this study might be useful for informing both future policy direction and principalship practice in New Zealand, to the benefit of small school principals.
2. INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH SETTING AND ITS GENERAL BEARING ON THE STUDY

This second part of the chapter introduces the research setting and aspects of its recent history that have bearing on the study. In particular, the section outlines the impact of the 1989 administrative restructuring on primary schools and primary school principalship.

a) The Current Pattern of Primary Schooling in New Zealand

(i) School Classification

In the New Zealand educational system, primary schools are classified by the Ministry of Education (MOE) as being either ‘full primary’, ‘contributing primary’ or ‘intermediate’. In 2002, (the year in which the data for this study were collected), there were 2220 primary schools in New Zealand; around 1200 were ‘full primary’ schools (that is, years 1-8), 880 were ‘contributing’ primary schools (that is, years 1-6), and 140 were ‘intermediate’ schools (that is, years 7-8 only). Of the 2220 primary schools, 472 had a roll of less than 50, and another 400 had a roll between 50 and 99. About 60% of all schools had a roll of less than 200. Almost all small primary schools were classified as ‘full primary’ schools (MOE, 2002a).

(ii) The New Zealand School Administrative Restructuring, 1989

The shape of contemporary schooling in New Zealand derives from the watershed ‘Tomorrow’s Schools’ reforms, implemented at system and institutional level on 1 October 1989 (Lange, 1988). Before the administrative restructuring of 1989 New Zealand primary schools were supported by an ‘Education Board’ in each major district, staffed with an office of full-time administrators and professional support staff. By contrast, most secondary schools before 1989 already had their own Board of Governors (Butterworth & Butterworth, 1998, p. 84). The 1989 reforms, which eliminated all intermediate administrative and support structures and introduced an individual Board of Trustees for each school, can therefore be characterised as the extension of the
secondary school pattern of governance and management onto the primary sector (Barrington, 1990).

(iii) Locating the 1989 New Zealand Policy Setting

To appreciate the radical nature of the 1989 restructuring and the extent of decentralisation that occurred it may be useful to try to locate the New Zealand framework for local governance and management amongst a range of other systems that have experienced similar reform in the last ten to fifteen years.

Wylie (2002) is helpful here. In a paper presented at the NZARE conference in December 2002, Wylie compared New Zealand’s degree of devolution with that of a number of other ‘Anglo’ systems, using the following diagram (Figure 1)

The diagram distinguishes between those jurisdictions where the degree of devolution is optional (the top half of the diagram), and those where it is mandated (the bottom half of the diagram). The diagram also places all the named jurisdictions somewhere along a power-continuum, from systems where boards have ‘advisory’ power (at the left hand end) to systems where boards have ‘governing’ power (at the right hand end).

The diagram suggests that school managers and governors in New Zealand have greater powers now in determining or influencing policy than similar local agents in almost any other system, but approximately equal with England and Victoria. As the notion of ‘self-management’ that was popularised by Caldwell and Spinks (1988) was used as the basis for administrative restructuring in all three jurisdictions (Whitty, Power & Halpin, 1998), the similarity of the location on the right hand end of the continuum of England, Victoria and New Zealand is not altogether surprising.
Figure 1. A Continuum of the Degree of Devolution in Selected Educational Systems

(Wylie, 2002, p. 1)
Adjusting The Setting, 1990-1999

As in England and Victoria, the devolution of administrative responsibility in New Zealand was accompanied immediately afterwards with curriculum, assessment and accountability reforms driven from the centre (Levin, 2001). In New Zealand the curriculum reform began in 1993 and was completed in 2002. In essence a different learning area became the focus for each year of the reform (Butterworth & Butterworth, 1998, p. 214). Successive new or adjusted accountability requirements have been introduced in 1993, 1997, 1998 and 1999 (Fiske & Ladd, 2000, pp. 117-131).

A second feature of the policy environment for schooling in the 1990s shared by New Zealand, England and Victoria, relates to notions of parental choice and school competition (Angus, 1993). In New Zealand the major thrust towards these policy aims came in 1991-1992, as a result of the amendment to the Education Act 1989, proposed and passed in 1991 by the newly elected National government. This amendment provided for regulatory change that introduced ‘dezoning’, so that parents could enrol their child at any school, not just the nearest school; that increased the proportion of school funding allocated on a per-pupil basis and introduced an option for the direct resourcing of schools; and that increased the use of the news media to publicise comparative aspects of school performance (in New Zealand’s case, largely through the publication of periodic Education Review Office reports on the performance of each school) (Fiske & Ladd, 2000 pp. 135-136). However, by the end of 1999, New Zealand had not introduced national- or system-wide testing for primary students, even though a proposal for this was made by the Government in 1998 (MOE, 1998a).

The Impact of the Reforms, 1989-1999

(i) The Initial Impact of the Reforms on Primary Schools Generally

The impact of the reforms on New Zealand primary schools over the first decade was monitored on a regular basis by the New Zealand Council of Educational Research (Wylie, 1993, 1997a, 1999).
Initially, many primary schools struggled with their new powers (Wylie, 1993). However in her 1999 report, Wylie concluded that the governance changes had been largely accepted, despite the increased local administration and paperwork (1999, p. 108). Both teacher and principal workloads had jumped markedly as a result of the reforms, with principals by 1998 working an average of 60 hours per week, and teachers working an average of 51.5 hours per week (1999, p. 111). Despite this and the perception that the central agencies still had too much influence on local decision-making (1999, p. 193), the new partnerships that the administrative reforms created were seen as usually working well and for the benefits of students in particular schools (1999, p. 194).

(ii) The Impact of the Reforms on Principalship

The 1989 educational reforms in New Zealand transformed the role of the primary school principal. Wylie (1997b) provides an excellent source for a summary of the general pattern here.

Before 1989, according to Wylie, primary school principals regarded themselves as essentially instructional or educational leaders. The notion of principal as head teacher goes back to 1904, she reports, when the responsibility for student classification, assessment, and schemes of work in each school was shifted from the inspectorate to the head teacher. In the 1963 regulations for state primary schools, these remained the prime duties of head teachers, supplemented by the planning of timetables, staff meetings and planned staff conferences in association with teaching staff (Wylie, 1997b, p. 3).

The radical decentralisation policy of 1989 transformed the role of the primary principal through the specified devolution to each school of powers to manage operational funding, make property and planning decisions, and take responsibility for staff appointments and professional development. However, the 1989 legislation failed to make any mention of the principal as instructional or educational or professional leader. Instead Section 76 of the Education Act 1989 identified the principal as the school’s ‘chief executive officer’, in
relation to its control and management. The Act also stated that the principal was required to comply with their Board of Trustee’s general policy directions, but otherwise had complete discretion to manage the school’s day-to-day administration as he or she thought fit (Wylie, 1997b, p. 4).

By 1997 this designation of principal as chief-executive was having a multifaceted impact on principals’ ideas and work:

- Principals by 1997 still regarded ‘educational leadership’ as the most important part of their role. However, their actual work involved less direct teaching work or work with teachers than it used to. Much educational leadership work by now included guidance, advice, and motivation for the parents on the school’s Board of Trustees, as well as the more traditional role of work with the school’s teachers.
- Some aspects of administration were now being seen as part of educational leadership, particularly work relating to resourcing the school or supporting teachers. However, overall, administration work was competing with educational leadership for priority, and for most principals, was taking up more of their time.
- Although the pastoral aspects of the role had been largely ignored in earlier official descriptions, they were now seen as important by most principals, particularly those whose schools were serving low-income or rural communities.
- Management of the school’s roll, its reputation and its buildings and grounds were more central to most principals’ work and concerns than they were before decentralisation.
- Administrative work was increased substantially by decentralisation. Many schools felt they had been inadequately funded for this and so were unable to make provision for the principal to delegate this aspect of work, (as had been originally envisioned in the Tomorrow’s School report, Lange, 1988).
- Principal workloads had increased by an average of 10 hours a week since 1989.
Teaching principals were particularly hard pressed to balance the different aspects of their role and their average workloads were 5 hours a week more than non-teaching principals.

Although many principals had enjoyed the challenge and stimulus of decentralisation, only half described their morale as good. There were clear signs that the continued high and intensive workload was taking its toll on principals’ energy, and might be making the principalship less attractive to teachers.

Principals were able to give less time now to their own professional development than they were before 1989. There were clear signals of increasing interest from principals in some external support system for principals and aspiring school leaders (Wylie, 1997b, p. iii).

In her 1997 study Wylie also reported on the patterns of board – principal relationships suggested by her data (pp. 23-25). She indicated that four main types of board/principal interaction emerged when she analysed the principals’ descriptions of their relationship with their board.

(i) The “Supportive” Board. In these schools the principal was regarded as the professional leader and the board supported in other areas – e.g. property or finance. Often there was a close relationship between the principal and the board chair.

(ii) The “Heart in the Right Place, But” Board. In these schools the board wanted to do the right thing, but didn’t have the skills or knowledge to provide either governance or management support. As a result the principal had a broad-ranging management responsibility.

(iii) The “Reactive” Board. In these schools the board would let the principal do her/his thing for long periods of time, but periodically would ask for details or quiz the principal closely, just to show who was the boss.

(iv) The “Mistrustful” Board. This was a board who tried to run the school, or who had a ‘them’ and ‘us’ attitude towards the principal and/or staff.
Wylie noted that most of the boards described by the principals interviewed in her study fell into the first two types (Wylie, 1997b, p. 23).

(iii) Contextual Issues

A major factor impacting on the role of the principal in New Zealand schools by the late 1990s was socio-economic context. At its margins, primary schooling was becoming increasingly polarised, with a subsequent impact on the principal’s role that was sometimes positive and sometimes negative, depending on the socio-economic setting of the school for which s/he had responsibility. Wylie (1997a) gives an initial indication of some of the processes involved. Additional insights into this conjunction of contextual issues have been provided by the research of Thrupp (1999).

In looking at how well different principals had been able to balance various aspects of their role, Wylie found that resource provision was the key to the success of principals who had established a satisfactory role balance. Typically, such principals were non-teaching, with boards who undertook or oversaw most of the substantial property and financial work, and/or with an executive officer or secretary undertaking most of the day-to-day administration. However, in less affluent areas these benefits and services did not usually exist, largely because schools in such communities had less capacity to raise additional funding through school activities or donations (1997a, p. 11).

In looking at the impact of parental choice on school rolls and school size, she found that in rural areas small schools within easy driving distance of towns and cities were becoming more attractive to urban parents. Between 1991 and 1996, rolls in these schools had typically increased because they were perceived as offering smaller class sizes and having a more friendly, family oriented feel than the nearby suburban schools. However, outside the driving circle of urban areas the reverse pattern was more typical. Here there was usually a pattern of roll decrease, associated with rural economic stagnation and demographic decline (Wylie, 1997a, p. 34).
Thrupp (1999) examined the impact of choice policies on secondary schools in different types of New Zealand urban area. In his conclusion he suggested that his study showed how important ‘school mix’ was for school improvement in the current New Zealand urban context. He argued that before the introduction of the choice policy in New Zealand, almost all schools, no matter their socio-economic setting, had a ‘mix’ of pupils who were either ‘academically ambitious’, with aspiration for school success passed on from their parents; ‘coasters’, with little academic ambition; or the ‘easily influenced’, likely to be swayed by whichever of the first two groupings was predominant at any particular time. In this pre-choice educational context, he claimed, school improvement was a realistic possibility in almost all cases, using the self-evident strategy of holding up the model of the ‘academically ambitious’ to encourage the ‘easily influenced’ and then the ‘coasters’ to try harder and thus make academic ambition the predominant culture of the school. However, between 1991 and 1998, with school choice now being actively promoted, there had been an ‘upward shuffle’ in urban schools, with ambitious parents in all socio-economic areas looking to enrol their children in a higher rated socio-economic school than existed in the local community. The results were that school improvement possibilities increased in some schools, (the higher socio-economic ones), because of the increasing concentration of the academically ambitious in them; but decreased in others, (the lowest socio-economic ones), because of the increasing predominance of ‘coasters’ (Thrupp, 1999, pp. 178-193). Thrupp closed with the claim that in the lowest socio-economic urban schools, it was unrealistic now to expect school improvement without dramatic external intervention (1999, p. 194).

It is fair to conclude on the basis of this research that by 1999 contextual polarization was likely to be influencing the work of teachers and principals in both larger and smaller New Zealand primary schools in significant ways. Principalship in some settings was being made easier by the impact of the reforms, while principalship in some other settings was becoming more difficult. Principals in lower decile small schools in rural areas were likely to

---

1 All New Zealand schools are given a ‘decile’ rating between 1 and 10, according to the socio-economic mix of the area in which the school is located. One is the lowest rating and Ten is the highest. The decile rating is publicly available.
be experiencing a compounding negative effect from these various contextual factors.

3. INTRODUCING SOME RECENT NEW ZEALAND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This third part of the chapter summarises recent relevant policy evolution in New Zealand under two headings - small school policy and general support policy. It focuses in particular on the changes in policy direction which have occurred after the change of government in New Zealand at the end of 1999 from a National dominated (centre-right) coalition to a Labour dominated (centre-left) coalition.

a) Evolution of Small School Policy

(i) Up To The Mid 1980s

Up to the mid 1980s policy towards small schools in New Zealand was characterised by notions of benevolent support. In 1952 the New Zealand Department of Education claimed that “few countries, if any, have done more to place rural and urban children on the same footing as New Zealand; and this is, perhaps, New Zealand’s most notable educational achievement” (quoted in Nash, 1980, p. 6). In his 1980 review of primary education in rural New Zealand, Nash included a section called ‘special support systems for primary education in rural areas’. The support measures he noted included the following:

1. The country service bar – a restriction on the promotion of basic scale teachers until they had completed two years country service.
2. A special salary increment for remoteness, giving rural teachers a higher salary than the equivalent urban teacher.
3. The provision of subsidized school housing for the majority of rural teaching positions.
4. ‘Model’ country schools attached to training colleges where pre-service students could gain experience in multi-level teaching.
5. Rural advisors to assist young principals with both the teaching and administrative aspects of the job.
6. ‘Itinerant’ or peripatetic teachers for special subjects, especially music, art and Maori language.
7. Special library arrangements for the long term loan of books to small schools.
8. The provision of teachers’ centres in areas with a predominant number of small schools, to assist with in-service education for rural teachers.

(Nash, 1980, pp. 6-7)

(ii) The Early 1990s

Policy during the early 1990s could be characterised by a push, mainly for economic reasons, for rationalisation of the national network of small schools. Not only were key aspects of the benevolent support of the previous era removed, but active steps were taken to reduce the number of small schools.

Following the 1989 administrative reforms the country service bar was abolished, subsidies were removed from school house rentals and eligibility requirements for the ‘remoteness’ salary increment were raised, making 90% of those previously paid this allowance no longer eligible (Butterworth & Butterworth, 1998, pp. 137-139).

Immediately after the election of the new National Government in November, 1990, the newly appointed Minister of Education, Lockwood Smith, set up a committee of officials to review and report on the viability of small schools. The report, published in April 1991, recommended that a group representing the Ministry of Education, the School Trustees’ Association and the two main teacher unions, be set up to develop comprehensive guidelines for the “rationalisation of educational provision” (MOE, 1991, p. 54). In November 1991 the guidelines, known as the ‘Educational Development Initiative’ (EDI), were published. In this policy schools and districts were encouraged to consider ways in which the structure of schooling in their locality could be made more effective and efficient for providing quality education. Districts
were offered incentives to participate, such as the redirection of ‘freed’ resources to new sites and the provision of resource-support for the restructuring process involved. While not setting a trigger number for any particular type of school to become involved in merger or closure talks, the guidelines did make a point of emphasising that education in a school with a roll of under 25 was twice as expensive per head as in a school with a roll of 50 and indicated that any savings in mergers at this level would be retained by the participating schools (EDI, 1991, p. 6).

Throughout 1992 and 1993 newspaper reports indicated that officials kept up the pressure for rationalisation. For example in February, 1992 the Education Ministry sent letters to 51 sole-charge schools in rural parts of the lower North Island asking them to consider merging with other schools. In June 1992 the Education Review Office (ERO) published a report on its recent reviews of rural schools, claiming that their school evaluation reports indicated that up to 40% of rural schools might no longer be viable. However, in the second half of 1992 rural lobby groups hit back, mounting a publicity campaign to ‘save small schools’. In February 1993 the Ministry of Education produced more definitive guidelines on the profile of schools facing closure, after pressure from lobby groups such as the Federated Farmers, claiming that the EDI guidelines were too vague and discriminated against rural schooling by not giving ‘trigger’ numbers for urban school closure. In the new guidelines the trigger student roll numbers were:

- 35 for a rural primary school
- 200 for a rural secondary school
- 450 for an urban secondary school
- 160 for an urban primary school
- 250 for an intermediate school

(The Dominion, 24 February 1993, p. 2)
However, even with these new guidelines, by November 1993 few schools or districts had voluntarily offered to participate in EDI talks. Following the election in that month, (with a big drop in the Government majority), the EDI policy was given a much lower profile for the next term of the Government (Butterworth & Butterworth, 1998, p. 216).

(iii) Since 1996

Policy after 1996 can best be described as following a ‘two-track’ strategy. While new policy was developed to try to strengthen some small schools, the EDI policy remained on the books and was again actively pursued for other small schools, especially in the areas where demographic trends and projections suggested rationalisation was the most appropriate response.

As far as new policy for strengthening small schools was concerned, in 1997 a School Administrative Support Cluster (SASC) pilot programme was initiated, to try to reduce the workload of principals and trustees in rural primary schools by providing seed funding for co-operative administrative arrangements between clusters of small schools. In 1999, following an independent evaluation of the pilot, the SASC programme was extended, with the funding available being doubled for the next two years. Then in 2001 the programme was formalised on an ongoing basis with continuous annual funding being increased from $1 million per year to $2.7 million per year (MOE, 2002b, p. ii).

At the same time, in the lower North Island (the area with the greatest concentration of one and two teacher schools in the country), the Ministry of Education initiated a series of ‘area reviews’ in rural areas where school age population appeared to have fallen most severely. Between 1998 and 2002 area reviews have taken place in the districts of Taumarunui, Marton, Opunake, Dannevirke and Taihape, all small rural towns in the Central Districts with increasingly under-utilised schooling provisions in the township and a large number of small schools in the adjacent rural district. Since 2001 area reviews have started in other parts of the country with a similar demographic profile (The Dominion Post, 15 January 2003, p. 3).
b) Evolution of General Support Policy for Primary Schooling Since 2000

Following the change of government from a National dominated coalition to a Labour dominated one in November 1999, the new Minister of Education, Trevor Mallard, initiated a number of policies to try to deal with other issues arising from the existing policy setting. These measures included the abolition of previous policy mechanisms apparently promoting polarization; a principal development initiative, to try to raise the quality of educational leadership in all New Zealand schools; the provision of extra staffing for schools with the highest levels of stress (particularly those in rural or low socio-economic districts); and new legislation for school support, where schools were deemed to be struggling with their self-managing role.

(i) Repeal of Previous Policy Measures

Immediately following the election, the new Minister took steps to reverse what he regarded as the worst excesses of the previous policy regime. Plans for national testing in primary schools were immediately dropped. Instead a new initiative, focusing on improving school-initiated diagnostic and formative assessment in literacy and numeracy, has been introduced. By the middle of 2001 new legislation was in place abolishing ‘bulk funding’ (the direct resourcing option), and increasing the proportion of school funding allocated on a ‘decile-weighted’ basis (that is, on the basis of comparative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage). The Education Review Office was restructured and directed to follow a policy of ‘assess and assist’, rather than the previous policy of ‘blame and shame’. School zones were re-introduced and popular schools were required to conduct ballots to fill places if they were over-subscribed, rather than the previous proviso which allowed them to pick and choose the pupils they wanted on a school-by-school determined basis (Codd, 2002, p. 3).

(ii) Policy for Principal Development

As far as principal development was concerned, in the May 2001 budget the Minister of Education announced a series of initiatives to support principal development in New Zealand schools, with a proposed budget of $27.4 million
over the next four years (MOE, 2001a). To begin the process a research contract was set up in the second half of 2001, to establish the developmental needs of principals in all types of school. The successful bidder for this contract was the management consultancy firm, the Hay Group.

In their research the Hay Group compared the competencies of experienced, successful principals with those of first-year, first-time principals, to try to identify the skills, knowledge, attributes and competencies that should be developed in any national principal development programme. The resulting competency-profiles drew a sharp contrast between new and experienced principals.

Table 1. Hay Group Findings on Comparative Competencies of Novice and Experienced Principals (2001, pp. 48-49)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year, first time principals:</th>
<th>Experienced, successful principals:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most with limited experience of school management.</td>
<td>Knew how to manage or delegate the ‘nuts and bolts’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often overwhelmed by the ‘nuts and bolts’.</td>
<td>Had contacts/supports to assist with any problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes got off-side with BOT or community as result of inexperience.</td>
<td>Could influence other people effectively when needed on important matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggled with vision and leadership of change-management.</td>
<td>Knew to sit back and assess culture before working on vision or change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of this analysis the Hay Group recommended that a suitable programme for first-time principal development would focus about 20% of the
time on the basic skills and knowledge required to do the job of principalship (that is, the ‘nuts and bolts’) and 80% of the time on developing higher-order competencies, based around five competency clusters: vision and leadership, building community relationships, striving for excellence, developing self-efficacy and demonstrating deeply held personal conviction (2001, p. 50).

The Hay Group Report also extrapolated a competency framework from the first four of these competency clusters. In this framework individual competencies were identified and described at four different levels (see Appendix 2). They argued that “highly effective performance in the principal’s role requires a balance across all four clusters in the model as well as the one stand-alone competency at the centre of the model” (2001, p. 12).

The First Time Principals’ Training initiative, based on the Hay Group findings, was introduced for the first time in 2002 to the almost 200 new principals appointed in that year. It featured a residential programme of fourteen days in total (during the April, July and September term breaks), run ‘by principals for principals’. The programme was backed up with one-on-one mentoring, where each first-time principal was matched with a senior principal who made two visits during the year. In addition, each first time principal was supplied with a leased laptop so that they could participate in the on-line learning and discussion elements of the programme (K. Stewart, 2002, p. 10).

Also in 2002 a new electronic network for more experienced principals, known as Leadspace, came on-line. This network aimed to give principals the opportunity to collaborate and share good leadership and management practices, develop their information and communication technology skills, and participate in facilitated discussion forums. To assist with its implementation, all more experienced principals will also be issued with leased laptop computers sometime in 2002 or 2003 (Lane, 2002, p.22).

Between 2003 and 2006 the principal development initiative will begin to focus on more experienced principals, through the implementation of a ‘Development Centre’ concept. While details of the exact nature of
development centres are still being worked out, the Ministry of Education has already indicated some preferred features:

- Development centres may be based in one central location, but could also be itinerant or regionally based;
- Development centres might be run by a different organization in different parts of the country, and each centre may be run by more than a single organization; and
- Development centre activities are likely to include a range of assessment approaches such as observation of simulated exercises, 360 degree feedback and participant portfolios.

The development centre idea will be piloted with approximately 50 principals in 2003, extended to 200 experienced principals in 2004, 350 in 2005 and 520 principals in 2006 and subsequent years (Education Gazette, 2003, p. 74).

(iii) The Staffing Review

In April 2001 the Minister of Education released the report of the Staffing Review group which he had chaired over the previous nine months. The group, made up of representatives from teacher unions, school principals’ associations, the School Trustees’ Association and a co-ordinating official from the Ministry of Education, reached unanimous conclusions about both the nature of current workload issues and the best strategy for reducing or solving the issues.

In analysing the nature of the workload problem, the review group concluded that,

increasingly complex curricula and societal problems have made it progressively more difficult for the pastoral and educational relationship between student and teacher to be maintained and developed (in all schools). Schools serving less affluent communities have proportionally greater demands placed on them … than do schools in more affluent areas. The current
staffing regime does not serve small schools as well as it serves larger ones. For these reasons, the review group’s recommendations focus on teaching staff entitlement (in these schools) as the most effective way to achieve the Group’s objectives (MOE, 2001b, p. 1).

The major recommendations of the group were that:

1. In the primary sector, a new staffing component for ‘school leadership’ be introduced, to complement the already existing entitlement for ‘management’ staffing. This new component needed to be weighted so that it delivered proportionately more staffing to smaller than larger primary schools.

2. In the secondary sector, an increased staffing component for both ‘guidance’ and base-staffing be introduced, weighted towards lower decile and smaller secondary schools, especially those serving areas of mainly Maori and/or pacific island population (MOE, 2001b, p. 2).

The proposed timeline for the introduction of the new entitlements suggested a phase-in time of five years, with the first tranche of the new staffing, including a doubling of release time for those in primary schools with a roll of less than 180, being allocated from 1 July 2002 (MOE, 2001b p. 8).

(iv) Education Standards Act 2001

Clearly, since the change of government at the end of 1999 the policy environment for schooling in New Zealand has changed somewhat. Views on the extent, nature and impact of the change differ, however, with some arguing that it is just a matter of system-correction and that its impact will be for the better; and others arguing it is a change of kind, with a likely impact for the worse. This variation of opinion can best be illustrated with a brief commentary on the Education Standards Act, 2001, which amended the Education Act, 1989.
As an example of the positive interpretation of the change, in a paper presented to a legal issues in education conference in July, 2002, Jan Breakwell, a Ministry of Education legal advisor, proposed that the Education Standards Act “marks a new way forward in New Zealand education” (Breakwell, 2002, p. 57). However, in an article in the same month published in the secondary principals’ magazine, Massey University Professor of Policy Studies John Codd argued that the new legal framework provides excessive opportunity for new bureaucratic control of teachers’ work in New Zealand schools (Codd, 2002, p. 5).

In summary, the new legal framework features:

- New interventionary powers for the Ministry, where a school is deemed to be ‘at risk’;
- New planning and reporting requirements, requiring all schools to set annual targets for improvements in student achievement;
- New expectations on schools to focus on and follow through with national initiatives;
- A new teachers’ council, with powers to investigate complaints against teachers and principals, where the matter has not been dealt with by the board of trustees to the satisfaction of the complainant; and
- Wider possibilities in governance arrangements, beyond the ‘one board/one school’ model of the 1989 legislation (Breakwell, 2002, p. 61).

To improve school support, the new Act provides the Ministry with six new powers of statutory intervention:

1. The power to obtain information about specified matters of concern;
2. The power to require a board to engage specialist help;
3. The power to require a board to prepare and carry out an approved action-plan;
4. The power to appoint a limited statutory manager to exercise any specified functions or powers of the board;

5. The power to dissolve the board and appoint a commissioner in its place where there is concern about the board’s overall performance; and

6. The power to dissolve a board and appoint a commissioner if there is a specific concern about the election or constitution of the board (Breakwell, 2002, p. 62).

Breakwell claims that the new powers in the revised statutory framework are necessary in order to give the Ministry of Education a more appropriate range of tools so that they might intervene earlier to help in situations where schools are clearly struggling to manage one or more aspects of their self-managing responsibilities (2002, pp. 62-63).

She concludes that “one thing is certain [about New Zealand’s experience of self-management in the 1990s] - flexibility in the tools available for intervention, to meet the varying needs of schools where the operation of the school or its students’ welfare or learning is at risk, has proved to be essential” (2002, p. 63).

In contrast, in reviewing the extent of change between the policies of the 1990s and those of the 2000s, Codd concludes that “three years on, there is very little to suggest that there has been any fundamental change of policy direction in education … [The policy changes are] very much a mixed bag of changes lacking any overall vision for educational reform” (2002, p. 3). More specifically, Codd claims that the Education Standards Act presents a distorted picture of the teaching profession by giving excessive emphasis to the disciplinary powers of the Teaching Council. This council is likely to be little more than a regulatory body operating under ministerial control (2002, p. 4). As such, it is part of a series of government policies introduced since 1999 which have “further reinforced the culture of management, where teachers are little more than skilled technicians and where performativity replaces the
critical reflection and professional judgement of the autonomous professional” (2002, p. 5).

While the impact of the new law on the work of teachers may be in dispute amongst commentators, the framework has done little to modify the substantive powers and responsibilities of the principal from what they were under the 1989 legislation. At the 2002 NZARE conference, a Senior Manager from the Ministry Of Education, Terry Bates, concluded that the Education Act 1989 described the principal as a ‘Servant-Leader’ and that this concept has not been changed by the new legislation. However, he also commented that this concept was not particularly well understood by principals or boards. “It is a concept that is not as well understood in the sector as it might be and is often at the root of the imbalance of power relationships (and other problems evident in the Ministry’s experience) in many struggling schools” (T. Bates, 2002, p. 2). Bates concluded his analysis with the comment that servant leadership requires more than the caricature of managerial/business behaviour, even though this can be very seductive for school leaders where the principal is inexperienced or trusteeship is not robust (2002, p. 3).
4. CONCLUSION

To conclude the chapter I will briefly recapitulate the argument made so far about the New Zealand policy setting and its impact on small schools. I will also present some demographic data relevant to the study and reiterate the policy issues that will be focused on in later chapters (especially Chapters 3 and 6).

a) The Argument So Far

The argument so far can be summarised as follows:

- Small primary schools have always been an important organisational feature in New Zealand education.
- Following the 1989 restructuring of educational administration small primary school principalship became problematic in New Zealand.
- The New Zealand Government has recently initiated a range of measures to assist small schools and small school principalship.
- As yet, little is known about the impact of these measures.
- Rationalisation of the small school network has also recently been suggested in New Zealand.
- Though the rationalisation effort receives extensive media coverage in local papers, there has been little research carried out on it.

b) Demographic Data Relevant to the Study

In September 2002 the Ministry of Education published an update on demographic trends in New Zealand schooling (Coppen, 2002). Roll trends for the primary sector suggest that the issue of small primary schools is not going to disappear in New Zealand in the next few years. The data shows that between 1990 and 2000 primary school rolls in New Zealand increased from 402,000 to 482,000. In other words, the New Zealand primary school system needed to expand school network provision over this decade.

However, projections suggest that by 2010 the total New Zealand primary school roll will have fallen back to 444,000 and by 2020 it will be back to where it was at the start of the 1990s, at just over 400,000. The key problem for the primary school network as
a system in the next ten to twenty years will be contraction, rather than the expansion experienced for the last decade.

When this data is viewed alongside data from rural geographers suggesting that rural population decline in New Zealand is likely to increase in the next ten years (Smith, 2002, p. ii), it would seem inevitable that schools that are currently small are likely in the medium term to become smaller. In the next five to ten years many of New Zealand’s present three or four teacher schools will fall back to two teachers; many two teacher schools are likely to become sole-charge; and many of the present sole-charge schools will probably be no longer viable.

c) The Key Policy Issues to be Examined in this Study

While there is a suggestion above that there may be a need for a detailed evaluation of educational policy changes in New Zealand since 2000, because views on the impact of these changes differ somewhat amongst policy commentators, such a review is not the purpose of this study. Instead, as was indicated in the first section of this chapter, there are two specific policy issues that I am planning to examine in greater depth:

1. The question of the appropriateness of the principal development initiative as it is presently structured for the needs of teaching principals; and
2. The question of how far the current two-track strategy for small school development is achieving its aims.

I am also interested in slightly broader questions about the underlying rationale for each of the above policies and the extent to which there is consistency between them. We will return to these policy issues and the literature associated with them in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 2 I will discuss conceptual matters and recent literature relating to selected aspects of principalship and small school principalship.
CHAPTER 2

PRINCIPALSHIP AND SMALL SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP

This chapter sets out to explore the concept of principalship that is being used in the study, and to review the relevant literature, especially the literature on principalship in small schools. The chapter is organised into two sections:

1. Principalship.

In ‘principalship’, there is an initial discussion of the definition of the term and my particular interest in it, then three sections outlining a number of important dimensions of the term as I understand it, and finally a short overview of the templates and the theory that I will use later in the study in my analysis of the ‘principalship’ set of data.

In ‘small school principalship’, there is an initial exploration of the definitional issue (that is, who is a small school principal?), then a review of what recent literature says about small school principalship, and then a brief overview of the template arising from the literature that will be used later in the study.

The chapter concludes with a recapitulation of the two key terms defined in earlier sections.

Throughout, the chapter also refers back to points introduced in Chapter 1, as it tries to demonstrate how the study’s conceptual framework is built on what we already know (and don’t know) about principalship and small school principalship in New Zealand.

1. PRINCIPALSHIP

This first part of the chapter reviews concepts relating to principalship that will be used later in this study. In particular, this section overviews three important sets of ideas about principalship strategies. The section begins, however, with a short commentary on my personal interest in, and definition for, principalship.
a) Definition and Personal Position

(i) **Definition**

For the purposes of this study I have defined ‘principalship’ as the important sets of ideas about their work held by the people doing the job of ‘principal’ in schools. The study focuses on the strategic ideas that principals have for managing their work. Sergiovanni (1992) refers to such ideas as a ‘mindscape’. Using this approach, the assumptions and beliefs of those doing the job become central to the study of the work of principals (Sergiovanni, 2001a).

(ii) **Primary School Principalship in New Zealand Today**

To explain my personal position with regards to what is important in the study of principalship, I need initially to recapitulate what we have learned about the current state of primary school principalship in New Zealand from the overview provided in Chapter 1.

Based on Wylie (1997b) and T. Bates (2002), it would appear that the current state-of-the-play with regards to primary school principalship in New Zealand is as follows:

1. New Zealand principals are struggling to manage their current range of role-demands, particularly the administrative demands (i.e. there may be an ‘administrative’ problem).

2. New Zealand principals are struggling to achieve coherence in their vision and practice of/for educational leadership (i.e. there may be an ‘educational leadership’ problem).

3. There is a detrimental variation between the ideal and the practice when it comes to the understanding of ‘governance/management’ issues in New Zealand, and principals contribute significantly to this variation (i.e. there may be a ‘governance/management’ problem).
If I am to study present patterns of primary school principalship in New Zealand effectively I will need an approach which provides appropriate conceptual tools to examine each of these three dimensions of the possible current New Zealand ‘principalship-problem’.

(iii) Positions on the Principalship Field

In her recent overview of the educational leadership ‘field’, and ‘positions’ within it in educational studies in England between the 1960s and today, Gunter (2001) has provided a conceptual framework for the sorts of issues I wish to examine here. According to Gunter, there have been three dominant approaches in the last forty years, with each still having an important position in the field today. These three approaches are as follows:

1. The Approach Arising from Organisational Management Studies.

Gunter suggests that in the 1960s and 1970s the expansion of the ‘comprehensive’ school in England made the internal arrangements for the organization of teaching and learning in schools more complex than formerly. Concepts of organisational management from business studies became popular in theory and research and were increasingly made attractive to an educational profession struggling with issues of organisational complexity, through the educational administration courses and textbooks of the day (2001, pp. 22-23). Then in the 1980s and 1990s, with increasing concerns about resourcing and accountability issues, the focus in ‘educational management’ studies turned to matters of strategic and performance management - again, concepts borrowed from business management. Those working from this position have “engaged and continue to engage in work that supports and challenges the practitioner in the strategic and operational management of educational organisations” (2001, p. 39). She identifies Hughes (1988) and Bush (1995) as being recent proponents of this position.

Gunter suggests that from the mid 1970s onwards a second major theme in educational leadership studies has been on the role of school leaders in promoting the cultural preconditions needed for school effectiveness and school improvement (2001, p. 33). Gunter cites Caldwell and Spinks’ 1988 ‘collaborative school management’ cycle as an early example of this approach. In the most recent work coming from this position, “leadership is conceptualised as a shared function and the project team [that should operate in each school] are concerned with devising the classroom conditions needed to support learning: authentic relationships, boundaries and expectations, planning for teaching, teaching repertoire, pedagogic partnerships and reflection on teaching” (2001, p. 36). Mortimore et al. (1988), Hopkins et al (1994) and Stoll and Fink (1996) are mentioned as good examples of writers occupying this position.


Gunter defines the position of those taking a critical approach as follows. “Those who take a critical approach to research and theory are concerned with enduring power structures and the impacts these have on the lives and work of educationalists and communities” (2001, p. 40). She lists recent influential writers who have adopted this third position as being Smyth (1989), R. Bates (1993), Ozga (1993), Ball (1994) and Grace (1995). Recent studies from this position suggest that the dominance of leadership and management in schools is the means through which social and political power structures are being maintained in wider society. “Central to critical work is not only to reveal this but also to shift our gaze towards alternative understandings of leadership within pedagogic relationships between teachers and pupils” (Gunter, 2001, p. 41).
(iv) **Principalship Theory in this Study**

After reflecting on Gunter I have decided to take an eclectic approach to my personal position on principalship theory. My justification for this is that we may have a multi-faceted principalship problem in New Zealand and therefore a multi-faceted theoretical approach is likely to be needed to study whether we have (or not). The problem-theory match I propose is as follows.

Table 2.1 The Problem-Theory Match in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible New Zealand Problems</th>
<th>Possible Theory Match</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ‘Administrative’ Problem</td>
<td>Organisational Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘Educational Leadership’ Problem</td>
<td>Cultural Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘Management/Governance’ Problem</td>
<td>Critical Perspective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this study I will be selecting aspects from all three of Gunter’s theoretical positions and trying to develop initial hypotheses around each. I then intend to use these hypothetical ‘templates’ in the later part of the study to try to create some form of ‘grounded theory’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) about the current state of primary principalship in New Zealand. The type of theory that may result has particular applicability in my personal Masters level teaching at Massey University, but might also provide an explanatory base for follow up research by others.

b) **Some Important Sets Of Organisational Ideas About Principalship**

In thinking about my topic from an organisational perspective, three sets of ideas seem to have special validity. These idea-sets are the concepts of ‘role’, ‘strategy’ and ‘motivation’. The rationale for the significance of each of these sets of organisational ideas is explained in the following section.
Handy on Role

In *Taken for granted? Looking at schools as organizations* (1984), Charles Handy argues that role is one of the most important categories to use when analysing individual behaviour in schools, particularly if examining aspects like role overload, role stress and role conflict. In his analysis of role in schools, Handy highlights the importance of ‘role-switching’. Role-switching occurs when two or more contrasting sets of role expectations are expected to be performed by the same individual, often within a relatively short time frame. He explains the significance of this concept in the following way:

Most people play many parts - but not often in the course of a week. The classroom teacher, in contrast, has to drop in and out of roles all week long: at one moment in the classroom as an authority figure (adult among children); then to the staffroom (adult among equals); then to a meeting with the head (subordinate in a hierarchy). This can be a switchback ride - a test for anyone’s identity and security.

Nor is it easier for a school manager. Henry Mintzberg has recently identified ten roles for any senior manager. Most heads would recognise all these roles and the tensions that can arise at times between them.

But join the two lots of roles together and one begins to marvel that any human being can cope…Teaching and managing are distinctive activities…Managers have to be pragmatic beings, as managing is an untidy fragmented business. Teachers plan and prepare. Their academic mind is typically more interested in truth than compromise, in analysis than in imperfect action, in deliberation than in decision. The qualities that make a good teacher may not be the qualities that are best suited to management…
Schools have distinctive activities and, in short, it would be wise for them to recognise the distinctions. To combine unthinkingly the two roles in one person is an invitation to distress (1984, pp. 22-23).

Role-switching produces tensions and uncertainties within the individual and it is also commonly associated with inconsistent, unpredictable and unanticipated behaviour, according to Handy (1984, p. 23). In addition it may result in avoidance patterns, where the individual goes through elaborate ritualistic behaviour in one aspect of their role performance, to avoid having to engage with another aspect that they fear may create conflict or discomfort (1984, p.24). None of these are behaviours likely to endear a principal to her or his staff.

Role and the potential for role-conflict within the role-set expected of principals has also been studied by a number of other researchers. In 1988, after studying role and secondary principalship for the previous decade, Meredydd Hughes concluded that while principals seemed to play two independent roles (the role of ‘chief executive’ and that of ‘professional leader’), in practice these roles were hard to separate and, cognitively, principals made little distinction between them (1988, p. 15).

If Hughes’ findings hold true for all principals, much of the distress that Handy hypothesises may be present from repeated role-switching would be reduced. However, in many of the empirical studies of ‘teaching principals’ (that will be reviewed in Part 2 of this chapter), principals of smaller schools seem to be reporting that there is much more of a dissonance between their roles as a classroom teacher and as a principal-administrator than Hughes reports. Many talk of the ‘double-role’ burden that they feel they have to carry. Given Handy’s suggestion about the difficulty of role-switching, and the distress that frequent role-switching causes, this latter possibility seems worthy of further exploration in this study.
In *Organizational behaviour in education* (various editions), Robert Owens has always had a central chapter headed ‘Motivation’ (Owens, 1981, 1987, 2001). In this chapter he has included a range of ideas, with the particular mix varying from edition to edition. The only common reference point in all this variation in various editions is the work of Herzberg, particularly on ‘satisfiers’ and ‘dissatisfiers’. This work would appear to have passed a repeated relevance test. However, all editions since the third have also highlighted the work of McClelland, on ‘achievement’ motivation, so this too would appear to be a topic that readers of the textbook have found helpful.

Briefly, Herzberg’s two factor theory of motivation proposes that motivation is not a single dimension describable as a hierarchy of needs, (as Maslow had earlier proposed), but instead that it is composed of two separate, independent factors. These two factors are:

1. ‘Motivational’ factors, which can lead to job satisfaction; and
2. ‘Maintenance’ factors, which (a) must be sufficiently present in order for motivational factors to come into play and when (b) not sufficiently present, can block motivation and lead to job dissatisfaction (Owens, 1981, p. 120).

In pioneering research in the 1960s and 1970s, David McClelland investigated the importance of the drive to succeed in various types of management situation. His conclusions were two-fold: first, the achievement drive was the most significant single explanatory factor in management success in over 80% of the situations studied; and, second, this drive to succeed could be taught if appropriate training strategies were employed (Owens, 1987, p. 122).

In later research McClelland and colleagues, including Boyatzis and Goleman, have extended the notion of ‘achievement motivation’ to that of ‘emotional intelligence’ - a concept which they claim accounts for at least 90% of success in complex management situations (Goleman et al., 2002, p. xv).
As Owens argues that without motivation there would be no purposive, organised behaviour by the individual or organisation, the ways in which principals are motivated best is obviously an important topic (Owens, 1981, p. 106).

This seems a worthwhile aspect to include in my study, especially as comparative job dissatisfaction has been widely reported in earlier studies of teaching principalship. The possible positive importance of achievement motivation has been reinforced recently in the Hay Group study of New Zealand principalship (2001), which found that a ‘deeply held personal conviction’ was central to success as a principal. However this study went little further in defining or exploring to which aspects of the job such convictions needed to apply, or how they might best be exhibited in different contexts. ‘Deeply held personal conviction’ was the one competency-cluster not included in the Hay Group’s competency-levels hierarchy. Further work would be of value in clarifying this part of the principal’s mindscape.

Another powerful idea relating to motivation covered in a number of the early editions of Owens’ book is the distinction between ‘local’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ career orientation. Working from the original descriptions of Gouldner, Owens describes the difference between these two orientation patterns in the following way:

Locals generally join organisations, stay in them, and work towards their goals because they wish to be part of them. A good many school teachers and administrators are committed to their school system, want to render long, faithful service to it, and tend to identify with it…

Cosmopolitans, however, participate in the organisation in order to pursue their commitment to their profession. Some teachers, who change jobs more frequently than locals, willingly transfer to another school to obtain greater prestige. (Owens, 1987, pp. 114-115).
As both Livingstone (1999) and Whittall (2002) (reviewed later in this chapter) indicate that there may be aspects of local and cosmopolitan orientations evident amongst New Zealand teaching principals, this distinction may also be a promising one to pursue in this study.

(iii) Leithwood on Problem Solving Strategies

In Changing leadership for changing times (1999), Ken Leithwood and colleagues reflect on their earlier studies of Canadian principalship and the conclusions they have reached about the strategies used by the most effective principals (whom they call ‘transformational’), compared to the strategies of other principals (who are usually inexperienced in the job of principal), when solving more or less complex problems that arise in their work.

The propositions that underpin the approach are described by Leithwood and his colleagues as follows:

What leaders do depends on what they think. So if we are to understand the sources of those leadership practices that are most productive in changing times, no source could be more fundamental than the thinking and problem-solving processes of leaders engaged in these practices (Leithwood et al., 1999, p.99).

The book goes on to use evidence gained in a comprehensive series of earlier studies of leadership expertise (for example, Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1992), to map the leadership strategies of transformational school leaders.

Their conclusion is that the most effective principals see their working environment differently than other principals (that is, they have more sophisticated cognitive scanning strategies) and use more sophisticated problem solving strategies in relation to the matters they regard as significant problems or issues. Further, they claim, these strategies can be taught and practised in a principal-development-coaching situation.
Evidence from this evaluation supports the contribution that guided practice in solving authentic problems with colleagues, encounters with progressively complex problems, and opportunities to acquire crucial knowledge in domains relevant to common categories of problems can have in developing higher order problem solving strategies (Leithwood et al., 1999, p.114).

As outlined in Chapter 1, in New Zealand the Hay Group report (2001) found that there were a range of differences between the ‘competencies’ of more and less experienced principals, when comparing first year, first time principals with experienced, successful principals. Their conclusion was that less experienced principals should be trained in the sorts of competencies or strategies evident in the work of the more experienced principals. They placed particular importance on the significance of emotional intelligence in success for principals, an idea which is also coming through from a number of other sources (e.g. Goleman, et al., 2002).

