



NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL  
OF THE POST PRIMARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

## SO YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE?

### What's next?

#### **Advice to Principals in Assisting Their Board to Find the Next Principal**

The material which follows suggests ways in which a principal who is resigning or retiring can assist his/her Board in the process of finding a replacement. Many Boards, understandably, view this prospect as daunting. It will not be something with which they are familiar, and generally, unless a principal has had a fairly short tenure, there will be little or no institutional memory within the Board which can be drawn on.

Boards need to be reassured, however, that while the process is lengthy and demanding, it is not difficult, and it provides an opportunity for a Board to learn a great deal about the school and community it serves. So eager anticipation, rather than fear or concern, should be in the Board's mind as it approaches this important task. Hopefully you, as the current principal, will be able to focus on the positive aspects of what they are about to undertake. Further, this material could be the stimulus to inform both the Board Chair and the principal as they discuss how to lead the rest of the Board in their task of finding a new Principal.

This material has been prepared by the NZ Secondary Principals' Council of PPTA. It is not exhaustive, but is practical and focuses on some of the key tasks and issues to be dealt with in this process. It has been written, in the main, by an ex-principal who has advised a dozen or so schools while they have conducted this rather lengthy work. It is the writer's view that, having negotiated the process, Boards are not only satisfied and gratified with the results of their labours but they have learned a great deal as well – learning which stands them in good stead in their governance role.

**This material has been prepared for the NZ Secondary Principals' Council of PPTA. It is designed to be downloaded from the website so that any principal has material to share with the board, or to use as the basis of discussion as the board turns its mind to appointing the new principal.**

## THE APPOINTMENT OF A PRINCIPAL – SUMMARY

### Page

Step 1 :	Deal with the resignation; appoint an adviser and a 'secretary'	3
Step 2 :	Construct a time-line	6
Step 3 :	Advertise the position	8
Step 4 :	Develop an information pack	10
Step 5 :	Draft letters required during the process	14
Step 6 :	Make plans for the interviews	15
Step 7 :	Receive applications	17
Step 8 :	Prepare a draft contract for the new principal	18
Step 9 :	Conduct a short-listing meeting	19
Step 10 :	Actions prior to interviews	20
Step 11 :	Interviews and appointment	21
Step 12 :	Announcement of the appointment	23
Step 13 :	Welcoming the new Principal	23

<b>Step 1 : Deal with the resignation; appoint an adviser and a 'secretary'</b>
---

- The Board of Trustees needs to meet to:
  - accept the resignation of the current principal;
  - consider the process ahead;
  - appoint an adviser to assist the Board professionally;
  - appoint a 'secretary' to see that the process proceeds smoothly.

### **The first meeting**

- It is advisable for the Board to meet as soon as is practicable to deal with the matters listed above. While all these things could be handled in a regular Board meeting, there is much sense in convening a meeting which has no other matters on the agenda. No part of this process, from beginning to end, should be rushed, and a Board is wise to start as it intends to continue. Further, right from the start, the whole Board can be included and involved.
- It also allows for the Board to begin to act in this matter as a team. This is not a time for any individual to push a barrow. The next 15 or 20 weeks will require collegiality and mutual support in order that tasks large or small may be shared, proper and necessary consultation may occur, and a variety of views may be considered.

### **Principal not involved**

- Until the current principal leaves office, he/she remains the chief adviser to the Board, and there will be plenty of educational, curriculum, property, personnel and financial concerns on which the Board will want good advice. However, it is very wise for the principal to consciously step aside from all matters related to the appointment of the new principal. The principal should, of course, respond to any questions or queries put by the Board, but in relation to this process, it should be the Board who initiates discussion with the principal, rather than the reverse. Principals leaving a school have all had to come to understand, however painful it might be, that their time is coming to a close, and the Board must act as it sees fit. The best advice is to take no part, to be absent from all meetings which deal with the appointment, and to give the Board the freedom it needs, especially if it wants to move in new directions.
- There is another reason for a principal staying clear of this process. It allows and in fact demands that the Board takes full responsibility for the process and the appointment, and keeps the resigning/retiring principal from any responsibility should the appointee not come up to expectations.
- These are hard decisions for a person who has been at the centre of everything in a school, perhaps for many years. But it needs to be recognised that in spite of our glorious personalities, wondrous work ethic and sanctified perspicacity, within a short time we will be gone for good, and – wonders of wonders – the school will survive! So it cannot be said too strongly: do not get involved. It is simply not worth it.