However, the Hay Group sample of more experienced principals included only one teaching principal, so I feel it is important to check the extent to which their conclusions about the list of appropriate strategies to be used in the training of novice principals hold true, if a more representative sample of teaching principals is used. In addition, I am not sure if their profile of first year principals gives a sufficiently detailed picture of the actual needs of the range of principals and the variety of settings that currently exist in New Zealand. Again, a check might be useful.

(iv) **Organisational Concepts in This Study**

The review so far suggests that role-theory, motivation-theory and problem-solving theory might be of use in a study of teaching principals. So how might any of these organisational concepts be used?

Figure 2.1, sets out an overview of the key ideas from the organisational literature that will be used later in this study.
Figure 2.1 A Template of Key Organisational Factors in the Job of Principalship
This template highlights the three areas indicated in the organisational behaviour literature as likely to be of greatest significance in principals’ work. I would add that it also provides a useful conceptual framework for use in analysing the current work situation and general work strategies of my participants.

c) ‘Instructional’ and ‘Cultural’ Ideas about Principalship

(i) The Concept of Instructional Leadership

Central to our current understanding of principalship work-strategies is the notion of ‘instructional leadership’. The concept of instructional leadership is largely a North American invention of the last quarter century (Duke, 1987). According to Duke, the most important dimensions of the concept are teacher supervision, evaluation, and staff and professional development. The concept has been used as the basis for an ongoing research programme (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986; Hallinger & Leithwood, 1994; Hallinger & Heck 1997, 1999). It has also had a strong influence on principal development in North America - the National Association of Secondary School Principals still defines its mission as “strengthening the role of the principal as instructional leader” (DuFour, 2002, p. 12). Most recently, however, there has been an emphasis in the North American literature on the need to look beyond instructional leadership in analysing the work of principals (Scherer, 2002). For example, Barth (2002, p. 6) claims that probably the most important – and the most difficult – part of the work of a principal is “to change the prevailing culture of the school”.

(ii) Sergiovanni on Cultural Leadership

Cultural leadership is an important form of principalship to study because of what we know about how it contributes to the internal capacity of a school (Sergiovanni, 1998, 2001a, 2001b).

In the latest edition (the fourth, 2001) of his book *The principalship*, American author Tom Sergiovanni has included four updated chapters from earlier editions, dealing with the importance of the principals’ ‘mindscape’ in creating
the ‘cultural lifeworld’ of her or his school (Sergiovanni, 2001, pp. 161-265).
In these chapters Sergiovanni outlines how in the 1980s and first half of the
1990s there was a strong push to use the findings of the effective schools
research as the basis for teaching, staff development, and assessment and
accountability in schools. However, he claims, things are different today.
Whereas the effective teaching findings of the 1980s cannot be dismissed out
of hand, there is a somewhat different picture now of how students learn best
and what good teaching might look like, as illustrated by more recent research.
This research, based on cognitive constructivist psychology and on cultural
views of human being and learning, is also important when we come to
consider the supervisory and support roles of the principal, Sergiovanni argues.
In fact, the basic educational philosophy of the principal (whether behaviourist
or constructivist), has a profound impact on the functioning of any school,
through the notions of ‘social capital’ and ‘human capital’ (Coleman & Hoffer,
1987). Social capital consists of norms, obligations, and trusts that are
generated by relationships among people in a school or community. Human
capital is the knowledge and skill required to enhance the capacity of
individuals or groups to function effectively. Both ‘personalism’ and
‘academic press’ are therefore important for effective learning, Sergiovanni
argues. Sophisticated leadership understandings are needed from principals if
schools are to develop as the sort of resource centres for building social and
human capital that Sergiovanni envisages. Sergiovanni proposes that
‘community’ is a much better metaphor to use when thinking about work in
schools than is ‘organisation’. He concludes that principalship should be
regarded as a moral craft, rather than some sort of applied science.

In another 2001 text, Leadership: What’s in it for schools?, Sergiovanni
expands on his ideas of how the role of the school leader needs to change as
the levels of social and academic capital in a school rise:

- When capital is low, mandates become the prime means to start the
  process of change. The leader needs to emphasize aligning goals with
  management systems, controls, and assessments that ensure achievement.
When capital begins to rise, incentives become the prime means to bring about further change. The leader needs to begin trading rewards for compliance as social contracts with parents, teachers and the local community.

To sustain the process of capital-growth, the leader as developer should predominate. The leader should emphasize capacity-building for parents, teachers and the local community.

When capital is high, the leader-as-community-sustainer becomes the role. The leader should now work to sustain the shared values and purposes that provide a moral source of authority for how the school-as-community operates (Sergiovanni, 2001b, pp. 49-50).

(iii) Sergiovanni on Pedagogical and Entrepreneurial Leadership

Elsewhere (Sergiovanni, 1998), Sergiovanni has proposed that instead of placing ‘bureaucratic’, ‘visionary’ or ‘entrepreneurial’ leadership at the centre of our efforts to develop principalship, we should focus on ‘pedagogical’ leadership. He defines pedagogical leadership as leadership that invests in capacity building and adds value by developing social and academic capital for students, and intellectual and professional capital for staff, as a first priority and commitment.

In contrast, entrepreneurial leadership applies market principles to schooling and supports the valuing of competition and winning. Bureaucratic leadership focuses on implementing state mandates. Visionary leadership highlights the personal values of the principal. None of these approaches foster capacity building to the extent that pedagogical leadership does.

It can be presumed that in any educational system following the general line of argument advanced by Sergiovanni, supporting principal development would be a high priority item for the state. The policy statements associated with New Zealand’s recent principal development initiatives certainly refer in their rationales to a number of the general themes argued by Sergiovanni. For example, in the report to Parliament on the New Zealand school sector in 2001, the Minister of Education says:
Effective principals provide the day-to-day leadership within schools... There is no single best model for how principals should provide that leadership... Effective principals have a conviction that every student has a right to the best possible educational experience... High achievement is more easily achieved in some schools than others because of the levels of prior...cultural capital available to some students. Nevertheless, evidence...shows that students from all backgrounds can learn to read at national norms or acquire school qualifications, irrespective of their school’s decile rating... Achieving such results depends on the board and principal having a strong belief in the capacity of all their students to learn... The principal is in a unique and strong position to influence a whole range of factors which impact upon learning - culture building constitutes a powerful force in aligning school vision, participant’s values and innovative processes. As such, it represents an important leadership dimension of school innovation and reform.

In order to balance experience with new ideas and innovation, the school system needs a mix of recently appointed and experienced principals... The principal workforce tends to be older than the teaching workforce... [because of this] in 2001 the Government began a programme of greatly enhanced support for principals, particularly new principals and principals of small schools (Ministry of Education, 2001c, pp. 1-3).

Clearly, culture-building using pedagogical leadership is a major expectation of the state for New Zealand principals. This report indicates that the principal development initiative in New Zealand will be based on these principles.

(iv) The Use of Principalship as Cultural Leadership Concepts in this Study

Sergiovanni’s writing has recently been acknowledged as central to the ‘cultural leadership’ position (Leithwood and Duke, 1999).
Based upon ideas in Sergiovanni, (1998, 2001a and 2001b), I have developed the following template for use in the analysis of the accounts of professional approaches adopted by the respondents in the study (Figure 2.2).

1. Building Community Through Focus on Pedagogical Leadership

   Internal, then external community building

   General Strategy

   Specific Strategies

   Priority order:
   - Analyse children’s needs
   - Adjust resource allocation and enhance professional development
   - Bring parents on board and step up parental involvement

2. Building Community Through Focus on Entrepreneurial Leadership

   External, then internal community building

   Specific Strategies

   Priority order:
   - Analyse parent’s wants
   - Adjust resource allocation and implement image-building initiatives
   - Increase school roll and use extra funding for internal development

Figure 2.2

A Template for Analysing Professional Approaches of Principals
If Wylie’s analysis of educational leadership in New Zealand (1997b) still remains current, this template should allow me to explore the mix of ‘pedagogical’ and ‘entrepreneurial’ ideas underpinning the present work-practice of my research participants.

But while this line of argument seems important in the types of ‘reforming’ school systems familiar to Sergiovanni, it is likely to be even more important in a ‘self managing’ system, where the principal has a greater degree of influence on the distribution of resources within the school than s/he might have in typical North American systems. This creates a link in this part of the argument to the ideas of Grace (1995), who has recently theorised the role of principalship and accountability in a self managing system, based upon a critical examination of the work of school heads in England.

d) Some Important Sets of ‘Critical’ Ideas About Principalship

Principalship is not only important because of its role in creating social and educational capital within schools. According to the critical approach to educational leadership theory, in a democracy it plays a major role in either sustaining or undermining the wider political culture of the society (Grace, 1995, 1998a).

(i) Grace on Critical Policy Analysis

In his 1995 text *School leadership: Beyond educational management*, Gerald Grace illustrates these two possibilities through his research into policy for and practice of headship in England. Grace argues that schools have always been a vital cog in the socialisation agenda within modern societies, for those politicians and policy advisors who are seeking levers to promote their particular vision of desirable social change. However, to use these levers it is vital that principals are influenced to view this vision as desirable, as they have a key role to play in the process of policy implementation. In his analysis of principalship in England in the first half of the 1990s, Grace claims that there is clear evidence that the politicians of the day recognised the strength of this line of argument and deliberately set out to create policy to try to influence
principals to a particular way of thinking (new public managerialism), that would serve their political and social ends (that is, a society valuing market approaches and values over the more communitarian traditional values).

It seemed to me that a significant struggle was in progress in England in the late 1980s and early 1990s to transform the consciousness of headteachers, their professional and educational values, their view of the schooling process and their practice as school leaders. I agree with Ball’s (1994) conclusion that the ethical and ideological position of the headteacher is crucial. It seems undeniable that the government intended to capture and reconstruct the headteacher as the key actor in the process of reform and redefinition (Grace, 1998a, pp. 212-213).

He also reports on the resulting tensions which the implementation of this policy-line created for many principals. In particular he examined three areas of principal-practice in which dilemmas for headteachers arose:

- From changing pupil and parent behaviour and attitude;
- From changing professional relations with pupils, teachers and governors; and
- From issues generated by a more market related culture in schooling (Grace, 1995, p. 71).

(ii) Grace on Democratic Accountability

Grace (1995) concludes that the underlying dilemma for English headteachers as school leaders is whether they should take the path of market accountability in schooling or whether they should take the path of community accountability. The first option claims the legitimacy of responding to the democracy of consumers. The second option involves responding to the democracy of citizens, including the pupils.

At the present juncture, Grace (1995) argues that the relationship of school leadership to democratic accountability and to democratic practice is the key
theoretical and practical issue that we face. A more visibly democratic practice of school leadership would strengthen responsible political education in schools. If democratic culture is to be strengthened in wider society, then schooling itself must be permeated with appropriate democratic practice. And if the argument for the moral primacy of democratic education is accepted, then the moral primacy of accountability to the community rather than to the market can be asserted. Education’s responsibilities are, therefore, primarily to the democracy of citizens rather than to the democracy of consumers. Following this approach, what school leadership could and should be is now at the centre of a potential educational and cultural transformation.

In the debates which should take place about the future of education and of educational leadership, existing school leaders have a particular responsibility. As a vital step in the process of creating the preconditions for democratic accountability, Grace recommends that principals reflect upon the present work-intensification and dilemma-intensification that they experience, brought about as a result of current educational policies.

There are strong functional and instrumental arguments for saying that this intensification and organisational pressure in schools should be more democratically shared with local governors, with teachers and students and with members of the local community (1995, p. 203).

Headteachers, as leading professionals, might continue to take the initiative in the resolution of difficult policy issues in schooling, but responsibility for final decision making should be located more explicitly and more visibly in wider democratic structures.

The challenge at this present juncture, concludes Grace (1995), is to construct balanced and representative forms of democratic school accountability. The leadership required in the construction process would be skilled in participative capacity building. Such leadership should go beyond education management and it should go beyond existing conceptions of strong leadership, to a greater
realisation of the importance of democratic culture in schools. The finalized lines of accountability should go beyond the market to the community.

(iii) The Use of the Concept of Democratic Accountability in this Study

In a keynote address to the 1998 NZEAS conference, Grace surmised that, given the similarity of experiences between the two systems over the past decade, a similar form of democratic accountability might be as relevant for New Zealand’s future as it was for England’s (Grace, 1998b). Figure 2.3 shows what such a form of accountability might look like.

**Indicators of a Market Approach to Accountability**

- School trustees regarded as directors
- The school principal regarded as chief executive
- The parents regarded as consumers
- The teachers and pupils regarded as workers

**Indicators of a Democratic Approach to Accountability**

- The schooling process regarded as open to the scrutiny and participation of all citizens in the local community
- Shared school leadership which deliberately facilitates internal democratic processes for important decision making
- Training and encouragement for staff and students in democratic engagement
- The principal, elected by an appropriate constituency of staff, students and community, for a designated period

Fig 2.3

A Template of Indicators for Market and Democratic Approaches to Accountability
Of course, democratic accountability is currently a legal fiction in both England and New Zealand. In England the head is designated in law as the school’s manager, responsible for its overall performance. In New Zealand the principal is the school’s chief executive, with a similar pattern of responsibilities. The notion of democratic accountability is therefore an ideal of what, on moral grounds, an appropriate school management/governance regime might look like.

However, along with T. Bates (2002), I would argue that a key need currently in New Zealand is to refine and develop more productive concepts for management and governance, based around a truer application of the ‘servant/leader’ notion.

The template and its indicators should allow me to test present understandings and ideas of my participants on this aspect of principalship.

e) Summary of the Templates and the Hypotheses being Used

Three templates are suggested, arising from this review of the theoretical literature about principalship:

1. A template of key organisational factors in the job of principal.
2. A template for analysing professional approaches of principals.
3. A template of indicators for market and democratic approaches to accountability.

Based on my consideration of the theoretical literature referred to here and my own previous experience in principal education, I have also framed three hypotheses to provide the theoretical foundation to be explored in the latter part of this study. These hypotheses are as follows:

1. Personal Strategies. Novice teaching principals are likely to display less mature personal work strategies than more experienced teaching principals. If
so, appropriate adjustments to the present range of principal supports may be necessary.

2. Professional Strategies. Successful teaching principals are likely to display more pedagogic than entrepreneurial thinking. If not, appropriate adjustments may be needed to principal support arrangements.

3. External Strategies. Successful teaching principals are likely to display more democratic than market approaches to community accountability. If not, appropriate adjustments may be needed in principal support arrangements.

With appropriate research design, Template One should allow me to test the first hypothesis, Template Two the second hypothesis, and Template Three the third hypothesis.

I believe that grounded theory conclusions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) based on these three hypotheses might provide a useful map of the sort of pathway for principalship development that should be aspired to in any true principal education programme. My hunch at present is that a grounded version of Hypothesis One might be especially important for principals in the first or second years, that a grounded version of Hypothesis Two might be of special use in charting the path for years two to five of a principalship, and a grounded version of Hypothesis Three provides the sort of vision for a morally just and educationally sound future model that all principals might aspire to in the longer term.

To generate grounded theory around these three hypotheses I will need to utilize action codes to facilitate a variety of comparisons that will allow me to identify significant variations within my various data sets (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Then, with possible use of dimensionalising and axial coding, I should be able to draw up some conditional matrices from which my conclusions may be drawn (Charmaz, 2000).

Taken together, the grounded theory that should arise from this study will provide within principalship the integration of behaviour with thinking, understanding with action, theory with practice. The hypotheses should therefore not only allow coherence in this study. They may result in theory that can assist the future practice of principalship and principalship education in New Zealand.
2. SMALL SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP

This second part of the chapter reviews concepts arising from the literature on small school principalship that will be used later in this study. After a brief review of 25 small school head/principal studies, six of these studies are analysed in greater depth. The section begins, however, with a short commentary on the problem of defining who is a small school principal.

a) The Problem of Definition

(i) Using Roll Size as a Basis

It is important at the outset of this section on small school principalship to clarify the meaning of ‘small’. According to the 1991 *New Zealand Small Schools Review*, “it is difficult to identify any one factor that determines that a school is small” (MOE, 1991, p. 13). While clearly roll size is the predominant factor, the concept of smallness in relation to a school may be influenced by a combination of other demographic, social, educational and economic factors.

So who is a small school principal? For me, the crucial factor when it comes to studying small school principalship in the New Zealand primary school setting is that the principal should have a responsibility for teaching a class for a significant proportion of her or his working week. By contrast, a large school principal who is non-teaching has no such regular teaching responsibility. However, this does not necessarily overcome the definitional problem for research purposes, because in practice the size of primary school in New Zealand where one becomes the other is not absolutely fixed by just one factor (such as roll size).

(ii) Using Staffing Entitlements as a Basis

In New Zealand until 2002 staffing entitlements only released a principal full time when the roll reached 300. However, as evidence presented to the 2001 Staffing Review revealed (Ministry of Education, 2001b), many schools with rolls under 300 used ‘locally raised’ money or other staffing entitlements to release the principal beyond the school’s strict entitlement. Some principals in...
New Zealand schools with a roll under 100 were therefore non-teaching, as I have defined this term.

Under the initial staffing framework introduced following the staffing review, full time release in New Zealand is now entitled for principals when a roll reaches 180 and it is this number that I will take for the purposes of this study as defining the border between small school principalship and large school principalship. I freely acknowledge, however, that some principals of schools with rolls lower than this in fact do very little teaching.

b) Conceptual Approaches Suggested by the Literature

To get an overview of the current state of knowledge about small school principalship, I have reviewed 25 major studies reported in ‘Anglo’ (North American, British, Australian and New Zealand) journals since 1988. Analysis from this review indicates that the vast majority of recent studies of small school principalship have focused on problems or coping strategies. Typically, these studies have dealt with the strain arising from the ‘dual role’, or work intensification resulting from managerialism (or other new system requirements). Some studies have looked at changing career paths and the difficulty many small school principals now face in winning the sorts of career advancements that were regarded as the norm in previous eras. Only a handful of studies have examined small school principalship from a positive frame. The concept of ‘instructional leadership’ is a common feature of two of these three more positive studies, and is an important conceptual element of the analysis that will be used later in this study.

In its most recent forms the concept of ‘instructional leadership’ allows an examination of ‘direct’, ‘shared’ and ‘indirect’ strategies for influencing learning in schools (Hallinger and Heck, 1997). The relationship between leadership strategies and learning is a major theme of interest in both the theorising and practice of school leadership currently (Southworth, 2002). The study of teaching principals gives the opportunity to view these strategies in operation in a ‘up close and personal’ way (Southworth, 1999).

Table 2.2 provides an overview of the 25 studies reviewed. The three studies with a positive focus are indicated with an asterisk. Further details of the 25 studies reviewed for this research are listed in Appendix 9.
Table 2.2. Analysis of Twenty Five ‘Small School’ Head/Principal Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study No</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Type of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Role Tension/Coping Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Work Survey Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Problems/Coping Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Dual Role Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Instructional Leadership*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Challenges/Opportunities*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>International Comparisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Dual Role Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Work Intensification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Stresses/Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Role Intensification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Impact of Managerialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Careers and Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Impact of New Planning Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Understanding Workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Dual Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Working Conditions/Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Delegation Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Workload Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>Career Paths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Comparison of Planning Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Impact of Managerialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Retention Patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Success Factors (Instructional Leadership)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Time Management Strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*studies adopting a positive frame
In the following two sections I will review selected studies in greater detail, dividing the discussion into the studies focusing on ‘strain’ factors and the studies focusing on ‘success’ factors.

c) Examples of ‘Strain’ Factor Studies

In this part of the chapter four ‘strain’ factor studies will be briefly reviewed, two from England and two from New Zealand.

(i) Dunning (England)

Dunning’s study (1993) was conducted at a time of great concern in England that small school heads might not manage the curriculum and administrative reforms as well as larger school heads could. Dunning set out to test this hypothesis by reviewing all the recent literature available on the issue. Central to his study was the concept of ‘double-loading’. His review was organised into two parts: an examination of the ‘double-loading’ problem in the period before the reforms, and an analysis of the impact of the reforms on the double-loading problem.

- The Double-Loading Problem before the Reforms

Dunning found that the double-loading of teaching heads was widely regarded as a problem as far back as the 1960s. In those times the management and leadership demands of the job were clearly less than they were to become after the reforms but there were still aspects that required careful self-management. Dunning refers to the main one of these as being the classic dilemma of the double-load.

Teaching heads have always suffered particular frustration from the conflict between their professional concern of teaching on the one hand and the relatively unimportant but distracting demands which stem from the minor disruptions and crises that regularly arise in day-to-day school life on the other (1993, p. 83).
Typically in small schools of the time there was little administrative support to cover things like telephone calls, hosting unexpected visitors, dealing with accidents or emergencies, or unplanned staff absences. In addition the head in a smaller school had to face a further demand - that created by the additional load resulting from the multi-age and multi-level class s/he typically had to deal with. In evaluating the extent of the load created by this demand, Dunning (1993) agreed with a 1965 assessment that taking into account the range of ages, abilities and interests, teaching a multi-level class effectively doubled the workload per student.

The Impact of the Reforms on the Double-Loading Problem.

In evaluating the impact of the reforms of 1988-1991 on the role of the teaching head, Dunning summarised his findings as follows:

- Firstly, the new management responsibilities flowing from Local Management of Schools (LMS) had created new commitments that were as demanding and onerous for the teaching head as for the non-teaching head.

- Secondly, the growing demands for performance and accountability had created a disparity of responsibility and support for teaching heads. The increasing scrutiny of their performance was not matched with increased provision of administrative assistance to handle aspects like strategic planning, analysing achievement data or appraising other staff.

- Thirdly, the new curriculum had created an expectation that teaching heads develop detailed understanding of junior as well as senior curriculum and assessment, plus an ability to lead curriculum development across all curriculum areas.

- Fourthly, the new demands in combination had multiplied existing problems for teaching heads in rural areas of professional isolation.
and restricted access to professional development opportunities (1993, pp. 82-84).

Dunning concluded his review by claiming that it showed that LMS would not of itself offer sufficient flexibility for small school heads to reconcile or alleviate all the conflicting demands of a combined teaching, management and leadership role that the reforms had created. Referring to the ‘slipstream effect’ that his study had revealed, he argued that the message to be taken from his research was as follows:

To formulate plans or policies for primary schools in any general sense is to make dangerous assumptions about the capacity of individual units to implement change. Legislators and policy makers have too seldom taken account of the ways in which new demands will affect disparate situations. Consequently teaching heads have often found themselves caught in a “slip-stream syndrome” in which they are left to interpret and adapt to their own special circumstances changes imposed with larger schools in mind (1993, p. 85).

We will return to this issue of policy-making which ignores the realities of the implications on workload for someone who is both a teacher and a manager in Chapter 3.

(ii) Hayes (England)

In this 1996 study, Hayes interviewed six teaching heads, three male and three female. The focus of the study was on their reasons for becoming a teaching head, their experience as a teaching head, and the consequences of the reality of the job on their initial idealism and subsequent emotional balance.

The reasons given for wanting to become a teaching head were similar for all six heads: a desire to continue teaching, a wish to be autonomous, an aspiration to ‘make a mark’, and the hope of being in a strong position to fulfil an educational vision.
However, once they were in post, all six heads found that they could not successfully meet all the demands of the job, which typically were not appreciated realistically before appointment to the position. In particular, they found the realities of the job restricted them in achieving their initial goals, as Table 2.3 below indicates.

Table 2.3. Hayes’ Hopes and Realities in Teaching Heads’ Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Reality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Desire to continue teaching</td>
<td>Threatened by pressure of managerial and administrative work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Desire to be autonomous</td>
<td>Quickly became aware of the impact of own limitations and need for colleagueship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Desire to make a mark</td>
<td>Realised that this might well be ‘more of a blot than a masterpiece’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Desire to fulfil vision</td>
<td>Faced difficulties in straddling staff and community views</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The consequences of the initial idealism not being matched by the subsequent reality were that all principals developed coping strategies to mask the tension that they were feeling within. In particular, Hayes (1996) noted five strategies.

1. Banking Initial Credit. All the heads prioritised initially a project which would result in something tangible and visible that might create the impression that they were in control. This initial project might not be aligned with their vision or their desire to focus on the children, but it did build up a bank of credit from the start with governors and parents.

2. Impression Management. The credit banking process was typically accompanied by public relations work to make the most of the credit achieved. This included sharing the success informally with key governors and parents, and using newsletters and meeting time to spread the word more formally.
3. Disguising Inability to Maintain Ideal. After a time in the post all heads realised that it was impossible to maintain high standards in every aspect of the job. Typically they found they had to rationalise their teaching commitment. A range of specific tactics were used to achieve this. Although these tactics did not result in any great satisfaction, they did help the heads to manage their workload, without immediately sacrificing their reputation as effective teachers.

4. Cutting and Running. All the Heads intended to move on as quickly as possible. They were prepared to make the public commitment required to appear to be succeeding long enough to convince the community that their departure would be a loss to the school, but not long enough for their reduction in classroom commitment to become evident.

5. Developing Confidantes. For four of the heads a key priority was to maintain a network of local confidantes, typically people with similar responsibilities to their own. The head who suffered the strains of headship most acutely was the head who had the least well-formed support network.

At the end of his study Hayes reached the following conclusion:

Although the heads in this study saw headship as a means to personal fulfilment, once in the job they were driven to make tough choices about which parts of the job to focus on… The investment of self in the job made them potentially vulnerable to criticism and anxious for publicly attestable success in their quest for image maintenance. From the earliest days in the post the heavy and varied demands of headship meant that the need for personal survival gradually replaced their self-referential idealism (1996, p. 389).

Hayes’ study as a whole provides an illuminating illustration of the way role, strain, strategy and career interact in the current English policy setting.
Livingstone (New Zealand)

Livingstone’s 1999 study was based on a survey sent to a stratified one-in-five sample of all teaching principals in New Zealand. The study was commissioned by NZEI, the primary teacher’s union, as part of a campaign to get the issues faced by teaching principals more widely recognised. Almost 90% of the teaching principals approached responded to the survey request.

The survey focused on five issues: workload, satisfiers and dissatisfiers in the present work, preparation and training for the job, recruitment and retention factors, and suggestions for improvement.

- As far as workload was concerned the study found that teaching principals were working an average of 63 hours a week. Over the weekends during term time they averaged 6.6 hours of work. In out of term time they averaged five days work each term break.
- The major satisfiers were reported as being the pleasure of teaching children, working with supportive colleagues, the opportunity to engage in educational leadership, and receiving recognition by parents and/or community (in order of importance).
- The main dissatisfiers were the amount and nature of the paperwork required in the job, the total number of hours now required to do the job, the impact this was having on family and personal life, and the threat of ERO reviews.
- In preparation for the position, the average length of teaching service before initial appointment as a teaching principal was nine years. About 40% were appointed directly to a teaching principal position without any management experience. One hundred and thirty of the 190 respondents said that they had ‘no prior preparation’ or ‘inadequate prior preparation’ before their first appointment.
- Respondents gave two main reasons for wanting to become a teaching principal: for the challenge, and to help children. If able to make a free choice right now, 40% said they would leave teaching immediately. When asked how long they expected realistically to stay in their present position, the median suggested time was 3.7 years.
Respondents made four main suggestions for improvement: firstly, to increase the amount of release time; secondly, to reduce the paperwork and record keeping requirements; thirdly, to develop a clearer career pathway between teaching principal positions and non-teaching principal positions; and fourthly, to slow the rate of curricular and administrative change (Livingstone, 1999, pp. vi-viii).

Overall, Livingstone claimed that his survey results “highlighted teaching principals’ voices, unedited and uncensored. They say some discomforting things, but they speak honestly and most eloquently. They need to be heard.” (1999, p. 80). The major theme of the study is clearly the strain created by current work pressures.

(iv) Whittall (New Zealand)

Whittall’s 2002 study examined principal retention and transition patterns in a cross section of small New Zealand schools over the decade 1990-2000. The study focused on the Nelson-Marlborough region, a region which has been traditionally regarded within the teaching service as a desirable area in which to gain an appointment, because of the climate and lifestyle available. Over the decade, Whittall tracked principal retention and transition in 50 small primary schools. He found that on average, each school had a total of 3.5 principals in the decade. However when the fact that five of the 50 schools closed early in the study, and another six had no change in principal over the ten years are factored in to the calculation, the average number of principals over the decade in each of the remaining 39 schools rises to 4.25 per school (that is, a new principal for each school on average every 2.2 years). Whittall also found that the smaller and remoter the school the higher the principal turnover was likely to be. The two schools with highest turnover had had ten different principals over the decade.

In his analysis of the reasons given for leaving the position, Whittall found that there were eight key groupings of reasons:
1. Ongoing conflict and relationship difficulty, with other staff or the board or parents;

2. Pressure from the board of trustees, in particular in relation to student discipline or performance issues;

3. Workload, especially the increasing time required to complete tasks and the seemingly ever mounting pressure of the work;

4. Preference to focus on teaching, especially the wish to return to an original love for classroom teaching;

5. Professional change, that is, the desire to widen professional horizons with a change to a new type of professional work;

6. Career change, such as a feeling that it was time to try something outside education;

7. School change, for example, the principal deciding the school needed a change of leadership; and

8. Family or personal reasons, for example, a principal deciding to relocate for reasons of wife’s or children’s welfare or for their own health’s sake (Whittall, 2002, p. 11).

The reasons why principals departed their position changed over the ten years of the study. During the first four years, most left for reasons 1 and 2, or for one of reasons 4, 5 and 6 above. In the latter years of the study, reason 3 became much more prominent (Whittall, 2002).

Whittall also investigated the destinations of the 135 principals who had left positions in these schools over the decade. He found that two had died, sixteen had retired, three had moved to a non-teaching position in an educational support agency, seventeen had moved to a principal’s position at the same level as the one they were leaving, twenty one had moved on promotion,
twenty six had left education, and forty five had returned to a classroom teaching position.

On the basis of this analysis, Whittall suggested that over the decade of his study both turnover rates and fallout rates had doubled in the region. He claimed that in this region now a significantly large number of schools are experiencing unduly high principal transition rates.

For these schools this situation creates important implications - these include costs associated with the appointment process; disruption to school planning and programmes; and the continual uncertainty of not knowing when the next principal transition will occur (Whittall, 2002, p. 13).

Only a small number of teaching principals are seeking and gaining promotion, while a comparatively large number (particularly first timers) are taking up other career options. If these trends are extrapolated across the country, then a serious problem is evident. “Huge resources of money, time, expertise and experience are lost every time one of these people departs” (Whittall, 2002, p. 13). Overall, Whittall claimed, the research data that he had collected over the past decade “gives a generally encompassing and realistic picture of what has been happening regarding principalship in small and rural New Zealand primary schools” (2002, p. 3).

In sum, this study indicates the way the traditional New Zealand career path for principal development (from classroom teacher to small school principal to larger school principal) had broken down during the 1990s in one New Zealand region.

d) Examples of ‘Success Factor’ Studies

In this part of the chapter two studies will be reviewed, one from Australia and one from England. Both studies utilise the concept of ‘instructional leadership’.
Wildy and Dimmock (Australia) studied the instructional leadership behaviour of a range of school principals in Western Australia in the early 1990s, using an instructional leadership rating scale based on that used earlier by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) in their studies of principalship in the United States in the mid 1980s. Wildy and Dimmock were especially interested in two factors: the comparative ratings between primary and secondary principals, and the extent to which ‘instructional leadership’ behaviours were shared with other staff in different sizes and types of school. At the time the survey was being conducted, all schools in the district in which the survey was carried out were experiencing administrative restructuring, with the change being from a highly centralised system to a much more devolved system. In this study Wildy and Dimmock were also interested in seeing whether this reform was having any significant impact on principal behaviour, in comparison to the earlier studies done in the US (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and Japan (Willis & Bartell, 1990), where devolution was less apparent.

In the total sample of schools studied (22), four were secondary schools, four were primary schools which had a roll under 100, and five had a roll between 100 and 300. The rest were primary schools with a roll between 300 and 1000. The instrument used focused on four dimensions of instructional leadership behaviour: defining and communicating the school’s mission, managing the curriculum, promoting a positive school climate, and evaluating and providing feedback.

The key findings in the study were as follows:

1. Instructional leadership tasks were generally perceived to be performed less by secondary principals than by primary principals.

2. In secondary schools, instructional leadership was regarded as a shared responsibility involving staff at all levels, with principals in many instances playing only a minor part.
3. In primary schools, principals of the smallest schools (with a roll under 100), were perceived to have the greatest involvement in instructional leadership, just ahead of principals in schools with a roll between 100 and 300.

4. Principals in larger non-teaching primary schools (with a roll over 500) had a higher score overall for instructional leadership than those in smaller non-teaching primary schools (with a roll between 300 and 500).

5. In comparison to overseas ratings, Western Australian principals scored highly in ‘defining and communicating the school’s mission’ and ‘promoting a positive school climate’. However, they generally scored lower on ‘evaluating and providing feedback’. In particular they scored lowly on the item ‘provides rewards and recognises high quality teaching’ (Wildy & Dimmock, 1993).

In explaining the patterns that they found, Wildy and Dimmock concluded that the principals of the smallest schools scored most highly in ratings of instructional leadership because of their direct involvement in teaching; principals in the larger primary schools scored second highest because they had a number of senior staff with whom they could share tasks; while principals in medium sized primary schools scored lowest because such schools were too large to permit teaching principals and too small to have staff with whom to share the tasks. “Principals in these schools assume responsibility for all management functions with little administrative support and may not have time for instructional leadership” (1993, p. 59).

Overall, Wildy and Dimmock concluded that:

this study suggests that… [except in the smallest schools] principals perceive they do not have sole or major responsibility for instructional leadership… At a time of rapid and widespread structural change…it is critical that principals devote resources to nurturing teachers, giving technical and personal support, and
supervising, recognising and rewarding high quality teaching
(1993, p. 60).

The significance of this study for my purposes arises from the extent to which it indicates principalship strategies differ in different school sizes or settings. In particular it is one of the few studies reviewed that has a data-set on principalship in schools with a roll under 100 students.

(ii) Southworth (England)

Southworth has reported his study on headship in small English primary schools in a number of forms (Southworth, 1999a, 1999b, 2002). In this review I will be referring to his 2002 version, because in this paper he uses the concept of instructional leadership in his analysis of findings (this is not used in either of the 1999 reports). Their shared use of this concept should allow me to demonstrate the advance in knowledge in the decade from the time of the Wildy and Dimmock paper (1993).

Southworth’s 2002 paper, entitled ‘Instructional leadership in schools: Reflections and empirical evidence’, sets out to argue that instructional leadership needs to be given “much greater emphasis than previously” (2002, p. 89). In his ‘reflections’ section, Southworth proposes two reasons for this importance. Firstly, the emphasis on instructional leadership needs to be heightened because of the potential value of any future findings about instructional leadership.

Given the global interest currently in learning organizations, and because it is instructional leadership that makes school leadership a distinctive branch of leadership practice and theorising, heads can undoubtedly teach business leaders a thing or two about running a social organization in which staff learning is a major priority and investment (2002, p. 75).

Secondly, instructional leadership needs to be re-emphasised because of some of the limitations to the studies that have already been carried out on
instructional leadership in schools - as he puts it, there is currently something of an issue because “the contemporary literature is far stronger in prescribing such leadership than it is in describing it” (Southworth, 2002, p. 76).

The body of the paper deals in detail with two recent empirical studies of instructional leadership – Blasé and Blasé’s 1998 study and Southworth’s own 1999 study. In introducing these two studies, Southworth also refers to Hallinger and Heck’s 1997 distinction between ‘direct’ effects (where the principal’s actions directly influence student learning outcomes), and ‘mediated’ effects (where the principal’s actions impact on other variables, which then indirectly influence student outcomes). Southworth (2002) believes that the major area where we must move from prescribing instructional leadership to describing it is in understanding the pathways by which these two sets of factors act and interact in different leadership contexts.

Blasé and Blasé’s study (1998) focused on what teachers described as influencing their thinking and their performance in the classroom, either positively or negatively. This study found three crucial aspects of positive instructional leadership behaviour: heads talking with teachers (‘conferencing’), promoting teachers’ professional growth, and fostering teachers’ reflection. These three aspects were tied to three other head teacher behaviours that could have positive (or negative) effects: being visible (as opposed to interrupting or abandoning), praising results (as opposed to criticising), and extending autonomy (as opposed to maintaining control) (Southworth, 2002). Southworth concluded that these findings were valuable, but they were limited in one important respect, because they did not make it clear whether the findings applied equally to junior, middle and high schools, or whether there were any contextual variations in the patterns.

Southworth then reports his own findings, based on a study of ten successful small school principals of primary schools in England. Southworth embarked on this study because of his hunch that “we may have much more to learn about instructional leadership from leaders of small schools than from leaders of larger ones” (2002, p. 81). Southworth discovered that there were six general factors identified by respondents as contributing to the success of the
small school heads: working hard, being determined, having a positive disposition, being approachable, promoting teamwork, and managing school improvement effectively. In addition, there were three key personal-professional strategies that the heads used to reinforce their impact as instructional leaders:

1. Modelling, that is, using their own teaching as an example of what and how to do things, plus working alongside other staff in their own classrooms and coaching the sorts of behaviours that they expected.

2. Monitoring, that is, using strategies such as visiting teachers in their classrooms, looking at their plans, examining samples of students’ work and reviewing test or other assessment data, to convey the expectation that teachers were expected to perform to a high standard.

3. Professional dialogue and discussion, that is, questioning and discussion during staff meetings or in informal discussion with teachers at other times, which aimed to use sustained teacher talk as a vehicle for teacher or staff development (Southworth, 2002, pp. 83-84).

Southworth concluded that these findings complemented those reported by Blasé and Blasé, both in their similarity and their differences. Both studies pointed to the importance of ‘mediating’ factors, such as professional dialogue. Though in the case of small schools it might be reasonable to assume that heads would have a stronger ‘direct’ influence than those in larger schools, the ten heads that he studied in depth deployed both direct and mediated forms of influence, apparently recognising that in combination the two forms of influence were more powerful than either in isolation. Because these small school heads “engaged with the mediating effects, as well as relying on direct effects, they were particularly powerful in making a difference inside their schools” (2002, p. 85).

While Southworth’s study paints a clear picture of the strategies these teaching heads used to influence learning in their schools, its findings relate to small schools that would be ‘larger’ small schools if transposed to the New Zealand
school setting described in Chapter 1. Southworth’s study tells us little about principalship in ‘smaller’ small schools. My review of the literature has failed to unearth a single study which compares the leadership strategies of principals in ‘larger’ small schools with those in ‘smaller’ small schools (in New Zealand terms), except the study by Wildy and Dimmock (1993).

c) **A Frame For Analysing Small School Principalship**

This review of the literature on small school principals has identified both ‘strain’ and ‘success’ factors associated with the job of being a ‘teaching principal’.

Based upon this review of the literature, I have drawn up the following template to use in my later analysis of the work of the small school principals in my study.

```
The work of small school principals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Strain’ Factors</th>
<th>‘Success’ Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management</td>
<td>Classroom model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall workload</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community pressure</td>
<td>Strong school/community bond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System pressure</td>
<td>Ability to choose wisely (prioritise, ignore, remain focused)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Figure 2.4. A template for examining small school principalship
The diagram highlights both ‘strain’ and ‘success’ factors.

The four highlighted ‘strain’ factors for small school principals are:

1. Classroom management: the strain, as represented by Dunning (1993) in particular, of having to teach a multi-age and/or multi-level class.

2. Overall workload: the strain, as represented by Whittall (2002) and Livingstone (1999) for example, of having to manage increasing work pressure created by the new self-managing responsibilities.

3. Community pressure: the strain indicated by Hayes (1996) and Whittall (2002), for example, to conform to local community expectations.

4. System pressure: the continuing pressure from external agencies to adjust or make improvements to school processes’ as indicated by Dunning (1993) and Livingstone (1999).

The four highlighted ‘success’ factors for small school principals have been drawn from Wildy and Dimmock (1993) and Southworth (2002), as corollaries to the four strain factors:

- The power of the model of one’s own classroom teaching, as a corollary to the classroom management strain;
- The opportunity to develop teamwork, as a corollary to the strain from overall workload;
- The creation of a strong school/community bond, as the corollary to community pressure; and
- The ability to choose wisely when managing school improvement, as the corollary to system pressure.

This template will be used, along with the three ‘principalship’ templates above, in analysing the ‘principalship’ set of data, later in the study (Chapter 5).
3. CONCLUSION

To conclude the chapter I will recapitulate the points made earlier about the meaning to be given in this study to two key terms: ‘principalship’ and ‘small schools’.

For the purposes of this study I have defined ‘principalship’ to be the important sets of ideas about their work held by the people doing the job of ‘principal’ in schools. The study will focus in particular on the strategic ideas that principals have for managing their work.

In this study I define a ‘small’ New Zealand primary school as a school with a current roll of under 180. In New Zealand at present primary schools are staffed so that in schools with a roll over 180 the principal may be released full time from class responsibilities.

From principalship the focus of the discussion now turns to policy, in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3

POLICY FOR SMALL SCHOOLS AND POLICY FOR PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT

This chapter sets out to explore the concept of policy being used in the study, and to review the relevant literature. There are three major sections in the chapter:

2. Small School Policy.
3. Principal Development Policy.

The chapter begins with an initial discussion of two central concepts: ‘policy’ and ‘policy analysis’.

The small school policy section will recapitulate the three general policy approaches, what the literature says about the three approaches, and the template that will be used to frame the small school policy analysis later in the study.

The principal development policy section will briefly review the policy issues and options. It will then summarise what the literature says about principal development, and will finally provide an overview of the principal development template that will be used later in the study.

The chapter concludes with a brief recapitulation of the two main sets of terms defined in earlier sections of the chapter.

Throughout the chapter, the emphasis is on showing how ideas taken from the literature being reviewed will be used later in the study.

1. POLICY AND POLICY ANALYSIS

What constitutes policy and policy analysis in the New Zealand settings needs to be established at the outset. This section of the chapter outlines some initial thoughts on these matters.
a) Defining Policy

For a working definition of policy in the New Zealand context I have found Prestidge (2000) especially helpful. Prestidge illustrates his definition of policy by contrasting a ‘naïve’ and a ‘realist’ view of educational policy-making in New Zealand.

(i) Prestidge on a Naïve View of Policy

Prestidge (2000) begins by suggesting that a logical, if somewhat naïve, view might be that a policy is a course of action adopted and followed consistently by an individual, organisation or system (including a government). Policy according to this view has a rationale which can be articulated by people with a leadership responsibility for policy development. It is made on a considered basis after a systematic consideration of the alternatives. It resolves important issues.

(ii) Prestidge on the Realist View of Policy

However, Prestidge (2000) goes on to suggest, the reality with regards to education policy in New Zealand is often far from this rational, pristine picture. He notes in particular the following patterns in educational policy making in the New Zealand setting:

- Policy is often ad hoc and is usually made on the run.
- Policy is not always rationally made but is often achieved in tentative and incremental steps, each of which usually involves the exercise of power.
- Policy is a process as well as a product – and this process is often characterised by ongoing contestation, rather than emerging consensus or resolution.
- Policies do not exist in a vacuum; an understanding of the context in which policies emerge is critical to an understanding of the policies themselves.

According to this realist view of policy, policy texts only provide a snapshot of the moving mosaic which is policy in practice. Prestidge (2000) therefore concludes that the best working definition of policy in the New Zealand setting
currently is the one suggested by Dye (1976) – policy is not what governments (or policy texts) say, but instead, policy is what governments choose to do or not to do.

b) **Proposed Framework for Analysing Policy and Policy Detail**

In thinking about how I might study possible policy impact in this research, I have found Codd (2001) particularly helpful. Codd proposes that in the study of policy detail, both policy ‘ideology’ and policy ‘texts’ are likely to be important.

(i) **Codd on Policy Ideology**

Following Ball (1990), Codd (2001) believes that policy is essentially about the operational statement of preferred values. In policy analysis we need to ask whose values are being validated and whose are not. On most educational policy issues there is likely to be some discrepancy between the basic values or ideologies of politicians, bureaucrats and professionals. He illustrates the sorts of differences likely by adapting Ball’s 1990 diagram, showing how ideological differences operate at three levels and with three strengths, using the example of assessment in New Zealand schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength 1</th>
<th>Strength 2</th>
<th>Strength 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Tastes in Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1</strong> Politicians</td>
<td>Market forces</td>
<td>Freedom of choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2</strong> Bureaucrats</td>
<td>Good administration management system maintenance</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Codd, 2001, p. 57, after Ball, 1990)

Figure 3.1. A three level comparison of policy ideology using the example of assessment
Like Ball (1990), Codd (2001) proposes that because of ideological contention at different levels in the policy process, policy making and implementation is inevitably a tension-filled, messy and often contradictory process. Codd’s argument here mirrors that of Prestidge (2000) about how policy is typically made within New Zealand education.

(ii) **Codd on Policy Texts**

When it comes to policy texts, Codd (2001) argues that within a ‘technical-rationalist’ conception of the policy process, official documents are regarded as clear expressions of government purpose, developed in response to political goal setting and following research by policy analysts of the available alternatives. These policy statements are then fleshed out by policy makers and administrators in their work of policy-implementation. Following the critique of Fay (1975), Codd believes that this view of policy texts is a-critical. It ignores the existence of personal ideologies at all levels in the policy process and entails several ‘idealistic’ assumptions about the nature of language. It is therefore unable to provide a deeper analysis of the ways in which such texts produce certain differential ideological effects at different levels and times or in different circumstances.

Following Foucault’s materialist theory of discourse (1980), Codd argues for an alternative conception of the reading of policy texts - a conception which he calls a ‘materialist’ conception (2001, p. 60). In this view, policy texts signify different linguistic and cultural practices depending on the context within which they are decoded. Socially situated readers will respond to such texts in different ways. A materialist analysis of policy implementation begins with the construction of the initial text and the way in which ambiguity is built in to the policy statement to try to accommodate variations in ideology or values. The analysis then investigates the statement’s content and impact in terms of divergent meanings, contradictions and structured omissions which enable the content to produce different effects for different readers, each of whom may have different beliefs and values.
According to Codd (1995), policies produced by and for the state are obvious instances in which language serves a political purpose, constructing particular meanings and signs that work to mask social conflict and foster commitment to the notion of a universal public interest. In this way, policy documents produce real social effects through the production and maintenance of consent. These effects, however, remain unrecognised by traditional forms of analysis which are derived from an idealist viewpoint.

The materialist conception allows a policy analysis to firstly deconstruct text, policy agendas and institutionalised assumptions. It then supports the revision and reconstruction of policy issues from the standpoint of different socio-cultural realities and incorporating voices from the counter-publics that may not have previously been heard in the policy debate (Codd, 1995).

Figures 3.2 and 3.3 contrast these two versions of the place of policy-text in the policy-construction process.
Figure 3.2. A materialist conception of the policy text

(Codd, 2001, after Foucault, 1980)

Figure 3.3. A technical-rationalist conception of policy analysis

(Codd, 2001, after Fay, 1975)
The Approach to Policy in this Study

Small school policy is currently a contentious issue in New Zealand (Adin, 2003). Chapter 1 has already foreshadowed the nature of the policy problem presently facing New Zealand educational decision-makers. Since 1989 a legal framework has been created which vests considerable autonomy in single-school Boards of Trustees. Hence there are legal limits on the state’s ability to dictate school amalgamations (Breakwell, 2002). In addition the current government maintains it has an obligation to provide reasonable access to a local school, while also being concerned with the economics of providing adequate educational opportunities for all across the current schooling network (MOE, 2001c). The failure of the EDI policy of the early 1990s to encourage voluntary consolidation of small schools and the resulting political backlash has been well documented (Butterworth and Butterworth, 1998). Yet population trends clearly indicate that primary school rolls will fall substantially in many provincial districts in the next ten years (Coppen, 2002). There is thus pressure on policy-makers both to do nothing and do something fairly radical with regards to the small New Zealand primary school network.

To do something fairly radical, legally the government must act in close consultation with local schools and communities. For assurance to all parties this consultation should occur within a consistent policy framework.

However, my assumption in framing this study has been that in the development of New Zealand’s recent policy frameworks, the views of teaching principals and small schools have been largely ignored or silenced. In England, Dunning (1993) refers to the ‘slipstream effect’ which applies to schooling there, where policy is devised for all schools largely based on a consideration of urban issues. Small schools therefore have to cope with a policy framework which often has little match to the realities of their work. My clear impression in New Zealand is that both the policy for small school development and the policy for principal development have been created largely in Wellington by people with little understanding of the realities of the lifeworld of small school principals. As Southworth comments in the introduction to his 1999 study of small school headship in England, “given
policy-makers’ preoccupation with the challenges associated with urban schooling, small rural schools are not usually given a high priority. Consequently, many staff in small schools feel overlooked and under-valued” (1999, p. 2). Or, as one New Zealand teaching principal commented to Livingstone during his 1999 survey of the workloads of teaching principals in New Zealand, “The MOE/ERO/Govt don’t consult enough with rurals… We certainly don’t feel that we’ve been consulted in any way over Special Education 2000” (a recently introduced government policy) (Livingstone, 1999, p. 81). The present study therefore aims to ‘dig deeper’ in selected policy areas to try to test my assumption and impression of the invisibility of small school principals’ views in recent policy evolution, and also to try to incorporate these previously silenced views in any future policy consideration.

In my coverage of policy evolution so far in New Zealand, as outlined in Chapter 1, I have probably been implying a ‘technical-rationalist’ interpretation. In looking to ‘dig deeper’ at the implementation of selected policies later in this study, I will need to apply more of a materialist conception, following Codd (2001), if I wish to privilege previously silenced views. In my study of these selected policies I will therefore need to concern myself both with deconstructing the readings of the policy intention made by the bureaucrats charged with implementation, and with reconstructing the debate incorporating the views of teaching principals directly involved in implementation in different socio-economic (or other relevant social) settings.

In Chapter 6 I attempt to ‘dig deeper’ in selected policy areas using Codd’s (2001) framework of policy-analysis, as well as some of Prestidge’s (2000) concepts about the nature of the policy process. In the rural forum, which closes the study (see the Endnote to this report and Appendix 8), I attempt to reconstruct the policy debate about the future of small primary schools in New Zealand.
2. SMALL SCHOOL POLICY

a) Outline of Policy Approaches of Interest in this Study

This section of the chapter reviews the literature on small school policy. In particular, the section reviews seven ‘Anglo’ studies from the Commonwealth, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, exploring the relationship between small school policy at the system level and the impact of the policy on schools. However, to begin, the section recapitulates the current approach to small school policy in New Zealand.

(i) The Three Approaches

In Chapter 1 I have already indicated the three broad approaches to small school policy at the system level which are of special interest in this study. Using key points from Prestidge’s 2000 analysis of the evolution of policy regarding small schools in New Zealand to reiterate, these three approaches are:

1. A ‘Supportive’ policy, based on a series of special measures to overcome the potential disadvantages or discriminations that small schools might otherwise face. In adopting this approach, a key issue for policy makers is determining the measures which are likely to have the most positive impact.

2. A policy of ‘Rationalisation’, in which the network of small schools is placed under review and the schools which fall within certain parameters as defined in the policy are rationalised either by merger with other small schools or closure. The key policy issue here is defining the parameters which should apply to trigger a rationalisation review.

3. A ‘Two-Track’ policy, where some small schools are rationalised while others are strengthened. Communicating some of the subtlety of detail in the policy is a key policy issue with this approach.
New Zealand’s Current ‘Two-Track’ Strategy

In New Zealand at present, policy is based on a two-track strategy, aimed both at strengthening and rationalising the small school network, as these extracts from two recent policy texts indicate.

1. The Strengthening Track: The Aims of the School Administration Support Cluster (SASC) Policy.

   Background

   Small schools face a number of challenges, many of which relate to their isolation and small roll size, including:

   o The principal having to combine teaching with managing the school;
   o Similar administrative tasks to larger schools;
   o Not having a large enough pool of parents with the skills to govern the school; and
   o Declining rolls in some areas, raising issues about the viability of the school.

   Objectives of the SASC Programme

   The objective of the SASC programme is to facilitate co-operative and innovative administrative arrangements among small schools in order to:

   o Reduce the workloads of principals and boards of trustees;
   o Create effective and sustainable school administration systems that allow more time for boards and principals to focus on improving educational outcomes for students; and
   o Assist principals and boards in the effective management of their schools.
Various school administration systems may be suitable for SASC project funding. Such systems may include:

- School planning;
- School reporting;
- Student assessment;
- Property management;
- Financial management;
- Purchasing;
- Staff performance management; and
- ICT systems.

In addition, projects that sit outside of these areas may also be approved, such as scoping possible forms of shared/alternative governance (SASC Circular 2002/24 of 24 November, MOE 2002b, pp. 1-3).

2. The Rationalising Track: Principles for School Closures and Mergers.

**Principles**

The principles on which the management of school closure and merger funding is built are:

- The main purpose of any school closure or merger is to improve educational opportunities for students. Therefore the educational needs of the students is paramount in determining the use of EDI funding; and the Ministry is a party to the memorandum setting out the level of funding involved.
- Every school that closes or merges generates EDI cash grant funding and a revised property entitlement.
- Where two or more schools are involved in the process of a network review and two or more schools remain at the end of the process, then additional funding at an
established range of rates is provided for cross-school initiatives.

- The calculation of funding to be returned to any school will be based on a formula and not on individual negotiations.
- The Minister reserves the right to adjust the rates set out in the formulae.
- Acceptance of the EDI funding indicates a willingness to co-operate with the Ministry in the review and a future evaluation of the educational benefits that may have been achieved (School Closures and Mergers: Information for schools, August 2002 draft, MOE 2002c, p. 1).

Participants in this research received both these pieces of policy text from the Ministry of Education during the data collection phase of the study. Codd (2001) suggests that ambiguity is often built into the texts of policy to try to create consensus. Based on Codd’s framework for policy analysis, I was interested in gauging how my participating principals read the overall Ministry goals for the small school network from their interpretation of pieces of policy text such as these two examples. Part of my data-gathering was focused on this issue.

b) What the Literature says about Small Schools and Small School Policy

The literature on policy for small schools largely consists of policy reports of one form or another. In conducting the literature review for this part of study I have reached four conclusions about what the literature says about small schools and small school policy:

1. The literature is broadly clustered into two groupings: the efficiency/viability cluster, and the effectiveness/comparative performance cluster;
2. Within the efficiency/viability type reports, a major policy issue is striking an appropriate balance between central and local decision-making when considering the shape of the future network;

3. Within the effectiveness/relative performance type reports, a major finding relates to the importance of the principal to school quality; and

4. The eastern Australian states provide an illuminating case study of a range of policy approaches in action.

Let us now examine the evidence for each of these conclusions, based on the small school reports reviewed for this study. (These reports are listed in Appendix 10.)

(i) Conclusions about Underlying Concepts in Policy Reviews

In my survey of the ‘Anglo’ literature on small school policy since the 1980s, I reviewed 38 documents, with about a third being policy ‘texts’, a third being ‘reviews/reports’ and a third being ‘impact studies’. As I was ‘key-wording’ the content of the various documents, I began to notice a pattern starting to emerge - the typical key words fell into one or the other of two clusters:

1. The ‘Efficiency/Viability’ cluster; and
2. The ‘Effectiveness/Relative Performance’ cluster.

Typical key words for the ‘efficiency/viability’ cluster were concepts like rural demographic and economic trends, sustainability, school closures or mergers, survival issues, cost-effectiveness and value for money, overcoming perceived disadvantages of remoteness or isolation, and the impact of various national or local funding policies on small schools.

Typical key words for the ‘effectiveness/relative performance’ cluster were concepts like school clustering for improved performance, student engagement, curriculum provision, class or school size effects on achievement,
the social climate in small schools, and advantages/disadvantages of dealing with mixed age classes of pupils.

Based on this I have surmised that there are two main policy issues underpinning the documents reviewed:

1. How to achieve greater efficiency in the operation of the network of small schools within the schooling system as a whole; and

2. How to improve the effectiveness of the total network of small schools by promoting the more universal take-up of factors found to contribute to performance in the ‘more effective’ small schools.

To explain further the differences between these two clusters of factors, in the next two parts of this review I will briefly examine four policy reports, two with an ‘efficiency/viability’ slant and two with an ‘effectiveness/comparative performance’ slant.

(ii) Conclusions from Reports using an Efficiency/Viability Slant

As an illustration of what I am terming the efficiency/viability approach to policy on small schooling, I will compare a 1986 Commonwealth sourced report on small schooling with the 1991 New Zealand report on small schooling already mentioned in Chapter 1. In 1986 the Commonwealth Secretariat published a report called *Improving the cost effectiveness of small schools*. The report was the result of a review conducted throughout 1985 and 1986 considering the different aspects of the viability issue that applied in different parts of the Commonwealth. The report recommended three main courses of action. In Africa, where the major problem was deemed to be finding sufficient non-government money to support and expand the existing network of schools, the report recommended a series of strategies for community management and fund-raising in conditions of economic constraint. In the Caribbean, where the major problem was described as the teaching of practical subjects with a vocational link (as these subjects were seen as of increasing importance to employment, but disproportionately
expensive to teach), the report recommended ways in which building design and construction could be done more efficiently, and more cost-effective curriculum, examination and pedagogical practices might be developed. In the Pacific, where the major problem was identified as the need to support a network of small and intrinsically expensive schools in a region with thinly scattered populations, the report identified the administrative and pedagogical features that make the schools costly to run and recommended a number of measures for getting optimal educational results.

In 1991 the New Zealand Ministry of Education issued a *Report of the economic and educational viability of small schools*. In this report, the officials described the results of their analysis of the concepts ‘small’, ‘educational viability’ and ‘economic viability’. They also outlined the other issues that their review had addressed: the issue of the relationship between the school and the community in rural New Zealand, and the issue of availability and choice across the school system as a whole. They briefly outlined the alternatives to be considered when schools were identified as non-viable - amalgamation, consolidation, reconfiguration, closure - and set out possible procedures to apply to make the best decision amongst the alternatives. In particular, they stressed the importance of the involvement of the local community in the decision making process.

It is this last point in the New Zealand report which most clearly distinguishes the two reports. The Commonwealth report, put together in the final years of the ‘welfarist’ state, emphasised the role of the central policy-makers in managing viability issues within a system. The New Zealand report, completed in the immediate aftermath of a restructuring based on self-management, emphasised local involvement.

Those listed in the Commonwealth Secretariat report (1986) as having participated in the discussion included technical experts from agencies such as UNESCO and NZCER, various university academics, education officials from central and regional offices, and a small number of school principals. The recommendations in the report were addressed for action to, firstly, education
authorities; secondly, training institutions; and thirdly, the Commonwealth Secretariat.

According to the appendices of the New Zealand report (Ministry of Education, 1991), a total of over one thousand eight hundred submissions were received by the review group. Those listed as having contributed to the review through public submission included individuals, formal and informal groups, and local or regional branches of national organizations. Almost a third of the submissions were from boards of trustees of small schools. Analysis of the origins of the submissions revealed that New Zealand provinces with the greatest proportion of small schools - Northland, Taranaki, Hawkes Bay, and Otago/Southland - also produced the largest number of submissions. Almost a half of the submissions commented on the inadequacy of the review process and as a result of this the major conclusion from the report was that:

> The process used for examining the provision of education in any area be undertaken at the local level, with each district making the initial identification of schools considered non-viable, taking into account the cluster of schools in the area, and that this process fully involve Boards of Trustees and other relevant organizations (Ministry of Education, 1991, p. 54)

(iii) **Conclusions from Reports using an ‘Effectiveness/Relative Performance’ Slant**

As an illustration of what I call the ‘effectiveness/relative performance’ approach to small school policy, I will now compare two recent reports on small schools, one from England and the other from New Zealand, considering the educational impact of smallness in schools in these two systems. Again, the New Zealand report has been briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, but will be analysed in more depth here.

In England, Ofsted inspectors have used inspection data to compare the overall achievement and quality of education in small schools with that in larger ones. In their 1999 report they found that small schools typically performed better than larger schools. The curriculum which such schools offered was generally
as broad and balanced as that offered by larger schools. The management of small schools was at least as good as that of larger schools, if not better. The inspectors concluded that the head of a small school is of paramount importance to the success of the school because of her/his more than usually direct influence on the quality of teaching standards achieved. They also said that, notwithstanding the higher unit costs, a good case could be made for the place of small schools in the overall system (Ofsted, 1999).

In New Zealand, by contrast, a similarly conceived study by the Education Review Office in 1999 was much less positive in its overall assessment of small schools in that country. The study found that, while the majority of ‘larger’ small schools (that is, with a roll between 50-150) performed as well as larger schools (with a roll over 200), the ‘smallest’ small schools (with a roll of less than 30) performed markedly less well than either of the other two groups. All small schools performed well on indicators concerned with ‘school climate’, but the smallest small schools performed worse than others in both ‘curriculum delivery’ and ‘management’ (Education Review Office, 1999a).

The report suggested four reasons for areas of high performance by small schools: firstly, that small schools were often regarded as the hub of the community and so had an exceptional level of community support; secondly, the smaller school size typically meant a more friendly and personal atmosphere in the playground; thirdly, the smaller class size allowed more individual teacher attention and therefore enhanced individual learning opportunities; and fourthly, stronger teacher knowledge of individuals built up through longer contact with individual students provided greater understanding of individual needs (ERO, 1999a).

Problems of management and curriculum delivery arose because small schools typically have a smaller pool of trustees and therefore a generally lower trustee skill mix than larger schools. This is often compounded by the tendency for small school to have less experienced principals and few other senior staff. In addition, with few other teachers, the particular limitations of individual staff are magnified in small schools.
In the smallest small schools these potential problems were exacerbated because of the further reduced size. The smallest small schools typically had difficulty in maintaining the quality of the board of trustees, generally lower qualifications and experience of appointees, greater isolation from sources of professional development and support, a higher rate of principal turnover, and more difficulty in maintaining a full range of learning opportunities than other small schools.

The report concluded that where the quality of a small school was found to be good there was often still an issue of sustainability, especially if the current principal were to leave, because s/he was usually the main contributor to the ‘quality chain’. Where the state of education was poor, the report argued that the state needed to intervene much more actively than it had in the past (ERO, 1999a).

Both these reports point to the crucial importance of principalship to the quality of education in smaller schools and in rural areas. However, the way in which this contribution of the head/principal is perceived to translate into practice is somewhat different in the two reports, with the Ofsted report (1999) seeing the impact deriving from the dual role of the teaching head, and the ERO report (1999a) seeing the first cause as being a quality principal appointment by the board of trustees. A summary of the findings can be found in Figure 3.4.
Ofsted ‘Virtuous Circle’

Head exemplifies two attributes

- Good management
- Change and development achieved more quickly

Good teaching

- Head leads by example, assesses priorities for training/resources

- Better learning opportunities created

(Ofsted, 1999)

ERO ‘Quality Chain’

BOTs understand their role and use effective practice

- High quality principal appointed
- Effective staff attracted to school
- Teachers use excellent multi-level planning and curriculum delivery
- Learning opportunities for students in small schools are enhanced

(ERO, 1999a)

Figure 3.4. Comparative views on contribution of small school head/principal to school quality
To conclude this part of the chapter I now want to outline three examples of recent policy approaches, and their respective impacts, from the three Australian state educational systems of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.


Where New Zealand in 1992-1993 continued to rely on voluntary participation in school rationalisations, in Victoria at that time the state government of premier Jeff Kennett took a much more direct and determined approach.

The rationale for the policy approach, known as the ‘Quality Provision’ policy, has been explained by the Minister for Education in the Kennett government between 1992 and 1995, Don Hayward, as follows:

The revolution began on the morning of Wednesday, October 6, 1992. I had been sworn in as Minister for Education the previous day...We were faced with an immediate problem of eliminating an overall deficit in the total public sector budget of more than $1 billion....The Cabinet decided that it had no option but to eliminate the recurrent deficit in the shortest possible time...I ordered an immediate review of the physical condition of our schools. This showed that we had inherited a maintenance backlog of more than $670 million. Many of our schools were in shocking condition, and we did not have enough money to fix them all. Over its ten-year reign, the previous Labor Government had also failed to address the issue of demographic shifts in population. As a consequence there was an excessive number of unused places in many schools...Clearly, we had to transfer under-utilized resources to areas of greater need...Given that our mission
was to help students fulfil their potential, the question had to be asked as to whether the existing configuration of schools was such as to best do that. In particular, we had the responsibility to consider whether the merger of schools would result in students being offered access to a curriculum of greater breadth and depth. Also, with a larger cohort of students, a merged school had the opportunity to build a team of teachers with a range of different skills and backgrounds. This would broaden the educational experience for students and help the school meet individual needs…I decided that it was important for local communities to face these questions. In effect I wanted local communities to review the way schools were organised in their area…I called this process Quality Provision. For the community review I established Quality Provision Task Forces across the state…The outcome was a large number of mergers of two or more previous schools on the site of one of the previous schools. As a consequence we were able to close more than 250 previous school sites…I was able to gain the agreement of the Cabinet to reinvest every dollar from the proceeds of the sale of the surplus real estate back into school improvement…Over a three year period we raised nearly $200 million from asset sales (Caldwell & Hayward, 1998, pp. 38-45).

Clearly, Hayward was arguing here that the rationalisation would produce both efficiency and effectiveness gains. But was the impact as positive as hoped? A few months after Hayward’s retirement, in a 1996 evaluation of his period as Minister, Gough and Taylor reported that between 1992 and 1995 the education budget in Victoria had been reduced by more than $400 million. However, the data available suggested that most of this saving came from increased class sizes and overall staffing reductions across the system, rather than from property
savings. More than 11,000 teaching and administrative staff had left the government school system through redundancy or early retirement. Teaching morale was devastated as a result.

The massive cuts in teaching personnel have, as is often the case, resulted in many of the more experienced and more dynamic mid-profession schoolteachers reluctantly quitting schools, placing students in the hands of reduced staff numbers which are inadequately bolstered by a declining population of trainee teachers...In the short term Victoria may have gained financially, but in the longer term there may be continuing difficulties caused by the outflow of experienced and competent staff at a time of continuing curriculum change (Gough & Taylor, 1996, p. 78).

In addition, there were indications that parental involvement in schools may have dropped as a whole (Hayward rejected almost 20% of the recommendations made to him by the Quality Provision Task Forces) (Kenway, 1997), and research in Victorian playgrounds by Evans (1998) indicated that children’s social development opportunities may also have deteriorated as a result of the school mergers.

Overall, the evidence here about rationalisation would appear to indicate that it creates a range of ‘pains’ for the financial ‘gain’.


In New South Wales, according to Gammage, the policy approach could best be described as “equal treatment for small and large” (2000, p. 82). Unlike New Zealand, the New South Wales Department of Education and Training still has well staffed district educational offices to support schools in particular regions. The general philosophy appears to be that each of these district offices should support the mix of schools in the local district without fear or favour. In the district that is the focus for Gammage’s study, the Hunter, there are a total of 214
primary schools. Eighty eight (41 percent) were classified as small schools (with a roll under 150), while 59 percent were larger schools. In particular, according to Gammage’s analysis, the equal treatment policy towards larger and smaller schools in the district had six dimensions that might affect small schools in a negative way:

1. Principal Release Time. The amount of principal release is based on a per student allocation, with no extra weighting for smallness.

2. Professional Development. Funding for professional development is based on a per staff allocation, with no extra weighting for smallness.

3. Allocation of Administrative Support Staff. The allocation is based entirely on school size with no weighting for smallness.

4. School Property Maintenance and Development. The region prioritizes property maintenance and development to favour larger schools, on the principle that this will assist the greatest number of pupils.

5. Promotion Patterns. The pattern of promotions seems to ignore the value of small school experience in making appointments to larger schools, and also ignores the possible inappropriateness of exclusive large school experience in making appointments to smaller schools.

6. School Transport Provision. The region provides no subsidy for additional transport costs in rural areas (Gammage, 2002, pp.84-85).

In his survey of principal attitudes to their policy environment, Gammage (2002) came across concern from principals about all six dimensions of the ‘equal treatment’ approach. However strongest concern was expressed over perceived inequities in the provisions for release time and professional development. Solutions suggested by the
principals were to increase release time for teaching principals, especially in the smaller small schools, and to increase staff/professional development funding, with a new factor built in for travel for remoter schools. Overall, the principals were adamant that their problems and needs were significantly different from larger schools and that policy needed to recognise these differences.

In summary, then, the effect of an equal treatment policy seems to be the creation of a ‘second class citizen’ mentality in small school principals.


As far as Queensland is concerned, Clarke (2002) starts by reporting recent changes in the wider policy environment for all schools that is having an impact on teaching principals. This is very similar to the New Zealand experience.

In accordance to recent legislation relating to school-based management, small schools are now subjected to heightened expectations as well as growing demands for accountability from parents, administrators and politicians. Furthermore, small schools are required to cope with an enlarged curriculum and additional prescribed testing, often within a context of multi-age teaching and learning. As a result, the leadership and management of change has been an increasing concern of teaching principals, especially as it needs to be combined with a substantial commitment to the classroom (2002, p. 28).

Clarke (2002) reports that in Queensland there are currently about 400 teaching principals and about 25% of the schools in the system are classified as small (with small being defined by a roll of under 100).
Clarke then reports on two strategies initiated recently by Education Queensland, to try to overcome some of the difficulties and better support these small schools and their principals. These strategies have been:

- **The ‘Schools with Teaching Principals’ project, which promotes the establishment of clusters of small schools for educational purposes.** According to Clarke, this project has “demonstrated the capacity of models of small school collaboration to advance school improvement” (2002, p. 29). In particular, the collaborative projects have enabled small schools to concentrate more effectively on teaching and learning and have facilitated the professional growth of teachers and principals.

- **The recent establishment of a Graduate Certificate in Small School Leadership, currently being trialled at Griffiths University with Education Queensland backing.** This programme was developed because of the perception by the state that there was a critical need to enrich the professional development of aspiring and recently appointed small school principals if the reforms were to achieve their wider goals. Clarke reports that although this programme has only just been launched, with 25 participants in the initial trial, it already appears to be having a variety of positive effects, particularly in getting participants to recognise the significance of the variation in contexts that they are each dealing with and the range of principal-responses that might therefore be appropriate.

In a survey of responses to the current policy initiatives, principals strongly endorsed the establishment of clusters. They also supported the introduction of the new certificate, but felt more needed to be done at the pre-service stage to prepare young teachers for the potential challenges that they would face if appointed to a rural school.

Overall, then, the data reported by Clarke (2002) would appear to indicate that Queensland’s recent support policy initiatives have been well received by teaching principals in that state.
c) The Frame for Small School Policy Analysis in this Study

So what can we conclude from this review of the small school policy literature for small school policy making in New Zealand? One point that needs to be made immediately relates to a limitation in the analysis in many of the impact studies reviewed, where the study fails to control for the difference in effect between ‘smallness’ alone, and a combination of ‘smallness’ plus ‘rurality’ in creating the pattern of effects being reported. Many of the studies treat ‘small’ and ‘rural’ synonymously. However, in New Zealand only 70% of small schools are in rural areas. In designing this study, I will need to try to incorporate a design feature that will allow me to separate these two variables (see the explanation of the focus group structure and its rationale in Chapter 4).

Overall, the review of basic policy concepts and state policy approaches in three Australian states would appear to suggest that:

- Efficiency gains through network-rationalisation are certainly possible if the policy environment favours expenditure reduction by the state. However, the medium term impact on effectiveness is likely to be negative.
- An equal treatment approach seems to promote neither efficiency nor effectiveness in small schools.
- A policy of targeted support for strengthening small schools may result in significant effectiveness gains, without very great additional expenditure by the state.

As outlined in Section 2 of this chapter, New Zealand since about 1998 has had a small school policy based on a two-track strategy. There has been no significant research into the impact of this policy. This study sets out to explore the question of the possible impact of the present two-track policy. To do this I have designed the following template (Figure 3.5).
Policy Approaches

Approach 1: (Victoria) Rationalise
Approach 2: (New South Wales) Evenhandedness
Approach 3: (Queensland) Strengthen

Policy Rationales

Network Efficiency Paramount
Network Fairness Paramount
Network Effectiveness Paramount

Policy Impacts

Positive in fiscal terms, negative on morale
Possibly negative resulting in neither efficiency nor effectiveness gains
Mainly positive, for relatively small costs

Figure 3.5. A template for analysing small school policy

What the template indicates in the right and left hand columns is the general pattern that can be surmised from the Victorian and the Queensland experiences. The centre column, applying to the current New South Wales experience, is more hypothetical. In my study I will be seeking to clarify with policy officials what the rationale is for current New Zealand policy (the mid-centre item in the diagram). I will also be asking principals for their impression of the impact of the two-track policy in their local school and community (the bottom-centre item in the diagram).
3. **PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

This section of the chapter reviews the literature on principal development policy. In particular the section reviews the views of six educational experts from ‘Anglo’ countries on the principal development policy issue. However, to begin, the section analyses recent principal development policy and its evolution in New Zealand.

a) **The Policy Issue**

For the purposes of this study I define ‘principal education’ as the outcome of processes by which aspiring and actual principals are encouraged and supported to learn about aspects of the role and responsibilities of principalship, and their own abilities and understandings in relation to this role and set of responsibilities. I define the ‘principal development policy issue’ as the policy question which arises from principal education, about the role that the ‘post-welfarist state’ (Gewirtz, 2002) should play in these processes.

(i) **New Zealand Principal Development, 1989-1999**

In New Zealand the principal development policy issue surfaced early, almost immediately after the 1989 administrative restructuring. In May, 1990, as a result of political concerns about the implementation of various aspects of the Tomorrow’s Schools policy and with an election looming at the end of that year, the Minister of Education Phil Goff established the ‘Lough Committee’ to review the implementation experience so far and make recommendations for how the process might be improved. The Lough Committee (1990) quickly identified principal understanding/misunderstanding as a key issue. The committee then had to come up with a recommendation for an appropriate policy adjustment to provide for this contingency. Their eventual recommendation was that a ‘Principals’ Implementation Task Force’ be established, to plan and organise a series of seminars around the country over the next twelve months to train principals in the key skills and understandings required of their new role in the administrative framework (Butterworth & Butterworth, 1998, p. 162).
The principal development issue resurfaced on the policy agenda in 1996-1998, when new accountability requirements for the appraisal of all teachers were being designed. The particular issue here was whether a separate prescription should be developed for principals than teachers, and if so, what might need to be in this prescription (Collins, 1997). Initially, at the end of 1996, a single prescription for all teachers (including principals) was issued (MOE, 1997a, 1997b). However, in 1998 this prescription was overlain with an additional prescription of ‘professional standards’, with separate standards and processes for their assessment for principals, from those for other teachers (MOE, 1998b, 1998c).

By the election campaign of 1999, principal development was a ‘hot’ topic again, with a number of reports from the Education Review Office in that year calling for a more interventionist role from the state (ERO, 1999b, 1999c). In addition, both the teacher unions and the principals associations endorsed the idea of some form of state sponsored principal development (Lovegrove, 2000). The Labour Party went in to the election with a pledge to act on the issue, but with the form of the action undefined (Collins, 2002).

(ii) **New Zealand Principal Development Since 2000**

So what were the broad policy options available to the incoming government at the start of 2000? Collins (2002) claims that there were essentially three options at the time:

1. To leave principal development to the individual principal, with quality assurance decided by each board of trustees through the principal appointment and principal appraisal processes;

2. For the state to plan, organise and implement a new regime for principal development, with a requirement in principals’ employment contracts that the appropriate level and type of development had been undertaken before appointment could be made to particular types of principal position; or
3. For the state to encourage the two main principals’ associations to take responsibility for quality assurance in matters to do with principalship, in the same way that the doctors’ or lawyers’ professional associations take responsibility for the work of their members.

In addition, there were undoubtedly general considerations for the state of cost and benefit associated with any policy decision, especially as the decision was being made in a policy environment where the government was considering the simultaneous introduction of a range of relatively expensive school strengthening and support measures (Collins, 2002).

Chapter 1 has briefly summarised what happened next. The Minister, Trevor Mallard, essentially delegated to his officials the detailed work of considering which policy mix, from the three options, should be adopted. The officials hired the Hay Group (2001) to answer the questions they felt needed answering before the policy choice could be made. The decision was then taken, with Ministerial approval, for the adoption of what I will call the ‘three tier strategy’

1. For Aspiring Principals and for Principal Appointment: leave this to the individual aspirant and board of trustees;

2. For First Year Principals: a state sponsored and controlled programme, but with no requirement that the individual complete this; and

3. For Principals From Year Two Onwards: a still relatively undefined programme to assist principals and boards to continue the process of principal development throughout a principal’s career, based (at least initially) on information communication technology.

We now turn to a consideration of what the literature says about principal development in general and the three policy options in particular.
b) What the Literature says about Principal Development

The principal development policy issue is one well recognised in the wider literature on principalship, as well as in the New Zealand literature.

For the purposes of this review, the relevant literature has been deemed to be the ‘Anglo’ literature – North American, British, Australasian - since about 1990. For clarity and brevity the review of the international literature will focus on three of the most influential views on principal development - one from North America (Barth); one from England (Ribbins); and one from Australia (Gronn). These are the three most frequently cited Anglo authors in the wider principal development literature. The review of the local literature will also focus on three views - those of David Stewart (Massey University); Carol Cardno (Unitec); and Jan Robertson (Waikato University). All have been involved in the last five years in significant contract work associated with New Zealand’s various principal development initiatives.

Firstly, then, what can we learn about principal development from the international literature?

(i) **Barth**

Roland Barth, the former Director of the Harvard Principals’ Centre, put together his key arguments about principal development in his 1990 book *Improving schools from within*. In this book he suggested that the principal development problem had a number of aspects to it:

- Research clearly suggests that for school improvement the school is the most promising unit of change;
- Research also indicates that principals have a disproportionate influence on the professional development of teachers and the achievement of children; but
- Research also suggests that principal stocks are in danger of depleting; that a once stable profession is beginning to face unprecedented retention and recruitment issues (with two thirds of US principals at the time indicating...
they were likely to resign or retire within the next five years and with the number of teachers aspiring to principalship dropping significantly over the 1980s (Barth, 1990).

Barth then argued from his personal experience as a principal and a director of a principal’s centre that the major antidote to the debilitating current demands of the job of principalship, and the major resource in building school improvement from within, was to focus on continuous personal and professional invigoration of principals, “for those of high ability as well as low, those who meet with success as well as failure, and those who have been in the job for twenty years as well as two” (Barth, 1990, pp. 66-67).

Barth then lays out his arguments about principal education and principal development. Central to this argument is the contention that principal education should have a clear visionary endpoint: he suggests the creation of the school as a community of learners/leaders as being an appropriate such vision. This community needs to be based around shared values of independence/interdependence and autonomy/collaboration. The means to achieve this vision are the promotion of the notion of principal as head learner, assisted by a range of specific supports for ongoing principal education throughout her/his career. These supports include improved principal pre-accreditation courses, mentorship programmes between consenting peers, and principal centre courses run by and for principals. Barth also advocates principal journal writing and book writing as means to promote and share principalship reflection.

The implications of Barth’s arguments for principal development are, firstly, that the state should restrict itself to a concern about the accreditation requirements for appointment to a first principal position; and, secondly, that once a principal is appointed it is the responsibility of the individual and the profession of principals (through principal centres especially) to continue the professional education needed.
Peter Ribbins, a longstanding professor of educational management at Birmingham University, summarised his views on principal development in an article in *Educational Management: Redefining theory, policy and practice* (1999). In this article Ribbins presented his views under two headings, ‘Understanding Headship and Headship Development’ and ‘Developing Headteachers’.

Ribbins refers initially to the claim made in a recently published government green paper that “all the evidence shows that heads are the keys to a school’s success” (1999, p. 81). Ribbins believes that this is an exaggeration, quoting both his own and other research which qualifies the claimed link.

My own view, supported by much of my research, is... that headteachers, in the United Kingdom anyway, may have a key role to play in determining the quality of a school and the achievement of pupils. But to suggest that “all the evidence demonstrates this” is simply not true...(for example)..., in the fullest survey currently available, Hallinger and Heck (1999) report...that:

1. Leadership, as measured in the behaviours of school principals, does not exert a measurable direct effect on school effectiveness and student achievement.

2. Leadership, as measured in the behaviours of school principals, does exert a measurable indirect effect on school effectiveness and student achievement.

3. Leadership, as measured in the behaviours of school principals, is itself influenced by the context of the school and its environment (Ribbins, 1999, p. 81).
Ribbins (1999) then goes on to lay out the results of his more than twenty years of research on the lives and careers of headteachers. His starting position here was the idea that, for the generation of any worthwhile strategic approach to meet the developmental needs of headteachers, we must first have a detailed understanding of characteristic patterns of careers within the profession. His current model for this suggests that there are two ideal or typical pathways, one more positive and the other more negative (see Figure 3.6).

1. **More Positive Pathway**
   - Formation (Making Heads)
   - Accession (Achieving Headship)
   - Incumbency (Enacting Headship)
     - Initiation
     - Development
     - Autonomy
     - Enchantment
   - Moving On (Leaving Headship)
     - Reinvention

2. **More Negative Pathway**
   - Formation (Making Heads)
   - Accession (Achieving Headship)
   - Incumbency (Enacting Headship)
     - Initiation
     - Development
     - Autonomy
     - Disenchantment
   - Moving On (Leaving Headship)
     - Divestiture

(Ribbins, 1999, pp. 84-86)

Figure 3.6. Two principal career pathways

In commenting on this model, Ribbins focuses in particular on the factors which help explain the paths by which incumbency can lead either to ‘enchantment’ or ‘disenchantment’. He lists these factors as being enduring commitment, manageable job expectations, good relations with colleagues, a
balanced home and school life, balance between leisure and work, and good opportunities for continuing professional development.

Ribbins then examines and critiques the current framework for principal development in England. In brief, these developments are the National Professional Qualifications for Headship (NPQH), a national qualification for aspiring principals that combines training and assessment; and the Leadership Programme for Serving Heads (LPSH), a programme for experienced principals that starts with a 360 degree assessment and then provides individually targeted training, before the 360 degree assessment is repeated. He claims that these developments for heads (and other similarly conceived ones for teachers), most of which have taken place since 1995, are based on one central principle in the English Teacher Training Agency’s agenda, that “each stage in promotion should be preceded by training appropriate to the new duties, with evaluation at the end of the training being used to decide on the appointment” (Ribbins, 1999, p.82). Ribbins queries both the format of the training and the form of assessment it involves. In essence, Ribbins argues, these initiatives suggest that the government is over-concerned in trying to “make teaching as teacher-proof and school leadership as headteacher-proof as possible” (1999, p. 80).

Ribbins concludes by laying out his own preferred vision for principal development in the future:

- An approach which is centrally concerned with improving the quality of schooling and the achievement of pupils;
- An approach which makes available continuing professional development opportunities at every career phase (right up to and including preparation for retirement);
- An approach which has concern for practical skills but also for a more philosophical approach;
- An approach which involves a range of providers, with universities engaged fully and at a variety of levels;
An approach which provides core training, but supports developmental opportunities that mean more than this in terms of providing for individual interests and needs; and

An approach that is based on the best possible evidence and fosters research which generates this (1999, p. 87).

Ribbins appears here to be arguing for a form of principal development that is rather less state-prescribed than the current English model. His preferred approach implies a lesser role for summative assessment in the whole process, because of the threat involved in a ‘high stakes’ assessment situation; and a greater role for universities, to give a better range of options and a greater philosophical edge to the programme.

(iii) **Gronn**

Peter Gronn is a longstanding staff member at Monash University. In his recent book *The making of educational leaders* (1999), Gronn argues initially from a historical perspective that the state needs to play a much more active role in developing leadership generally than it has in the recent past. He then goes on to extend and refine some of Ribbins’ notions of career stages and the role they might play in principal development.

In his ‘bigger picture’ argument, Gronn starts by outlining the late nineteenth and early twentieth century ‘leadership-making systems’ of countries such as Japan, Germany and England. In these countries, he claims, there was a systematic process sponsored by the state for the identification, fostering and promotion of leadership talent. However, in the colonies of Australia and New Zealand, where there were always stronger equalitarian traditions, such systems were not reproduced. Even in England, Germany and Japan, much of the state apparatus for leadership-making had withered away by the middle of the twentieth century, largely as a result of the growth of a democratising ideology. Only in a few places in the Eastern bloc countries was there still an active leadership-making system in the second half of the last century.
In the new century, with its post-welfarist state and the need for ‘an intelligent society’ fostering to the maximum the talents of all, there is a need again to think about the issue of an appropriate leadership-making system to achieve this end. Gronn (1999) suggests that such thinking needs to be based on two broad principles:

1. If as never before there now exists a need for the ongoing supply of cohorts of requisite quality replacements for the currently stretched leadership cadre, the state should have a direct role in the regeneration of this cadre.

2. It is more desirable to provide systems that monitor and support the progress of individuals aspiring to leadership roles as they progress down pathways and negotiate the various barriers, constraints, demands or opportunities confronting them, than it is to rely on serendipity.

When it comes to school leadership, Gronn starts by arguing that school leadership “may be profitably thought of as a progression through four sequential career course stages: formation, accession to office or position of influence, role incumbency and finally, divestiture of status, power and role” (1999, p. ix). However, his analysis in this book focuses on the first two of these stages, because he claims that the most important distinction between any of the stages in the school context is between those of ‘getting there’ (formation) and ‘being there’ (accession). Gronn believes that any leadership-making system for schooling must recognise the significance of two core concepts: character and strategy. Gronn describes in some detail the three main aspects of leadership character: ‘identity’, ‘values’ and ‘work-style’ (Chapters 4-6). He then spells out what he means by strategy: the degree of calculated behaviour of individuals as they negotiate a career path through institutionalised pathways and roles (Chapters 7-9). In these latter chapters, Gronn illustrates the sorts of career supports which have been found to be most helpful in advancing potential aspirants from the first to the second stages, particularly ‘talent-spotting’ and various forms of mentorship. He also goes on to argue that aspiring principals need to be given a much greater sense of the importance of strategic thinking in planning their principalship career. In
particular, he stresses the importance of distinguishing between the strategies needed for the different elements of accession: preparation, selection and induction.