### **Appoint an adviser**

- It is highly desirable for the Board to appoint an adviser to assist it. Most Boards turn to a current or retired principal, and it is very helpful for the adviser to be involved right at the outset.
- Why a current or retired principal?
  - he/she is an educational expert;
  - he/she has been through the process;
  - he/she has contacts within the educational world;
  - he/she can deliver objective, dispassionate, educational advice because of being removed from the school and not caught up in its day to day work.
- As a rough rule of thumb, and depending on the tasks an adviser is asked to handle, the time an adviser will spend on assisting a Board will be between 25 and 50 hours. Depending on the agreed hourly rate an adviser charges, the cost of this service to the Board would be between \$2,000 and \$5,000.

### **Personnel Consultants**

- Some Boards, as an alternative to an adviser, employ personnel consultants to take charge of virtually the whole process, and to present the Board, in due course, with a list of names for interview. This saves Board members a considerable amount of time and effort, but has serious down-sides:
  - Personnel consultants are expensive. Most charge a fee calculated at between 18% and 21% of the appointee's salary. So for working to appoint a U10 grade principal (salary \$107,571) the fee will range between \$19,400 and \$22,600.
  - While some personnel consultants have a little expertise in education, very few specialise in secondary school principal appointments. Often, as senior principals will testify, they seek advice from current or former principals.
  - By handing over most aspects of the process to consultants, Board members disqualify themselves from gaining the insights and information about their school that come from their own involvement.
  - There is no guarantee that at the end of the day a consulting firm will come up with a better appointee than a Board plus adviser would.

### **Appoint a 'secretary'**

- Clearly the 'secretary' should be capable, discreet, able to maintain total confidentiality, and have the Board's confidence and trust. Often the current principal's secretary/ personal assistant is asked to take this role, for in that position a high degree of trust and confidentiality is already required. It may be both fair and reasonable for the Board to enter into a special contract with the secretary if he/she is already the principal's secretary, in view of the extra hours and meetings he/she will find it necessary to work.

## Confidentiality

- The question of confidentiality cannot be too highly stressed, for the “education grapevine” in New Zealand is very active. It is very important, for example, that an applicant who is already the principal of another school has his/her application kept confidential because of what might be read into the situation were it to become known in his/her current school. Not only the ‘secretary’ but the entire board (elected, co-opted, staff and student representatives) must keep confidentiality. There is little worse for a Board or a school in this situation than gaining a “leaking” reputation.
- So all meetings of the Board related to this process should be held ‘in committee’; careful filing of material should be undertaken; material obtained should not be copied and distributed where it could be seen by people outside the Board; and any copies which are made should be numbered, kept track of, and checked off on return.

## **Step 2 : Construct a timeline**

- The process of making the appointment of a principal can take up to 15 or 20 weeks, so it is clearly desirable that everyone on the Board of Trustees understands what and when various activities take place. So a timeline is required – from advertising the job, appointing an acting principal (if that is necessary), through to welcoming the newly appointed principal to the school and community.

### **Who handles the process?**

- In developing a timeline, the Board will have to determine who will handle the process of appointment:
  - Some Boards elect a sub-committee to act on behalf of the Board.
  - Other Boards (probably a majority) prefer to involve all their members as a team, so that everyone has access, more or less, to relevant information.
- Whatever is decided, it is vital to know who is leading the process and taking responsibility to see that deadlines on the timeline are met. Usually this person is the Board Chair who, by virtue of his/her office, already has the confidence of the rest of the Board.

### **Take your time**

- It is important that at no stage should the Board feel rushed. Good decisions are not made under undue pressure. It is not necessary, for example, to hurry things along so that the new appointee takes office at the beginning of a term (though that may be a tidy way of handling matters). In this matter good, sensible decision-making is more important than a date on a calendar which is arbitrary, even if it means a start for the new principal two or three weeks into a term.
- At this point, Board members may wish to indicate how they could assist with the particular tasks required during the process (because of experience or expertise they possess).