Gronn (1999) appears to give a sound rationale for a more active state policy of principal development. It also provides some practical suggestions for ways in which the mentoring relationship, in particular, might be made more productive.

Secondly, what can we learn about principal development from the local (New Zealand) literature?

(i) Stewart

In the 1990s David Stewart had a prominent role in the New Zealand debate that went on right through the decade about the principal development issue. Stewart was at the start of the decade on the staff of Massey University’s Faculty of Education but in 1997 he became the founding director of the New Zealand Principal and Leadership Centre. In his 2000 book, *Tomorrow’s principals today*, Stewart starts by stating and defending his position that principalship is mainly ‘headwork’. He then claims that, according to constructivist learning principles, the best way to change ideas and improve head-work is for learners to swap and compare perceptions in a non-threatening small group situation. Stewart terms this desired small group learning situation a ‘quality learning circle’ (2000, p. 8). He then reasons that the best forms of principal education will therefore be those which promote the greatest degree of constructivist-type learning, within a quality learning circle format. Stewart then reviews a number of the formats of principal education that he had been engaged in over the decade and reflects upon their relative effectiveness for creating the desired ‘quality learning’. In brief, these formats were:

1. An ‘intimate’ residential retreat for principals, held in holiday time. (What made these residential ‘intimate’ was their emphasis on the
usage of small break-out study groups of two to four principals, to reflect on previous experiences and review appropriate readings, rather than plenary type conference sessions with a series of addresses to a large group);

2. A programme of mentorship, linking between two and four less experienced principals with a more senior principal, ideally in the immediate locality;

3. On-line learning in a variety of formats, emphasising ‘helpdesks’, scenario study, and focused ‘chat-groups’ of two to four principals; and finally

4. A ‘digital’ principal portfolio, using reflective annotation of selected items (to then be shared with a trusted colleague) as the major learning tool (D. Stewart, 2000).

Stewart’s (2000) conclusions were as follows -

- The ‘intimate’ residential programme was extremely popular with participants and in follow-up research was found to have had a generally positive effect, but in comparison to the other options this was a time and resource intensive format, and as a result was accessed by relatively few principals. Also, this option failed to provide appropriate ‘follow-up’ in the participant’s own school.

- The various on-line learning options tried in the period before 1997 were rated as useful by those who had experienced them, but again, were adopted on a continuing basis by relatively few principals as a preferred option. Again, there were significant financial implications for schools considering this option. With more user-friendly technology appearing all the time, Stewart in 2000 remained optimistic that on-line learning might yet play a significant part in the overall mix of desirable options.
The initial mentorship trial (the Mentor_94 project) offered theoretical understandings for participating principal’s practical problems, and both individual and group support. Evaluations highlighted the critical role and skills of the mentor principal in the success of the trial, but Stewart believed that the link with the University was also vital. Following the success of the trial, in 2000 the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Principal and Leadership Centre established a pilot mentorship programme (Mentor 2000) for both experienced and aspiring principals.

The principal portfolio option was also found to have a positive impact, especially if introduced in conjunction with a face-to-face course demonstrating the format and its potential.

Stewart’s (2000) overall conclusions are that principal learning is better initiated by the individual than by a stated requirement, that the first three or four years ‘in post’ are a crucial time for principal learning and support; and that on-the-job learning at this time is most effectively strengthened by the link between the principal-learner (or a very small group of principal-learners) and an outside school leader, sharing the experiences of critical reflection and on-going professional dialogue. In establishing this link, the principal portfolio is a practical, non-threatening and cost-effective tool to structure the initial reflection and dialogue.

In essence, Stewart seems to be arguing here for a form of principal development where the state would have a very indirect role, possibly as the provider of minimum quality standards and as a funder of last resort. However, his main theme is that, for principalship to become more professional, it must take greater responsibility for principal education itself.

(ii) Robertson

Jan Robertson, like Stewart, was a primary school principal before gaining a university appointment in the late 1980s. In the mid 1990s she was appointed as the founding director of Waikato University’s Educational Leadership Centre. In the middle of 2001 she was contracted by the New Zealand Ministry
of Education, along with Stewart, to design the proposed training programme for first time principals in New Zealand. The designers were expected to use the Hay Group (2001) findings as the template for the design. According to the Ministry timeline for the project, the design needed to be completed before a subsequent contract would be let for the actual delivery of the training programme.

In Robertson and Martin (2002), Robertson reflects upon this experience as a contractee in the principal development process. In particular, Robertson identifies and comments on four major issues with which the design team had to grapple:

1. Designing the Curriculum when key aspects of the delivery arrangements were unknown. The design team had long and initially inconclusive and frustrating discussions about the amount and type of detail and prescription expected, given that it was likely that the team would not be the actual deliverers. However, once the Ministry spelt out to the design team that the philosophy and intent of each module in the programme needed to be described carefully, so that the deliverers were true to the design intent, decisions on these matters became easier.

2. Ensuring Coherence and Credibility within the programme. From the start the team had ‘a degree of discomfort’ with aspects of the Hay Group (2001) template. Thus from an early stage they tried to work around what they felt were the limitations of the ‘competency’ approach. To give the required coherence and credibility, they wanted the programme to be based on principles of adult learning and reflective leadership. They therefore built in to the design a large number of activities indicating the importance of focused reflection, collegial action-planning, coaching and portfolio development as important professional development tools for school leaders.

3. Balancing Technical and Conceptual Elements. The Hay Group (2001) gave an initial guideline of a 20% to 80% split here, but the design team needed to make the hard decisions about what should be included
and excluded under each of these two broad headings, based on their own prior knowledge of real principal-induction needs. They also needed to decide about what the appropriate sequencing of selected elements might be. The results were key decisions to build a mix of both the technical and conceptual in to each day of the programme, and to go for an overall split of more like 40/60 than 20/80 in the programme as a whole.

4. Assessing Progress of Participants. Possibly the most contentious issue revolved around “how to measure the progress of participants and whether this was a necessary part of such a programme” (Robertson & Martin, 2002, p. 8). Possibilities were vigorously debated with both the Ministry and the project’s principal advisory group. Initially, the Ministry seemed wedded to the competency notion of an assessment of each key component in the programme. This was opposed from within the design team, especially by Stewart. The solution eventually reached was for the programme to require each principal to develop a ‘reflective portfolio’, including a prescribed set of expected ‘artefacts’. Each of the annotated artefacts expected in the portfolio were designed as ‘rich tasks’ (Luke, 2001), to demonstrate a range of programme objectives, rather than the more atomised individual-competency-assessment approach.

In conclusion, Robertson notes the tension which can arise in university involvement in contracted principal development work, when the philosophical base for aspects of the work might not be regarded by the staff involved as academically or practically sound. “The continuing challenge for educational leaders in tertiary institutions is to be able to facilitate principal development programmes [which are] focused around the real needs of school principals” (Robertson & Martin, 2002, p. 10).

(iii) **Cardno**

Unlike Stewart and Robertson, Cardno’s background was as a secondary principal. However, like them she was appointed to a tertiary teaching position
in educational administration at about the time of Tomorrow’s Schools. In 1999, Cardno became New Zealand’s first professor of educational management.

Cardno is New Zealand’s acknowledged expert on principal appraisal, being contracted by the Ministry of Education to write the draft for *PMS Three: Principal Appraisal* (MOE, 1997b), a Ministry of Education guideline and set of good practice advice sent out to all schools when teacher appraisal first became compulsory. As a result, she is often invited to address meetings of principals or deputy principals. In 2001, Cardno conducted an opportunity-survey of what principals and deputy principals from a cross section of schools who were attending such meetings thought about a range of principal development options, focusing in particular on a possible ‘pre-employment’ provision.

Her major findings were as follows:

- There was a general concern from all participants about the adequacy of current pre-employment preparation for principalship.
- There was also a high level of agreement that any future provision for principal preparation needed to be compulsory. However, there were a range of opinions on what such a provision might involve.
- There was a high level of disagreement with the notion that a single national programme should be developed and used for principal preparation.
- There was a moderate to high level of disagreement with the notion that entry to preparation programmes should be selective or restricted to current senior managers (Cardno, 2002).

On the basis of this survey, Cardno went on to highlight the potential tension inherent in her findings.

Whilst on the one hand they [that is, her course participants] favour a degree of regulation to ensure that principals are prepared for their role, they do not favour over-regulation in
terms of a national programme or restrictive selection (2002, p. 51).

There is therefore an issue in New Zealand at present to do with the degree of prescriptiveness in any so-called principal development solution, according to Cardno’s analysis. Provision is appreciated but over-regulation is not.

c) The Two Critical Policy Questions, the Current New Zealand Situation and this Study

Based on this review of the literature it would appear that there are two fundamental questions about principal development coming through from the analyses of the experts:

1. The ‘Career Stage’ Question: To what extent should the state fund and regulate principal development activity at the ‘pre-appointment’, ‘immediate post-appointment’ and ‘late post-appointment’ career stages?

2. The ‘Activity Mix’ Question: What types or mix of principal development activity are likely to have the most impact and therefore provide the best return on principal development investment?

Codd’s 1995 model for analysing a policy text using a materialist conception suggests that such an analysis will examine both the context of ‘construction’ and the context of ‘interpretation’ of the text. Applying the Codd model to our present knowledge of principal development in New Zealand, it would seem that we already have good knowledge of the tensions that can arise in the contractor/contractee relationship adopted within the context of construction, based on different ideological positioning (Robertson & Martin, 2002). We also have some knowledge of the discrepancy between the views of Ministry officials and school principals with regard to the answer to Policy Question 1 above within the context of interpretation (Cardno, 2002).

However, this present knowledge base about principal development in New Zealand does not discriminate between the views of teaching principals and non-teaching principals, and possible discrepancies between the views of the former and the latter are therefore made invisible in any analysis. Nor do we yet have any reliable data on
principal views on Policy Question 2, though Stewart (2000) provides a basis for some possible hypotheses here. As outlined in the first section of this chapter, I am especially interested in the views of teaching principals on both policy questions. I have therefore designed the following template to guide my analysis of the responses that I get in my ‘principal development’ set of data (see Figure 3.7).

**Career Stage**

‘Post Incumbency’

---

**Activity Mix**

‘Low stake/ high interaction’

Moderate Stake Interaction

‘Appointment’

‘High stake/ low interaction’

‘Preappointment’

= Optimal pattern of state-involvement indicated by the literature

Figure 3.7. A template for analysing views on principal development
The diagram indicates, firstly, the two critical dimensions of principal development, ‘career stage’ (the vertical axis) and ‘activity mix’ (the horizontal axis).

For career stage, the diagram indicates positions for the start of the process (‘Pre-appointment’), the middle of the process (‘Appointment’), and the end of the process (‘Post-Incumbency’).

For activity mix, the diagram indicates a mix that is ‘high interaction/low stake’ at the left, a mix that involves a ‘moderate’ level of interaction and stake in the middle, and a mix emphasising ‘high stake/low interaction’ activities at the right.

The diagram indicates, secondly, an optimum pattern of principal development, the oval pattern in the centre of the diagram. This oval pattern indicates the general positioning on the grid of the principal development activities and stages deemed appropriate for state policy to concern itself, according to the literature reviewed here.

To perhaps illustrate better how the positioning on the model works, the display in Figure 3.8 indicates where some of the specific activities mentioned in the literature review would appear on the grid.
Figure 3.8. Where specific activities fall on the principal development grid
In my research I will be checking the reactions of participants to various elements in the present policy mix for principal development and their suggestions for how the present mix might be improved.
To conclude the chapter I will briefly recapitulate the points made earlier about the meaning to be given in this study to two key sets of terms: ‘policy/policy analysis’ and ‘principal education/principal development’.

For the purposes of this study I have defined ‘policy’ very generally as what governments choose to do or not do in any area of state activity. Following Codd (2001), ‘policy analysis’ in this study involves deconstructing policy texts and the meanings given to them in various contexts where policy text is interpreted.

In this study, ‘principal education’ is defined as the outcome of processes by which aspiring and actual principals are encouraged and supported to learn about aspects of the role and responsibilities of principalship, and their own abilities and understandings in relation to this role and set of responsibilities. ‘Principal development’ refers to the extent and means by which the state involves itself in principal education.

We now turn to an overview of the methodology and research design which has been adopted in the study (Chapter 4).
CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM, METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter will outline the research problem, examine methodological issues and summarize the research design. It is arranged into three sections:

1. The Research Problem, Aims and Questions.
2. Notes on Methodology.

The chapter concludes with a recapitulation of the key features of the study’s research design.

1. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM, AIMS AND QUESTIONS

This first part of the chapter outlines the research problem, the aims of the study and the research questions proposed.

a) The Research Problem

The research problem on which this study focuses is the issue of the appropriateness of the current relationship between principalship and policy in small New Zealand primary schools. To introduce a consideration of the research problem let me begin by summing up the argument so far about principalship and policy.

In sum we know now that:

- Principalship is important for quality in any schooling system.
- Principalship is especially important for quality in a ‘self-managing’ school system.
- Principalship is profoundly important for quality in small schools.
- In both England and New Zealand recent state policy has recognised the importance of principalship for quality by the initiation of a mix of principal-support initiatives.
Incorporating what we know about principalship and policy in small New Zealand primary schools with the above, factors already known to be influencing the research problem for this study can now be outlined as follows:

- We know that principalship is profoundly important for quality in any system where the majority of schools are small schools, as they are in New Zealand.
- We know that by 1999, principalship in small New Zealand primary schools was somewhat problematic, with many principals reporting strain of one sort or another.
- It seems that problems of strain were somewhat greater in ‘smaller’ small schools than in ‘larger’ small schools, but we don’t really know why.
- We know that the state in New Zealand has recently initiated policy to support principalship in small schools, but we don’t know much yet about its impact on small school principalship.

To advance small school principalship in New Zealand we therefore now need to know more about what the work situation is for teaching principals in New Zealand currently and how far present policies may be influencing their work. Once we have this knowledge we can then begin planning a more appropriate relationship between principalship and policy support, where this might be required.

b) Aims of the Study, the Literature Reviewed and the Research Questions Proposed

To explore the research problem, the study has four aims:

1. To discover what the current work situation is for teaching principals and to explore the ways those factors previously reported as creating strain are currently managed in practice in their work;
2. To explore teaching principals’ ideas about the most appropriate types of strategy to use to deal with the major issues that they perceive need addressing, and how they see these strategies contributing to success;
3. To examine the rationales for various support policy planks initiated over recent years (whether for small schools or for primary schools more generally) and to evaluate the extent to which they demonstrate internal consistency; and

4. On the basis of answers to 1, 2, and 3 above, to evaluate the appropriateness of current policy for the emerging and potential future issues and needs of teaching principals in New Zealand primary schools.

The literature review has indicated that there may be two mediating factors that also need considering in a study such as this:

1. The career stage of the principal (that is, is s/he a first year principal, a principal in her/his second or third year of principalship, or a more experienced principal?). The Hay Group (2001), Leithwood (1999), Ribbins (1999) and Gronn (1999) all indicate that there may be a different pattern of responses from principals at different career stages.

2. The situation of the school regarding size and location, (that is, its degree of smallness and rurality). Wylie (1997b), Whittall (2002) and ERO (1999a) all suggest that in New Zealand at present, smaller small schools in a more distant location may be more difficult for a principal to manage than a larger small school with a less isolated location.

To achieve the four aims, and to take account of the possible mediating factors, eight rather more specific research questions have been devised to provide a focus for the study:

1. What perceptions do teaching principals have about the factors contributing to success and creating strain in their current work?

2. What seem to be the critical sets of beliefs and values influencing the stated strategy preferences of teaching principals?

3. To what extent is there variation in answers to questions 1 or 2 based on different stages of principal-career?

4. To what extent is there variation in answers to questions 1 or 2 based on differences in the school situation of the teaching principal?
5. What rationale do those involved in policy development provide for present small school policy and how consistent are different parts of the policy?

6. In the view of teaching principals, is present small school policy achieving its aims and if not how might it be improved?

7. What rationale do those involved in devising policy provide for present principal development policy and how consistent are different parts of the policy?

8. In the view of teaching principals, is present principal development policy achieving its aims and if not how might it be improved?

The answers to questions 1-4 will be sought from the ‘principalship’ set of data gathered for this study (see Chapter 5); the answers to questions 5-8 will be sought from the ‘policy’ set of data (see Chapter 6).
2. NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

This section of the chapter outlines my thoughts on research methodology.

There are five notes in this section, each note outlining the way a particular author or set of authors has influenced the methodology of the study. In order, the notes outline the influence on the study of Gough/Ribbins/Blackmore in combination, Grace, Billot, Gewirtz, and Southworth.

a) Gough, Ribbins and Blackmore in combination

(i) Gough on Methodology

In describing how methodology fits within educational research, Noel Gough (1999) has suggested to Deakin University Higher Degree by Research students that preparing a dissertation involves three types of work:

1. Head Work.
2. Field Work.
3. Text Work.

Gough regards ‘methodology’ as part of the headwork of research. He defines it as the thinking that needs to take place about the questions, problems and issues that frame how the research proceeds. Gough suggests that in their methodology section researchers need to be explicit in defining and justifying the theories, understandings, conceptualisations and representations of inquiry that have determined the shape of their investigation.

(ii) Ribbins on the Integrative Position

In Chapter 2 I have suggested that my approach towards theory in educational administration in this study is an ‘eclectic’ one. Another way of expressing this is that I have adopted an ‘integrative’ position (Ribbins, 1999).

In discussing his framework for studying school leaders and their development Ribbins comments that he has “spent many years devising and testing a
framework relevant to a wide variety of historical, social and cultural contexts” (1999, p. 83). Applied to the study of principalship within, for example, a period of radical reform, such an integrative approach he suggests would require the collection and analysis of data about:

1. The reforms in their specific historical, social, cultural and values framework.

2. The contemporary scope, dimension and character of the reforms.

3. The interpretation of, and responses to, the reforms of key national and local stakeholders.

4. The interpretation of, and responses to, the reforms of key institutional stakeholders as seen from the perspective of particular schools.

5. The interpretations of, and responses to, the reforms by individual principals within the schools identified in level 4 above.

In explaining why he has privileged this particular framework, Ribbins indicates that Levels 1 and 2 constitute study of macro-level, longitudinal and comparative elements of relational context. Levels 3, 4 and 5 cover actors and agencies operating in a variety of interpretive contexts and at a variety of levels. The justification for including Levels 1 and 2 in the framework has been provided by recent contributors to the Educational Management and Administration journal such as Fitz (1999) and Glatter (1999), according to Ribbins (1999). These writers have argued that it is misguided to try to separate the study of educational management from that of educational policy - the two must be integrated together. Ribbins himself (see Ribbins, 1996) provides the justification for the importance of Levels 3-5, in his argument about the importance of meso- and micro- level ethnographies in any study of educational leaders and leadership. Ribbins claims that such studies incorporate three elements of interpretive analysis, building collectively to a cumulative portrait.
In this study, Chapters 1-3 have provided an introduction to Ribbins’ Levels 1 and 2. Chapters 5 and 6 will provide the basis for Levels 3-5.

(iii) Gough on simultaneousness

Returning now to Gough (1999), he also suggests that the best way to approach matters of headwork, fieldwork and textwork is simultaneously, developing all three dimensions of the work in tandem as the study proceeds. While agreeing in part with Gough, and generally following his principle of simultaneous head/text/fieldwork in this study, my approach also assumes that there is a fourth important component to research that needs to be considered in research design - what I will call ‘Impact Work’. I do not believe dissertation work should stop with the production of a text to the satisfaction of examiners, nor even with the resulting publication in academic journals of the major research findings from the study. I strongly believe that at all stages of the research the researcher has an ethical and moral obligation to consider how to increase the impact of the findings, to the benefit of the research participants.

(iv) Blackmore on Political Commitment for Change

My position here is close to that of feminist researchers of policy and leadership such as Blackmore (1995). In her 1995 article, Blackmore describes how she built dialogue, shared reflection and productive criticism between the researcher and the researched into the process with the intention of creating, in the first instance, a truer account of the lived experience of the participants, and secondly, a heightening of political commitment to try to produce change.

As a result of this positioning, in this study there are two particular aspects of research design that result from my privileging of the ‘impact’ factor:

1. The creation, in the focus group phase, of a private professional forum where research participants can talk directly to the people responsible for providing their support needs (rather than having any message about professional needs of the respondents mediated through the researcher’s lenses in a second hand report to support personnel at some later stage).
2. The initiation, in the post data-gathering phase, of a public forum where research findings and their implications can be discussed simultaneously with research participants, contracted support providers and appropriate policy makers.

Again, the rationale here is that it is more appropriate to discuss findings directly with policy makers and participants in a face-to-face situation than it is to pen a ‘discussion’ section at the end of articles in academic journals that are unlikely to be read or discussed in any meaningful sense by either policy makers or research participants.

Both these features of the research design are described more fully in the next section of this chapter.

b) Grace

(i) Grace on Critical Policy Scholarship

Grace (1998a) strongly advocates for a ‘critical policy scholarship’ approach to work of this type. Grace argues that there is a need for more researchers to write accounts which show the limitations of technicisim and reveal the ideological and historical struggles behind ‘logic’ and ‘sequence’ in policy making and implementation. As he defines it, critical policy scholarship has an emphasis upon historical process, structural contradictions, and the self-understanding of the actors in the policy process. It also emphasizes the educative role of critical scholarship and the importance of the raising of consciousness of all research participants. Critical policy scholarship tries to bring all these various elements of research into some sort of intellectual relationship, or at least dialogue. Critical policy scholarship therefore attempts to “unite the strengths of critical theory (with its sharp awareness of structural and ideological oppressions and policy contradictions) with the traditional disciplines of scholarship (careful delineation of evidence and argument, balanced and judicious conclusions)” (1998a, p. 207).

While sympathising with many of Grace’s arguments and adhering to the underlying principles that he advances for critical policy scholarship in my
own approach to policy analysis, in this study I have chosen to take a rather different tactical viewpoint to the educative role in policy research than the one his approach implies. In thinking about the educative role in research design I have chosen to take an empirical-realist approach, rather than a critical-outsider approach. This results from my experiences in the mid 1990s with the issue of how best to influence policy initiatives of the day, which at their initiation stage seemed overtly managerialist in approach. A number of my now colleagues, then in the Massey University Faculty of Education, choose to adopt the ‘outsider-critique’ role. My impression at the time was that this had absolutely no effect, in terms of influencing the shape of policy, even though it did have a minor impact in terms of awareness about the dangers of managerialism amongst a small but politically literate part of public opinion. My approach at that time was rather different, in that I actively sort involvement in the policy interpretation and initiation processes. Through these processes, I learned that policy-officials could be influenced at the margins, and policy adjustments would result, but not by ‘anecdotal’ (that is, qualitative) evidence. Instead, they gave credence to quantitative data that backed up the claims that I was making about particular implementation issues that were arising in the field (see Collins, 1997).

The research design which follows also reflects this general line of thinking. At an early stage in the research I planned a quantitative survey, whose results I have shared with appropriate policy analysts within the Ministry of Education. They have responded positively to this and we are in ongoing dialogue now about the rest of the research results (from the qualitative data).

In addition, I arranged for the chief policy advisor of the Ministry of Education to participate in the public policy forum with which I concluded the study (along with other appropriate policy advisors). I supplied him with key arguments as they were being developed in the thesis. I also arranged for Cathy Wylie from NZCER to close the forum and draw the various strands together for the benefit of both policy-makers and practitioners.
(ii) Blackmore on Influencing Policy

In the rural forum that closes this study, along with my research participants, I am deliberately trying to influence state policy in the area I have researched. Again, my approach here mirrors that of feminist researchers such as Blackmore (1995) whose paper describes how both she and her research participants (feminist educators who had recently been appointed to policy level positions within the educational bureaucracy) worked together to strategically address issues of policy within a culture that was largely informed by technicist views of bureaucratic rationality. To achieve this Blackmore promotes networking between researchers and policy makers. Grace, too, in a recent reflective account of his earlier research (Grace, 1998a), has concluded that in any future critical policy scholarship research he will do more to create a “research network, including critical friends and oppositional critics”, to raise the integrity of the scholarship (1998a, p. 215). As he concludes, “in the conception, execution and dissemination of the research project, significant consultation with, and participation by, the ‘researched’ should be a feature of the best forms of policy scholarship” (1998a, p. 215).

The Endnote which concludes this dissertation summarises the outcomes of the public policy forum.

c) Billot

Billot’s (2001, 2003) recent study of secondary principalship in New Zealand has also provided a useful model for aspects of research design in this study. Over 2001 and 2002, Billot worked with Australian colleagues in a research project designed to examine the role and workload of secondary principals in New Zealand and Queensland (Billot, 2001). Initial findings on the New Zealand part of the study have been reported in a March 2003 paper (Billot, 2003).

The data in Billot’s study of New Zealand secondary principalship was collected by three methods, in three separate phases:

1. Phase One. A focus group was conducted with a group of eight principals, to get an initial feel for the issues.
Phase Two. Individual interviews were conducted with representatives from key stakeholder groups, the New Zealand School Trustees’ Association, the Principals’ Council, the Secondary Principals’ Association and the Ministry of Education.

Phase Three. Questionnaire responses were collected from secondary school principals across New Zealand (2003, p. 10).

What gathering her data in this way has allowed Billot to do in her data-analysis is to compare the way principals actually dedicate their time (the practitioner-reality) with how they would prefer to dedicate their time (the practitioner-ideal) and with how those who work at system-level would like them to dedicate their time (the policy-ideal).

My data-gathering phases, described more fully in the next section of this chapter, have adopted a similar phase-mix to Billot, but with somewhat different details and sequencing:

- I have started with a survey of all the target group of principals, to try to get an overall picture of the current situation (phase one);
- On the basis of the information from this, I have refined my list of the issues to be explored and matters to be fleshed out in the follow-up interviews with a selected number of individual principals, and focus group discussions with similarly situated principal-groups (phase two);
- Following this, I have gathered the views of key stakeholder representatives, through individual interviews with three key policy analysts from the Ministry of Education, the immediate past-president of the New Zealand Primary Principals’ Federation, and two Massey University staff responsible for implementing the key policy planks being investigated (phase three).

Like Billot, my overall aim in adopting this strategy is to get a mix of individual, situated portrayals; multi-actor perspectives; and policy interpretations, so that comparative patterns can be established.
Another recent secondary school study which has influenced my thinking on research design is Gewirtz (2002). In designing the details of my study I have tried to give it two different ‘lenses’ for examining the interaction between principalship and policy:

- Lens One, allowing me to see the ‘big picture’.
- Lens Two, allowing me to see ‘up close and personal’.

I am broadly interested in two types of social process, firstly the changing set of policy patterns at the centre and their greater or lesser impact on patterns of work at the periphery; secondly, the relative impact of different degrees of ‘smallness’ and ‘rurality’ on the particular life-world and work-practice of individual principals.

(i) Gewirtz on General Patterns

To illustrate what I mean here and the implications for the sort of study that I have in mind, let me start by paraphrasing from the introduction to Gewirtz’s recent book. In her 2002 study of the relationship between the present English policy environment and the work of teachers and school managers in English secondary schools, Gewirtz states her theoretical premises as:

1. It is suggested here that post-welfarist policies have some generalised, structuring effects across the schooling system, which are producing various forms of justice or injustice.

   AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER

2. Local variations in the internal forms of control and organization need to be recognised; and in particular, the influence and interweaving of social, economic and biographical factors need to be acknowledged (2002, p. 23).

In the next section of her book, Gewirtz (2002) examines the impact of recent policies of performativity and managerialism on schools generally and on the work of principals in particular (that is, she adopts a ‘big picture’ lens). She concludes this section of the book by stating that for those involved as
teachers, these policies have created a wider spectrum of beliefs and values than existed formerly, with the range now from ‘comprehensivism’ at one end to ‘marketism’ at the other, and a polarising effect being noted. For principals, however, the post-welfarist policy environment has resulted in a narrowing of the options and a limitation in what can be done, because the market logic defines the pattern of response in all situations where a school is apparently under-achieving. She describes this pattern as typically including attempts to try to promote the school and grow the roll. Gewirtz’s analysis in this part of her study suggests that all this does in the longer term is produce a possible redistribution of students within schools within an area, whilst not doing anything material to address the root causes of educational under-achievement. In other words, it is a misapplication of time and effort.

(ii) Gewirz on Local Variation

So far, Gewirtz’s study (2002) is largely a study of the impact of policy generally on secondary schools of all types. However, in the following part of the book she turns to examining in closer detail the variation that exists in school situations based on setting and the extent to which this might modify or influence the more general pattern (that is, she is now adopting an ‘up close and personal’ lens).

She does this by investigating the differential patterns of educational work and associated values in four ‘typical’ local settings:

1. ‘Beatrice Webb’: A ‘weak’ school in market terms with a falling roll: inner city location, in a lower socio-economic context, highly transient school population;

2. ‘Northwark Park’: A ‘slowly growing’ school in market terms: a predominantly working class intake, small core of white middle class;

3. ‘Ruskin’: A ‘faster growing’ school in market terms: about a third of the intake from the middle class, the rest mixed, good recent exam results; and
4. ‘Martineau’; ‘Extremely strong’ in market terms: heavily oversubscribed and therefore able to pick the most desirable entrants, a socially mixed outer city girls-only school.

Gewirtz’s conclusion at the end of this section is that these case studies show how “the discursive material and socio-economic contexts within which individual schools operate have a differential effect on what school managers can do” (2002, p. 90). Whether the roll was growing or contracting was found to have a central place in the way this contextual effect worked in different situations, but so did the extent to which there was a potential pool of middle class recruits for the school, and how near to/far from retirement the head was.

In my study I am interested in the general impact of recent policies on small school principals, but I am also interested in the extent of variation of impact in a range of settings. For my ‘big picture’, I am interviewing representatives of what is called the ‘policy-elite’ (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). I am also getting an overview of general patterns from my initial survey, using what Marshall and Rossman call a ‘maximum variation’ sample (1999, p. 76). For the cross section of principals who will be studied ‘up close and personal’, I will have to use a carefully targeted ‘stratified purposeful’ sampling strategy (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 78). In particular, through this sampling strategy I will try to create four case study groupings of principals, similar to Gewirtz’s (2002) four typical school profiles: the smallest and most rural small school principals, the largest and most urban small school principals, and two in-between groupings (based on size and degree of rurality). Within these groupings I will have about one third who are first year principals, one third between years two and four of principalship, and one third who are in their fifth year or beyond. This should allow me to study up close the impact of the situational factors that the literature review suggests may be of importance in the study (see page 128 of this chapter).

e) Southworth

It is clear from the review of both the previous New Zealand and other ‘Anglo’ studies of small school principalship that there has been a strong tendency up to now to
‘problematize’ the position and/or the work associated with it. The limitations of this type of study have been succinctly pointed out by Southworth (1999a) in the first section of his recent study of successful heads of small primary schools.

While all the studies cited in this paragraph are based upon heads’ perceptions of their roles and provide valuable insights into their practical theories and experiential knowledge, they do not focus on the leadership of school improvement, nor on what it looks like to those headteachers who are accomplishing it with success.

In short, although leadership matters, we have yet to learn from those who are effective leaders of improving or high performing primary schools how they actually conceptualise their work...We urgently need to know how these leadership skills were acquired and developed and which professional learning experiences were of critical importance to them if we are to be able to plan forms of principal-development that will make a difference (1999a, pp. 3-4).

Southworth then goes on to explain how the working out of this rationale required him to design a study which was focused not simply on heads of small schools, but on heads of successful and improving schools and on heads of schools of different sizes and types. To achieve this, he used a purposive sample, with possible participants being identified by Ofsted data or the recommendation of Local Education Authority (LEA) advisors. In addition, he aimed for the sample to include, as far as possible, heads from rural, suburban and urban settings; non-denominational and denominational schools; and schools from a number of LEAs. In gathering data, Southworth used a ‘multiple perspective’ approach, because in his view too many earlier studies relied overly heavily on head self-reporting as their major source of data. Southworth sought views on the heads’ strategies from governors and teachers in the school, as well as from the heads themselves, “to try to reduce bias and widen the angle of observation” (1999a, p. 14).

In examining the details of principals’ work, I intend to follow Southworth’s lead, by initially trying to focus on the factors that have created success for small school principals, rather than just dwelling on the problems and issues that seem associated
with the role. My stratified/purposive sample for the ‘up close and personal’ phase will be drawn up in a similar fashion to Southworth’s, so that I am looking in depth at successful practice, from a cross section of situations. I hope that my findings will illuminate aspects of the principal development process that have been masked in previous research, just as Southworth intended his study to do.

However, in examining the details of the strategies that the principals in my study have adopted, I have had to rely on self-report, rather than the triangulated sources that Southworth used. This has been necessary to keep the study manageable by a single researcher in the time available for a dissertation. This is a major limitation to the present study and needs to be borne in mind later on in the ‘discussion’ stage of the report, when I come to compare my findings with those of Southworth in particular. However, this weakness in my study is a weakness shared with the Hay Group report (2001), another major study that will be discussed and compared with my findings in Chapter 7.

In Ribbens’ (1999) terms outlined earlier in this section, my decision to rely on self-report has meant the lack of Level 4 (individual school) analysis in this study. Instead, I have used the notion of similarly situated sub-groupings of principals (my focus groups) to provide a meso-level data-source between Levels 3 and 5.
3. NOTES ON RESEARCH DESIGN

This section of the chapter outlines how the research in this study has been designed.

There are five notes in this section of the chapter, with each note explaining how a particular reading has contributed to the research design of the study. The five readings are from Creswell, Gillham, Marshall and Rossman, Bush, and the Deakin HDR Administration Guide.

a) Creswell

Creswell (1994) has convinced me to consider combining research design methods in this study. In his text *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*, Creswell initially provides what he calls his standard advice for the novice researcher: to choose one or other of the two main research paradigms (qualitative or quantitative), on the assumption that there is less expertise required from the researcher if the study methods are limited to those typically associated with one or other of the approaches. However, he goes on to acknowledge that there are a number of advantages, in particular circumstances, of adopting mixed methods across the paradigms. The main advantage comes from the opportunities this provides to build deeper understanding of a concept or hypothesis. Creswell calls this mixed paradigm variation a ‘pragmatic’ approach (as opposed to a ‘purist’ approach). The key to deciding whether or not to adopt either a pragmatic or a purist approach, he suggests, lies in a careful analysis of the nature of the research problem for the study. To help a novice engaged in research design for the first time to frame this analysis, Creswell explains that there are typically two types of research problem, with each type of problem lending itself to one or other of the purist research approaches (see Figure 4.1). If the research problem has been previously well studied then empirical research is the usual option. If the research problem has not previously been well studied, then an exploratory study makes most sense. If, however, the researcher is faced with a research problem that has aspects which have been previously well studied, but other aspects need an exploratory study, then a mixed paradigm/mixed method study is entirely appropriate. According to the type of problem-mix, the research design might need to feature a two-phase design approach, a dominant-less dominant design, or a mixed methodology design.
Type of Research Problem: | Appropriate Type of Study:
---|---
1. Previously well studied; wide body of literature; known variables; existing theories. | 1. Empirical Research: survey procedures or experimental design; statistical analysis; theory advanced. 
2. Not well studied; variables unknown; context important; may lack theory base for study. | 2. Exploratory Study: observation or interview or document search; thematic and/or categorical analysis; possible patterns established.

Figure 4.1. Creswell’s research problem and study matches

Following Creswell (1994), it is crucial before establishing design details to carry out an analysis of the research problem. In my study there are four key facets to the research problem, and the state of existing knowledge and theory is somewhat different for each problem-facet, as Figure 4.2, below, indicates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facet of Research Problem</th>
<th>State of Existing Knowledge/Theory</th>
<th>Best Way to Advance Knowledge/Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Principalship generally</td>
<td>Reasonably large body of existing studies; variables reasonably well known</td>
<td>Empirical study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Small School Principalship</td>
<td>Limited number of existing studies; no specific theoretical frameworks</td>
<td>Exploratory study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Small School Policy</td>
<td>Very limited number of existing studies; no theory</td>
<td>Exploratory study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Principal Development Policy</td>
<td>Some previous studies; a generally acknowledged theoretical framework has emerged</td>
<td>Empirical study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2. Analysis of the research problem

My conclusion, after conducting this analysis, is that a mixed paradigm/mixed method study is entirely appropriate in the case of my current research problem.
b) Gillham on Research Design Preliminaries

According to Gillham (2000), the first consideration in planning research design details should be the nature of the evidence required to answer the questions posed. “Good research questions are the most important single part of research procedure” (2000, p. 17). The importance of framing the research direction in the form of questions is that the researcher is then driven to consider basic methods: “how could I answer these questions and what kind of information will I need to help me find the answers?” (2000, p. 17). Good research questions are those which enable the researcher to achieve its aims and which are capable of being answered by the evidence available in the research setting proposed.

Gillham goes on to explain that in studying the real world of people, evidence is of various kinds and none of it is perfect. “The researcher needs to assess what faith can be placed on particular pieces of evidence, and relate it to other evidences at hand” (2000, p. 20). The overall aim should be to use multiple sources of evidence to create a ‘chain of evidence’, that is, an argument where each key element or link in your account is supported by or related to evidence of different kinds. Thus in planning research design, he proposes, it is useful to start with an overview of the main kinds or types of evidence, because it is easy to neglect one kind or source.

Gillham (2000) suggests that there are eight main sources of evidence for the novice researcher to consider in her/his research design planning (see Figure 4.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human</th>
<th>Non-Human</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Observations</td>
<td>Physical Artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Observations</td>
<td>Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>Inferential Statistics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3. Gillham’s sources for research evidence
The ultimate skill required in research is the ability to weave the evidence gained into a coherent narrative that maintains the focus and direction which has been determined by the overall aims and specific research questions established for the project (Gillham, 2000).

In Figure 4.4 I set out the question and evidence match that I propose to adopt for the rest of this study. In essence, this diagram provides an overview of the overall research design and an advance frame for the outlining and discussion of research results (Chapters 5-7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions Asked – Principalship Questions</th>
<th>Types of Evidence Sought – Principalship Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Current perceptions about success and/or strain factors</td>
<td>- Descriptive statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Beliefs and values influencing stated strategy preferences</td>
<td>- Interviews plus some participant observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Degree of variation based on career stage</td>
<td>- Inferential statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Degree of variation based on school situation</td>
<td>- Inferential statistics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions Asked – Policy Questions</th>
<th>Types of Evidence Sought – Policy Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Policy rationales</td>
<td>- Documents, records plus interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Policy consistency</td>
<td>- Documents, records plus interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teaching principal views on present policy</td>
<td>- Interviews plus descriptive statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teaching principal views on how policy might be improved</td>
<td>- Interviews plus descriptive statistics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.4. Nature of evidence sought to answer research questions posed in this study

c) Marshall and Rossman on Building Qualitative Research Design

Marshall and Rossman’s 1999 text is specially designed to help novice researchers plan the details of qualitative aspects of their research design. The authors suggest that
there are five stages involved and provide advice on what needs to be considered in relation to each key stage.

(i) **Deciding the overall strategy**

The authors suggest that there are three distinct strategies to consider, with each strategy being more appropriate for a qualitative study of a particular type (see Figure 4.5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Type of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In-depth interviews</td>
<td>1. Individual lived experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Case Studies</td>
<td>2. Group or organisational patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Microanalysis</td>
<td>3. Speech events and interactions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.5. Marshall and Rossman’s research strategy and study match

The distinctions among the three broad strategies rest on two continua, as follows. In-depth interviews are elegant in design, relying on a single primary method of data gathering. They also entail close, personal interactions between researcher and participants, often over long periods of time, that is, an up close and personal approach (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Case studies, by contrast, typically entail a complex mix of methods, but much less intimate or extensive contact. Microanalysis lies somewhere in the middle, often requiring a second method (for example, participant observation) to complement the data gathered from interview, but less intensive interaction than is typically required in in-depth interviewing. Deciding on the strategy provides a ‘road map’ for the researcher - an overall plan for undertaking a systematic exploration of phenomena of interest. It also indicates the sorts of methods that are likely to be most effective for conducting the exploration.

(ii) **Defining the setting**

Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggest that defining the setting is an early and very significant decision, as it shapes all subsequent aspects of research design in qualitative studies. A realistic setting is one where entry is possible, where there is a high probability that a rich mix of the processes, people, interactions
or structures of interest are present, where the researcher is likely to build trusting relations with the participants of the study, and where the data quality and credibility of the study are reasonably assured.

(iii) Choosing the sample(s)

Because of the high level of interaction required in qualitative research, whenever a setting and its population have been established, the next decision for the researcher is usually to choose the sample or samples of the population which are able to be studied in depth (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). To justify a sample, one must normally be able to assure that it encapsulates all reasonable variations in the population. Often the research questions provide a guide to assist in the search for information-rich examples for the study to focus on. In addition to this ‘critical’ case approach, the authors suggest that, depending on the study, it may also be important to try for a sample of ‘maximum variety’ or of ‘typical’ cases.

(iv) Choosing the data-analysis strategies

As defined by Marshall and Rossman (1999), data-analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of collected data in a study. In qualitative research this can become an especially messy, ambiguous and time-consuming process unless careful thought and awareness has gone in to weighing up the implications of key options at the design stage. The options here are summarised in the following diagram.

1. **Quasi-statistical** 2. **Template** 3. **Editing** 4. **Immersion/Crystalisation**
   - Analysis
   - Analysis
   - Analysis

Figure 4.6. A continuum of qualitative data analysis strategies

The researcher should use the preliminary research questions and the related literature to provide guidelines for the data-analysis plan: “this earlier grounding and planning can be used to suggest several categories that can serve to code the data initially for subsequent analysis” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 152).
Planning the project

Marshall and Rossman (1999) stress that in dissertation research there is a crucial need for any research plan to be practical and realistic. In particular, they suggest that it needs to take account of the preciousness of time on a small scale, likely limitations in finance available, costs of materials and services, personal costs, and the need to build in time with mentors and peers for the sort of support needed to get the job done. They conclude that “dissertation work is unlike any the student has ever undertaken before. It is not like a large course; it is not like reading for an exam; it is of quite a different magnitude to either of these” (1999, p. 184). The students who are most successful in moving through the phases required are those who have done the most careful planning and have built up the most useful support network.

Figures 4.7 and 4.8, on the next three pages, outline the key design decisions that I have taken on the basis of Marshall and Rossman’s research design advice.

The rationale for the selection of each sample in this study is as follows:

- Case Studies 1 and 2. Own location in this district (cost, convenience) plus known to many of the potential participants (improving possibility of access and response).
- Case Studies 3 and 4. Researcher’s pre-research involvement in these two policy areas (improving possibility of access and response) plus potential policy areas likely to be of most significant benefit to participants.

In this study I have used the full range of data gathering and analysis strategies suggested by Marshall and Rossman, as can be seen in Figure 4.9.

1. **Quasi-statistical**  
   - survey responses
2. **Template Analysis**  
   - interview data
3. **Editing Analysis**  
   - policy text data
4. **Immersion**  
   - focus group data

Figure 4.9. Marshall and Rossman’s data gathering/analysis range
Overall Approach

A case study strategy, using multiple cases and a ‘rich’ sampling selection

The Principalship Cases

Case Study 1: Central Districts Region Principals
- a maximum variation sample

Case Study 2: Sixteen Successful Principals
- a stratified, purposeful sample

The Policy Cases

Case Study 3: Small School Policy
- a critical case sample

Case Study 4: Principal Development Policy
- a critical case sample

Figure 4.7. The research strategy and sampling decisions
Aim - Complete three phases of data gathering

1. Phase 1 Survey (June/July)
   - Initial postal questionnaire sent to all principals of primary schools with a roll under 180 in the Central Districts region of New Zealand.

2. Phase 2 Participant Interviews (October/November)
   - Individual interviews with sixteen successful principals selected from questionnaire respondents.
   - Focus group interviews with four groups of four ‘similarly situated’ principals (from the sixteen individually interviewed); plus two Massey University school support staff managers in attendance at each interview.

3. Phase 3 Elite Interviews (November/December)
   - Interview One – Senior Policy Analyst, Ministry of Education responsible for Principal Development initiative
   - Interview Two – Joint interview with two Senior Policy Analysts, Ministry of Education, responsible for Small School Support
   - Interview Three – Interview with Massey University Senior School Support Staff Manager
   - Interview Four – Interview with President of New Zealand Principal Federation 1999-2002
   - Interview Five – Interview with Massey University School Administration Support Cluster contract manager
   - Interview Six – Interview with Massey University First Time Principals Design contract co-director

Figure 4.8. Project plan for 2002/2003
2003

THE RESEARCH PLAN FOR 2003

Aim - Complete writing up and impact work

(Note: from February to July 2003, researcher was on study leave at Deakin University, Geelong)

Phase Four Writing Up (February – July)

February
- Doctoral Summer School

March
- Chapter 1

April
- Chapters 2-3

May
- Chapters 4-5

June
- Chapters 6-7

Phase Five Impact Work (August – December)

29 – 31 August
- ‘Rural Futures’ Policy Forum in Palmerston North: 50 small school principals; 50 rural trustees; plus mix of MOE policy analysts and Massey support staff.

11-13 September

3-5 October
- BELMAS Conference in Milton Keynes. Paper on principalship role and support needs in small New Zealand schools.

1-3 December
The appendices to the study provide details of these data gathering and analysis strategies:

Appendix 3: The Survey. These data were analysed using SPSS (Quasi-statistics).

Appendix 4: Focus Group Structure and Themes. These data were analysed using thematic analysis.

Appendix 5: Interview Questions. These data were analysed using thematic and template analysis.

Appendix 6: Elite Interview and Document Analysis Themes. These data were analysed using content analysis.

d) Bush on Building Authenticity into Research Design

Bush (2002, p. 59) suggests that “although research methods should be determined largely by the aims and context of the research, they should also have regard to quality criteria”. He then goes on to describe three key quality criteria - reliability, validity and triangulation.

(i) Bush on Reliability

According to Bush (2002), reliability refers to the probability that repeating a research procedure will produce identical or similar results and as such it relates mainly to the instruments used in the research. Validity is a concept relating to whether the research as a whole accurately describes the phenomena which it was intended to describe. Triangulation results from comparing sources of evidence in order to determine the accuracy of information or phenomena. Together, a focus on reliability, validity and triangulation should create an acceptable level of authenticity in any study.
In examining reliability in greater detail, Bush (2002) comments that survey research places great emphasis on reliability of measurement, on the standardisation of measuring instruments and on the reliability of data collection methods. In my study I have taken the following steps to try to increase the reliability of the survey:

1. I have based my questionnaire on the one used by Livingstone in his 1999 survey of workload of New Zealand teaching principals. In his report, Livingstone describes how his questionnaire was carefully designed and pre-tested to ensure that the questions were as unambiguous as possible, were phrased neutrally and made not unreasonable demands on the memory of past experience of the participants.

2. For my questionnaire, I did some updating of Livingstone’s items and also did not use all his items on details of workload. To check the reliability of the modifications, I pre-tested the revised questionnaire with a group of five local principals and made minor adjustments to some wording as a result of their feedback.

3. To try to increase reliability of data-input, I used a professional data-inputer and have then personally cross-checked a one in ten sample of responses for input accuracy.

(ii) Bush on Validity

In examining validity, Bush suggests that probably the greatest single threat to validity in novice qualitative research results from bias in interview questioning. While interviewer training and careful formulation of questions (to avoid leading questions) may reduce potential invalidity, the possibility is difficult to eliminate by these strategies alone. In my study I have submitted my possible interview questions to my supervisor and made adjustments to the schedule before use, as a result of his comments. Before fieldwork I also conducted a dummy-interview with two colleagues and gained their comments on ways my technique might be improved. However, following Bush, I have relied more on
triangulation than on validity-enhancing techniques to try to improve the authenticity of my study.

(iii) **Bush on Triangulation**

According to Bush, triangulation is especially important in providing authenticity in case study research. “The basic principle in data-collection for case study is to check your data across a variety of methods and a variety of sources” (2002, p. 69). In my study I have used triangulation with both my principalship data-set and my policy data-set, as shown in Figures 4.10 and 4.11.

![Triangulation in principalship data-set](image)

Figure 4.10. Triangulation in principalship data-set

![Triangulation in policy data-set](image)

Figure 4.11. Triangulation in policy data-set

A key role in triangulation was played by my two colleagues, Tim White and Prue Kyle, who participated in and took a record of both parts of the focus group discussions. Tim and Prue are senior managers in Massey University’s
school support services. Their involvement, plus our lengthy post-group de-
briefs, ensured that the research was not reliant on the researcher as the sole
data-gathering instrument (thus overcoming a key shortcoming of most case
study research according to Bush, 2002).

e) Deakin HDR Administration Guide on Ethical Issues and Their Management

The Deakin University *Higher Degrees by Research Administrative Guide* (Deakin
University, 2002) indicates that those engaged in research should demonstrate
professionalism and integrity, observe fairness and equity, participate only in work
which conforms to accepted ethical standards, participate only in work which they are
competent to perform, avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest and ensure the safety
of those associated with the research. At this university, ethical supervision of any
research involving human subjects is carried out by the Deakin University Human
Research Ethics Committee. Details of the research design of this study were
submitted to the DUHREC in April 2002 (survey stage) and July 2002 (interviews and
focus groups). In considering submissions, the committee pays particular attention to
two principles: respect for personal autonomy, and avoiding harm to the participant.
Specific ethical implications and how they have been met in this study are as follows:

- **Researcher capability.** I have completed a masters paper in research methods.
  I work in an environment where I am surrounded by experienced research
  colleagues and during this study I have asked their advice whenever I have felt
  this might be useful. I acknowledge in particular the assistance of Professor
  John Codd (see the first section of Chapter 3). I also acknowledge the
  assistance of Professor Richard Harker with the statistical aspects of the study
  (see the first section of Chapter 5).

- **Power relationships.** I regard myself as a colleague and fellow professional
  with all participants. However, I acknowledge that some participants may see
  me as being from a ‘higher’ educational institution or as being more expert
  than them. As a result individual interviews in this study took place ‘on site’
  for the participants, in a situation with which they were comfortable. Focus
  group interviews took place at a ‘neutral’ venue, central to group members and
  out of school hours, so that participants were relaxed and able to contribute as
  fully as they felt they needed.
Free and Informed Consent. All participants received a prior description of the study and an overview of what participation might involve before being asked to consent to involvement. The ‘plain language’ statement and consent form used for these purposes are attached as Appendix 7.

Privacy Issues, Confidentiality and Anonymity. All survey and participant interview research data was coded so that participants’ individual responses were anonymous during the data analysis stage. Elite interviews were transcribed and returned for correction and/or amendment by interviewees. Participants in the focus group discussions were required to sign an agreement of confidentiality between themselves. All participants in focus groups had the right to withdraw any information previously volunteered if on reflection they felt its divulgence might cause harm or invade privacy. Pseudonyms for participants and their schools will be used in all future reporting of research results.

Storage and Security of Data. All data gathered in the research is stored in electronic or transcript form in the secure section of the Massey University Social and Policy Studies Department archives. It will be kept there for six years.

Potential Risk to Participants. All participants were advised that if they had any concern about any potential risk they were immediately to raise the concern with the researcher. Failing this, participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time if they were stressed or discomforted by the research process. One of the central ironies in designing the study was that the first of the key themes to be explored in the research is strain in the work of teaching principals - yet it is difficult to research this adequately without adding to the workstrain of the participants. As a result of this consideration, all participants in the individual interviews received a contribution of $250 towards recompense for the loss of release time that resulted from engagement in the research.

Potential Benefits to Participants. The most immediate application of research findings is likely to be in the area of policy, where key policy players were invited to participate in the public policy forum which concluded the study. The study is premised on the belief that the views of teaching principals have not been sufficiently heard up to now by policy makers in New Zealand and
the forum therefore established an arena where views could be directly shared. All research participants were invited to participate in the forum and in addition I presented the forum with an overview of my key findings and conclusions. The outcomes of the policy forum are included as an Endnote to this report.

Copies of the two ethics clearance statements for this study from the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee are attached as Appendix 7. A flyer about the rural policy forum is attached as Appendix 8.
4. CONCLUSION

To conclude the chapter I will briefly recapitulate the key features of the research design adopted in the study. Data has been sought in the study about both principalship and policy.

For principalship, data has been gathered by three methods:

- A questionnaire on strains, support and satisfactions in their current work, completed by all teaching principals in New Zealand’s Central Districts region.
- Individual interviews with sixteen successful teaching principals on their work strategies and associated thinking.
- Focus group interviews with those previously interviewed individually, focusing on success factors for their particular school setting.

For policy, data has been gathered by three methods:

- Document analysis of key policy texts.
- Elite interviews with significant ‘players’ in policy implementation.
- Individual and focus group interview responses on current needs and reactions to current policies.

The study now moves on to a consideration of the major research findings (Chapters 5 and 6).
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS ABOUT PRINCIPALSHIP

This chapter summarises the principalship data. The data sought about principalship in this study related to the success and strain factors evident in principals’ current work; the strategies, beliefs and values being utilized by the principals; and the extent to which these might vary according to school setting and/or principal career stage (that is, Research Questions 1-4 from the research questions outlined at the beginning of Chapter 4). The chapter has three sections:

1. Data arising from the questionnaire.
2. Data arising from the focus groups.
3. Data arising from the individual interviews.

It concludes with a summary of key themes evident in the data as a whole relating to success, strain and strategies in the current work of small New Zealand primary school principals.

1. THE PRINCIPALSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

In June 2002 I sent out a questionnaire to all primary principals in New Zealand’s Central Districts region of schools with a roll under 180. There are 260 such schools in the region, which covers the area of the lower North Island that is north of the Wellington region (at the bottom of the island) and south of the Taupo/Rotorua region (in the middle of the island). The Central Districts region includes the districts of Taranaki in the west, around the city of New Plymouth; Manawatu/Wanganui in the centre, with the city of Palmerston North as the main service centre; and Hawkes Bay in the east, with the twin cities of Napier and Hastings as the major service centres.

a) The Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire was structured into eight sections:

(i) Biographical Details
(ii) Current Job and Context
(iii) Previous Teaching Career
(iv) Principal Preparation and Support
(v) Use of Time
(vi) Challenges and Rewards
(vii) Current Attitude Overall
(viii) View of the Future

(See Appendix 3 for a copy of the questionnaire used.)

b) The study population and the survey sample

The table below breaks down the distribution of smaller primary schools by size for New Zealand as a whole (that is, the study population) alongside that in the region of the Central Districts (that is, the survey sample).

Table 5.1. Distribution of Smaller Primary Schools in New Zealand and the Central Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Zealand Smaller Primary Schools Breakdown</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No of Teachers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
<td><strong>No of Schools</strong></td>
<td><strong>Percentage of all schools</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 teachers</td>
<td>U1</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 teachers</td>
<td>U2</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 teachers</td>
<td>U3</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 teachers</td>
<td>U4</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Districts Smaller Primary Schools Breakdown</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No of Teachers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
<td><strong>No of Schools</strong></td>
<td><strong>Percentage of all schools</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 teachers</td>
<td>U1</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 teachers</td>
<td>U2</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 teachers</td>
<td>U3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 teachers</td>
<td>U4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this table only U4 schools with a roll under 180 have been included. The U4 grade actually extends from a roll of 150 to one of 300 (MOE, 2002c).

The table shows how the Central Districts has a larger proportion of small primary schools than the national pattern and how it has an especially large number of the smallest grade (U1) schools, with over a quarter of all New Zealand’s 1 and 2 teacher schools being in the Central Districts.
As was outlined in Chapter 1, nationally the Ministry of Education projects that primary school rolls across New Zealand will fall by about 15% between now and 2020. For the Central Districts the projected roll fall is 28% (Coppen, 2002), so the proportion of small schools in the Central Districts region is likely to remain high (barring a significant initiative to rationalise the schooling network) in the next ten or fifteen years.

c) Distribution and Response

The questionnaire, along with an explanatory letter and a consent form, was mailed to the school but addressed by name to the principal. The mailout was timed to coincide with the last week of Term Two, on the assumption that it was more likely to be completed by principals in the holiday period than during term time. The mailout included a stamped return-envelope. By the end of the holiday period there was a response rate of just over 40% but following a reminder note at the start of the new term the final response rate improved to 63%. The table below summarises the pattern of respondents, using the categories of school types from above.

Table 5.2. Questionnaire Respondent Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Teachers</th>
<th>School Grade</th>
<th>Percentage of sample</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 teachers</td>
<td>U1</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 teachers</td>
<td>U2</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 teachers</td>
<td>U3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 teachers</td>
<td>U4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breakdown indicates that proportionally, slightly more of my respondents come from larger small schools than there are in the region.

Eleven questionnaires (4.2%) were returned unopened because the named addressee was either no longer at the school or was on extended leave. Eight of these returns were from U1 schools; the rest were from U2 schools. Other background details of respondents are included in Appendix 3.
d) **Data Analysis**

Coded questionnaire responses were aggregated using the frequency function of the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Cross tabulation and statistical analysis for significance was carried out for the factors ‘age’ (in ten year broad categories), gender (female/male), school grade (U1, U2, U3, U4), and school decile (in ‘lower’, ‘middle’ and ‘higher’ categories). Further details of data analysis procedure are in Appendix 3.

e) **Results By Theme**

The questionnaire focused on the broad theme of the current work situation of teaching principals. The major results have been summarised in nine tables (see pages 165-169). Results from the questionnaire will be reported here using three sub-themes: time, motivation, and career-supports.

(i) **Time**

Time refers in particular to the use of ‘release’ time and of vacation time. Teaching principals are allocated release time from the Ministry of Education on a scale based on roll numbers. For the calculated amount of time based on roll size, the school is funded to employ a ‘release’ teacher, in addition to other staffing entitlements. In this study 27 respondents were entitled to 5 hours or less release per week, 88 had an entitlement of between 6 and 10 hours per week, 32 had an entitlement between 11 and 15 hours per week, 11 had an entitlement between 16 and 20 hours, and 5 had an entitlement between 20 and 25 hours. In addition, 20 principals were experiencing additional release time funded from local sources. The study investigated the predominant activities that the principal engaged in during this release time (Table 5.3).

During the New Zealand school year there are four terms of approximately ten weeks each, and three term vacations, each of two weeks. The study investigated the major patterns of work during this ‘between term’ vacation time (Table 5.4).
The results (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4 on pages 165 and 166) indicate that respondents spend the major part of both release time and between term time catching up on management and administration paperwork, or in meetings. Between term time is also frequently used for planning and resource preparation. Professional development and professional leadership activities are ranked rather lower, in terms of use-of-time.

(ii) **Motivation**

Motivation refers to the factors attracting respondents to take up a teaching principal position in the first place, the factors providing greatest challenge and reward in their current work, and their overall attitude to teaching principalship and principalship more generally. Tables 5.5 to 5.8 summarise these results.

These data indicate that the main attraction of the position initially is derived from the leadership and management possibilities that it offers (Table 5.5). Once in the job, this remains a major satisfier for principals, alongside the reward of helping children learn (Table 5.7). Things that are perceived to get in the way of these satisfiers are the amount of paperwork and the interruptions associated with the job, alongside pressure from the external agencies (the Ministry of Education’s assessment and curriculum requirements, and Education Review Office reviews).

Overall, however, respondents are markedly more positive than negative about their job (Table 5.6). Almost three quarters of respondents are intending to stay in principalship as a career for at least the next two years (Table 5.8).

Statistical analysis of the motivational data, using the Pearson Chi-Square test, detected no significant difference by age, gender, school grade or decile rating at the p<0.05 level.

(iii) **Career-supports**

Career-supports refer to the sources of support and training received both before and since appointment to a teaching principal’s position, and the sorts
of support that would be most highly valued in the future. Tables 5.9 to 5.11 summarise the findings on this sub-theme.

The results suggest previous management experience, either as a principal or as a deputy principal, is the most highly valued support experience before appointment (Table 5.9). However, 36 of the 164 respondents (about 20%) had been appointed to their current position without any previous management experience as a principal, deputy principal or assistant principal. Once appointed to a principal’s position the most frequently experienced support is from informal discussion with other principals, closely followed by working with advisors, involvement in a cluster group or curriculum contract and principals’ association involvement (Table 5.10). However, the most valued experience (formal mentoring) had been experienced by less than a third of the respondents.

The results also indicate that principals think both reduced demands and better support from outside agencies are likely to improve their working position in the future (Table 5.11).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Number of Principals Rating it a Significant Factor</th>
<th>% of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handling correspondence</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing/revising school policies</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranging or preparing for/ attending meeting</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing/writing newsletters</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling finances</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making/answering phone calls</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to parents</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying out staff appraisals</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student counselling/discipline</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning lessons</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting professional discussions</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing/managing teaching resources</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising property maintenance/ checking supplies</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.4  Use of time: Time outside term time (n= 164)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Number of Principals Rating it a Significant Factor</th>
<th>% of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme planning</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing school policy</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updating student records</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource preparation</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting up classroom</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff recruitment/appointment</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional reading</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher development days</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional conferences</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison with parents/community</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting outside agencies</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5.  Reasons for becoming teaching principal (n = 164)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order of Priority</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; choice (frequency)</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; choice (frequency)</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; choice (frequency)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Employ management skills</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Implement philosophy and vision</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Career progression</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Empower/improve other staff</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Maintain contact with children</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.6. Overall rating of experience of teaching principalship (n = 164)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7. Current motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Satisfiers</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Major Dissatisfiers</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helping children learn</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Completing paperwork</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for ed. leadership</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>ERO review</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial relationships</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Developing new assessment</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making children happy</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Lack of finance</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative competence</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Interruptions to reaching</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building parent/community support</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Introducing new curriculum</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing relationship with BOT</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Managing falling roll</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with individual teachers</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Balancing admin and class teaching</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to local community</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Implementing new technology</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepping stone</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Special needs children</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inadequate class space</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.8. Future aspirations: Where do you wish to be in two years time? (n = 160)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a non-teaching principal position</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the same/similar position</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will have left teaching</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to classroom teaching</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a DP/AP position</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9. Type/Value of pre-principal training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes/No Numbers</th>
<th>Highly Valued %</th>
<th>Moderately Valued %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal discussion with other principals</td>
<td>115/49</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with advisors</td>
<td>92/72</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience as AP/DP</td>
<td>79/85</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal of previous school</td>
<td>77/87</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer course pre-principalship</td>
<td>42/122</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short course pre-principalship</td>
<td>30/134</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Qualification in Ed. Mgt</td>
<td>25/139</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.10. Type/value of support since current appointment (n = 162)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Yes/No Numbers</th>
<th>Highly Valued %</th>
<th>Moderately Valued %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal discussion with other principals</td>
<td>154/10</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with advisors</td>
<td>149/15</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in cluster group</td>
<td>135/29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in curriculum contracts</td>
<td>131/33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ association involvement</td>
<td>129/35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer course principalship</td>
<td>91/73</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short course principalship</td>
<td>68/96</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal mentoring</td>
<td>67/97</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Qualification in Ed. Mgt</td>
<td>23/141</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.11. Desired changes to improve position of teaching principals (n = 162)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More release time</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less paper work</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better access to outside services</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce demands from MOE/ERO</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better PD for principal</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More staffing</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher salaries</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better BOT training</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **THE PRINCIPALSHIP FOCUS GROUPS**

In November 2002 I arranged and conducted four focus group interviews with a stratified, purposive sample of questionnaire respondents. Two focus groups took place in Hawkes Bay, one in Taranaki and one in Manawatu. The aim of the focus group phase of data-gathering was to get collective responses from principals, grouped according to the most distinctive types of school setting. The focus group discussion was structured around the exploration of four questions:

1. **The Qualities Profile** - what qualities might a good school for this setting have, and what contributing qualities should the principal have?
2. **The Recent Support Initiatives** - what is the group’s level of involvement with, and reaction to, the various recent support initiatives?
3. **Career Paths** - what career development suggestions do the group have that might improve principalship in the future?
4. **Demographic Trends** - what implications for small school principalship do the group foresee from the recent demographic projections?

See Appendix 4 for further details of the focus group procedure and findings.

In this chapter I will report the responses to Question 1, about the qualities expected for success in principalship in different small school settings. The responses to Questions 2-4 will be reported in the next chapter.

**a) The Sample**

Sixteen respondents were selected to participate in the focus group discussions, according to the following criteria:

1. All had to be succeeding in their current role. To achieve this I asked the school management advisors based in New Plymouth, Palmerston North and Napier (who had a good knowledge of the current work of principals in their respective districts) to nominate all the local teaching principals that they felt...
were succeeding. From these lists I then selected participants who met the other four criteria listed below.

2. Four needed to be principals of schools located in a city or town. This focus group was called the IN group, because of their location in an urban area. Because most primary schools in an urban area have a larger roll than 180, all the nominees in this category were from ‘schools of special character’ that is, either integrated Christian schools, or schools with a bi-lingual focus (English and Maori). In the summarised results which follow, this group is treated as two subgroups, because of the distinctions between the two predominant types of setting, Christian and bi-lingual.

3. Four needed to be principals of schools located near a city and with a typical roll between 80 and 160 (4-8 teachers). This focus group was called the NEAR group, because of their location near an urban area.

4. Four needed to be principals of schools located in a township or rural area and with a typical roll between 40 and 80 (2-4 teachers). This focus group was called the MID DISTANT group because of their location more than 10 kilometres from an urban centre but within 25 kilometres of one.

5. Four needed to be principals of schools located in a rural area and with a typical roll of less than 40. This focus group was called the FAR group, because of their location more than 25 kilometres from an urban area.

b) Data Gathering and Analysis

During each focus group meeting I conducted the discussion using a semi-structured interview format, with the intention of getting pooled reactions to general themes (and not to specific questions) (Kvale, 1996). To help with data-gathering and analysis I was assisted during the meeting by two colleagues from Massey University’s Institute for Professional Development and Educational Research, Prue Kyle (the Institute’s Professional Development Co-ordinator) and Tim White (the Institute’s Associate Director of the New Zealand Principal and Leadership Centre). During discussions Tim noted the white board summary which was developed as the discussion proceeded; Prue noted key quotes. After the discussion we de-briefed on what we thought were the major messages arising from the group discussion. These de-brief notes form the basis for the results which follow.
c) Results by Setting and Theme

The discussion on principalship in each focus group explored group member’s ideas about three quality themes: the features of the setting and the qualities of a good school for this setting; the contributing qualities of a good principal for a school in this setting, and the contributing qualities of other staff to overall success of a school in this setting. Results can be summarised as follows.

(i) Focus Group One - Part A

The IN Group (Christian Special Character Setting)

Participants in this discussion were either from a Catholic or a Seventh Day Adventist special character school located in an urban area. The Catholic school was a U3 school in a town; the SDA school was a U2 school in a city.

- Qualities of A Good Special Character Christian Small School

Participants identified five qualities which they felt would characterise any good special character small Christian school.

1. It must be a “good learning place with a family oriented feel”. It is this feel which creates the basis for the special character.
2. It must have a “strong values commitment, of the sort talked about at the recent education values summit” (held in Wellington in the month before the focus group met). Such values would include those of caring, sharing and serving.
3. It would be of an optimum roll size, typically smaller than other urban schools and “maybe in the order of 100 to 150”. This size is necessary to help create the special ‘family’ feel of the place.
4. It would feature suitable ceremonies, appropriate to the faith and special purpose of the school.
5. It would be strongly connected to the local community, both of parents and the wider faith.
• Qualities of A Good Special Character Christian School Principal

1. S/he must be a role model of practising Christian faith.
2. S/he must be able to use spiritual, sporting and teaching occasions to create or strengthen the sense of community.
3. S/he must be skilled at encouraging parental involvement in school activities such as picnics/barbecues, special days, services.
4. S/he must be “transparent” and a “good and open communicator”.
5. S/he must have (or must quickly develop) excellent knowledge of the local community and its internal dynamics.
6. S/he would be skilled at low key marketing: “it’s the size of the school and the family nature of its feel (and not the glossiness of the brochure) that’s the attraction”.

• The Contribution of Other Staff

Participants felt that the ‘tagged’ staff were vital for the promotion of the special Christian character (in New Zealand each ‘special character’ school must stipulate in its School Charter a certain proportion of its staffing positions as being ‘tagged’, that is, reserved for applicants exhibiting the characteristic that the school is designated to be promoting). However they felt that currently in provincial areas of the country there was only a very small pool of suitable ‘tagged’ staff to draw upon and principals often had to use ingenuity to come up with suitable staffing arrangements for tagged positions (Focus Group One Notes, p. 1-5).

(ii) Focus Group One - Part B

The IN Group (Bi-lingual Schools)

Participants in this group were from bi-lingual schools. One was a U4 school in a town with a high predominance of Maori in the population (about 85%), the other was a U1 school in a town with 95% of the population Maori.

• Qualities of a Good Bi-lingual School

Participants identified five qualities expected of any good bi-lingual school.
1. It would feature strong input from the local iwi (tribe) or hapu (Subtribe).
2. There would be a strong whanau (family) feel, both amongst staff and students.
3. The physical setting and decoration of the school would be reflective of its Maori identity.
4. The school would push both staff and students to ever higher levels of accomplishment in Te Reo (Maori language).
5. The school would also push students to the highest possible levels in the so-called ‘basics’ - English literacy and mathematical numeracy.

- **Qualities of a Good Bi-lingual School Principal**

To foster the above characteristics, participants suggested five qualities which they expected the principal of a successful bi-lingual school to display.

1. Ability to work collaboratively with the Board of Trustees and local community leaders.
2. Ability to generate local community support for the school.
3. Ability to tap into sources of outside support for Te Reo development and basics development.
4. Aroha (deep respect) for staff and students.
5. Mana (standing or status) based on one’s ability to ‘walk the talk’.

- **Contribution of Other Staff**

This type of school is fundamentally dependent on the impact of a whole-staff effect, including non-teaching and para-professional staff and volunteers. All staff must therefore ‘feel wanted and supported’ (Focus Group One Notes; plus Individual Interview 16).

(iii) **Focus Group Two**

**The NEAR Group (Larger Small Schools)**

Participants in this discussion were all from 4-8 teacher schools located near a major urban centre. One was from a fast growing U3 school three minutes drive from the city; one was from a fast growing U4 school, five minutes drive from the city; one was
from a steadily growing U2 school seven minutes drive from the city; and one was from a stable U2 school nine minutes drive from the city.

- Qualities of a Good 4-8 Teacher School

Participants identified eight qualities which they felt would characterise any good 4-8 teacher school.

1. It would provide “effective learning for the community setting”. Community expectations drive such schools.
2. It would have “a balanced staff-profile”, with the balance being both a balance of curriculum strengths and a balance of workloads across the staff as a whole. “There is no room for passengers in such a school”.
3. It would feature a “consultative approach” to planning and decision-making if the strengths of staff are to be capitalised on.
4. Relationships would be generally harmonious internally and externally.
5. It would be strong on vision and innovation.
6. It would have a “good” culture, based on positive values and a shared outlook.
7. The Board of Trustees would be supportive and share in the workload.
8. There would be strong community involvement and support.

- Qualities of a Good 4-8 Teacher School Principal

To foster the above characteristics, participants agreed on eight qualities that they would expect any good 4-8 teacher school principal to exhibit.

1. S/he must be a model classroom teacher. “That’s number one. You’re supposedly the best teacher in the school so you must strive to be the best teacher that you can be”.
2. S/he must treat other staff as equals and regard her/him self as part of the overall balance of the team.
3. S/he must be a good communicator - a skilled listener and speaker, appreciative of and approachable to parents, staff, students and community members.
4. S/he must be able to read situations and people and respond appropriately.
5. S/he must be the “central (but not the only) ideas person” and provide the vision that underpins the culture.
6. S/he must be well organised and skilled at using coping strategies, time management, and “time outs” to keep fresh.

7. S/he must be confident in how s/he looks and dresses. S/he must exemplify inner strength.

8. S/he must also exemplify professionalism through things like managing one’s own continuing learning, opening doors for others, and living the role of principal outside the school as well as internally.

- Contribution of Other Staff

Participants felt that it was vital in this setting for all staff to have drive and enthusiasm. They should “radiate a passion for the betterment of children and a love of being a teacher” (Focus Group Two Notes, pp. 1-7).

(iv) Focus Group Three

The MID DISTANT Group (Middle sized small schools)

Participants in this discussion were all from 2-4 teacher schools located some distance away from an urban centre but not in a remote location. One was from a growing U2 school, two were from growing U1 schools, and one was from a U2 school in an area of declining school age population (this last school was likely to be reclassified as a U1 school from the end of the year).

- Qualities of a Good 2-4 Teacher School

Participants identified five qualities which they felt would characterise any good 2-4 teacher school.

1. It must be “highly collaborative”, based on good communication between staff, parents, board and principal.

2. It must have children as the focus and stress achievement, progress and breadth of learning. Such learning needs to be “made visible” to parents and community.

3. It must have a supportive Board of Trustees. Because of the small pool of parents available to serve on the board, the board must be “willing to undertake training and seek advice when necessary”.
4. In such schools the career stage of the principal is a dominant influence: “every two teacher school is on a somewhat different journey and is in its own setting and at its own stage”. The principal and school must grow together.

5. It will have its own identity (or vision) and purpose: “it’s the principal’s job to grow this”.

- **Qualities of a Good 2-4 Teacher School Principal**

To foster the above characteristics, participants agreed on five qualities that they would expect in any good 2-4 teacher school principal.

1. S/he must be an excellent communicator with the staff and board. “A balanced approach and a sense of humour are both vital”.

2. S/he must be multi-tasked and multi-skilled. S/he must be able to prioritise and be a good time manager (to give their class the priority it deserves), but s/he must also be able to turn a hand to the multitude of tasks needed to keep the school running smoothly.

3. S/he must be flexible and self-motivated: “able to read the setting/place/stage and plan an appropriate medium term destination”. S/he must also be able to manage her/his own development because “s/he is the key learner”.

4. Ability to read and manage the board is a key attribute and board training is an important facet of the role.

5. S/he must be able to strike a balance between work and home: “burnout will come sooner rather than later if this is not the case”.

- **Contribution of Other Staff**

Participants felt other staff were especially important in schools of this size. They felt that it was vital that the office administrator was discreet, that s/he was multi-tasked (e.g. could also act as teacher aide, bus driver, library co-ordinator, etc.), and that s/he could provide institutional memory to an incoming principal. It was also important that the principal-release teacher have complementary skills to the principal and yet the two share a compatible viewpoint on standards and expectations (Focus Group Three Notes, pp. 1-5).
Focus Group Four

The FAR Group (1-2 Teacher Schools)

Participants in this discussion were from 1-2 teacher schools located in a remote rural setting. Two were sole-charge principals and two were principals of two-teacher schools.

- Qualities of a Good 1-2 Teacher School

Participants identified five qualities which they felt would characterise any good one or two teacher small school.

1. It would have quality classroom teaching. The learning environment would be well structured and planned and multi-level groupings would be operating smoothly.
2. It would be well organised administratively with good systems for all major aspects of the school’s operation.
3. It would feature “responsive programmes” that take the children from where they are at and develop their self-management skills.
4. There would be a supportive community with a high level of community involvement.
5. There would also be a supportive Board of Trustees.
6. A long term vision would be evident and the school goals and plans would be ‘in alignment’ with this.

- Qualities of a Good 1-2 Teacher School Principal

To foster the above characteristics, participants agreed on five qualities that they would expect any good 1-2 teacher school principal to exhibit.

1. S/he must have multi-level teaching skill and the ability to understand programme requirements for all levels. This includes the ability to develop children’s initiative and self-management skills.
2. S/he should have good personal organization and some management experience beforehand to draw on.
3. S/he must be able to stand up for themselves when necessary and “not be bullied by the board or community”, yet s/he must keep the community involved. This “sometimes requires adaptability and always involves understanding the local community dynamics”.

4. S/he must be a good communicator, “modelling and communicating the vision and mission regularly to caregivers and children” and skilled in both oral and written modes.

5. S/he must be a good time manager, able to “create time for one self and make time when necessary for other people”.

- Contribution of Other Staff

Participants felt that in this type of school the skills of the principal-release teacher were critical. S/he must have complementary teaching skills and interests to the principal, but they should share similar values, vision and human qualities. Strong classroom management skills were also needed so that the principal could leave the class with confidence. The office manager is also important and must be “very well organised, versatile and have lots of initiative”. Often s/he provides a key linkage to the local community (Focus Group Four Notes, pp. 1-5).

d) Further Analysis

In further analysis of the focus group ‘quality’ data reported so far in this section of the chapter, the qualities reported by focus group respondents were ‘collapsed’ into like groupings (Watling, 2002) so that the patterns of results could be visually compared across typical small school principalship settings. The results are displayed in Tables 5.12 and 5.13, on pages 181-182.

Table 5.12 shows that the qualities required for success by types of school in the various types of small school setting examined in this study collapsed into four clusters, the qualities of the class programmes, staff qualities, qualities of the school’s culture, and qualities of school-community relationships.

Table 5.13 shows that the qualities required to succeed as a principal reported for the typical small school settings examined in this study also collapsed into four categories:
personal qualities of the principal, interpersonal qualities of the principal, technical
skills of the principal and educational understandings and qualities of the principal.

Five patterns of results arising from this analysis are worthy of further comment, for
the light they shed on variations in principalship according to type of school setting.

1. The strong emphasis in the data from the special character focus groups on the
principal in these settings modelling the personal qualities (whether Christian or
Maori) that the school’s Charter expects the school to uphold, if the school is
going to succeed in its mission.

2. The strong emphasis in the ‘smaller’ small schools data on the principals’ skills in
organising and managing the class programme around individual needs, so that all
children in the school were being adequately catered for.

3. The strong emphasis in the responses from ‘mid-sized’ and ‘larger’ small school
settings on the qualities of other staff as a vital factor in the success of such
schools.

4. The low emphasis in all types of setting on principals requiring technical skills to
succeed.

5. The high emphasis in all types of setting on the personal and interpersonal
qualities of the principal as a prerequisite for success.
Table 5.12. Qualities expected for success by types of school in typical small school settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Class Programme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basics development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ‘Special Character’ Christian Small Schools</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ‘Larger’ Small Schools</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ‘Mid Sized’ Small Schools</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ‘Smaller’ Small Schools</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ‘Special Character’ Bilingual Small Schools</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.13  Qualities required to succeed as a principal in typical small school settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Technical</th>
<th>Educational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special character role model</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal organisation</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confident manner</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balanced life</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to multi-task</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to foster parental involvement</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community knowledge</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication qualities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to foster teamwork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to work with BOT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practical skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model classroom teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fosters appropriate culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leads professional development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. ‘Special Character’ Small Schools
2. ‘Larger’ Small Schools
3. ‘Mid Sized’ Small Schools
4. ‘Smaller’ Small Schools
5. ‘Special Character’ Bilingual Small Schools

182
3. THE PRINCIPALSHIP INTERVIEWS

In November and December 2002 I conducted sixteen individual interviews, one with each of the participants in the focus group discussions. Eight of the interviewees were from Hawkes Bay, four were from Taranaki, and four were from Manawatu. The aim of the individual interviews was to get a thicker description of each principal’s strategies and associated thinking. See Appendix 5 for details of interview procedure and findings.

a) Sample Profile

Five of the interviewees had been principals for less than eighteen months (and were thus eligible for the First Time Principals’ Training Programme), five had been principals for between twenty months and five years, and six had been principals for longer than five years. As noted in the section above on the focus groups, all were regarded by advisors as being principals who were succeeding. Table 5.14 provides details of all interviewees and their schools.

Table 5.14  Interviewee Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Pseudonym</th>
<th>Time as Principal</th>
<th>Previous Experience</th>
<th>School Grade</th>
<th>School Location</th>
<th>School Decile</th>
<th>Career Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dianne</td>
<td>10 months</td>
<td>Senior Teacher</td>
<td>U1</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Novice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ann</td>
<td>11 months</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td>U2</td>
<td>Near</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Novice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dave</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>U1</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Novice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Betty</td>
<td>16 months</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td>U1</td>
<td>Far</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Novice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jill</td>
<td>16 months</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>U1</td>
<td>Far</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Novice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. June</td>
<td>20 months</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td>U2</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gwen</td>
<td>22 months</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td>U4</td>
<td>In</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cath</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td>U1</td>
<td>Far</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Alec</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td>U3</td>
<td>In</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Jerry</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>U3</td>
<td>Near</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Samantha</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>U3</td>
<td>Near</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Helen</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>U2</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Judy</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>U1</td>
<td>Far</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Steve</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>U2</td>
<td>Near</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Chris</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>U2</td>
<td>In</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Joe</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>U4</td>
<td>In</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Interview Themes

Though for ethical reasons specific questions for the individual interviews were developed (see Appendix 5), the interviews in practice followed a semi-structured format based on the exploration of pre-set themes (Kvale, 1996). There were three principalship themes explored in the interviews: the general work situation of the principal and in particular the role balance that s/he has adopted, the issues the principal faced in the early part of her/his principalship and the strategies that the principal has used since to respond, and the principal’s plans for further school development in the next 18 months to two years.

c) Data Analysis and Reporting

Kvale (1996) describes two major methods for structuring and analysing interview data: ‘meaning condensation’ and ‘meaning categorisation’. By condensation Kvale means the abridgement of the data from the form in which it was expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulations. By categorisation Kvale means the sorting of pieces of the data into sub-categories that can be displayed or quantified to establish and communicate general patterns evident in the data.

In this study all the principalship interviews were tape recorded and the recording was then transcribed. Starting from the transcriptions, an initial breakdown was carried out and the general pattern of each interview was established in the form of a five to six page ‘mindmap’ of key ideas covered in the interview. This was then transposed into a one page short-summary of the response from each interviewee (see Appendix 5). Kvale (1996) calls this process of abridgement of interview responses, using the broad themes used in interview-questioning, the process of ‘meaning condensation’.

Following this, I reviewed all the summarised data under each of the three broad themes that I had used in the principalship half of the short summaries (the left hand side of each page), and broke the principalship responses down into the subthemes evident in individual responses. I transferred the results into three tables (see Tables 5.15-5.17, on pages 186-188), based on the following format:

(i) First Year Principals - the case of the Novices (5 in total).
(ii) Years 2-5 Principals - the case of the Mid-Experienced (5 in total).
d) Commentary on the Principalship Data Breakdown

For the purposes of clarity and brevity only selected data patterns will be commented on here, using the following themes as the basis for the commentary:

1. General work situation;
2. Issues and strategies; and
3. Plans for school development.

(i) The General Work Situation

There were five sub-themes that came through in this part of the data analysis: how the principal handled their overall workload, the classroom/release roles, the BOT/school manager role, the administrative role, and what specific strategies were used to cope with the overall workflow (see the top sections of Interview Tables 5.15-5.17).

- Overall Attitude and Workload

Some (especially the less experienced principals) reported working longer hours per week than the average for teaching principals indicated in Livingstone’s study (60 hours per week).

For example, Dave:

‘If it’s not running the way I want it, then my weekends turn in to school days so I virtually have a seven day week. I am working right through now. Until I can rectify the Charter and some of the administration stuff and get my classroom back to the way I want it, that’s how it’s got to be’ (Transcript 3, p. 7).
### Table 5.15. Principal Situation, Strategies and Plans (Novices)

#### General Work Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Attitude/Workload</th>
<th>Classroom/release Roles</th>
<th>BOT/Manager Role</th>
<th>Administrative Role</th>
<th>Specific Personal Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work more enjoyable than expected - Dave</td>
<td>Class has top priority - Dianne - Ann - Dave (initially)</td>
<td>BOT has wide management role - Ann - Betty</td>
<td>Find paperwork a burden - Dave - Betty</td>
<td>Chunking time - Dianne - Ann - Betty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working average hours for TPS - Ann</td>
<td>Release teacher working partnership - Ann</td>
<td>Principal dominates management role - Dave</td>
<td>Find mail a burden - Jill</td>
<td>- Jill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher than TP average - Jill - Dave</td>
<td>Similar to AP - Betty</td>
<td>BOT/P shared roles - Jill</td>
<td>Find reading a burden - Dianne (takes home)</td>
<td>Making meetings more efficient – Dianne</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Issues and Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Climate/Behaviour</th>
<th>Broader/ N narrower Programme</th>
<th>Better Basics</th>
<th>Better Systems/ Policies</th>
<th>Improved Parental Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct/Indirect</td>
<td>Direct/Indirect</td>
<td>Direct/Indirect</td>
<td>Direct/Indirect</td>
<td>Direct/Indirect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dianne (whole school climate)</td>
<td>- Dianne (narrower)</td>
<td>- Betty (juniors)</td>
<td>- Dianne</td>
<td>- Dave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ann (senior class)</td>
<td>- Ann (broader)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Ann</td>
<td>- Jill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dave (uniform)</td>
<td>- Dave (activity)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Betty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jill (students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Plans for School Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Students</th>
<th>Internal Plant</th>
<th>External - other Schools</th>
<th>External Market</th>
<th>External - Response to Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Dianne (raise Māori achievement)</td>
<td>- Ann (Safer entrance)</td>
<td>- Dianne (clusters)</td>
<td>- Dianne (stabilise roll)</td>
<td>- Dianne (respond to ERO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ann (L/N)</td>
<td>- Betty (ICT)</td>
<td>- Dianne (buddy principal)</td>
<td>- Ann (hold as 3 teachers)</td>
<td>- Dianne (Māori consultation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dave (lift yr 1-8)</td>
<td>- Jill (ICT)</td>
<td>- Ann (pre-school/colleges)</td>
<td>- Dave (grow)</td>
<td>- Betty (EDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Betty (General lift and study skill)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Dave (mix inter-racially)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Jill (Māori consultation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jill (L/N)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Betty (buddy principal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jill (Te Reo)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5.16. Principal Situation, Strategies and Plans (Mid-Experienced)

#### General Work Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Attitude/Workload</th>
<th>Classroom/release Roles</th>
<th>BOT/Manager Role</th>
<th>Administrative Role</th>
<th>Specific Personal Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher than TP</td>
<td>Class top priority - June - Cath</td>
<td>B OT boundaries set - June – Alec</td>
<td>Laptop help - June – Jerry</td>
<td>Chunking time - June - Gwen - Alec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Paperwork top priority - Alec</td>
<td>Raised BOTs roles - Cath</td>
<td>Mail cleared regularly - June - Gwen</td>
<td>Delegation - Cath – Gwen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher in first year as P</td>
<td>Release teacher partnership - June – Cath</td>
<td>PR with parents crucial - Jerry</td>
<td>Administrator crucial - Gwen - Cath</td>
<td>Extra release - Alec - Jerry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as P - Cath</td>
<td>Teacher support top priority - Gwen - Alec - Jerry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Issues and Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Achievement</th>
<th>Better Vision/Systems/Plans</th>
<th>Staff Climate/Support</th>
<th>Student Climate</th>
<th>BOT/Parents/Community Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Cath</td>
<td>- June</td>
<td>- Gwen</td>
<td>- June</td>
<td>- June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Gwen</td>
<td>- Alec</td>
<td>- Cath</td>
<td>- Cath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Cath</td>
<td>- Jerry</td>
<td>- Alec</td>
<td>- Alec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Alec</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Jerry</td>
<td>- Jerry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct/Indirect</td>
<td>Direct/Indirect</td>
<td>Direct/Indirect</td>
<td>Direct/Indirect</td>
<td>Direct/Indirect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cath (d)</td>
<td>- June (d)</td>
<td>- June (d)</td>
<td>- June (d)</td>
<td>- June (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Gwen (shared)</td>
<td>- Gwen (d)</td>
<td>- Cath (shared)</td>
<td>- Cath (shared)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Alec (shared)</td>
<td>- Alec (shared)</td>
<td>- Jerry (i)</td>
<td>- Alec (shared)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Jerry (i)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Jerry (i)</td>
<td>- Jerry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Plans for School Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Students</th>
<th>Internal Staff</th>
<th>Internal Plant</th>
<th>External Market</th>
<th>External-Response to Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Cath (seniors)</td>
<td>- Gwen (DP)</td>
<td>- Gwen (ICT)</td>
<td>- June (grow)</td>
<td>- June (planning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cath (Te Reo)</td>
<td>- Gwen (pedagogy)</td>
<td>- June (grow)</td>
<td>- Alec (consolidate)</td>
<td>- Gwen (ERO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Alec (boys)</td>
<td>- Jerry (breather)</td>
<td>- Jerry (sell programme)</td>
<td>- Cath (Te Reo plus planning)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jerry (seniors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.17. Principal Situation, Strategies and Plans (Seniors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Work Situation</th>
<th>Overall Attitude/Workload</th>
<th>Classroom/release Roles</th>
<th>BOT/Manager Role</th>
<th>Administrative Role</th>
<th>Specific Personal Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easier than previous school - Samantha</td>
<td>PR role - Samantha - Joe</td>
<td>BOT wide management - Samantha</td>
<td>Phone key link – Helen</td>
<td>Delegation - Samantha - Helen - Judy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher than TP average – Judy</td>
<td>Class top priority - Helen – Steve</td>
<td>Parental/PR role vital - Helen – Joe</td>
<td>Secretary vital - Judy</td>
<td>Steve – Joe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than TP average – Steve - Chris</td>
<td>SMT partnership – Joe</td>
<td>BOT focused support – Judy</td>
<td>Especially frustrating - Chris</td>
<td>Chunks time - Judy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Release teacher partnership - Helen - Judy - Chris</td>
<td>BOT chair vital – Steve</td>
<td>Independent learning – Helen</td>
<td>Extra release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BOT narrow role - Chris</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Samantha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues and Strategies</th>
<th>Staff Climate/PD</th>
<th>Student Programmes</th>
<th>Student Climate</th>
<th>School Plant</th>
<th>Parents/Roll/Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Samantha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Helen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Judy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samantha (d)</td>
<td>Samantha (d)</td>
<td>Judy (d)</td>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Samantha (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steve (shared)</td>
<td>Steve (shared)</td>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Steve (shared)</td>
<td>Hunting (shared)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joe (shared)</td>
<td>Joe (shared)</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Chris (shared)</td>
<td>Hunting (shared)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samantha (shared)</td>
<td>Steve (shared)</td>
<td>Erik (shared)</td>
<td>Joe (shared)</td>
<td>Hunting (shared)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steve (shared)</td>
<td>Joe (shared)</td>
<td>Joe (shared)</td>
<td>Steve (shared)</td>
<td>Hunting (shared)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joe (shared)</td>
<td>Helen (shared)</td>
<td>Judy (shared)</td>
<td>Chris (shared)</td>
<td>Hunting (shared)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plans for School Development</th>
<th>Internal Students</th>
<th>Internal Staff</th>
<th>Internal Plant</th>
<th>External Market</th>
<th>External Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal Students</td>
<td>Samantha (N)</td>
<td>Samantha (ped)</td>
<td>- Helen (B)</td>
<td>- Helen (manage roll fall)</td>
<td>Samantha (MOE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judy (seniors)</td>
<td>Steve (B)</td>
<td>- Steve (B)</td>
<td>- Judy (growth)</td>
<td>Steve (social work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helen (L/N)</td>
<td>Chris (B)</td>
<td>- Chris (B)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steve (L/N)</td>
<td>Joe (ICT)</td>
<td>- Joe (IC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chris (L/N)</td>
<td>Joe (B)</td>
<td>- Joe (B)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joe (N)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jill was another novice principal working longer hours than the teaching principal average:

*Interviewer: You mentioned that in terms of your classroom planning, you come in on...*

*Respondent: Sunday normally.*

*I: And spend a full day more or less getting yourself up to speed.*

*R: I normally spend about seven or eight hours on a Sunday on class planning and preparation for the next week.*

*I: And what sort of hours would you typically work in a week? Is it basically six full days?*

*R: Yeah. I probably would work a twelve hour day normally. Sometimes longer.*

*I: So that’s 70 odd hours a week?*

*R: Sometimes longer (Transcript 5, p. 6).*