### **Steps ahead**

- The timeline can be constructed around the remaining 11 steps outlined in this material.

### **Budget required**

- It is probably also an appropriate time to consider a budget to cover the expenses associated with the process. Allowance should be made for the following:
  - the cost of an adviser;
  - the cost of a 'secretary';
  - advertising costs;

- printing costs (information packs in particular);
  - travel and accommodation costs for applicants to be interviewed, and for any travel on behalf of the Board to gather information;
  - toll call costs;
  - catering costs;
  - hireage of a neutral venue for interviews (if the Board deems it necessary or better to use a facility other than the school for interviews).
- As a rule of thumb, between 5% and 10% of the principal's salary is a reasonable amount to be budgeted for. For the U10 school mentioned above, that would give a budget amount of between \$5,000 and \$10,000.
  - As an aside, Boards would be well advised to 'salt away' about \$1,000 per year into such a budget line.

### **Step 3 : Advertise the position**

#### **Who is the target?**

- Boards naturally want to cast as wide a net as possible, and, with commendable loyalty, believe that their school will be very attractive to many. Advertising internationally may even be considered. While a Board may take any number of choices, the current principal may want to caution against an expensive and over-enthusiastic approach towards advertising.
  - The best appointee to head a New Zealand school is likely to be a New Zealander. Overseas appointees will inevitably require time (perhaps 12 to 24 months) to come to terms with our history, both past and present; the nuances of New Zealand and family life; the curriculum; the multicultural nature of New Zealand and the place of Maori as a Treaty partner; and particularly with schooling issues such as the NCEA.
  - By no means all teachers or senior management staff aspire to be principals. A recent survey suggests less than 8% of teachers are interested in pursuing principalships. It is perceived as a demanding and difficult job.
  - Recent experience suggests that in the metropolitan cities of New Zealand, 10 applications will be a good field and 20 extraordinary. Fields are sometimes larger for provincial and rural schools.
- So the main aim of an advertisement is to attract competent senior managers already in a New Zealand school.

#### **Where to advertise?**

- The prime place is in the Education Gazette. All schools in New Zealand receive free copies and most teachers read it. Further, the Board is obliged to advertise nationally. The Education Gazette also posts vacancies on the world-wide web and many possible applicants are well aware of this. Most principals' positions appear to attract international applicants via this facility. And lastly, advertisements in the Education Gazette are free. They are limited to 55 words.
- Boards may also choose to place in the Education Gazette an extended advertisement, similar to that which might be placed in a newspaper, but there is a cost for this service.
- Newspapers are another obvious place to advertise. In the New Zealand of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, placing an advertisement in any or all of the daily papers of the five largest cities, and the Sunday papers, will give very extensive coverage.

### **The object of advertising**

- Board spending on advertising is not designed simply to gain a large (20-50) field, but attract 5 to 10 very good to excellent teachers to apply so that the Board has the opportunity to select a strong shortlist. Such a shortlist will give the Board a genuine choice in making an appointment. Having said that, a Board needs only to attract one outstanding applicant!

### **The advertisement**

- The advertisement should be written in clear, readable language. Gimmicks and florid language do not look professional. The advertisement should contain the position; the location of the school; a brief description of the school (size, staffing, strengths); who to contact for an application kit; email, phone fax and school website information; where to send applications; and the closing date for applications.
- The advertisement does not need to be lengthy, for detailed information about the school will be included in the information pack.

## **Step 4 : Develop an information pack**

### **What should it contain?**

- The information pack is of vital importance. What it contains and how it is presented say much about both the Board and the school. It should be as professional as possible in its appearance and contents.
- It should contain:
  - a covering letter
  - an application form
  - a job description
  - a personal specification
  - a map/photos of the school
  - referee report forms (x 3)
  - the school's staffing profile
  - the latest school prospectus
  - the school's strategic plan and latest annual report
  - a summary of the latest ERO report
  - a brief report on the current and future shape of the school
  - information about the school's catchment and the community in which it is set.
- Some of the above is self-explanatory and needs little further comment. There are some key elements of an information pack which require careful thought.