However, two of the senior principals indicated that they are working less hours than the teaching principal average. For example, Steve:

*Interviewer: In terms of your workload then, how would you graph it? Was it higher in the early days of Tomorrow’s Schools and lower now or what?*

*Respondent: It’s all about the same.*

*I: Is it? So what would you be working in a typical week now in terms of hours?*
R: I’ll always be here at a quarter to eight and I’m usually here till 4.30 or a quarter to five. So whatever that is. Taking into that also I’d be out two nights doing coaching sessions with indoor basketball, T-Ball, whatever. And board meetings, of course (Transcript 14, p. 9).

- Attitude to Classroom Role

The majority of the principals saw their class as their number one work priority. For example, the novice Dianne:

My main reason for coming out here (from the nearby city) was so that I could actually teach, because I enjoy teaching. And so my main goal is to be in the classroom as much as possible (Transcript 1, p. 3).

And the more senior Helen:

What’s important? Trying to do the very best job that you can in the classroom, because if you don’t then the parents are just going to whip their kids away again (Transcript 12, p. 5).

A key strategy used by a number of the principals to try to strengthen the class programme was to deliberately seek a principal release teacher for their class who would complement their own strengths. As Ann explained this strategy:

I think the greatest asset was the fact that I was able to appoint my release teacher at the start of this year. And so I have got with me the most fantastic first year teacher whose got a mindset just like me but who has curriculum strengths that I don’t have (Transcript 2, p. 7).

Another strategy used to strengthen curriculum delivery across the school, especially in the larger schools, was the strategy of using principal release
time to support or relieve other teachers. Gwen explained the impact of this strategy in the following terms:

\[
\text{During school hours I lead by example. Certainly there are times when there are meetings that need to happen during the day. But I try to make these as rare and as short as possible. Schools are about kids. And if I go into a classroom and suddenly a teacher has now got fifteen in her group and I've got fifteen in mine I've just lifted the stress. And that's what it's about, you know} \ 
\text{(Transcript 7, p. 7).}
\]

- **BOT/Manager Role**

A range of strategies were evident in the ways principals worked with Boards of Trustees. One was to get the board to change its focus from minor property matters (‘dunnies and drains’) to overseeing the general direction and achievement of the school. Cath described how this change came about in her school as follows:

\[
\text{[When I got here] there were no systems. There was no paperwork really. And the board were very focused on property - they would discuss it for hours at meetings...}
\]

\[
\text{But those people left during the first year and other new people came on. I started to get them focusing on planning and knowing about achievement - the sorts of things they are meant to be dealing with. Initially some questions were asked about why we were doing this. Then ERO came in and told them what a good job they were doing, so that settled that} \ 
\text{(Transcript 8, pp. 2 and 5).}
\]

Another strategy was for the principal to do a lot of the preparatory work beforehand, with the board then formalising the matter. Chris was one principal who used this strategy:
Board members do have portfolios. Some of that’s token possibly. Because when it comes to the nitty-gritty, for example in the financial area, I’ll run through it all beforehand and give a draft to the Treasurer and then basically it’s done. So basically I do a lot of the groundwork for them (Transcript 15, p. 5).

Another strategy was to allow volunteers from the board a wide-ranging role in the repetitive work of running the school, doing things which might otherwise be a cost to the school. Ann explained the rationale for this strategy as follows:

It’s quite different here to what I am used to, coming from a school with a roll of 280...The board played quite a different role there to what they are doing here. Because all of a sudden I arrived here and there was no cleaner. There was no caretaker. So I said “who does these things?” And the board sort of said “We do”. And then I realised how it works, with me having to say to them “This needs doing”. And it would get done (Transcript 2, p. 3).

- Role as Administrator

In general, the novices tended to struggle with the ‘paper war’ and the ‘administrivia’. Jill’s response was fairly typical:

Interviewer: Tell me about how you have found the administrative aspects of the role?

Respondent: I enjoy it...But on the other hand I do find it a bit difficult because I’m trying to run a class and do all of that stuff, which is huge, as well as this other job which is also huge. So yes. And this is what happens. [Points to a pile of unopened mail].
I: It just piles up?

R: It just piles up! (Transcript 5, p. 4).

The more experienced principals have usually devised personal strategies for dealing with such matters. For example, Jane:

I learned very early on after I came here and had a waist high pile of mail and it took me about four weeks to get on to it that the mail now gets opened at three o’clock everyday and stuff you don’t need goes straight in the bin. That’s about three quarters of it (Transcript 6, p. 9).

- Specific Personal Strategies

The main personal strategy used to manage the workflow by less experienced principals was ‘chunking’ (setting aside) blocks of time for particular pre-set purposes. Dianne describes her use of this strategy as follows:

I am released one and a half days a week, which I take one day one week and two days the next week… I will not answer the telephone and do any administrative work while I am in the classroom… My Fridays I have for administration (or Fridays and Mondays) and I’m totally focused. I list everything to do and then it’s heads down and to it (Transcript 1, pp. 3-4).

The main personal strategy used to manage the workflow by the more experienced principals is delegation to others. Joe provides a good example of this:

At the time these people came in [points to the Deputy Principal and the Senior Teacher of the school, who are sitting beside Joe during the interview] it was a matter of getting ourselves sorted out for Senior Teacher, Deputy Principal and the staff itself… P_____[the Senior Teacher] runs our literacy programme. K_____[the Deputy Principal] organises the
planning, assessment and reporting side of things... So it’s not just the principal. It’s the staff and the Deputy Principal and the Senior Teacher down. That’s what provides the success of the school in implementing these new things and that’s what makes it possible (Transcript 16, pp. 9, 17).

(ii) Issues and Strategies

There were six sub-themes that emerged from the data about the issues faced by the principals in the early stages of their principalship, improving student climate/behaviour, improving staff climate, raising student achievement (or broadening the class programme), creating a better vision or systems or plans, improving school plant and physical facilities, and improving relationships with parents and/or the community (see the middle sections of Tables 5.15-5.17).

- Improving Student Climate/Behaviour

Almost all the novice principals felt that improving student climate was one of the key issues one which they needed to focus. Ann, for example, described the need for this as follows:

Straight away the children were the key focus because I arrived on the 21st of November, which was a funny time... The children had had a relieving principal and the Year 8 children had really given the people that were in the school at the time a very hard time... So I arrived here and immediately went about the classroom thing and getting that up and running. Routines established and rules and expectations and letting them know how I intended to deal with that sort of behaviour (Transcript 2, p. 2).

Where the novice principal lacked recent experience of teaching across all the levels required in a ‘sole charge’ or ‘two teacher’ situation, this created an
immediate issue. Betty was one novice who found it difficult to gain the breadth and depth of programme knowledge needed to teach effectively across Years 1 to 8.

The major issue that I faced was my lack of curriculum knowledge in the depth required to deliver an effective individualised programme that actually met the range of needs that were evident in the class I was teaching...You can learn the management stuff at the First Time Principals course in Auckland, but they don’t teach you anything there about what I found was the major issue I faced - putting together a whole-class programme that delivered what children needed for their individual requirements (Transcript 4, p. 4).

- Improving Staff Climate

More experienced principals often reported facing a staff climate that needed some attention. For instance the situation Gwen faced was as follows:

We had very much a “sick school” syndrome. There was so much infighting amongst the staff. The previous principal had ruled the school for sixteen years and he was pretty dogmatic and the staff had factionalised. It was an awful place to be in and I thought that because I knew the issues (Gwen was previously DP at the same school) I was best to come in as a buffer. So it was, yes, a bit of a healing thing that was needed (Transcript 7, p. 3).

- Improving Relationships with Parents and Community

Experienced principals also focused heavily on parental and community relationships early in their most recent tenure. Some needed to adopt a strong public relations persona. Jerry for example:
I’m a people person. And I think you’ve got to be. And I think that’s what parents want here too. It’s very open door here. Its not just open door by saying it. They actually do it. They expect it. They come in and work with their children. They see what they’re doing. And it’s my job to make it happen (Transcript 10, p. 16).

Other experienced principals needed to work to reduce parental expectations and demands on staff. When she arrived at her present school Samantha, for example, had to deal with managing a stressed staff-parental relationship:

Respondent: There was a lot of stress.

Interviewer: Between staff and parents?


I: Right. So what did you do for some of these things?

R: Stopped the gossip (Transcript 11, pp. 10-11).

Samantha also had to work to get parents to realise that school success may have its downsides:

So I think the parents have been the biggest issue in it all ...The biggest issue we’ve got currently is the fact that we are growing whether we want it or not. We don’t have a choice. And then there are those in the community who don’t want it to grow. These parents that want their small community and their small classes. And I’ve needed to point out that – it’s taken a lot of community consultation - they’re very confused as to why we are growing and why the school has not said “No more” (Transcript 11, p. 9).
The particular strategies the principals reported adopting to raise student achievement and provide educational leadership have been classified in the tables according to the following criteria:

Table 5.18. Classification of Leadership Strategies of Small School Principals in New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Shared</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal works directly with parents, staff, children, trustees to create the climate behaviour, vision, values that they are seeking</td>
<td>Principal shares leadership role with someone else/others (e.g. trustees, advisors, another staff member) during development</td>
<td>Principal arranges for someone else to work with parents, trustees, staff, children, and then evaluates/follows through Modelling/Coaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results from applying this classification suggest that novices rely heavily on direct strategies, especially as far as the class programmes are concerned. Mid-career and senior principals, by contrast, use a far higher proportion of shared and indirect strategies.

Another way at looking at the data using this classification is to redivide the sixteen principals and their strategies according to the size of school, rather than the stage of principal career. The results here infer that there may be a strong relationship between school size and type of leadership strategy:

Table 5.19. Classification of Leadership Strategies in This Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-3 teacher schools Principal Pseudonym</th>
<th>Strategy Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dianne</td>
<td>3x Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>2x Direct; 1x Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave</td>
<td>2x Direct; 1x Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>2x Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>1x Indirect; 1x Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cath</td>
<td>2x Direct; 1x Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>3x Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>1x Direct; 1x Shared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4-8 teacher schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Pseudonym</th>
<th>Strategy Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alec</td>
<td>1x Indirect; 2x Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>3x Indirect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen</td>
<td>1x Direct; 1x Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>2x Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>1x Direct; 3x Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>2x Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>2x Shared; 2x Indirect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>3x Direct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: Samantha had spent five years as a principal of a sole charge school before her relatively recent appointment to a five teacher school)

(iii) **Plans For School Development**

There were six sub-themes that emerged when the interview data relating to principals’ plans for future school development were analysed. Three related to ‘internal’ matters: student based development, staff based development, and property/plant development. Three related to ‘external’ matters: better links with other schools, better marketing/positioning of the school, and initiatives based on a response to the requirement of an external agency (see the bottom sections of Tables 5.15-5.17).

- **Student Based Development**

All of the principals put emphasis in one way or the other on student matters in their outlined plans. Typical of the rationale given for this emphasis was the explanation given by Judy:

*Next year a lot of our students, instead of going to Intermediate school, are staying on here. So the immediate issue is providing a worthwhile plan or programme for these children. We’re going to have to get together and work out a programme - playing sports, doing computer activities, extending their interests. Once a term we’re planning various trips* (Transcript 13, p. 8).
While for some the rationale for the emphasis on students in plans was to broaden the programme, for others it was to raise basics. For example, Alec:

*We’re putting listening as the focus. We’re looking at the ways the teachers can use the teacher aides in the classroom and then raise performance, particularly in listening comprehension. Our boys, in particular need to be lifted here. We’ve made some gains recently but the trick, as always, is to continue* (Transcript 9, pp. 5-6).

- **Better Market Positioning**

Most of the principals also took account of the changing market position or community demands on the school in their plans. Helen, for example, faced a declining pool of new entrants in the local area and surmised that this would require careful handling on her part:

*The roll issue is a huge issue. We’re likely to drop to two teachers, so roll issues and finance and making sure that the teachers feel supported are all things I’ll need to focus on. And reassuring parents. What I’m afraid of is that when we say that we’re going to drop a teacher the parents are going to say “well, I don’t want to be part of a two teacher school”* (Transcript 12, p. 12).

- **Links with Neighbouring Schools**

Novices in particular emphasised closer links with neighbouring schools in their stated plans. Sometimes this might mean planning to move in advance of prevailing community attitudes. As Betty put it:

*With the last EDI [that failed] it has created a lot of ill feeling between us and H_______[the next community]. Quite bitter. But D______[the neighbouring principal] and I get on really well together so we are planning to collaborate more on a
professional level, sharing ideas, and starting the process of getting rid of all that rubbish (Transcript 4, p. 11).

- Property and Plant Development

Some principals, especially the ‘Seniors’, had ambitious plans for plant/property development. Both Steve and Joe (the two most senior principals) were in this category. Steve was looking to complete a $500,000 project to construct a multi purpose building that would be used by both the school and community and be the base for shared social workers.

A school like this, I’d love to have a couple of social workers on site so that they would be accessible to all the community, to every kid (Transcript 14, p. 10).

Joe was planning to upgrade both the school’s information communication technology and student accommodation.

We’ll use our Maori whanau to put in the new plant, plumbing, concreting. There’ll be airconditioning in every classroom. We’ve got to keep up. So we’re pushing for Ibooks with our computers. We’re pushing for twelve Ibooks in there [points to the Senior room] (Transcript 16, p. 19).

- Response to Central Initiatives

Almost all principals were also planning to initiate or enhance some aspect of their school planning or reporting, in line with new Ministry of Education requirements, being introduced at the start of 2003. As Cath puts it,

Next year we’re looking at our Te Reo and consulting the parents about that, we’ve got one of the teachers that comes in as a relieving teacher, she is very strong Te Reo teacher so we should be well placed to meet what they [the Ministry] want there (Transcript 8, p. 9).

June was another needing to get the school’s planning up to scratch.
We’ve got a clear idea of our vision and how it’s being translated into practice but we haven’t yet committed it to paper in an easily accessible form. So next year we’ll need to do that, to meet the new strategic planning and reporting requirements (Transcript 6, p. 19).
4. CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an overview of the principalship data gathered from questionnaires, focus groups and individual interviews. In reviewing the data on principalship as a whole, six main themes are evident.

1. Teaching principals overall are still working very hard, both during term time and in so-called ‘vacation’ time. Both questionnaire and individual interview data support this conclusion.

2. Despite having to work hard, teaching principals currently are generally positive in their outlook, and feel relatively well supported. Again, both questionnaire data and individual interview data support this conclusion.

3. Successful teaching principals use a range of personal strategies to manage the demands of their general work situation, with time chunking (in smaller small schools) and delegation (in larger small schools) being two that are frequently mentioned. This conclusion is supported by data from both the focus group discussions and the individual interviews.

4. Successful teaching principals put considerable store on ‘emotional intelligence’ (that is, understanding and control of self, and understanding and ability to influence others) as a foundation for principalship success. All focus groups independently indicated that this was a crucial success factor.

5. Successful teaching principals in smaller small schools work for school improvement in a somewhat different way than teaching principals of larger small schools. As the individual interview data in particular indicates, they rely much more on their personal effectiveness as a class teacher and the model this provides, than they do on aspects like teamwork and delegation, which are used extensively by principals of larger small schools.

6. For almost all teaching principals it is the teaching aspects of the job that provide the greatest job satisfaction. This is clearly indicated in the questionnaire data. However, as is indicated by the individual interview data, for novice principals this also appears to be the most difficult single aspect of the job to learn and master quickly.
CHAPTER 6

POLICY FINDINGS

This chapter summarises the policy data. The data sought about policy in this study related to the policy construction process in New Zealand and the impact of selected educational policies on the work of small school principals. The chapter has two sections:

1. Policy data relating to small school network development and support.
2. Policy data relating to principal development and support.

Each section of the chapter covers three main aspects:

(i) Texts: what the policy texts say about what the purpose of the policy is and why it came about;
(ii) Elite interviews: how those implementing the policy view it; and
(iii) Responses from the field: how the policy is being received.

Each section of the chapter concludes with a review of the consistency/inconsistency within the overall policy data subset with which it deals (the ‘small school development’ subset at the end of the first section, and the ‘principal development’ subset at the end of the second section).

The chapter concludes with a brief recapitulation of the key policy findings. As a whole the chapter aims to provide an overview of the data gathered in the study that answers Research Questions 5 to 8 from Chapter 4, about the rationale for, degree of consistency within, and impact of each of the selected policy aspects. See Appendix 6 for details of elite interview and policy document analysis procedure not described in this chapter.
1. POLICY DATA RELATING TO SMALL SCHOOL NETWORK DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

As indicated in Chapter 3, there are two significant policies that presently make up the policy framework for New Zealand small school network development and support. These policies are the School Administration Support Cluster (SASC) policy, introduced first in pilot form in 1997; and the Education Development Initiative (EDI) policy, introduced at the end of 1991. SASC provides seed funding for groups of small schools to implement cooperative projects in designated areas. EDI facilitates discussion amongst groups of small schools considering merger or other forms of rationalisation. The data reported here focuses on these two policies. It provides the basis for the answers to the two research questions dealing with small school policy: what the rationale for each of the key policies is, and how each of the policies is being received in the field.

a) What the Policy Texts Say

As part of the data gathering for this study, over 2002 I gathered a range of examples of current New Zealand policy texts referring to small schools and small school support policy. A selection of these policy texts was then analysed, using techniques for documentary analysis (Cortazzi, 2002) which focus on the analysis and classification of themes, keywords and meanings. As Cortazzi suggests, the purpose of policy text analysis is to “read for embedded meanings or unwitting evidence for such aspects of an educational institution’s (or system’s) behaviour as the exercise of power and control, the presentation of real or contrived images, and the leaking of attitudes, values and social expectations which the authors might have thought hidden” (2002, p. 202). This part of the chapter is based on a textual analysis of the following small school development policy documents (see Figure 6.1 for an overview of the texts):

1. Minister Mallard’s April 2002 statement to parliament (MOE, 2001c) about small school policy (SASC clustering and EDI network rationalising).
2. Secretary Fancie’s April 2002 statement to overseas visitors about school clustering (Fancy, 2002).
3. Circulars to schools about SASC (MOE, 2002b) and EDI (MOE, 2001d).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Why It Came About</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Minister to Parliament (MOE, 2001c)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Clustering (SASC)</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Help reduce principals’ workload&lt;br&gt;- Facilitate support networks amongst schools and principals&lt;br&gt;- Give principals more time to focus on professional leadership</td>
<td>- Particular challenges faced by small schools&lt;br&gt;- Lack of time teaching principals spend on instructional leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rationalising School Network (EDI)</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Improve school performance and outcomes&lt;br&gt;- Allow for greater innovation&lt;br&gt;- Make more effective use of resources</td>
<td>- Cost of funding present network of small schools&lt;br&gt;- Changing demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Secretary to Overseas Visitors (Fancy, 2002)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Clustering</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Collaborative approach can strengthen education delivery&lt;br&gt;- Can enhance professional leadership/support&lt;br&gt;- Allows benefits of economy of scale&lt;br&gt;- Can use ICT to benefit</td>
<td>- Problems of self management often occur in ‘clusters’ particularly in areas where schools are poor and/or remote&lt;br&gt;- Need to build capacity of schools, to minimise risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rationalising School Network</strong>&lt;br&gt;Not mentioned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Information for Schools (MOE, 2001d, 2002b)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Clustering</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Reduce principals’ and BOTs’ workload&lt;br&gt;- Create effective administration systems to allow principals and BOTs more time for educational outcomes&lt;br&gt;- Assist principals and BOTs in effective management of school</td>
<td>- Particular challenges faced by small schools&lt;br&gt;- Success of pilot stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rationalising School Network</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Strengthen the curriculum&lt;br&gt;- Give consideration to preferences of parents and BOTs&lt;br&gt;- More effective use of educational resources</td>
<td>- Shifts in population numbers&lt;br&gt;- Changes in secondary schools&lt;br&gt;- Need for wider social group for children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.1. Small school policy texts
These textual excerpts were selected because they provided the most comprehensive explanation of the rationale for the policy available in the accessible public domain (Cortazzi, 2002).

(i) **Degree of Consistency**

Analysis of these texts revealed both areas of consistency and inconsistency within the policies.

- **First Consistency.** Firstly, there was general consistency about the personal and school-level nature of the expected benefits from SASC. In the texts analysed, the stated aims of SASC Clustering are to help principals (and in the SASC circular, Boards of Trustees as well) reduce workload and build better support networks. The time being freed should aid the principal to give greater time to professional leadership.

- **Second Consistency.** There was also a general consistency about the impersonal or systemic benefits envisaged from EDIs. The benefits of the EDI process stated in both the Minister’s statement to Parliament and in the EDI circular to schools are to improve school performance and make more effective use of resources (with strengthened curriculum delivery, especially in smaller secondary schools, being added as a possible benefit in the EDI circular).

- **Third Consistency.** There was also a relatively consistent explanation of the rationale for SASC policy between the Minister’s version and the version in the SASC circular. Both explanations of why the SASC policy has been formalised refer to the same listing of the difficulties faced by small schools: the principal having to combine teaching with managing the school, having a similar range of administrative tasks to larger schools, not having a large enough pool of parents with the skills to govern the school, and declining rolls in some areas, raising issues about the viability of the school.

- **First Inconsistency.** One area of inconsistency was in views about how easy (or difficult) it is to get schools to cooperate. The Secretary displays relative confidence about the ease of and positive impact on small schools
of switching from competition between schools to greater collaboration. As he puts it,

Thinking networks of schools as opposed to stand-alone schools has a number of strengths. It can enhance professional leadership and support. It can recognise the importance of a small school to a community while at the same time enable that school to benefit from the economies of scale of being associated with other schools. It can use ICT to considerable benefit…It is early days yet but initial evidence is very positive [about the impact of such networking strategies] both in terms of improved student achievement and of more students staying on in school. In remote and rural areas a collaborative approach across schools can strengthen education delivery and reduce the vulnerability to a poor teacher or a poor Board (Fancy, 2002, p. 28).

This contrasts somewhat with the less optimistic viewpoint indicated in the EDI circular, where “the Ministry recognises the impact of possible change on students, parents, communities and staffs (and the difficulties that may arise) and will work with boards to facilitate EDI projects. We will facilitate the negotiations that will lead to the signing of a memorandum of agreement, which sets out the terms of the reorganisation” (MOE, 2001d, p. 3). Here the need for active facilitation (rather than just ‘thinking networks’) is stressed as a precondition for collaboration.

• Second Inconsistency. Another area of inconsistency was in the Secretary’s rather different notion of clustering to the SASC concept. Where the SASC circular defines a cluster as “between three and eight schools” which choose to work together for co-operative or innovative purposes (MOE, 2002b, p. 2), the Secretary defines the term as applying within the “diverse capabilities of schools, teachers and communities” to pockets of schools which have difficulty learning or applying the skills required in a self-managing environment (Fancy, 2002, p. 27). As he puts it, “while the reforms had student learning at their heart, they were too
optimistic about how easily schools, teachers and communities could learn new skills and meet new requirements…It is now explicitly recognised that some parts of the system need a helping hand at times. Often the focus of that support is with a cluster of schools - particularly in poor or remote areas. The focus of the interventions not only look to address problems that have emerged but also the need to build the capacity of schools” (Fancy, 2002, p. 27). In the former quote the implication is that cluster members self-identify; in the latter there is a clear implication that the Ministry has the responsibility to identify clusters requiring interventions.

(ii) Degree of Ambiguity

Analysis of the texts also revealed a number of areas where the textual message was ambiguous.

- Textual Ambiguity. One example of textual ambiguity arises from the rather ambiguous use of the concepts ‘resources’ and ‘improvement’ in the statements to do with EDI. The EDI circular puts it like this:

EDI is a policy which aims to improve the education of school students by making better use of our existing school resources. EDI challenges local school communities to look at and, where necessary, recommend reorganisation of schooling in their area. We all want to create better educational opportunities for our children and young people. The best way to do this is to encourage those most directly involved - the boards of trustees, parents, teachers, and principals - to work with the Ministry to look at how educational resources are used and to develop proposals for improvement (MOE, 2001d, p. 1).

Here resources are equated with educational opportunities. Improvement in resource allocation refers to educational benefits to the students and
staffs of the schools involved. The Minister’s statement has rather different connotations:

One of the key distinguishing features of the New Zealand school sector is the large proportion of small schools. One-quarter of all schools have fewer than 75 students, half have fewer than 200, and three quarters have fewer than 400 students. Because it is costly to fund small schools, there is a continuing tension between the need to maintain access to a national network of schools and resourcing small schools where alternative provision is available, particularly in or near urban centres. School reorganisations and area reviews address community needs when the existing network of schools may no longer be suitable for the population it was established to cater for. The school network is reorganised in order to improve school performance and outcomes, allow for greater innovation, and make more effective use of resources (MOE, 2001c, p. 1).

Here resourcing refers to the ‘costs’ or levels of funding needed to run the school network and the indicated benefits from reorganisation will presumably accrue to the taxpayer whose taxes fund the system as a whole.

There is also some ambiguity within SASC policy over how long the cooperation between schools that the policy aims for is intended to extend. The additional funding made available for approved SASC projects is only available for two years for any one project, yet the policy as a whole aims to create “sustainable school administration systems” (MOE, 2002b, p. 2). The implication here is that beyond the second year, the project will need to be sustained without the seed funding, but this is not clearly stated in the circular, presumably as it might act as a deterrent to some applicants.
Textual Analysis. It is also useful to analyse these textual excerpts applying some of the concepts of Prestidge (2000) and Codd (2001) that were introduced in Chapter 3. Applying Prestidge’s notion that educational policy in New Zealand is not often rationally made but is more often the result of a series of tentative and incremental steps (Prestidge, 2000), such incrementalism can be easily identified in the evolution of SASC policy. With each incremental change, policy aims become more confused. During the pilot stage (1998-2001) the emphasis was clearly on administration, as the Minister’s statement indicates in its summary of what was achieved by the pilot: “The SASC programme has been shown to ease the administrative burden of small schools” (MOE, 2002c, p. 3).

In reviewing the programme for 2002/3 the Minister notes that the emphasis is now somewhat broader, encompassing management as well as administration. The current programme has helped “reduce principals’ and boards’ workloads through for example the instituting of common management systems and the appointment of cluster administration officers” (MOE, 2001c, p. 3). In stating the objectives for the 2002-2006 programme the SASC circular indicates a possible further extension, into the governance area:

The SASC programme aims to facilitate co-operative and innovative administrative arrangements between small schools in order to reduce principals’ and boards’ workloads; allow principals and boards more time to focus on educational outcomes; and assist principals and boards in the effective management of their schools. In addition, projects that sit outside of these areas may also be approved, such as scoping possible forms of shared/alternative governance (MOE, 2002b, pp. 1-2).

Applying Codd’s assertion that “official policy documents are often couched in ambiguous or vague language” (2001, p. 58) in order to provide the widest possible parameters for variation in contextual interpretation and to encourage
consensus, such ambiguity is clearly evident in the EDI circular when it describes the process that will be used in decision-making about the pattern of school reorganisation. Page three of the circular, which sets outs the respective roles of the Ministry and local parties in the EDI process, in some places describes the process of exchange between the Ministry and local representatives as ‘consultation’ and in other places as ‘negotiation’. In New Zealand legal terms the two words describe different expectations of the parties - in consultation the deciding party is required to listen to the views of the supplicant party with an open mind before reaching a decision; in negotiation two equal parties bargain in good faith to reach an accommodation (Walsh, 1997; Hannan, 2001). In fact the legal requirement relating to the merger or closure of any school is only that the Minister must ‘consult’ before reaching a decision (Section 157, Education Act 1989). However, in using the word ‘negotiate’ the EDI circular tries to give the impression that the local interests have greater power in the exchange than in fact they have in law. The EDI circular mentions that the Minister has power to act following consultation only in its very last section (p. 8) - well after the injection of the idea that the process is one of negotiation (as well as consultation).

b) **Key Points from the Elite Interviews**

In late 2002 and early 2003 I conducted three semi-structured interviews with ‘elites’ (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 113) involved in policy development and implementation relating to small schools. As Marshall and Rossman explain, elite interviewees are those considered to be influential, prominent and well informed; they are selected for interviewing on the basis of their expertise in areas relevant to the research; they provide an ‘insider’s’ perspective on the research topic. The three interviewees were as follows:

(i) Peter Kennedy and James Whitaker, policy analysts, Ministry of Education.
(ii) Tim White, SASC contract director, Massey University.
(iii) Bill Richardson, former MOE Senior regional manager, Central East region.

The contents of the interviews and the expertise of the interviewees are summarised in Figure 6.2, on page 212.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Involvement</th>
<th>Identification of Central Issues/Themes</th>
<th>Other Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Peter Kennedy and James Whitaker, Policy Analysts, MOE</td>
<td>Review of pilot suggested clustering idea was well supported by principals and was achieving aims</td>
<td>‘Paradoxical’ relationship with EDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formalisation in line with policy in other areas</td>
<td>New possibilities of shared governance now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two areas of difficulty – length of funding, administration scope too narrow – both addressed in the reformulation</td>
<td>Possibility of an overriding cluster structure an area of continuing policy interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James – responsible for implementing/overseeing current round of SASC contracting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tim White, SASC Contract Director, Massey University</td>
<td>Pilots intention was ‘co-operation’; now ‘collaboration’ has been added</td>
<td>Process used contrasts with that used in a neighbouring EDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Worked throughout pilot stage as SASC Director/facilitator</td>
<td>Factors that assist collaboration are –</td>
<td>The emerging SASC model might be much better for other areas to consider than current EDI model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Facilitator of ‘Surfboard’ Cluster; piloting shared governance in Central Districts</td>
<td>(i) Previous experience of cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Openness of principals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Support of key BOT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iv) Limited role of MOE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(v) Ability to point to local example of successful amalgamation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(vi) Process used, which ‘enlarged sense of community’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bill Richardson, Massey University</td>
<td>Small School Review (1990) identified issues; unable to agree on way forward</td>
<td>Need in policy to distinguish between general issues of smallness/rurality, and the more specific issues of ‘pockets of special difficulty’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MOE Central East Region Manager, 1990-1994</td>
<td>EDI (1991-94) had necessary broader scope, but failed to have impact (lack of MOE leadership of process on the ground)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Last five years, Manager of Central Region Advisory Service</td>
<td>Need is still there – MOE role to lead/facilitate the process (not advisors)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.2. Small school elite interview
Amongst the key points covered in the three interviews were the following:

(i) The interview with Peter Kennedy and James Whitaker

Three key themes came through in the interview with Kennedy and Whitaker: firstly, an official explanation for the widening focus of the SASC programme over time; secondly, an exploration of the ‘paradoxical’ linkage between SASC and EDI; thirdly, a recognition of the possibility of the need to rationalise the burgeoning variety of clusters in different programmes sponsored by the Ministry.

- The Widening Focus of SASC

According to the policy analyst who conducted the review of the pilot stage of SASC (Peter Kennedy), the broadening scope of the programme between the pilot and its formalisation came about as a direct result of the feedback he gathered in conducting his review of the pilot.

Peter:

_The two main areas of difficulties that arose [in the review of the pilot] related to, firstly, the length of the funding. A lot of schools were saying, well, the clusters were saying that they had to cut back their projects quite significantly and they had difficulties sustaining them after just one year and so they wanted funding to run over a longer period of time. And they were also saying, well, you know, lots of us have done [over the three year period of the pilot] a lot of the things that have been most obvious to us administratively. And now we’re starting to explore the boundaries of what we might do as a cluster and that led into or sort of coincided with the introduction of the new planning and reporting processes for schools. And so they were wanting to use the cluster money to look at how they might go about addressing that need as a group. So those were the two areas that we recommended in_
the paper to the Minister that maybe there was a case for change (Elite Transcript 1, pp. 2-3).

- Linkage Between SASC and EDI

In considering how the SASC programme interfaced with EDI, the two policy analysts initially felt the two programmes operated separately from each other:

James:

Basically, this programme [SASC] I suppose we can see it as completely separate to any EDIs or area reviews (Elite Transcript 1, p. 5).

However, after further discussion between themselves, there was a recognition that in practice there was a relationship.

James:

Yeah, there’s ruboffs isn’t there? There’s ruboffs, which would be of benefit. You know, if a group of schools were used to working together and then later on down the track (whether they initiated a review or the Ministry did or whatever) if it was announced in the end that the schools needed to work together in some way, naturally the people on the boards and the principals especially would be used to working together...

Peter:

But that’s sort of paradoxical. You know that obviously strengthening the education in a community may well be about merging schools or reorganising schools, whereas the focus of this [the SASC programme] is solely on supporting the school and strengthening the school. So you know there are different tensions in there I think.
James:

*It’s interesting. They’re almost chalk and cheese objectives wise \[SASC and EDI\]. But in a way they’re not. They’re actually very similar* (Elite Transcript 1, p. 7).

- Needs in Future Policy Development

One possibility for future policy development was signalled in the interview - the possibility of rationalising the current proliferation of cluster structures associated with different Ministry initiatives.

Peter:

*One of the issues that came up during the review was the relationship of this programme \[SASC\] to other cluster initiatives and although in the end we saw this as quite a distinct area of activity around administration, I think there will be ongoing questions about “do we need different cluster groupings of schools for different initiatives?” - sort of; is this the most effective use of money, to have the same group of schools involved in different clusters? Or, you know, with slightly different configurations - is there some better way of managing all this?*

James:

*Yeah, an overriding cluster programme which encompasses ICT, curriculum support and everything else perhaps in the future.*

Peter:

*So that’s certainly something we’ll have to keep under review. Because there are, as you know, a lot of other sorts of cluster schools clustering around other school initiatives* (Elite Transcript 1, p. 10).
The interview with Bill Richardson

The major theme that came through in this interview was an explanation from the official viewpoint of the rationale for network rationalisation. In Richardson’s view there is a clear need for rationalisation.

*We have to do something quite dramatic in terms of rural education. And I mean here that in my personal view there are way too many small schools* (Elite Transcript 3, p. 8).

When asked to explain his reasoning for this point of view, Richardson refers to educational, economic and community change reasons.

- **First Reason for Rationalisation**

  Firstly, Richardson indicates the difficulties that ‘smaller’ small schools may have in providing an overall curriculum balance.

  *Small schools are difficult to staff and difficult to govern with consistent quality. But there are also concerns about the quality of the education that children are receiving...Everybody recognises I think that it is a pretty tall order in a one, two or three teacher school to provide quality coverage of curriculum for a start. And quality programmes from five through to twelve. And a lot of those schools do go right through to Form 2 [age 12]* (Elite Transcript 3, p. 2).

- **Second Reason for Rationalisation**

  Secondly, Richardson explains the impact of declining rolls on staff morale and recruitment.

  *I just think from a purely educational point of view to have schools slowly dying is a very negative thing. And that is going to happen more frequently. And by dying I mean in terms of numbers - they are just going to get smaller and smaller. And the attraction for somebody to go there who’s got things going for
them as a teacher is going to get less and less and less. And unless you can put a community of people together, like teachers who are going to be able to spark and work off each other - that to me is the way in which or there’s the key to keep the curriculum ever evolving and being dynamic. If you’ve got a school you’re just struggling to keep alive then it’s not particularly fruitful (Elite Transcript 3, p. 9).

- Third Reason for Rationalisation

Thirdly, Richardson illustrates how economic and social changes are altering the nature of rural life.

Interviewer: How much of a consideration in your recollection was the economic factor (in the reviews you were involved in)? Was that a factor in the reviews?

Respondent: Yes. Oh, it certainly was...And rightly so...But there are other factors as well of course - the whole social factor of having a school in a community...You still have it today, people speaking from a community perspective and saying if this school goes then that is the end of community. [Richardson then goes on to recount an anecdote about driving recently in a relatively isolated part of the district. Up until the early 1990s roading in the area was terrible. However now it is much better and the driving time to the nearest city has halved. There are five small schools in the area. If asked to think about merging, publically the schools would claim that each was a distinct community that needed to be maintained. Privately however, individual families would tell you that almost all their shopping and leisure was now done in the city].

...Sure, they had farms there. And they had their parents maybe and lots of related families were there but to a great extent they were quietly telling me that the community thing had gone. But
they weren’t going to admit that (and probably still wouldn’t) in public (Elite Transcript 3, p. 3).

- Fourth Reason for Rationalisation

Fourthly, Richardson suggests that the economics of scale being created in other aspects of rural life are not yet being mirrored in the makeup of the rural schooling network.

I’m just thinking of when I grew up in a rural area which was largely dairy farming. And at that stage each unit was around about in terms of herd size 60-80 cows. And now its not prevalent but the size of herds that I’m starting to hear about is somewhere between 800 and 1000. OK? And you don’t just have one milking at morning and one at night…And you have two shifts of staff…The staff are based in town and they drive out and they drive back home again. They are the sorts of changes that have happened in rural New Zealand…So it seems to me that education - rural education - in New Zealand hasn’t really kept pace in the same sort of way (Elite Transcript 3, pp. 10-11).

Richardson also emphasises the need for both political will and Ministry leadership in the process of rationalisation:

Interviewer: ‘So, in terms of the process of change which you see is needing to happen, which you say is always going to be a difficult process, who has what roles?

Respondent: It’s never going to be comfortable. Its always going to be hard graft and frankly it boils down to political will. Because in the end if there is that will to go for it then no matter how hard it is the process has to be worked through…I think it’s the role of advisors to stay outside that particular argument [of which schools should stay open and which should close]. Whatever is decided it is their role to come in and be supportive of the situation that’s decided. I think it [the process of
leading/selling the decision] is a matter for the Ministry to handle (Elite Transcript 3, p. 9).

(iii) The Interview with Tim White

White’s interview is important for its exploration of the concepts of ‘cooperation’ and ‘collaboration’ as alternatives to competition between neighbouring schools. In an earlier paper, White & Collins, 2000, White defined the distinction here as it relates to inter-school relationships in the following terms: “co-operation = working together for a limited time and with a specific focus, collaboration = longer term commitment to an ongoing shared structure” (White & Collins, 2002, p. 1). In the interview White covers three main areas: his earlier experience as SASC Director, his experience as Surfboard Facilitator, and his views on community-building in rural areas.

- White’s Earlier Experience as SASC Director

In the interview White starts by noting that he takes the Ministry’s decision to let the SASC contract from 2002-2006 as a four year contract (as opposed to the one year contracts of the pilot phase) as a signal of new commitment to collaboration.

So this is probably the longest time such projects have been contracted out in one go and reflects I suppose the Government’s or the Minister’s commitment to getting schools to collaborate (Elite Transcript 2, p. 1).

He recalls that in the pilot stage of SASC the projects that were approved to receive SASC funding were “very much about administration”.

Now, in the third stage of the programme, I suppose, there are still opportunities to cooperate or collaborate administratively or in management, but there is also a change in focus to supporting alternative forms of governance (Elite Transcript 2, p. 2).
White’s Experience as Surfboard Facilitator

White then recounts his experience in facilitating a cluster that has worked towards developing a model for shared governance: the ‘Surfboard’ cluster, named as such because all the schools involved are on the so called ‘surf coast’ of rural Taranaki. During the pilot phase of SASC this cluster worked on a cooperative administrative project. Then in the last 18 months it has worked on preparing and submitting to the Ministry a ‘constitution’ for a new form of governance based on a single ‘Surfboard’ of trustees for the schools (Elite Transcript 2, pp. 3-6).

White feels that his work with this cluster illustrates some of the key preconditions that either need to be present or need injecting, in a situation where schools that were previously in competition with each other are now expected to begin collaborating.

At the outset...they were quite competitive, they all ran their own bus services, they all encroached on each other’s territories, there was movement [of students/parents exercising choice] between the schools...So going back to the question about what were some of the success factors or some of the factors that contributed to success, firstly, it has to be said that the opportunity for these schools to cooperate at an administrative level gave them the opportunity to see the benefits from working together as a combined unit rather than as single competing entities (Elite Transcript 2, p. 7).

White also identifies a number of other factors that helped in the development of the collaboration.

The second factor was the openness from the three principals - they were all very experienced principals and so they didn’t have the same sort of ownership that a first time principal has for “my school”...Another factor was the two board members who had experienced being on more than one school’s board...and had a
much larger picture [than the other novice board members] of the sort of duplication that went on and the overlap or the similarity that exists...I also think that we were particularly lucky in the person that the cluster was allocated [from the Ministry of Education to keep a watching brief on the process] because they understood what we were trying to do [and that the Ministry’s role]...was very much one of advice and guidance and not one of directing or calling the shots or reporting back to the Minister (Elite Transcript 2, pp. 7-8).

White also explains how he sees the process used in the case of the Surfboard cluster differing from the process used for EDIs.

*The [EDI] process in my opinion is very much one of surveying or meeting with each of the communities and asking them what they want as an outcome and then based on these findings...a plan is drawn up....and then the communities are asked to put in submissions on these. And unfortunately one of the flaws in the model is there is no sense [developed through the process] of why there should be any change. There isn’t any sense of ownership for anything other than the interests of your own school and that’s quite considerably different to the process that we went through with the coastal group, which was about enlarging the sense of community (Elite Transcript 2, p. 9).*

- White’s Views on Community-Building in Rural Areas

White feels that a policy of facilitating greater collaboration amongst small schools in rural areas would have significant pay-offs.

*I suppose I see the SASC contract and the process we’ve engaged in as being extremely useful in getting communities to look to the wider community for answers to these problems [of falling school rolls]. And the cooperation or the benefits from schools cooperating and hopefully collaborating can often lead to both a*
rationalisation of schools and improved learning outcomes for children...I think the process is particularly useful and one that the Ministry could further enhance as a tool for engagement by communities in thinking strategically about their futures (Elite Transcript 2, p. 10).

Central to the change needed in rural areas, in White’s view, is change to the notion of ‘community’ being applied.

I’m very convinced that the way forward is for there to be processes that encourage a community to become more than just the community that services one particular school. And if we can get schools to work together in ways where the community becomes a much larger group then the processes [as they relate to the rationalising of schooling] are going to be a lot easier for schools to manage and a lot of the decisions are going to be a lot more palatable by communities (Elite Transcript 2, p. 11).

c) Summary of Policy Framework for Small School Support

Putting together data from the elite interviews, the policy text analysis and the general policy background notes from Chapters 1 and 3, the pattern within the policy framework for small school support which emerges from the overall analysis is one where the current government has adapted two significant policies of the previous government (SASC and EDI) for its own purposes. In the case of SASC both the ends (the reduction of principal workload) and the means (short term financial support for cooperative interschool projects) have essentially remained the same now as they were pre 2000; in the case of EDI the policy-end (rationalisation of the schooling network) remains the same, but the means (forced mergers or closures where voluntarism does not produce the required efficiencies) have altered somewhat in the last couple of years.
d) Responses from the field: Key points in the response of Principals

(i) Focus Group Responses

During the focus group discussions with successful principals from small schools in typical settings from the Central Districts region, data were gathered about principals’ perceptions of the demographic trends in their local district, and of the policy implications arising from these trends. The general patterns of response here are summarised in Figure 6.3. Three patterns are evident.

- Districts with holding rolls

In sum, there were two districts where principals predicted rolls were likely to hold over the next decade (North Taranaki coastal district, and Hawkes Bay city suburbs). In North Taranaki, the focus group felt that, demographically, their area was likely to hold its own in terms of school age population in the next decade, with a steady influx of new families arriving because of the slow growth of tourism on the north Taranaki coast, and because of lifestyle choices. “This area is slowly but surely changing, largely as a result of the tourism thing” (Focus Group Four Notes, p. 4). In terms of a policy suggestion to assist with supporting small schools in this district, the principals in this group recommended a strengthening and formalising of the link between their present cluster and an outside facilitator. “I found G_____ [the present SASC facilitator] coming in regularly, you know, an outside person coming in with the latest info, really valuable. I actually like to see a person - not just have an ICT connection - that’s the best sort of support in isolated situations like ours” (Focus Group Four Notes, p. 5). In Hawkes Bay city suburbs, the focus group felt that pre-school rolls in this area were ‘bubbling’ and that subdivision/infill housing was still occurring ‘in pockets’ (Focus Group One Notes, p. 1). In suburbs such as these this group felt that there was “a need to have two or three different shaped or configured primary schools, including a smaller special character school, to continue to give parents appropriate choice” (Focus Group One Notes, p. 3).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Central Hawkes Bay</td>
<td>Rolls falling; predicted further falls.</td>
<td>Government/MOE to take more directive role, rationalisation vital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hawkes Bay City Suburbs</td>
<td>Rolls holding.</td>
<td>Still a need for special character smaller schools in urban areas, to offer choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Northern Hawkes Bay</td>
<td>Rolls falling.</td>
<td>Busing/school marketing not a real option; MOE involvement inevitable. Need to maintain family feel in reorganised network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Manawatu District</td>
<td>Pattern mixed – rolls falling in some areas; rising in others.</td>
<td>MOE needs to be more upfront about intentions. Principals need to work on community attitudes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.3. Focus Group responses on local demographic situation and future suggestions for policy
Districts with falling rolls

There were two districts where principals predicted rolls were likely to fall steadily over the next decade (Northern Hawkes Bay district and Central Hawkes Bay district). In the former, the focus group noted that falling rolls had been occurring for some time in this district and that busing students from outside the school’s immediate catchment (which all the schools were currently doing) was not a real solution in the medium term (Focus Group Three Notes, p. 2). The group suggested that in the future the Ministry should take a more proactive stance, visiting individual schools, fact-finding, and explaining the longer term implications to parents and community. However in any future reorganisation, this group felt that it would be vital that the newly reconfigured schooling provision sustain the ‘family feel’ (which is the most distinctive and attractive feature of two and three teacher schools) (Focus Group Three Notes, p. 3). In the latter district, the group here felt that ‘it was unrealistic to try to maintain the present infrastructure of schooling in the district’ (Focus Group One, p. 1). This group made an unequivocal recommendation that the Government/Ministry needed in future to take “a much more directive role in examining patterns of schooling” in the district, so that “present patterns of spending could be reallocated more creatively” (Focus Group One Notes, p. 7).

Districts with mixed predictions for roll change

There was one district in the region – Manawatu - where the focus group of principals felt rolls in some parts of the district were likely to increase (especially near to towns and cities), while rolls in other parts of the district (outside easy driving distance of major population centres) were likely to decrease. Principals in this group felt that in the future the Ministry “needed to be more honest about its intentions” towards the schooling network and that it would need to “stop shifting the goalposts” with regards to policy relating to growth/decrease in school size (Focus Group Two Notes, p. 2). In addition, future principals in this district that were affected by falling rolls would need to work hard on reducing the parochialism of community attitudes, and also realize that “it was not their fault” when rolls declined from demographic
factors outside their control, according to the suggestions of this group (Focus Group Two Notes, p. 2).

(ii) Individual Interview Responses

During the individual interviews with the sixteen successful principals each was asked about the strategies which they were presently adopting, and planned to adopt in the near future, in relation to the local community and/or neighbouring schools. The data gathered in this part of the individual interviews is summarised in Table 6.1, on page 229. All principals reported pursuing at least one community/neighbouring strategy, with the most often reported being to develop a better community focus (or level of parental involvement), and to develop greater cluster involvement. Three patterns are evident in this data.

- Principals aiming to strengthen the local school-community relationship

Some principals aimed to strengthen the local school-community relationship. Ann provides a good example of this pattern, with her plans to utilize community support to improve the entrance to the school and the neighbouring school hall, so that overall safety and access for both children and parents is improved.

_Interviewer:_ ‘What would be the key initiatives that you’re planning to put in place over the next couple of years at this school?

_Respondent:_ OK. I guess the spirit of the community is the key goal as it were…So the safety of the children and really that feeling of just having enough space for parking is the key issue…And that’s where the community want to put their energy, so we’ll need to plan an initiative that’s able to harness that (Individual Transcript 2, p. 11).
**Principals favouring co-operation with neighbouring schools**

A number of participants favoured co-operating with neighbouring schools. This might take a variety of forms. Helen provides a description of one form in the following outline of the way clustering is evolving as a form of support in the group with whom she participates with:

> Since S_____ has been the rural advisor and I suppose it’s gone on now for two years - maybe three - we’ve had cluster meetings. And that has turned this year into the Administration Cluster and actually we’ve got funding for a project that we’ve been working on anyway to do with literacy and stuff. And in this project S_____ would guide us as a group through development type things, so it has become a professional development type thing really more than an admin thingy and that’s how it is now (Individual Transcript 12, p. 9).

Another popular form of co-operative activity is working more closely with the principal of a neighbouring school. Dianne explains her intentions to do this as follows:

> Respondent: ‘The other area that I would like to develop and I discussed it with the Board Chair this week, is our relationship with M______ school, which is a three teacher school about twenty minutes away. We do cross country with them. We do swimming sports with them. We’re now throwing around the idea of becoming buddy schools.

> Interviewer: So how might that work?

> R: We’d get the two boards together and try to see if we can just work together. Because, well, R_____ [the neighbouring principal] will ring and ask me things. And I’ll ring him - it’s not just a one way track. It’s a two way thing and a good and healthy thing and I feel really comfortable with it, so we’ll probably try to foster it across the board (Individual Transcript 1, p. 13).
Principals favouring competition

While a good number of the principals report either trying or wanting to try similar cooperative arrangements with neighbouring schools as those described so far (the right hand side of Table 6.1), well over half of the successful principals are also adopting (or were planning to adopt) strategies which actively compete in one way or another with their neighbours, to grow their school roll (the left hand side of Table 6.1). While apparently protecting their own position, this growth strategy might act in the longer term to harm a neighbour. June is one such principal. To maintain her school at the three teacher level she sees roll growth as vital. If the school were to fall to two teachers, class sizes would increase dramatically and much of the advantage that attracts parents from outside the natural catchment to her school at present (the family feel and small class sizes), would disappear.

At the moment I’ve only got twenty kids and we can do all these exciting things, but if I had thirty in my class it would be much more difficult (Individual Transcript 6, p. 9).

However, June recognises that primary school rolls in the area are declining and that her strategy may have negative consequences for others.

I get on with the bigger principals further away but at the moment relations are a little strained with A_____ (the principal of the neighbouring school) because he thinks we’re poaching (Individual Transcript 6, p. 11).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STOP recent roll growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Dianne</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ann</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dave</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Betty</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jill</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. June</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gwen</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cath</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Alec</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Jerry</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Samantha</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Helen</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Judy</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Steve</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Chris</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Joe</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Others are vitally interested in promoting roll growth, but more for personal ends. Dave, for example, explains his adoption of a ‘growth’ strategy in the following terms:

*I will certainly try innovative programmes that aren’t in large schools and that will benefit our kids. And also it’s a possibility of promoting our roll by attracting kids from those bigger schools. So these are the things we’re going to target. I’ve got a very supportive board here and they’re really behind me promoting myself and they’ve been encouraging me to see that we can actually push this school forward… I’ve said to them “Do you want this school to continue the way its going? ‘Cause if you do we’ll never grow. And one day the kids are going to run out. And if the kids are going to run out therefore the school will close. So we don’t have a choice”. We’ve got to get out there and grow…So they’re things that we really want to work towards and that we’re working on together* (Individual Transcript 3, p. 4).

e) Summary of Principalship Responses and Policy Assumptions

Overall, then, the principalship strategy data in this study would indicate that small school principals of ‘stronger’ schools (in market terms) are willing to cooperate with neighbouring schools for short term benefit (for example, through SASC projects), but also that they feel no particular loyalty to the local network of schools or inclination to work in collaboration with ‘weaker’ neighbours to strengthen the local network as a whole. Here, ‘stronger’ schools refer to schools with a recent history of roll growth, situated in an area where roll numbers are predicted to at least hold in the medium term; ‘weaker’ schools are schools where the roll has been dropping in recent times and where roll numbers are predicted to fall in the future (Gewirtz, 2002). Instead, ‘strong’ school principals in this study see it as a Ministry responsibility to initiate interventions and/or supports that might assist ‘weaker’ schools (in market terms) than themselves (as indicated by focus group responses from principals in districts anticipating future rolls to hold or grow). Possibly perversely, the data also indicates that in those small schools most needing to collaborate (that is those facing falling rolls - the weaker schools in market terms), local dynamics create an impetus for more
competitive (rather than cooperative) solutions to be tried, at least initially (as indicated by individual interview responses from principals in areas where rolls are predicted to fall).

Both these patterns contrast with the two key Ministry assumptions underpinning present small school support and development policy:

1. That stronger small schools will want to collaborate with weaker small schools.
2. That weaker small schools will initiate mergers with their weakest neighbours.

These overall patterns are illustrated in Table 6.2.
Table 6.2. Current Impact of Small School Development and Support Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry Policy Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stronger Schools</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will work collaboratively with weaker schools to strengthen the network as a whole.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Principal/School Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stronger Schools</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to cooperate with weaker schools for temporary benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationalise their unwillingness to collaborate with weaker schools as ‘not our responsibility’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. POLICY DATA RELATING TO PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

The data reported in this section of the chapter provide the database to help answer the two research questions from Chapter 4 to do with recent New Zealand principal development initiatives - questions dealing with what the rationale for the current initiatives are, and how the initiatives are being received in the field. As in the previous section, the data will be reported here under subheadings relating to the three main data: sources used (texts), elite interviews and reactions from the field.

a) What the Policy Texts Say

As was indicated in Chapter 3 there were two new principal development policies that the New Zealand Government introduced in 2002, the year in which the data for this study was gathered. These two policies were the First Time Principals induction training programme (FTP), and the electronic network initiative for more experienced principals (‘Leadspace’). As part of the data gathering for this study, over 2002 and early 2003 I gathered a range of examples of current New Zealand policy texts relating to principal development in general, and these two recent Ministry of Education principal development initiatives in particular. A selection of the most significant of these policy texts was then analysed, using techniques for documentary analysis described earlier in this chapter (Cortazzi, 2002). This part of the chapter is based on textual analysis of the following documents:

1. Minister Mallard’s April 2002 statement to parliament about new support programmes for principals (MOE, 2002a).
3. Information made available to schools on the principal development initiatives:
   (i) First Time Principals: the University of Auckland 2003 First Time Principals’ Information brochure (University of Auckland, 2003); and
   (ii) Leadspace: NZ Principal article of November 2002 entitled ‘Leadspace: Six months on’ (Lane, 2002).

See Figure 6.4 for a summary of the key points in each of these textual excerpts.
### Aims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FTP</th>
<th>Why It Came About</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Minister to Parliament (MOE, 2002a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help principals in management and leadership role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal can have major impact on learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most new principals have no tertiary qualifications in management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FTP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadspace/Laptops</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce principals’ professional isolation</td>
<td>Successful innovation requires strong leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure access to outside support</td>
<td>Rural/small schools currently vulnerable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FTP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadspace/Laptops</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop initial leadership and management capabilities</td>
<td>Preparation options are not always accessed and in some cases are not sufficiently indepth, practical, or timely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FTP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadspace/Laptops</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create electronic principals’ network which will:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide facilitated discussion</td>
<td>Individual principals do not always access the professional development that would make the most difference to their performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide access to examples of good practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FTP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadspace/Laptops</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generate community amongst principals based on common educational issues</td>
<td>Unmet need for ready access to information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce some of the isolation felt by New Zealand school principals</td>
<td>Unmet need for flexibility in professional development timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need to reduce paperwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need for better quality professional dialogue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Figure 6.4. Principal development policy texts**
Analysis of the excerpts reveals both areas of consistency and inconsistency within the policies. It also indicates areas where the policy has evolved with altered emphases as time goes on. The following patterns are worthy of note.

(i) **Areas of Increasing Specification**

In a number of cases, aspects of policy become more detailed in successive texts about the policy.

One area where specificity increases is in the stated aims for the First Time Principals’ initiative over time. In the June 2001 Budget initiatives summary it is suggested that the first component in “a package of initiatives to develop leadership and management capabilities amongst principals” is “an induction programme for first time principals” (MOE, 2001a, p. 3). In the Minister’s April 2002 report on the 2001 situation, he makes the following statement

While almost all boards recruiting a principal in 2001 expected applicants to have management knowledge, most of the principals appointed had no tertiary qualification in management. Professional development programmes for principals will help support principals in their management and leadership roles (MOE, 2002a, p. 3).

He also reports that the Ministry of Education has “begun to establish the infrastructure to provide an in-depth induction programme for first-time principals” (MOE, 2002a, p. 3). In its 2003 Introduction to the Programme, the University of Auckland brochure outlines the aims of the First-Time Principals Programme as follows.

The First-Time Principals Programme is a year-long induction programme designed to provide new principals of all school types with the knowledge, skills and competencies required for successful school leadership….The induction programme is designed to meet both the overall and the individual needs of new
principals, and to help them develop professionally and personally (University of Auckland, 2003, p. 2).

What is simply ‘an induction programme’ in the first excerpt becomes ‘an in depth induction programme’ in the second excerpt and ‘a year long induction programme’ with a range of stated aims and objectives in the third excerpt.

Another area where specificity increases is in the progressive elaboration in the naming and focus of the electronic initiative over time. In the June 2001 budget statement this initiative is described as “an electronic principals’ network with leased laptops available to principals, providing a facilitated discussion forum and access to examples of good practice” (MOE, 2001a, p. 2). In the April 2002 Minister’s statement the description of the initiative is as follows.

Work was begun in 2001 to design an electronic network for principals, Leadspace. Associated with this, laptops will be provided to all principals during 2002/2003. Ideally, Leadspace will reduce principals’ professional isolation, especially for principals of geographically isolated schools (p. 3).

The November 2002 NZ Principal article describes the initiative as “a new online network, Leadspace, which incorporates the Principals Electronic Network (PEN)”. The aim of the initiative is “to reduce some of the isolation felt by New Zealand school principals”. The article also describes how five facilitators are now “working with principals to generate an online community for discussion about educational and leadership issues” (Lane, 2002, p. 22).

What in excerpt one is simply a ‘facilitated discussion forum’ becomes in excerpt two ‘Leadspace’, with a particular target to support principals in geographically isolated areas. In excerpt three
the network title is expanded and the target group for support has become all New Zealand school principals.

(ii) Evidence of an Altered Attitude

In these excerpts there is also a suggestion of a changing Ministry attitude to teacher professionalism.

One sign of this changing attitude is in the development in the First Time Principals rationale from a ‘deficit’ emphasis in its initial formulation to a much more ‘professional’ emphasis in later formulations. In the 2001 Budget statement the rationale for the FTP initiative is explained as follows.

Preparation for first-time principals is not always accessed and in some case is not sufficiently in-depth, practical or timely; and individual principals do not always access the professional development that will make the most difference to their performance; and also those most in need of development are least likely to undertake it (MOE, 2001a, p. 2).

In April 2002 the Minister’s report describes the initiatives in the following terms.

In 2001 Government began a programme of greatly enhanced support for principals, particularly new principals and principals of small schools. Research to identify the skills, knowledge, attributes and competencies required by first-time principals will provide the basis for the design of a comprehensive induction programme. The research identifies four important clusters of competencies possessed by effective school leaders. These skills include knowing how to organise and manage a school, such as how to manage a budget and staff. In addition first-time principals need to know how to build relationships, particularly with their
board, but also with the community. They need to understand how to improve learning outcomes, and how to work with their board and staff to develop strategic and operational plans (MOE, 2002c, p. 3).

In its 2003 Introductory brochure for FTP the University of Auckland explain the rationale for the programme in the following terms.

Evidence shows that real change and improvement (in schools) happens over time and is most likely to happen when the principal is committed to long-term leadership learning. It is this learning, and the educational leadership focus of the principal’s role, that the First-Time Principals Programme promotes…Principals can then be active role models for colleagues to improve and strengthen the core activities of the school - teaching and learning (University of Auckland, 2003, p. 2).

In the first excerpt the implication is that all principals need development, and those most in need don’t even know what they don’t know. The implication is that such principals will need to be told what they must do. The second excerpt indicates that there is now a clear picture of what principals need to know and do, and that these needs can be organised into a hierarchy of management and leadership competencies. Again, the implication is prescription. In the third excerpt there is little emphasis on management, and shared learning plus collegial leadership become the key foci. Principals are expected to actively initiate their own learning.

Another sign of changing attitude is based on the development in the Leadspace rationale from a technocratic emphasis in the early formulations to a more professional focus in later formulations. In the June 2001 Budget rationale it is suggested that the development of the electronic principals network will be organised as follows.
[It will be] closely aligned with other initiatives the Ministry is taking in areas of information technology, school monitoring and support, the national assessment strategy and the role of MOE Regional Management Centres (MOE, 2001a, p. 2).

In the November 2002 New Zealand Principal article there is an explanation of how Leadspace has expanded over 2002 from an e-Admin concept with the recent development of PEN, the Principals’ Electronic Network.

The purpose of PEN is to provide an opportunity for principals to communicate with one another and discuss a variety of issues on-line…The membership of PEN is growing daily and there are now sufficient numbers of participants for robust debate and stimulating educational discussion to be a regular part of every principal’s week…Leadspace will continue to grow especially as the “Leadership” area is developed (within PEN), and as further school information is transferred into e-Admin…Leadspace and PEN belong to principals. It is your site to use and develop to meet your needs (Lane, 2002, p. 22).

Where in the first excerpt there is a clear emphasis on the administrative aspects of the electronic network (largely to suit Ministry purposes), in the latter excerpt ownership of the site is being claimed by principals for their professional (as well as administrative) needs.

(iii) Evidence of Underlying Discourses

A close reading of some of the texts also indicates ideological variation.
Applying Codd’s suggestions (1994) about policy discourse to these excerpts is particularly illuminating. Codd suggests that in the debates over the shape of educational reform in New Zealand in the 1990s there were two contradictory discourses evident: a ‘technocratic-reductionist’ discourse and a ‘professional-contextualist’ discourse. “These two discourses can both be recognised within the discursive practices associated with current educational reform” (1990, p. 50). Codd describes the aim of the technocratic-reductionist discourse as being to produce the attainment of specific learning outcomes necessary for generic skill development, its core values as being technical skills and competence, and its two key features as being an emphasis on mobilizing extrinsic motivation within a hierarchical structure and utilizing contractual compliance as the major form of accountability. In contrast, professional-contextualist discourse aims to enable the development of diverse human capabilities that are able to respond to the greatest variety of contextual divergence, its core values are reflective practice and professional integrity, and its two key features are an emphasis on mobilizing intrinsic motivation within a collaborative professional structure and utilizing professional commitment as a major form of accountability (Codd, 1990, p. 50). Codd goes on to align the first form of discourse with officials embued in the ideologies of ‘new public managerialism’ and economic rationalism, while the second arises from those embued in the traditional ideology of teacher education in Western societies.

In the textual excerpts analysed here, the earlier extracts are from texts written by Ministry of Education officials such as Secretary Fancy (an economist by training and before his appointment as Education Secretary, a New Zealand Treasury official) (Fancy, 2002) and officials from the School Labour Market Division of the Ministry, trained in the framework of economic rationalism. The later extracts are from those individuals or organizations who have been contracted by the Ministry to ‘deliver’ the policy. In the case of the Principal Development Initiative (University of Auckland, 2003), the Director of the Auckland
University team delivering the programme in 2002/03 as named in the information brochure is David Eddy, a former secondary school principal; in the case of Leadspace (Lane 2002), the author of the excerpt is Geoff Lane, a contracted facilitator in the current Leadspace programme but previously a primary school principal. Codd’s analysis therefore suggests an explanation for the pattern of divergences in these policy excerpts where the difference in emphasis between the earlier versions and the later versions is not co-incidental, but is instead the result of the different discursive positioning of the respective writers.

b) Key Points from the Elite Interviews

In late 2002 and early 2003 I conducted three semi-structured interviews with ‘elites’ involved in policy implementation relating to principal development within New Zealand. As Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggest, such interviews can provide an overall view of an organisation’s policies, past histories or future plans from an informed, insider’s perspective. The three interviewees were as follows:

(i) Stephanie Nichols, Senior Policy Analyst, Ministry of Education.

(ii) Geoff Lovegrove, former President, NZ Principals’ Federation.

(iii) David Stewart, former Director, NZ Principal and Leadership Centre.

The contents of the interviews and the respective expertise of the three interviewees are summarised in Figure 6.5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Involvement</th>
<th>Identification of Central Issues/Themes</th>
<th>Other Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Stephanie Nichols, Policy Analyst, MOE | ▪ Initial reconnaissance suggested:  
  - Lots of PD opportunities available  
  - Principals undertake wide range of PD  
  - Not all high quality, though  
  - People who most need it, often don’t get it  
  ▪ Four key strategies needed:  
    - FTP programme  
    - Electronic initiative  
    - Development centres  
    - PD guidelines  | ▪ FTP mostly very successful (especially getting/retaining new principals). Aspects, however, needed tweaking, plus we don’t yet know long term impact  
  ▪ Leadspace – still early days; mainly passive involvement so far, delivery format and details will continue to evolve |
| 2. Geoff Lovegrove (former President, NZ Principals’ Federation) | ▪ Pre-conference 2000 – difficult to get taken seriously by either major party  
  ▪ Post-conference 2000 – serious consultation where NZPF argued for:  
    - Principal preparation  
    - Ongoing mentoring  
    - Refreshment/research  | ▪ NZPF generally supports what’s happened sofar – both FTP and Leadspace  
  ▪ But not enough being done in other areas: need to incorporate a stronger ‘mentors’ and a more ‘professional’ approach |
| 3. David Stewart (former Director, NZ Principal and Leadership Centre, Massey University) | ▪ Some major issues arose during design process:  
    - MOE stance favouring measurable behavioural outcomes  
    - MOE’s uncritical acceptance of Hay Group  
    - Conflicting views of how schools work and can be improved  
  ▪ Resulting design a compromise:  
    - Relatively prescriptive  
    - Portfolio evidence  
    - Peer based assessment  | ▪ Design contract work featured reluctance by MOE to listen to alternative viewpoints, and a relationship with contractees based on power  
  ▪ Despite this, by the end contractees were generally relatively happy with final design |

Figure 6.5. Principal development elite interviews
Amongst the key points covered in the three interviews, the following are worthy of mention.

(i) **The Interview with Stephanie Nichols**

Nichols made three key points during the interview.

- **The Initial Policy Reconnaissance**

The first was about the nature of, and outcomes from, the policy ‘reconnaissance’ that she carried out over 2000, to try to establish the key needs in the area of principal development.

> We sort of identified two key issues - one was the need for in-depth principal preparation, the other was...largely an access and information kind of issue - it seemed to be about making it easier for people to select from what was available, making it easier for them to make sure that the time and the money that was invested would match their needs (Elite Transcript 4, p. 5).

- **The Process of Policy Consultation**

The second was about the process of consultation carried out over 2001, to flesh out policy details, and the nature of those details.

> Essentially we broke the work [in that year] into two chunks. In the chunk to do with the area of preparation we felt there was a gap in the availability of in-depth comprehensive induction or preparation for first-time principals so we were thinking of a national programme. When we were thinking about what that might look like we referenced the information about what constituted effective professional development and what seemed to work best in terms of adult learning and came to the conclusion that a process over a period of time was going to work better than a one-off type residential programme...So a kind of phased/stepped process was going to be most effective...
mix of residential with support throughout the year and [for the latter] we felt that what would be most useful was a sort of personal support, plus we were at the time thinking about electronic connections between principals so it seemed sensible to link this into the induction programme as well. So, overall, a three pronged approach (Elite Transcript 4, pp. 5-6).

And then for the other chunk we were looking at this issue of more structure to the development of existing principals and information sharing and that kind of thing...So what we were sort of looking at was options that would help the matching process take place. And that would provide a better access to information for principals about what was out there and available for them. And also to sort of grow the potential for their own personal networks - to give them more access to more colleagues and more experiences and more ideas. And out of that basic kind of pool of issues we developed three different initiatives - the electronic network, development centres, and the professional development guide (Elite Transcript 4, pp. 7-8).

One of these three initiatives was the electronic network/Leadspace idea:

You know, the principals’ electronic network which is specifically enabling or encouraging principals to talk to each other in a facilitated environment, and that sort of linked in quite nicely with some parallel thinking that our ICT strategy people were doing... so there was a kind of synergy between the two lots of thinking, so we could achieve some ICT specific objectives at the same time as some leadership development objectives (Elite Transcript 4, p. 8).

The other two initiatives mentioned by Nichols - the development centres and the professional development guide - are not scheduled to take effect until 2004 or 2005.
The Ongoing Nature of the Policy Work

The third major theme in the interview with Nichols was the ongoing nature of the policy work and the way each of the key initiatives introduced in 2002 was being monitored and modified as time went on.

At the beginning [of FTP] it was made quite clear to the participants that I mean I suppose they were asked to take into account the fact that this was the first year that this was running. To bear with any glitches that might happen and to participate in that ongoing internal evaluation because their views were necessary in order to make sure that we could adjust things that weren’t working. And I think that’s been very successful (Elite Transcript 4, p. 12).

Interviewer: ‘What’s your sense of Leadspace?

Respondent: Leadspace as??

I: Is it value for money?

R: It’s a bit - that’s quite a hard question to answer I suppose. It’s quite early days...In fact, rather than having a kind of formal pilot what we’re ending up going to have is a process that’s continually being adjusted and tweaked. And that will happen with the induction programme and I think it will happen with Leadspace as well (Elite Transcript 4, p. 15).

In addition, Nichols made a strong point about the way in which the underlying aim of the Ministry in developing the various initiatives was to try to telescope down the sort of on-the-job learning that earlier principals have traditionally undertaken in their initial years in the job.

People were telling us that in their experience as a principal it sometimes took some time between two and four years depending on the individual, before they were au fait with the technical side
of principalship...and they had the kind of space in their head if you like to start really focussing on the educational leadership element of their job. And so one of our key objectives is to try to telescope that learning time down (Elite Transcript 4, p. 14).

She also indicated that the Ministry saw a close inter-relationship between management and educational leadership:

Also what we’re trying to do is try to break down that sense of dichotomy, that principalship is educational leadership but with a management component. Because the management decisions are important because they do influence student outcomes. Everything that a principal does influences student outcomes and it’s a matter of being able to see that as a whole (Elite Transcript 4, p. 14).

(ii) The interview with Geoff Lovegrove

Lovegrove described two stages of New Zealand Principals’ Federation (NZPF) involvement in the evolution of principal development policy: a first stage before the NZPF conference at the end of June 2000, and a second following that conference and up to the 2001 Budget announcement.

- Early Involvement

During the first stage key office holders of NZPF had been overseas and seen a range of principal development possibilities in countries such as England, Canada, Australia and the United States (Elite Transcript 5, p. 2). They had also developed their own preferred position on the desirable pattern of state involvement in principal development.

Throughout 1999 and the emergence of the new government, with Mallard being Minister, it became apparent that Government would be needing to pay more than lip service to it
And we were involved in the early stages in thinking about the types of PD that school leaders might require. We took a line of (through our own experience) of reflective practice being a good model. And many of us had been - well, we weren’t disciples of David Stewart, but we had certainly benefited professionally from his type of principal leadership development. Others like Carol Cardno in Auckland had also worked closely with principals, with mentor schemes and so on, and that had proved to be the best sort of on-going development for principals and their leadership role, we felt (Elite Transcript 5, pp. 1-2).

In early 2000 these views were expressed to the Ministry and just before the midyear time of the 2000 budget NZPF were hopeful that funding for a major principal development initiative would be announced, only to be disappointed when the budget came out.

We believe it was on the table for the budget in 2000, a small but significant amount...but we also believe that it fell off the table just before that budget, and I got that from pretty high up. So we were very disappointed and we fired a real mortar attack at the Minister at the big conference in late June 2000, which was also a joint Australia/New Zealand conference with about 1400 principals present. I think that he took that on board because the reaction from principals was so strong. And I was reflecting that in my role (Elite Transcript 5, p. 2).

Later Involvement

Following the 2000 conference NZPF noticed a clear change in stance from the Ministry officials and ‘serious talk’ began on the shape of the possible initiatives.

The discussions were fraught, though, because it seemed to us that some of the Ministry people had sought advice from
overseas and wanted to attach their banner to a model which we really didn’t like much. A labour market mentality is not always the same as a professional development mentality and my executive (and it has not moved from this stance since my time) has wanted to keep it a high level of study, reflection, research, mentorship for principals right from the beginning. We acknowledged that there were some very basic needs that brand new principals have, but....training is a word that the Ministry uses a lot. It grates with me because its more an apprentice type action than a professional development action. We just wish the Ministry and Government would pump that angle, with reflective practice, ahead of some of the other angles of the Hay Group report. They [the Hay Group] did some great work initially and have identified some really key professional attributes of principals and then they went and dressed it all up in this language of skills and competences and training. How can we get to gaining competence in these professional attributes for all principals and how can we provide development that is truly professional was really the crunch of the conversation that took place over 2001, and that is still going on today between our representatives and the Ministry officials (Elite Transcript 5, p. 3).

- Lovegrove’s Overall Conclusions

Lovegrove has reached a conclusion that in the overall evolution of principal development policy, there has been a relatively consistent approach from the Minister and his officials.

Interviewer: To sum up then, how would you see the overall influence of the Minister on the one hand versus the key officials on the other in the evolution of policy in the principal development area?
Respondent: I think they’ve been heading together in the right direction rather than an either/or sort of approach. Since mid 2000 the Minister has been very supportive and focussed on this as a need. If we want to improve our schools then we need to improve the leadership of those schools and that’s a message we agree with and it’s one that both the Minister and his officials have embraced (Elite Transcript 5, p. 4).

However, in the continuing consultation, he has detected some divisions within the viewpoints and attitudes of different Ministry officials.

We sense a tension in the Ministry where different divisions of the Ministry - and I might have the wrong word, it might be just “group” or whatever - seem to have different approaches. We have some hesitation about projects which are professional being driven by school labour market people who have their own focus and their own style of policy analysis. When we see it as more of a professional development matter...There’s another division of the Ministry that does most of the curriculum implementation - I can’t remember what its name is, but we see them as being more relevant to this sort of work.

Interviewer: That’s C____ B____’s division?

Respondent: Yes, that division. And they do things like bringing in seconded principals and that has added a dimension to the work being done that was not there previously and I think that has helped steer it in a direction that is desirable (Elite Transcript 5, p. 4).

(iii) The Interview with David Stewart

Stewart commented usefully on two issues: his experience as a co-director of the team charged with the task of designing the First Time Principals’ programme, and his impressions of how the programme was being received.
— Design of the FTP programme

With regard to his experiences in designing FTP, Stewart mentions that, “as you know, it was a pretty torrid time and not very enjoyable” (Elite Transcript 6, p. 1).

He lists the three key reasons for this as being:

1. The ‘very strong ideological position’ that the Ministry adopted, focused around measurable and observable behaviours and belief in generic leadership attributes.

2. The Ministry’s ‘totally uncritical’ acceptance of the Hay Group’s needs analysis as the proper basis for the programme and its design.

3. Conflicting views of how schools work and can be improved, with the Ministry “failing to appreciate the role that local context has to play” in influencing the possibilities and appropriate strategies (Elite Transcript 6, pp. 2-3).

In addition, Stewart comments on how the contract for the design work was managed at the Ministry end.

There was a reluctance by the Ministry to listen to alternative perspectives and a relationship between writers and commissioners based on power and contract conditions. In addition there were very tight timelines and some confusion in the early stages in the information we were given about how the programme would be taught, how it would be supported in the field and indeed even when it would start (Elite Transcript 6, p. 4).

— How the Programme is Being Received

Stewart attended the April 2002 session (the first offering) of the holiday residential part of the FTP and was a keynote presenter. This gave him a basis for judging the initial impact of the programme.
As you are probably aware, the first residential session was pretty rocky. Basic needs were not very well attended to. On the day that I was there they didn’t even stop for lunch. All filed through and got a bag lunch and then straight on to the next event. When I talked to him about it afterwards David Eddy attributed much of the blame to the “over-crowded and too-theoretical nature” of the curriculum we had provided. His design of the session in a large conference format and with little if any time for interaction was not mentioned (Elite Transcript 6, p. 5).

Stewart also mentions that at the end of this first session a number of the participating principals told him privately that unless there was a substantial improvement at the second session in July they would ‘drop out’ of the programme (Elite Transcript 6, p. 5). However Stewart acknowledges that the Auckland University planning group seemed to have learned from this first experience and made a number of crucial changes for the subsequent holiday sessions (in July and September 2002), including giving the participants a greater range of choice and slightly more ‘down time’ in the programme. The results were much higher satisfaction scores in the participant evaluations at the end of the sessions and the retention to the end of the programme of the vast majority of participants (Elite Transcript 6, p. 6).

c) Summary of Policy Framework for Principal Development

Overall, then, the analysis of the data from the textual excerpts and the elite interviews summarised in this section of the chapter provide a fascinating picture of different influences and tensions within what Codd (2001) has called the ‘context of construction’ part of the policy process, as various state agents apply personal ideology as well as contextually influenced interpretations to their work of policy development and implementation. It also illustrates a variety of ways in which, as Bourdieu has put it, “language is not only an instrument of communication, or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 648). While there is some evidence of Codd’s two discursive-positionings initially talking past each other in the policy construction phase analysed in this part of the chapter, there is also a
suggestion that, with time, the two viewpoints are reaching a working accommodation in the principal development area of policy implementation.

d) Reactions from the Field: Comments of Principals on the Impact of the Principal Development Initiatives

(i) Focus Group Responses

During the focus group discussions with successful principals of small schools from typical settings in the Central Districts region, data were gathered about principals’ reactions to the recent Ministry of Education principal development initiatives, and also their ideas on what further initiatives principals would prefer. The results of this aspect of data-gathering are summarised in Figure 6.6.

Four clear messages came through from the focus group responses about things the principals liked and disliked in the recent initiatives.

- **First Message.** The FTP programme was generally very positively regarded by those who had participated in it, with the networking aspect being the most highly valued component.

  *I just found it absolutely wonderful, it was a privilege to be on it, the opportunity to network was brilliant* (Focus Group Three Notes, p. 5).

- **Second Message.** Two aspects of FTP were not so highly regarded: its mentoring component, and its overall intensity. As far as mentoring was concerned, one person in Focus Group Four commented:

  *I think I’d still like a mentor (like we got in FTP) but with it done under a different system. It would have to be a primary person for a primary principal; they’d have to make a lot more visits, especially early in the process; and they’d need to have a good network of local contacts that they could put me on to in the times between their visits* (Focus Group Four Notes, p. 5).
Regarding the overall intensity, the predominant comment was typically something like this.

*I just feel that three holiday sessions, each a week long, is too much, especially if they are going to be ten or twelve hour days. I got to the end of the year absolutely knackered, in a way I’d never experienced before. And then I sat down and thought about it and realized I’d gone through the whole year at absolute full tilt without a break. It’s too much - I reckon a session length of three days each holiday would be more than enough* (Focus Group One Notes, p. 2).

- Third Message. The Supply of Laptops to Principals was very well regarded. A typical comment was:

*The laptop - it’s great. It allows me to go home to the kids for a couple of hours, then get on with my work after they have gone to bed* (Focus Group Four Notes, p. 4).

- Fourth Message. However, Leadspace was lowly rated. One principal summed up the general reaction:

*The Leadspace discussion forum - I just don’t use it. It’s possibly a good idea and if I had the time I might find it useful, but just at the moment I can’t even remember - or find - my special entry password* (Focus Group Four Notes, p. 5).

Principals from the Christian Special Character small schools enjoyed the benefits of access to state initiatives, with supplementary supports being provided from within their own systems (either Roman Catholic or Seventh Day Adventist) (Focus Group Two Notes, pp. 1-3).

In addition there was one other strong theme reported consistently by each focus group: the need for the Ministry to extend the principal development initiative to other areas. Amongst the range of suggestions made by the focus
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Reaction to MOE Initiatives</th>
<th>Other Issues/Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ‘Smallest’ Small Schools</td>
<td>FTP – Great speakers; great for networking; good for big picture; exhausting experience; mentorship could be better</td>
<td>Smallest small principalship image needs improving; to improve it as career stepping-stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laptop/Leadspace – Laptops great; leadspace little used</td>
<td>E learning needs to be linked with personal contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Block of refreshment time needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Christian Special Character Schools</td>
<td>Both RC and SDA systems – principals enjoy access to state initiatives as of right</td>
<td>State must do much more for aspiring principals – a wide range of initiatives is required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both systems – supplement state-provided PD with own initiatives/supports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mid-sized Small Schools</td>
<td>FTP – Networking and range of topics great; timing okay but overall impact exhausting</td>
<td>DP/AP/TP relativities need revisiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laptop/Leadspace – Laptops a help; leadspace not much used</td>
<td>Mentorship aspects need strengthening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MOE needs to adopt a more ‘hands on’ role in career counselling/appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ‘Larger’ Small Schools</td>
<td>FTP – Aims right; delivery at present questionable</td>
<td>MOE also needs to work on programmes for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laptop/Leadspace – Laptops mixed value; leadspace valued lowly</td>
<td>- Aspiring principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Better induction support (first 3-6 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Better mentorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Refreshment/sabbatical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.6 Focus Group responses: Reaction to principal development initiatives
groups about the next areas for principal development to address two stood out. First was the idea that ‘aspiring’ principal recruitment and preparation needed urgent attention, if principalship was to return to being an effective and attractive career path; second was the idea that some form of refreshment leave was also a vital requirement, if principal vitality was to be retained beyond the initial burst. Both these ideas were mentioned in all four focus groups. The second of these ideas echo those of Lovegrove about what more needs to be done in principal development:

To me though the sort of mentorship used in FTP is not the pure or proven form of mentorship that has worked for so many of us. And we want to see the future development centres building from a base of reflection and embracing the value of a mentor principal. And we dream of the day when development centres can have a research and refreshment base as well, because New Zealand has been decades behind the play in that field (Elite Transcript 5, p. 2).

(ii) Individual Interview Responses

Further data about principal career paths was gathered during the individual interviews with the sixteen successful principals, when each was asked about their career paths up to now, and their career intentions. The results were as follows:

- Career Path up to Now. Five interviewees had worked only in the local area throughout their career up to now; three had worked in local and adjacent areas only; and eight were more mobile, moving to a variety of areas and/or working for significant periods outside teaching.

- Career Intentions. Three interviewees stated their future career intention as being to stay working as a principal in the small school network; seven stated that they were aiming to become a principal of a larger school; and six were unsure or were considering a range of possibilities.
Career Supports. In addition to these data about career paths, during the individual interviews with the sixteen successful principals each was asked about the supports they had received in their principalship career so far; and how they rated each of these. The data gathered in this part of the individual interviews are summarised in Table 6.3.

These data show that all principals reported receiving support from a variety of sources in recent times and that many of the sources were widely used across the interviewees. Beyond this the patterns evident in these data back up some of the tentative conclusions that can be drawn from some of the data already reported in earlier sections about principal support. Amongst these conclusions the following are worthy of note.

1. The breadth of the range of sources of support used by the typical small school principal, especially in their early years as a principal. Dianne provides just one example of this.

   *When I came to P_____ school, the board agreed to release me for the first six weeks and they kept the reliever who had been teaching the class before I started on for a bit longer. I spent the whole of those six weeks coming in and out of the school and reading all the files and asking questions and so on, and that really set me up. Then there was the First Time Principals programme and that has been a real highlight...Also I went to the Rural Principals’ conference in Masterton. I found that a really good experience as well...My other support system has been the local Ministry of Ed - the Napier office and people there...And I do a lot of reading - you know, the STA manuals and the NZEI Principals Guide and stuff - I find them really easy to follow* (Individual Transcript 1, pp. 11-12).
Table 6.3 Recent/Present personal supports of interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Types of Support Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Time Principals Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Dianne</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ann</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dave</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Betty</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jill</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. June</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gwen</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cath</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Alec</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Jerry</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Samantha</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Helen</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Judy</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Steve</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Chris</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Joe</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. The general level of satisfaction with the traditional source of small school support: the College of Education’s advisors. Ann explains here how the support has been tailored to her needs.

N______ [the rural advisor] has helped me with the new planning and reporting. And that was great. She also just pops in which has been wonderful. She knows the days that I am going to be in the office. Her visits are now very well timetabled. We know what we are going to do in each session and there’s “homework” prior to it and there’s feedback via the email on a regular basis. But it’s been that face and that personal touch which I have most appreciated because in the area of planning and reporting there isn’t a lot else out there (Individual Interview 2, p. 10).

Betty also has received tailored support that has helped her survive her first year in the job.

I am still coming to grips with multi-levels. I have taught every age group throughout my teaching career. But only a year and a half of it was in juniors. And I still don’t feel confident. I’ve had a lot of advisory help there. R_____ [the rural advisor] is wonderful. I can’t thank her enough. I’ve got the content and teaching skills sorted out now. But the organization, with fifteen others also in the class, it’s still a challenge (Individual Interview 4, p. 4).

3. There is also general satisfaction with the new supports resulting from recent Ministry policy initiatives. Jill, for example, reports as follows.

The FTP - I’ve got lots of contacts now and if I’m not sure about something I can just pick up the phone and ask....and the other part of it that was really good was that they had really good speakers, especially at the second session...The cluster thing has been good for me too, because its all been set up for
me now and because I’m so new to it...And then when I go home that’s the time that I get on my Leadspace...most nights I’m networking or on the webspace having a look around or downloading something (Individual Interview 5, pp. 6-7).

4. There are also data from the individual interviews to reinforce earlier messages about two areas of current weakness in the present patterns of support: the lack of formal mentoring arrangements, and the lack of incentive to pursue further tertiary study, particularly in the school management area. Only Ann amongst all these principals is participating or has participated in a formalised mentoring relationship, though three of the other principals have made their own informal arrangements. Yet Ann rates her mentoring experience as her single most valuable support (Individual Interview 2, p. 9). Only two of these principals have completed further tertiary study in school management, though three others have started at some time or the other but have more recently deferred their study ambitions through lack of time. Those who have successfully completed tertiary study in school management are indicated in Table 6.3 by the double ticks; those who have started but not completed are indicated by a single tick.

e) Summary of Principal Supports and Needs

Putting together the overall pattern of conclusions that can be drawn from the data collected in this study about the various forms of principal support that have been investigated, three types of conclusion can be reached:

(i) Conclusions about traditional supports that are still highly valued by principals;

(ii) Conclusions about new supports being well utilized and valued; and

(iii) Conclusions about areas where further improvement to the overall network of support could be made.
Table 6.4 attempts to draw these various threads together and show the overall pattern of conclusions about principal support in New Zealand indicated by the data in this study. In the diagram the items printed in block capitals are supports not available at present but valued by respondents in this study; those printed in lower cases are supports currently available and valued by participants in this study. Traditional supports that are still valued include the College of Education advisory service, and both the Ministry of Education and School Trustees’ Association advisors. New supports valued by the principals in this study include the First Time Principals programme and the provision of laptops. There are four key needs reported in this study that are still not being adequately met: support for aspiring principals, support for further study, refreshment leave, and personal mentoring. The pattern of results indicated here suggest that a fairly good start has been made in the job of principal development and support in New Zealand schools, but that there is also some important further work required, for the needs reported by this cross-section of principals to be met satisfactorily.
Table 6.4. Current impact of principal development policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*SUPPORT FOR ASPIRING PRINCIPALS</td>
<td>*FTP programme</td>
<td>*REFRESHMENT LEAVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Laptops .................................&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*SUPPORT FOR TERTIARY STUDY</td>
<td>*COE advisors .............................&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*MOE/STA Advisors.........................&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*INDIVIDUAL MENTORING .................&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:

- BLOCK CAPS = Felt needs, not currently being met
- Lower case titles = Current supports that participants wish continued
3. CONCLUSION

The key points made in this chapter about current New Zealand principal and small-school support policy can be recapitulated as follows:

- Principal-development policy in New Zealand has been designed by a relatively ‘rational’ policy-process of Minister initiation, official option-exploration, considered decision, and contracted implementation.
- Small-school policy in New Zealand has been rather more ‘ad hoc’ in terms of process, with perennial issues resurfacing, busy decision-makers ‘tweaking’ existing policy, changes being made at the margins, and the issue continuing to bubble away.
- Within the principal-development findings in this study, FTP has been viewed rather more positively than Leadspace.
- Within the small-school support findings, SASC has had a rather more positive impact than EDI.
- Overall, principals appreciate recent support initiatives, but believe that the New Zealand Ministry of Education could go further in future than it is presently in providing support for principals in small primary schools.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter sets out to review the overall pattern of results in the study, to discuss the findings in the light of the literature, and to consider the conclusions, limitations and recommendations arising from the study. The chapter is divided into three sections on this basis:

1. Review of Research Results.
2. Discussion of Findings.
3. Conclusions and Implications.

According to the preamble to this report, this is a study about the relationship between principalship and policy in small New Zealand primary schools. The statement of the research problem for the study (at the beginning of Chapter 4) referred to two facets to the problem for investigation: first, what might be the current nature of the relationship between principalship and policy; and second, how might the relationship be made more appropriate in the future. The general aim of this chapter is to spell out the conclusions reached about both these matters.

1. REVIEW OF RESEARCH RESULTS

In this section of the chapter the major findings in the study about principalship and policy in New Zealand will be summarised as a response to the eight research questions from Chapter 4 (pages 128-129). In summary, there are two sets of research results in the study: first, results about small school principalship and its variations (that is, answers to Research Questions 1-4); and second, results about current educational policy and its impact (that is, answers to Research Questions 5-8). This section of the chapter reviews the results using these two subheadings.
a) Results About Small School Principalship and its Variations

Research Questions 1 to 4 deal with small school principalship in New Zealand and its variations. The answers to Research Questions 1 to 4 are as follows.

(i) Strain and Success Factors

Research Question 1 asked ‘what perceptions do teaching principals have about the factors creating strain and contributing to success in their current work?’ To answer this question requires a consideration of both the ‘strain’ and the ‘success’ factors reported by respondents in this study.

- Strain Factors

Strain factors in their current work refers to the work pressures and stressors of the respondents. Both statistical and interview data provide evidence about these factors.

Based on Table 5.7 (in Chapter 5), amongst Central Districts small school principals as a whole there were eleven key strain factors reported, which can be grouped as follows. There were five strain factors arising from ‘system’ pressures: preparing for an ERO review (causing major strain), implementing new assessment requirements (causing major strain), managing with a lack of finance (causing major strain), managing with inadequate class space (causing moderate strain); and implementing new technology (causing moderate strain). There were two strain factors relating to the ‘classroom’ role of the small school principal: strain from interruptions to teaching (causing major strain), and strain from introducing new curriculum (causing moderate strain). There were two strain factors arising from ‘community’ pressure: strain from managing a falling roll situation (causing moderate strain); and strain from responsibility for special needs children (creating moderate strain). The final two strain factors relate to overall role-balance. As far as the overall workload of principals across the Central Districts is concerned, Table 5.7 indicates that the paperwork associated with the multiple roles of the job created a major strain, while trying to balance administration and class teaching responsibilities created a moderate strain.
Tables 5.15, 5.16 and 5.17 (in Chapter 5) also provide data on strain. Amongst the sixteen successful teaching principals studied in depth, four reported working longer than the Teaching Principal average hours per week calculated earlier by Livingstone, two reported working less than Livingstone’s Teaching Principal average, and three reported working higher than the average in the early years of their principalship (though they were working closer to the average now). Four of the ‘novice’ principals reported finding the administrative aspects of their role especially burdensome.

The data here generally supports the conclusion that it is the administrative aspects of the teaching principals’ role that study respondents found created the greatest strain in their current work.

- **Success Factors**

Success factors in their current work refer to the rewards that arise from respondents’ work and the qualities that they consider are needed to succeed in particular small school work-settings. Both statistical and focus group data provide evidence about these factors.

Based on Table 5.7, there were six factors that provided significant reward to over half of the respondents from across the Central Districts. These were, in descending order: helping children learn, the opportunity for educational leadership, enjoying collegial relationships, making children happy, demonstrating administrative competence, and building parent/community support.

Tables 5.12 and 5.13 (in Chapter 5) summarise the perceptions of successful teaching principals about the attributes and qualities that explain success in particular small school settings.

Principals from ‘special character’ small schools attributed school success in this setting to a mix of class-programme, school-culture and school-community factors. For principal success they put emphasis on the principal as a role model and her/his ability to foster an appropriate school culture for the niche ‘speciality’ of the school.
Principals from ‘larger’ small schools attributed school success in this setting to a mix of staffing, leadership and community support qualities. They put particular emphasis on the principal’s ability as an educational leader and her/his personal and interpersonal qualities as key attributes for principal success in this setting.

Principals from ‘mid-sized’ small schools attributed school success in this setting largely to a mix of principal and staff qualities. They described the key principal qualities for this setting as being a mix of personal, interpersonal, technical and educational skills.

Principals from ‘smaller’ small schools attributed school success in this setting largely to qualities of the class programme, supported by school-culture and school-community factors. They put particular emphasis on the educational skills of the principal as a critical success factor for principalship in this setting, supported by a mix of personal and interpersonal qualities.

The data here generally support the conclusion that it is the classroom and educational leadership aspects of the teaching principals’ role that study respondents found created the greatest satisfaction in their current work and to which they were most likely to attribute their success.

(ii) Strategies and Associated Beliefs/Values

Research Question 2 asked ‘what seem to be the critical sets of beliefs and values influencing the stated strategy preferences of teaching principals?’ To answer this question requires consideration of both the stated strategy preferences of respondents, and the inferred beliefs and values that can be deduced from the responses.

- Stated Strategy Preferences

Tables 5.15, 5.16 and 5.17 indicate that there were three main types of strategy employed by successful teaching principals interviewed in this study. These were ‘personal’ strategies, relating to overall workload (role complexity and conflicting demands); ‘pedagogic’ strategies, relating to educational aspects of