### **The application form**

- A person applying for a principal's position in a New Zealand secondary school is not only hoping to be appointed to the most senior position in the school, but will also occupy an important position of moral authority in the school's and local community which requires integrity, honesty, and trust. It is therefore legitimate for a Board, in considering applicants, to want to know as much as possible about those who have put themselves forward for consideration. The application form is one of the vehicles whereby much that a Board ought to know can be obtained at first hand.
- The application form will provide some basic information such as:
  - Personal information (full name, date of birth\*, marital status\*, address, full contact details).  
\* optional by law
  - Qualifications and training (degrees, diplomas, certificates, and when and where they were obtained. Those to be short-listed later might be required to offer proof of authenticity of the qualifications listed.)
  - Other relevant experience (jobs outside teaching, professional development).
  - Details of the present position of the applicant.
  - Management experience beyond HOD level.

- HOD experience.
  - Dean/pastoral care experience.
  - A summary of work history (starting from the most recent).
  - Background experience in school finance, property, information and communication technology.
  - Cultural and/or sporting experience/interests and hobbies.
  - Involvement with community organisations.
- A vital question to be asked relates to the key components of the applicants educational philosophy. An applicant ought to be able to put into words what they believe about life, and what therefore they believe about education; and how that belief can be translated into their actions within a school. Such a question ought to give the Board some understanding of “what makes an applicant tick”.
  - There are administrative matters to be addressed:
    - Is the applicant a New Zealand citizen? If not, does he/she have permanent residency? Or a current work permit?
    - What is the applicant’s professional status (NZ Teachers Council status and registration number; Ministry of Education number?)
    - The names, positions, addresses, telephone numbers and relationship to the applicant of the referees chosen by him/her.
  - A privacy statement is required and must be signed by the applicant containing declarations regarding:
    - Privacy, and authorising the Board to collect such information as necessary to assess the applicant’s suitability for employment, and giving the Board permission to consult others (e.g. present employer, past employers, the Teacher Registration Board, referees) as the Board deems appropriate.
    - Convictions against the law.
    - Medical and/or health status (e.g. the applicant has no illness or disability which might affect his/her ability to carry out the duties of the position).
    - Employment (an affirmation regarding never having been dismissed from an employment position in the education sector).
    - A signed confirmation that the declarations made are true and that the information given in the application form is correct.

### **A person specification**

- This is generally a brief statement of the attributes and skills the Board believes are required for the position. Prior to drawing up this document, the Board could:
  - meet to discuss what it believes are the attributes and skills required;
  - take advice or ask for comment from other groups or individuals such as staff, students or parents.

This is a good opportunity for school/community consultation and involvement in the appointment process. All that is required is for the Board to ask such groups the question:

*“What skills or abilities do you believe are necessary for a principal to possess?”*  
Then give these groups a clear opportunity to respond. Such an opportunity may provide the Board with significant information. It also negates the charge that *“the Board didn’t consult anyone in making the appointment”*.

- Regardless of all the advice offered, however, the Board is the final authority in determining what goes into the person specification.

### **The job description**

- This also should be a brief statement outlining the key functions of the position, such as:
  - relationship to the Board; reporting to and accountable to the Board;
  - implementing Board policies;
  - being the chief adviser to the Board;
  - the required role in strategic planning;
  - leading the school and managing it day to day;
  - managing the recruitment, performance and professional development of the staff;
  - promoting the school;
  - reporting on student achievement, curriculum development, administration and management issues;
  - being responsible, if appropriate, for specialist areas within school life (school hostel, school farm, overseas student recruitment, for example).

### **Referees’ reports**

- Generally Boards ask applicants to ask up to three people (of the applicant’s choosing) to provide confidential “referees’ reports” direct to the Board (and not via the applicant).
- Referees’ reports are important to the Board because, if responded to honestly and professionally, they will provide information from people who have known or worked with the applicant, perhaps for an extended period.