the teaching principal role (working with students and staff); and ‘community’ strategies, relating to the wider role that the principal plays (working with trustees, parents and external agencies). Tables 5.15-5.17 indicate that amongst the sixteen successful principals the three most popular personal strategies were chunking time (used by eight of the interviewees), delegation (used by six of the interviewees), and the purchase of extra release time from local funding (used by five of the interviewees). There were six main pedagogic strategies reported, with developing better basics being the most popular strategy (reported by eight principals), closely followed by better student climate, better staff support and broader programming (each reported by seven principals), then better programmes at either the senior or the junior level (reported by four principals), and better Te Reo instruction (reported by three principals). The four main community strategies reported were working more closely with the Board of Trustees (reported by fourteen of the principals), working more closely with parents (reported by eight of the interviewees), working more closely with national agencies (reported by six interviewees), and working more closely with local community agencies (reported by three principals).

- Inferred Beliefs and Values

From the data gathered relating to pedagogic and community strategies, certain values and beliefs can be inferred. Examining Table 5.19 (in Chapter 5), when the strategies used by successful principals to deal with their initial pedagogic issues are categorised and aggregated, twenty of the responses indicate a preference for the value of direct action, seventeen of the responses indicate a preference for the value of shared action, and seven of the responses suggest a preference for the value of indirect action.

Examining Table 6.1 (in Chapter 6), when the community/neighbouring school strategies used by successful principals are categorised and aggregated, two of the principals show an overall preference for a neutral strategy of co-existence towards their neighbours, four exhibit a more co-operative than competitive preference, eight exhibit a more competitive than co-operative preference, and two exhibit a mix of both co-operative and competitive strategies.
Further analysis of the interview data suggested that there were two main lines of reasoning offered by principals for the adoption of competitive strategies. First, according to some principals, this was necessary as a career development strategy. To get noticed and make one’s mark as a principal, it was necessary to demonstrate capability in promoting school growth, according to this line of thinking. Second, other principals adopted competitive strategies to maintain the market edge of their own school. Maintaining the present roll number in these schools ensured class sizes remained low, but a slight decrease in roll size would cause a significant increase in class numbers. (For example, in a small New Zealand primary school with a roll of 55 the school is staffed with three teachers. If the roll falls to 54, the school is staffed by two teachers.)

Overall, then, two of the most significant variations in beliefs and values amongst successful teaching principals indicated by the data reported in this study would appear to relate to beliefs about how direct (or indirect) leadership should be, and how co-operative (or competitive) the school needs to be towards its neighbours.

(iii) Variation by Career Stage

Research Question 3 asked ‘to what extent is there variation in answers to Questions 1 or 2 based on different stages of principal-career?’ Both statistical and interview data provide evidence to help answer this question.

While the statistical analysis of the questionnaire data suggests no statistically significant difference in responses across the Central Districts according to career stage, in the interview data on principal workload there is some suggestion of possible variation arising from this factor amongst the sixteen successful principals. The interview data suggests that novices may work longer hours and therefore be under more strain in the initial years of their tenure than more experienced principals, possibly because they are more reactive to system demands than their more senior colleagues (who, presumably, have learned from experience that many things arising from system demands are not quite as urgent as they may appear on the surface).
(iv) Variation by School Situation

Research Question 4 asked ‘to what extent is there variation in answers to Questions 1 or 2 based on differences in the school situation of the teaching principal?’. Both statistical and interview data provide evidence to help answer this question.

While the statistical analysis of the questionnaire data suggests no statistically significant difference in responses across the Central Districts according to situational variations such as decile rating and school size, in the interview data there is a clear indication that school size may be a significant variable amongst the sixteen successful principals. Individual interview responses indicate that within micro-educational organizations (‘smaller’ small schools) there may be a special requirement for ‘direct’ educational leadership from the principal, whereas in ‘mid-sized’ and ‘larger’ small schools ‘shared’ or ‘indirect’ strategies are more likely to be required. The focus group responses suggest that whether the school roll is likely to grow or not in the future may also be a significant influence on principal behaviour. Principals of strong growth schools might be willing to co-operate with their neighbouring weaker schools for temporary benefit, but principals of weak growth schools typically competed vigorously with their weaker neighbours for the declining total number of new enrolees. The focus group responses also indicate that in ‘smaller’ small schools the classroom management skills of the principal are regarded as a crucial factor, whereas this factor was not mentioned in any of the other focus groups.

b) Results about Current Educational Policy and its Impact

Research Questions 5 to 8 deal with current educational policy in New Zealand and its impact on small school principalship. The answers to Research Questions 5 to 8 are as follows.

(i) Current Small School Support Policy
Research Question 5 asked ‘what rationale do those involved in policy development provide for present small school policy and how consistent are different parts of the policy?’.

To answer this question requires consideration of both small school policy rationales and of the degree of consistency within these policies.

- **Policy Rationales**

As Figure 6.1 (in Chapter 6) indicates, there were two policies of small school support that have been analysed in this study: the Education Development Initiative (EDI) policy and the School Administration Support Cluster (SASC) policy.

The EDI policy aims to facilitate the rationalising of the overall network of small schools in New Zealand through the offering of financial incentives (derived from some of the savings arising from the reduction in the total number of schools) to schools involved in the rationalising exercise. Both the policy texts and the Ministry officials associated with this policy articulated this understanding of the policy rationale.

The SASC policy aims to support small groups of small schools (‘clusters’) to reduce overall workload through the temporary provision of additional funding for approved co-operative projects. Again, both the policy texts and the Ministry officials associated with this policy articulated this rationale.

- **Degree of Internal Consistency**

Within the EDI policy the textual analysis has suggested that there is some inconsistency about the means that will be used to facilitate the process of decision making about rationalisation options: whether this is ‘consultation’ or ‘negotiation’.
Within the SASC policy there is a certain degree of vagueness about how long the co-operation should extend, with the funding being only available for any project for two years, but with the policy as a whole having the aim of “creating effective and sustainable school administration systems” (MOE, 2002b, p. 2).

(ii) Views of Principals on Small School Support Policy

Research Question 6 asked ‘in the view of teaching principals is present small school policy achieving its aims and if not how might it be improved?’ Data from both interviews and policy textual analysis help answer this question.

Principals in this study reported general support for the SASC policy, but were less complimentary about the EDI policy. In individual interview responses six successful small school principals reported valuing their cluster group as a major source of support, one of the three highest ranked supports reported. In focus group responses one group made particular mention of wishing their cluster support to be strengthened in future years, two groups wanted the Ministry of Education to take a more upfront role in school rationalisation, and one group felt the Ministry needed to be more directive in its approach to school reorganisation.

The policy analysis in this study suggests that present small school policy makes two assumptions about principal/school behaviour: first, that where rolls are falling principals/schools will be motivated to seek mergers with stronger neighbouring schools to help rationalise the school network; and second, that where school rolls are holding, schools/principals will be willing to co-operate with neighbouring schools, to help strengthen the school network. The principal behaviour analysis, however, suggests a rather more complex pattern of responses, with behaviours based on co-operation and collaboration with neighbouring schools being less frequently reported than competitive responses.

Using this analysis, it would seem reasonable to conclude that present small school support policy may need further work and policy refinement, if small
school strengthening/rationalising are to occur on the scale indicated as being necessary based upon the New Zealand-wide demographic indicators for primary school roll numbers in the future.

(iii) **Current Principal Development Policy**

Research Question 7 asked ‘what rationale do those involved in devising policy provide for present principal development policy and how consistent are various parts of the policy?’. To answer this question requires a consideration of both principal development policy rationales and consideration of the degree of policy consistency within these policies.

- **Policy Rationales**

As Figure 6.4 (in Chapter 6) indicates, there were two principal development policies that have been analysed in this study: the First Time Principals training policy (‘FTP’), and the electronic network policy for more experienced principals (‘Leadspace/laptops’).

The FTP policy aims to provide a national programme of training for ‘first time’ principals in the first year after their appointment, to develop initial leadership and management capabilities and help novice principals in their management and leadership roles. The Leadspace/laptops policy aims to use electronic technology to provide access to examples of good principalship practice, generate community amongst more experienced principals and reduce the isolation felt by some New Zealand principals.

Both the policy texts referred to and the interviews with those involved in the policy construction process indicate a common understanding of these rationales.

- **Degree of Internal Policy Consistency**

Analysis of the FTP policy construction process suggests a shift in discursive positioning, based on the expression of policy details as policy implementation has proceeded in this area of principal development.
Analysis of the Leadspace/laptops policy construction process supports this suggestion by indicating a similar shift in discursive positioning as policy implementation has proceeded in this area of principal development.

(iv) View of Principals on Principal Development Policy

Research Question 8 asked ‘in the view of teaching principals, is present principal development policy achieving its aims and if not how might it be improved?’ Data from both interviews and focus group responses help answer this question.

All of the five successful small school principals interviewed in this study that were involved in FTP during 2002 (that is, the ‘Novices’), supported this policy initiative overall. However, there were two aspects of FTP that were less highly favoured by novices: the overcrowded nature of the programme’s training sessions, and the lack of onsite personal support that the programme offered. To overcome the ‘over-busyness’ of their first year as a principal, novice interviewees suggested that it might be better if some of the current contents of FTP sessions were covered in a programme for aspiring principals, or by extending some aspects of FTP into follow up sessions in the second year of First Principalship. Novice interviewees were also unanimous that mentorship aspects of FTP needed strengthening or reconfiguring.

Focus groups of successful small school principals interviewed in this study were consistent in their responses about the Leadspace/laptops initiative: that the laptops were a useful support but that, at least so far, Leadspace was having very little impact on their work or thinking. Interviewees in two of the focus groups suggested that for Leadspace to become more productive and useful in the future, principals might need to be shown in a face-to-face session how to access and use its various components.

In general, all focus groups wanted the Ministry of Education to both broaden and deepen the supports co-ordinated from a national perspective, with a greater range of both pre-appointment and post-appointment supports being suggested.
2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this section of the chapter the major findings in this study will be compared with the findings in comparable earlier studies. In the first part of the section the focus of the comparison is on the principalship findings; in the second part of the section the focus is on the policy findings.

a) Discussion of Principalship Findings

The principalship findings in this study, as reported in Chapter 5, are significantly different to earlier findings in some respects, somewhat different in other respects, and similar to a limited degree. Table 7.1 summarises these patterns of similarity and difference.

(i) Significantly Different Principalship Findings

The most significant differences arise in the comparison between the data gathered in this study and the earlier New Zealand data, reporting the workload of teaching principals during the 1990s and their perceptions of the relative degrees of strain and support associated with this work. In earlier studies teaching principals report their workload steadily increasing as time goes on, their degree of stress consequently rising, and their turnover/fallout rates therefore also increasing (Livingstone, 1999; Whittall, 2002). Principals also reported feeling poorly prepared for the challenges of the role, and poorly supported by central agencies once in the role (Livingstone, 1999). In this study teaching principals reported a high workload in their initial years as a principal and a steady workload thereafter. They reported receiving and valuing a wide variety of supports both before and after their appointment as a teaching principal. Based on statements of their future intentions, both turnover rate and fallout rate would appear to be declining amongst New Zealand’s teaching principals.
Table 7.1  Comparison with Results in earlier Principalship Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earlier Studies</th>
<th>This Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Livingstone (1999)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- TP workload rapidly increasing over recent times</td>
<td>- Workload high for beginning principals, steady for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stress increasing from:</td>
<td>- 62.5% rate experience as TP positively overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Paperwork</td>
<td>- 17.5% indicate they would leave teaching in next 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Number of hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) ERO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 75% report no/inadequate prior preparation</td>
<td>- Wide range of supports experienced/valued both before and after appointment as TP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 40% would leave teaching in next 12 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No significant differences in motivational response patterns by setting/career stage</td>
<td>- No significant difference in motivational responses by setting/career stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whittall (2002)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rapid turnover rate amongst TP’s, increasing as decade proceeded</td>
<td>- Principal turnover rate appears to be declining, based on TP intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Smaller, remoter TPs under greater strain</td>
<td>- No significant difference in TP strain based on location, more likely to be based on career stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Principal fallout rate a growing issue amongst TPs (that is, number leaving the profession, rather than seeking promotion)</td>
<td>- Principal fallout rate appears to be declining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.1 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earlier Studies</th>
<th>This Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ERO (1999a)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Principal the main contributor to quality in small schools</td>
<td>- Principal in partnership with principal-release (in ‘smaller’ small schools) and other staff (in ‘larger’ small schools) the main contributors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Problems for principalship increase as size of school decreases</td>
<td>- New supports appear to be reducing the disadvantage, but multi-level teaching demand remains an issue in the ‘smaller’ small schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wylie (1997)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In primary schools, educational leadership is become more ‘indirect’ over time</td>
<td>- Indirect leadership common in ‘larger’ small schools, but ‘direct’ leadership still predominates in ‘smaller’ small schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Two patterns of BOT-Principal relationship predominate:</td>
<td>- Two additional patterns reported:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Principal as professional leader, BOT manage finance/property</td>
<td>(a) BOT as volunteers in administration/housekeeping (2/16 cases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Principal assumes leadership in management as well as professional areas</td>
<td>(b) Control of management genuinely shared (2/16 cases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlier Studies</td>
<td>This Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southworth (1999a)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Southworth (1999a)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful small school principals:</td>
<td>Successful small school principals:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Work hard</td>
<td>- Work hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Show determination for the best</td>
<td>- Display emotional intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Radiate positiveness</td>
<td>- Emphasize teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Convey approachability</td>
<td>- Strive to succeed as school improvers and educational leaders. HOWEVER ‘smaller’ small school principalship is somewhat different to ‘larger’ small school principalship:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are team builders and team players</td>
<td>(a) Greater emphasis on skills as class teacher/manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are school improvers</td>
<td>(b) Greater emphasis on direct leadership as an influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use three key strategies as educational leaders:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Modelling</td>
<td>(a) Modelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Monitoring</td>
<td>(b) Monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Dialogue</td>
<td>(c) Dialogue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Hayes (1996)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Hayes (1996)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Small primary heads are attracted to the position to ‘make a mark’, but also continue in teaching</td>
<td>- Aspirants seek TP positions to experience educational leadership but maintain contact with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Once in position, teaching heads seek credit with parents and governors and resort to ‘impression management’ to try to achieve/sustain sense of success.</td>
<td>- Successful ‘smaller’ school TPs emphasise classroom management, to gain parental confidence. ‘Weak market’ TPs emphasise roll growth/maintenance, to retain parental confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(ii) Somewhat Different Principalship Findings

Areas where there was somewhat of a difference between findings in earlier studies and findings in this study relate mainly to the strategies that the small school principals report using to manage various aspects of their work roles. Where the earlier ERO (1999a) and Ofsted (1999) studies reported the principal as the major contributor to educational quality in small primary schools, the present study suggests that for success principals rely on others to a greater extent than this. In ‘smaller’ small schools the release teacher makes a major contribution, while in ‘larger’ small schools other staff (especially senior staff) play a significant role. Where Wylie’s earlier New Zealand primary principalship study (1997a) reported a general switch to ‘indirect’ leadership strategies amongst New Zealand principals, the present study suggests that such a switch might not have occurred in ‘smaller’ small schools, though there is evidence for its significance in ‘larger’ small schools. While Southworth (1999a) suggested a relatively consistent pattern in the educational leadership and school improvement strategies used by the small school heads he studied, in this study there was some variation. ‘Smaller’ small school principals were much more likely to play an ‘upfront’ role in school development, working directly with parents, staff, children or trustees to create the climate, vision or values that were the foundation for school improvement. ‘Larger’ small school principals typically used ‘shared’ or ‘indirect’ means, with the principal building capacity amongst other staff to lead aspects of needed programme development, or sharing the leadership role with someone else (e.g. an advisor or other outside expert) during the development work.

(iii) Similar Principalship Findings

Areas where there were considerable similarities between earlier studies and findings in this study were largely in the reports of personal qualities required to succeed in the job, and the reported impact of the local community as a reference group on teaching principal behaviour. Southworth (1999a) suggested five personal and interpersonal qualities needed for success as a small school head in England: working hard, showing determination, being
positive, portraying approachability, and being a team builder/team player. The focus groups in this study reported very similar qualities, with their emphasis on successful small school principals in New Zealand needing to work hard, be well organised and resilient, display emotional intelligence and emphasise teamwork. Hayes (1996) suggested that small school heads generally started with an idealistic burst, to try to make their mark as an educational leader and also as a classroom teacher. However the strain of the work as a teaching principal created a strong likelihood that the small school head would adjust their work role more closely to parental and local community demands the longer they stayed in the job. A rather similar effect was noted in the present study. In the analysis of pedagogic strategies in this study there was a clear pattern in the ‘smaller’ small schools of principals feeling the need to respond to parental expectations about classroom management and control in the early stages of their principalship. In the analysis of neighbouring school strategies in this study, principals in ‘weaker’ mid-sized and larger schools in market terms (where the school roll seemed under threat) appeared to respond over time to community demands for school survival by promoting inter-school competition, even though their own personal beliefs and internal strategies may have been more inclined to a pedagogic (rather than an entrepreneurial) approach.

b) Discussion of Policy Findings

The policy findings in this study, as reported in Chapter 6, reflect both similarities and differences in policy settings and impacts to those reported in other ‘Anglo’ settings. Table 7.2 summarises these patterns of similarity and difference.
Table 7.2   Comparison with Results in Earlier Policy Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earlier Studies</th>
<th>This Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hay Group (2001)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A significant difference between competencies of first year, first time</td>
<td>- Little difference between strategies used by novice TPs and strategies of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principals and more experienced, successful principals</td>
<td>more experienced TPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To improve situation FTP training would need to focus on basic skills plus</td>
<td>- Major need not being met by FTP is multi level teaching skills for ‘smaller’ school TPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher order leadership competencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clarke (2002a)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Traditional role complexity for TPs has been further complicated by recent</td>
<td>- Ongoing system adjustments continue to fuel TP role complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>system reform/requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- As a system, Queensland has recognised this and acted to support TPs in</td>
<td>- SASC is main systemic support for small schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>various ways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Effective collaboration between small schools is being created</td>
<td>- Little evidence that SASC is creating effective collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- University providing skills in multi-level teaching as well as management</td>
<td>- University providing management support mainly – little recognition/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support for multi-level teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7.2  continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earlier Studies</th>
<th>This Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gronn (2003)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- At System Level in ‘anglo’ educational systems, idea of ‘designer leadership’ now predominant</td>
<td>- At System level New Zealand has largely adopted a ‘national govt’ driven approach, based loosely on UK (e.g. Hay Group competencies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Two versions of DL</td>
<td>- At School level there is some evidence of principal ‘re-engagement’ but also strong suggestions that more needs doing before principal enchantment is likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) USA – Profession driven (b) UK – National govt driven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- At School level in ‘anglo’ systems, growing evidence for ‘disengagement’ with leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Two primary causes for disengagement:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Work intensification (b) Career breakdown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gewirtz (2002)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- New Labour’s ‘Third Way’ in education differs little from previous policy: continuing emphasis on markets, compliance and standardisation</td>
<td>- New Zealand’s Labour-Coalition government has moved decisively to remove ‘incentives’ of marketisation and competition but done little yet to promote a positive alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Case studies in schools indicate how the discourse of ‘new managerialism’ continues to replace the discourse of ‘welfarism’ amongst principals</td>
<td>- Case studies in schools suggest the good of the individual school remains the key value for principals, rather than the good of the network as a whole</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similar Policy Findings

There are five main ways in which the policy findings reported in this study are similar to those reported in other recent Anglo policy studies.

- First Similarity

First, what Gronn (2003) calls the trend to ‘Designer Leadership’ is evident in New Zealand, as well as the other systems studied by Gronn (USA, Canada, England, Victoria). Gronn suggests that “central to the notion of designer-leadership is the determination of sets of standards and competencies for the preparation and development of educational administrators” (2003, p. 7). He indicates that in practice, there are two contrasting approaches to the development of designer-leadership standards: a profession-driven one (mainly evident in the USA) and a national government-driven one (evident in the UK). He concludes that the move to such customised leader formation is a substantial, paradigmatic break with previous ideas about leader preparation in the schools sector, based largely on voluntarism.

In this study we have seen how in 2001 and 2002 New Zealand moved decisively from a policy setting of ‘voluntarism’ for school leader preparation to one of ‘customisation’ (in Gronn’s terms). Like the UK, in New Zealand the switch to designer-leadership has been government inspired, rather than being driven by the profession.

- Second Similarity

Second, what Gronn calls the reliance of standards authorities on “data produced increasingly by international management consultancy firms” (2003, p. 22) is evident in New Zealand, as well as in Victoria and in England. Gronn identifies the Hay Group in particular as one such consultancy firm prominent in the shift to designer-leadership. According to Gronn this firm was used to produce “the NCSL’s Capability Dictionary (in England) and Victoria’s Excellence in School Leadership report” (2003, p. 22).
In this study both policy texts and elite interviews indicate the role played by the Hay Group research and competencies (2001) as the basis for New Zealand’s recent principal development policy initiatives. Both FTP and the soon to be introduced ‘Development Centre’ initiative are based on this report.

- **Third Similarity**

Third, what Clarke (2002a) calls ‘responsibility-expansion’ for teaching principals arising from educational reform is evident in New Zealand, as well as Queensland, where Clarke reports its incidence. Clarke suggests that “few other role-holders in school systems will have experienced such an expansion of responsibilities and such limited change to the framework of their role as the teaching principal in a small school” (2002, p. 2). With the shift in many systems to school-based management, small schools are “now subject to heightened expectations and growing demands from parents, administrators and politicians”. Furthermore, “small schools are required to cope with an enlarged curriculum and additional prescribed testing, often within a context of multi-age teaching and learning” (Clarke, 2002a, p. 2).

Teaching principals in this study indicate that system pressures such as these still create the greatest degree of strain in their work. New system requirements for school planning and reporting, to be introduced in 2003, were especially mentioned by respondents in this study as a strain factor.

- **Fourth Similarity**

Fourth, what Clarke (2002a) calls ‘emerging systemic awareness’ of the challenging nature of the teaching principals’ role is evident in New Zealand, as well as Queensland. According to Clarke, the result in Queensland has been two initiatives to assist teaching principals there with the demands of their current role: firstly, the Schools with Teaching Principals Project, implemented in 1998; and secondly, the establishment of a Graduate Certificate in Small Schools’ Leadership, started in 2001.

The 2001 formalisation of SASC, plus high level Ministry of Education involvement in the Massey University Future of Rural Schooling Forum,
which concluded this study, are evidence of similar emerging systemic awareness in the New Zealand setting.

- Fifth Similarity

Fifth, principals in this study appear influenced by aspects of ‘new managerialism’ in a similar way to that reported in English studies by Gewirtz (2002). In case studies of English heads in different ‘market’ situations, Gewirtz explores in depth what she terms the ‘discursive shifts’ in headship thinking in recent years. Her analysis shows how the new management discourse in education often emphasises strategies that aim to grow the school roll and thus improve the school’s market position. She concludes that the headteacher is the most important ‘carrier’ in the discursive reworking that her studies chart.

The single most surprising finding in this study to me personally was the extent to which the respondents still exhibit market-competitive behaviour. As is explained below, the policy environment for school principalship in New Zealand, which had consistently emphasised ‘new managerialism’ in the 1990s, changed decisively in 2000. Yet in 2002, the year in which the data in this study was collected, the successful principals studied in depth still exhibited markedly more competitive than co-operative behaviours and strategies.

(ii) Different Policy Findings

There are five major ways in which the policy findings in this study differ from the policy findings of similar studies in other Anglo policy settings or earlier New Zealand studies.

- First Difference

First, where recent English policy studies (e.g. Gewirtz, 2002; Thrupp, 2001) suggest New Labour policies there differ only in the margins from the policies of their Conservative predecessors, with continuing negative effect on teachers’ work, my analysis in Chapter 1 of this study tends to agree with
Thrupp when he asserts that in New Zealand “the Labour coalition has made a more concerted effort to pull back National’s market-led approach to education” (2001, p. 14) than has New Labour in England. Thrupp points in particular to the New Zealand 2000 changes to school enrolment schemes (to prevent oversubscribed schools ‘picking off’ the most desirable students), and the 2000 discontinuing of the bulk-funding of teachers’ salaries (with a subsequent redistribution of the bulk-funding grant into operational funding on the basis of SES decile), as two instances where New Zealand’s Labour coalition has implemented significant ‘pullback’. In the present study there is clear evidence that teaching principals feel more supported by and comfortable with the overall policy setting currently than they did in the late 1990s.

- Second Difference

Second, where recent principalship policy studies reported in Gronn (2003) suggest growing principal disenchantment with the job, my findings suggest that teaching principals’ dissatisfaction with their work is lessening from what it was in the late 1990s. Gronn reports data from the USA, the UK and Victoria suggesting that in principalship in these places the “demand for replacements (to principal positions) appears to be outstripping supply and there is an excess of vacancies over appointable candidates” (2003, p. 61). In explaining this pattern, Gronn points to the interrelationship between two phenomena: the erosion of traditional workplace career identities, and the intensification of leadership work. In the present study the questionnaire data clearly indicated lower job dissatisfaction amongst teaching principals in New Zealand than was reported in Livingstone (1999). My interview data suggested that the majority of successful teaching principals in New Zealand are likely to seek promotion to principal positions in larger schools in the medium term future (that is, the traditional career path for principalship still applies, or if this aspect of Whittall’s (2002) study is to be taken seriously beyond his region, has been restored).
Third Difference

Third, where the Hay Group research carried out on principalship in New Zealand in 2001 indicated a marked difference in capability between less and more experienced principals, my study suggests much less variation. While the Hay Group concluded that “first time principals are often overwhelmed by the nuts and bolts” of their work (2001, p. 47), and while more experienced principals “have had the time to determine and develop their leadership styles, their vision and how they can influence people around them” (2001, p. 48), in my responses from successful less and more experienced teaching principals there was little variation in work approach or strategy based on experience alone. These data would appear to support the conclusion that the First Time Principals training over 2002 has had the desired effect of getting the five novice principals studied in depth here in November and December of that year to adopt similarly mature personal and professional strategies as the more experienced principals.

Fourth Difference

Fourth, where the Hay Group (2001) research suggested a standard set of competencies which could be generically applied for success in any New Zealand principalship setting, my study has indicated that the success factors that apply differ somewhat according to the type of small school principalship setting. The Hay Group reported that in their discussions with principals “about the different types of schools, e.g. rural, urban, secondary, primary etc., the consensus was that these issues did not impact upon the competencies required by principals - the thinking of the interviewees here reflecting Hay Group methodology” (2001, p. 13). My study has found that the requirements for ‘smaller’ small school principalship in particular differ significantly in a number of respects from principalship in other settings. As indicated above in the discussion of the response to Research Question 4, the two most significant requirements that are special to ‘smaller’ small school principalship relate to effectiveness in classroom management in a multi-level teaching situation, and the ability to lead in a direct and upfront way. My findings here largely mirror those reported by Clarke (2002a and b) in Queensland.
Fifth, where Clarke (2002a, 2002b) reports between-school collaboration arising from clustering, my data fails to register any significant sign of this. Clarke indicates that as a part of the Schools with Teaching Principals Project, three models for collaborative approaches to small school management were trialled. The results of the trial indicated that all models “enabled small schools to concentrate more effectively on teaching and learning and facilitated the professional growth of teaching principals…these outcomes serve to reinforce…conclusions about the effectiveness of collaborative arrangements amongst small primary schools” (2002b, p. 4). As indicated above in the discussion of the response to Research Question 4, my data suggest that under the present policy setting in New Zealand, while principals of strong growth schools are willing to co-operate with their weaker neighbours for temporary benefit, principals of weak growth schools typically compete vigorously with their weaker neighbours.
3. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

So far the discussion of results has dealt separately with the principalship and the policy data sets gathered as part of this study. However the research problem asks about the appropriate relationship between principalship and policy in small New Zealand primary schools. To conclude the study this issue of the appropriateness of the relationship between principalship and policy for small New Zealand primary schools will now be addressed. There are three parts to this final section of the chapter: conclusions about policy/practice relationships derived from the hypotheses, limitations to the study and implications of the study.

a) Conclusions about Policy/Practice Relationships Derived from the Hypotheses

The conclusions about the policy/practice relationship in this study are drawn in part from a revision of earlier hypotheses and in part from deductions derived from these revisions. This part of the chapter outlines these two matters.

(i) Revision of Hypotheses

In Chapter 2, the following hypotheses were formulated to provide a basis for this part of the study, where conclusions about the relationship between policy and practice are to be drawn.

- Hypothesis One: Personal Strategies. Novice teaching principals are likely to display less mature personal work strategies than experienced teaching principals. If so, appropriate adjustments will need to be made to principalship support arrangements.
- Hypothesis Two: Professional Strategies. Successful teaching principals are likely to display more pedagogic than entrepreneurial thinking. If not, appropriate adjustments will need to be made to principalship support arrangements.
- Hypothesis Three: External Strategies. Successful teaching principals are likely to display more democratic than market approaches to community accountability. If not, appropriate adjustments will need to be made to principalship support arrangements.
Regarding Hypothesis One (Personal Strategies)

Detailed analysis in this study of the work strategies and associated thinking of seven first or second year teaching principals, compared to those of nine teaching principals with three or more years experience, detected no significant differences in either strategies or thinking resulting from greater or lesser experience alone. This result suggests that the impact of FTP has been positive overall in ‘fast tracking’ the development of personal and professional strategies amongst beginning principals. By the end of their first year as a principal, the strategies of the First Year principals in this study were of similar maturity to the strategies of the more experienced principals.

However, other data in the study has indicated ways in which FTP might be strengthened in the future. On the basis of the data in this study indicating that the most significant differences within teaching principals arose from the rather different demands of the role in ‘smaller’ and ‘larger’ small schools, and that first year ‘smaller’ small school principals felt unprepared for the teaching aspects of their role, Hypothesis One might be rewritten as follows:

- Revised Hypothesis One: Personal and Professional Strategies. Successful teaching principals of ‘smaller’ small schools display somewhat different personal and professional strategies to successful ‘larger’ small school principals. Because of this, adjustment to FTP is recommended.

Regarding Hypotheses Two and Three (Professional and External Strategies)

Detailed analysis in this study of the work strategies and associated professional thinking of the sixteen successful principals suggested that:

(i) The vast majority (14 of the 16) demonstrated a more democratic than a market approach to community accountability.
(ii) About half (9) demonstrated a more strongly pedagogic orientation, but almost half (7) demonstrated a more entrepreneurial orientation.

(iii) Amongst those demonstrating an entrepreneurial orientation, the market position of the school appeared to be the strongest single consideration.

(iv) Career considerations were also a factor in the entrepreneurial orientation of some principals.

(v) In terms of overall career motivation, the group divided relatively evenly, with seven being more strongly ‘place’ oriented, and six being more strongly ‘career’ oriented.

On the basis of these data patterns, Hypotheses Two and Three might be revised as follows:

- **Revised Hypothesis Two: Professional and Career Strategies.** Successful small school principals currently display a range of professional and career motivations. This variation needs to be borne in mind in future adjustments to New Zealand’s principal development initiatives.

- **Revised Hypothesis Three: External Strategies.** Successful small school principals currently display a range of attitudes to neighbouring schools and/or the educational market. Reducing this range by promoting greater co-operation should be the aim of any review of New Zealand’s small school support policy.

The rest of this thesis will attempt to explain the meaning, deductions associated with, and implications arising from these revisions to the hypotheses. The data sets associated with each of these patterns are laid out in Table 7.3 and Figures 7.1-7.2. These data sets help explain the meaning of each of the revisions.
Table 7.3

Table 7.3 brings together earlier results about personal and professional strategies into a single overview comparing the results for ‘smaller’ small school principals and ‘larger’ small school principals. The overview indicates the similarity in general strategies, but the difference in strategy-detail in the two school-size settings. Table 7.3 provides the data set that supports the revision of Hypothesis One outlined above.

Figure 7.1

Figure 7.1 demonstrates how the sixteen principals can be subdivided according to their professional outlook and motivational orientation. In terms of professional outlook the group divides fairly evenly into those with a ‘more pedagogic’ and those with a ‘more entrepreneurial’ outlook. In terms of motivational orientation there is also a relatively even split, with about half being more ‘career oriented’ and the other half being more ‘location oriented’. Figure 7.1 provides the data set that supports the revision of Hypothesis Two above.

Figure 7.2

Figure 7.2 draws together data on the market position of each principal’s school and her/his neighbouring school strategy. This overview shows that while there are a similar number of ‘stronger’ and ‘weaker’ schools in terms of market position, there is a greater number of ‘more competitive’ than ‘more co-operative’ neighbouring school strategies reported amongst the principals studied. Figure 7.2 provides the data set that supports the revision of Hypothesis Three above.

As is explained below, there are a number of support policy conclusions and implications arising from these revisions to the hypotheses, which in effect make up my considered response to the stipulated research problem of the study.

The major policy conclusions are illustrated graphically in Figures 7.3-7.5.
Table 7.3 Variation in Personal–Professional Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Strategies</th>
<th>Professional Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Smaller’ Small School Principals</td>
<td>‘Larger’ Small School Principals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Time Chunking  
- to protect class time | 1. Time Chunking  
- to make self available to support other staff/classes |
| 2. Delegation  
- to office administrator | 2. Delegation  
- to DP/AP and curriculum leaders |
| 1. Teamwork  
- with principal release | 2. Instructional Leadership  
- largely direct, plus some shared |
| 2. Instructional Leadership  
- largely shared, with some indirect |
Figure 7.1 Variations in Professional-Career Strategies
Figure 7.2. Variations in External Strategies
In ‘Larger’ Small Primary Schools:

Classroom Role \[\rightarrow\] Role Distinctiveness
Simple \[\downarrow\] Lower

Need for External Support \[\leftarrow\] Internal Support
Lower \[\rightarrow\] Higher

In ‘Smaller’ Small Primary Schools:

Classroom Role \[\rightarrow\] Role Distinctiveness
Complex \[\downarrow\] Higher

Need for External Support \[\leftarrow\] Internal Support
Higher \[\rightarrow\] Lower

Figure 7.3 Principalship Role and Support Need
Figure 7.4 Professional-Career Belief/Value Sets
Internal Community Building

Sergiovanni (1992) has suggested that for internal community-building in schools, principals need to know how to apply the appropriate community-building skills-set:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2. Building: | Raising expectations.  
| 4. Banking: | Empowering others to lead.  

External Community Building

It might be that in small New Zealand primary school principalship a similar community-building skills-set could apply in external relationships, based on the four ‘C’s, rather than the four ‘B’s:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Colleagueship: | Developing professional linkages.  
| 2. Co-operation: | Short term structural linkage.  
| 4. Consolidation: | Bringing together into a single unit.  

Figure 7.5 Internal and External Community-Building Strategies
(ii) Conclusions Derived From Revisions of Hypotheses

When the above revised hypotheses (grounded in the findings of this study) are considered, along with the description of current policy provisions (and in particular their strengths and weaknesses) provided in earlier sections of the study, a number of policy conclusions can be derived.

- Figure 7.3

Figure 7.3 suggests the interrelationship between principalship role and support need indicated by this study. Earlier analysis of current principal development policy in this study indicates a present emphasis on initial first time principal training based on a single set of generic competencies for new principals, no matter what their principalship setting. Table 7.3, supported by other data in this study on the degree of variation in current teaching principalship strain, indicates that to improve small school principal support in future there may be a need to recognise a number of distinctive needs within small school principalship. In particular, new ‘smaller’ small school principals typically face a more demanding classroom situation (longer in the classroom, with the additional demands created by the multi-level setting) with less within-school support available (usually no other senior staff, smaller amounts of administrative support). This creates additional role distinctiveness between the ‘teaching’ and the ‘school manager’ roles within principalship in smaller small schools than in larger small schools. As Handy (1985) indicates, whenever an individual is role-switching repeatedly, the greater the degree of role-differentiation, the greater the degree of role-strain. The policy implication here is that more may now be needed by way of special support for ‘smaller’ small school principals, either through distinctive provisions within FTP, or new supports channelled through the universities (as is the case in Queensland).

Figure 7.3 suggests that such external support will need to be targeted at the distinctive classroom role of ‘smaller’ small school principals in particular (hence the stronger lines in the bottom half of the diagram to the top half). The
reason for this is because the major factor creating greater role-distinctiveness in smaller small school principalship than in larger small school principalship is the greater degree of complexity associated with the smaller school principal’s classroom teaching role.

- Figure 7.4

Figure 7.4 summarises the major variations within principals’ beliefs and values indicated by the principalship data in this study. Data reported in earlier policy chapters of this study (the interviews with Robertson, Stewart and Lovegrove) indicated the discomfort felt by experienced principals and principal educators about the way the Hay Group (2001) research findings had been converted into a hierarchical template of ‘competencies’, which the New Zealand Ministry of Education then applied across all its principal development initiatives. Like Gronn (2003), these professional educators believe that such competencies are based on international organisational thinking, rather than capturing local work reality, when “the real question in customising the work for practitioners is: what does it actually take to get the job done?” in particular settings (Gronn, 2003, p. 22). To achieve the latter, Gronn argues that we will need in future to rely on “evidence informed policy and practice” as the basis of our customisation efforts, if these efforts are to be based on more than “intercultural borrowing and global knowledge diffusion” (2003, pp. 23-25).

Figure 7.4 is my attempt to summarise the conclusions that can be drawn from this study about the most significant variations in present principalship thinking and practice, that might usefully inform future support policy for principals in New Zealand. Chapter 1 has pointed out how the small school setting is actually the dominant single setting for principalship practice (numerically) in New Zealand. Within this setting, the data in Figure 7.1 suggest that approximately equal numbers of principals fall in each quadrant of this matrix. I propose that as these quadrants refer to variation in basic beliefs and values, they are important as a consideration in any future New Zealand policy requiring greater principal co-operation with one another, or understanding of current principal motivational patterns. In particular, the
figure lays out the key belief/value variations that might need to be considered in drawing up something like a network of mentor partnerships between principals. Improved career planning and career-structuring might also be derived from this framework. I would also venture to suggest that if their validity were reported on a wider scale in subsequent studies, the principalship variations in Figure 7.4 might be a more reliable basis for planning future principal development initiatives in New Zealand, such as the Development Centre proposal, than is the current reliance on the Hay Group (2001) hierarchy of generic competencies.

- Figure 7.5

The policy text analysis of current small school support policy in New Zealand in Chapter 6 indicated that it was focused on getting small schools to co-operate (SASC) and consolidate (EDI). In Queensland Clarke (2002a, 2002b) has shown how policy there is encouraging staff in neighbouring small schools to begin working together in professional projects as colleagues, before attempting more serious collaboration.

Putting these two sets of ideas together, it is possible to envisage an optimal external community-building strategy for small New Zealand primary schools that starts with colleagueship and co-operation and then goes on to collaboration and possible consolidation.

Figure 7.5 sets out such a hierarchy and shows how it compares with Sergiovanni’s well known 1992 internal community-building strategy.

Data in Chapter 6 analysing current small school principals’ external strategies would suggest that in the future, unless there is some sort of external community-building strategy such as this added to the facilitation currently available through EDI, small school rationalisation in New Zealand is always likely to be a problematic process.
b) Limitations of the Study

In reading both the review of the results and the conclusions above, the following limitations to the study need to be borne in mind.

(i) The Nature of the Questionnaire Sample

Though the title of the study refers to principalship ‘in small New Zealand primary schools’, the questionnaire was administered to teaching principals in only one region of New Zealand: the Central Districts. Therefore the results from the questionnaire apply only to small school principalship in this district, not to the country as a whole.

(ii) The Nature of the Focus Group Structure

The focus group structure was initially designed to try to control for the variable of ‘distance’, as a proxy for degree of rurality, in responses - that is, by gathering separate sets of data from ‘In’, ‘Near’, ‘Mid-Distant’, and ‘Far’ groups it was hoped to differentiate between the variables of ‘size alone’ and ‘size plus distance’ in responses. However in practice this control was confounded because each group also tended to exhibit between-group variation in other categories that the literature suggests may create variation in responses. For example, each group’s average length of experience in principalship tended to reduce as distance of location from the centre increased. Thus the resulting variation from group to group in this study should not be read as resulting from distance alone.

(iii) The Nature of the Selection of Individual Interviewees

In this study five of the principals studied in depth were ‘novice’ principals who had participated in First Time Principals training. Two others were in their second year of principalship, with the other nine all having been principal for longer than three years when they were interviewed for the study. The analysis above has compared the maturity of the personal and professional strategies that the novices displayed with those of the other more experienced principals, in order to draw some conclusions about the possible impact of
FTP. The Hay Group (2001) research, carried out in the year before FTP was introduced, suggested that there was a significant difference in the level of maturity of the strategies of new and more experienced principals.

The finding in this study, that there was little difference in the level of maturity of the strategies based on experience alone, can be read as an endorsement for the positive impact of the FTP programme. However, this conclusion is based on a very narrow sample in a possibly atypical region, with the sample being skewed from the start because of the requirement that the novices be ‘successful’ to be included in the study. Caution is therefore needed in drawing any conclusion about the overall impact of FTP on the basis of this study, which might be regarded as indicative of possible FTP impact only.

(iv) The Overall Status of the Principalship Data

The major caution that was given in Chapter 4 about the status of the principalship data overall should also be repeated here. All the principalship data in this study have been gathered from principal self-report - from either questionnaires, or individual interview and focus group discussions. The results reported here are therefore results of what principals say they do, rather than what they actually do. Further research would be necessary, involving both observation of practice and reports from other sources than the principal alone, before it could be reasonably concluded that the results accurately reflect actual principal behaviour.

(v) The Limited Consideration of Future Policy Options

The principalship data reported in this study on work strain and overload has indicated that the demand to teach all curriculum areas at multiple levels poses the single most significant problem in New Zealand teaching principalship currently, especially in ‘smaller’ small schools. These are also the schools in which the Ministry of Education’s projected demographic data suggests rolls will fall most significantly in the next ten years (Coppen, 2002).

As was indicated in Chapter 3, one policy option that at first glance might be considered appropriate in these circumstances is that all schools under a
particular roll size be merged, as happened in Victoria, Australia, in the mid 1990s. However, as was also indicated in Chapter 3, the New Zealand legal framework for schooling predetermines a need for close consultation with local communities before any merger decision can be implemented. Hence the policy option of forced mergers is less viable in New Zealand than in other jurisdictions. Instead, in recommending policy for the future, this study has focussed on ways in which the sense of local community might be extended beyond that of a single school’s catchment, as a precondition for possible voluntary consolidation at a later stage.

c) Implications

As has already been foreshadowed above, the conclusions reached in this study have implications for future regional support for small school principalship (Massey University), future national support for small schools and small school principals (the Ministry of Education), and further research (the New Zealand research community).

(i) Implications for Massey University

The results in this study highlight the significance of multi-level teaching experience and classroom management as factors contributing to success as a teaching principal, especially in ‘smaller’ small schools. At present Massey University does little to prepare its undergraduate teacher-trainees or the aspirants for principalship in such schools in its region in these skills (Massey University, 2003).

The implication clearly is that if it is to take its responsibility to provide appropriate support to the network of schools in its region seriously, Massey University will need to do more to provide future support in these areas.

(ii) Implications for the Ministry of Education

The principalship results in this study indicate that educational leadership in ‘smaller’ small schools is somewhat different to educational leadership in ‘larger’ small schools. In its future monitoring of the impact of FTP training
the Ministry of Education might find it fruitful to devote part of its review to the implications for future training that arise from this finding.

The policy results in this study indicate less co-operative and more competitive behaviour from principals than the current small school support policy assumes. If the Ministry of Education is serious about encouraging co-operation and collaboration across the schooling network, then it will need to revisit its policy details here, in particular by looking to strengthen the incentives available for between-school and between-principal co-operation.

The grounded theory arising from this study about external community-building strategies (the bottom half of Figure 7.5) might provide a starting point for planning any policy revision.

(iii) Implications for Further Research

The grounded theory arising from this study about professional and career strategies (Figure 7.4) indicates that career motivation and professional outlook may be two significant dimensions where marked variation exists in current principal beliefs and values, which might need to be accounted for in planning future principal development in New Zealand. However as has been explained in the previous section on the limitations of the study, this conclusion has been drawn from a very narrow base of data on principalship practice. Further research is therefore needed in both other school settings and using a larger number of principals before this tentative conclusion might be regarded as valid for the wider body of New Zealand school principals.
Results of Rural Forum, 5-6 September 2003

The rural forum, held from 5 pm on Friday 5th September to 4.30 pm on Saturday 6th September, attracted over 150 participants. About a third of the participants were board of trustees members, another third were small school principals and the final third were educational officials (from the Ministry of Education, Massey University or teacher and community organisations).

After being briefed on current Ministry of Education policy, recent research findings and a variety of current inter-school initiatives, the forum discussed its suggestions for ways forward in fifteen facilitated small groups. The ten recommendations arising from the forum discussions were as follows.

1. There is a need for much greater clarity in communication to local communities about:
   - Ministry of Education policy and its applications,
   - Current and future demographic trends, and
   - Practical options available

2. There is a need to adopt a more organic approach to community and community-building. Schools need to work at building relationships *before* ‘trouble’ (that is, before being approached by the Ministry of Education to engage in a Network Review).

3. Both better guidelines and/or better management of the process of review is required from the Ministry of Education.

4. In building relationships with neighbours, schools should generally look first for curriculum linkages.

5. There should be better financial incentives for inter-school collaboration.

6. Massey University College of Education should be more involved in inter-school facilitation and should upgrade the training it provides in managing multi-level teaching in its primary pre-service training programme.

7. There should be better research of the various processes (co-operation, collaboration, consolidation between schools). The learning needs to be passed on.
8. There needs to be better clarity at the start of the review process about what is non-negotiable.

9. At a national level, there is a need to trial some of the key options (federated governance and/or management).

10. The big idea that both the Ministry of Education and the College of Education needs to communicate is that ‘if you don’t manage change, change will manage you’.
References


Deakin University Office of Research and Graduate Studies (2002). *Higher degrees by research administrative guide*. Geelong: Deakin University Faculty of Education.


Southworth, G. (1999b). *A teacher training agency report into successful heads of small primary schools*. Reading: University of Reading School of Education.