- Referees' reports typically ask for information relating to the applicants:
  - personal qualities;
  - interpersonal skills;
  - staff management;
  - student management;
  - educational leadership;.,
  - co-curricular and community activity;
  - administrative skills;
  - perceived strengths and weaknesses.
- Referees are also often asked to give a weighted view on areas such as professional conduct, handling crises, dealing with multicultural issues, flexibility, meeting deadlines, energy, and the like.
- Referees can also be asked to make a recommendation for appointment ('very highly recommended' to 'not recommended').
- A carefully worded referee's report can provide a Board with very valuable information and opinion, though it must always be borne in mind that the applicant has been able to choose his/her own referees. Boards would be well advised to treat carefully a report which focuses only on strengths and positives, but has no negatives or concerns. While there are certainly outstanding applicants within the teaching profession, most candidates are capable of improvement, have skills to polish up, and are, in other words, rather human!

<b>Step 5 : Prepare the letters required during the process</b>
---

### **Acknowledgement of the receipt of applications**

- This letter is very important. Applicants have invested a great deal in what they have submitted, and will be anxious to know that what they have spent so much time in thinking about and preparing has arrived at its destination. A brief letter of acknowledgement is both businesslike and reassuring.

### **Covering letter for the information pack**

- This letter should contain:
  - a list of what is in the pack;
  - the deadline for applications to be received;
  - the deadline for referees' reports to be received;
  - the person and the address to which the application should be sent;
  - the anticipated date for short-listing;
  - the anticipated date for interviewing those who are short-listed;
  - the name(s) of those to contact for further information.

### **Acknowledgement of the receipt of referees' reports**

- As for applications, referees spend a good deal of time writing the reports. They need to be thanked and acknowledged.

### **Letters to applicants**

- To those who have been short-listed, a letter confirming the telephone call made by the Board Chair, and giving in writing details regarding the time and place for interviews, and information, if required, regarding travel and accommodation.
- To those who have not been short-listed, a letter stating that, and thanking them for their application and their interest in the school.

### **Letters at the conclusion of the process**

- A letter to those short-listed and interviewed but not appointed, confirming the telephone call they will have received from the Board Chair.
- For the appointee, a letter offering the position (see Step 10).
- Some Boards send letters to all applicants and all referees whose reports have been received informing them of the name and a little of the background of the person appointed. Such a letter is a courtesy, rather than a requirement.

## **Step 6 : Make plans for the interviews**

### **Where to hold interviews**

- A date needs to be set for interviews, with a back-up day in case of candidate sickness or travel foul-ups (fog at Auckland's airport – again!).
- In the past, almost without exception, interviews were held in the school (library). Many schools continue that practice. In more recent years some schools have held interviews away from the school so that:
  - the prying eyes of the school community are not present;
  - the candidates and the Board can meet on neutral ground;
  - the venue is more convenient or quicker to get to for travelling candidates (perhaps near an airport);
  - candidates (especially if they are current principals) can be reassured of the Board's concern for discretion.
- Wherever the Board chooses to hold the interviews, the provision of food for the Board (morning and afternoon teas, and a light lunch) needs to be taken into account.

### **Questions**

- A set of questions to be asked by the Board needs to be prepared.
- The following may be helpful:
  - Start with one or two questions with which the candidate will have no difficulty ("Tell us about your family"; "What's the main emphasis of your current work?"). Such questions help put the candidate at ease (relatively!).
  - Develop a number of questions on important matters which will be asked of all candidates (e.g. questions about change, teamwork, attitude to discipline, attributes the candidate will bring to the position). Such questions allow for comparisons to be made.
  - Develop a number of questions specific to each candidate, which arise out of reading each application and each person's referee reports.
  - Enough questions should be prepared to occupy 60 minutes or thereabouts.
- Increasingly Boards are asking applicants to make a 10 minute presentation to the Board, either on a topic chosen by the Board or chosen by the applicant. Such a presentation can be very helpful and revealing.

### **Other activity**

- Decide whether any activity apart from interviews is necessary, bearing in mind issues of privacy which inevitably arise when people beyond the Board become involved in the process. Some schools want the short-listed candidates to meet the senior staff and/or the whole staff. This should only be done if the Board can receive accurate, immediate and fair feedback from those involved. Otherwise there is no purpose to be served. Other Boards put on a Board dinner to which the short-listed candidates are invited (sometimes with spouses). Again, there must be a clear (educational) purpose for doing this.
- Still other Boards recognise that while Boards may find some assistance from watching candidates meet staff or eat with the Board, there is inevitably an artificiality about such procedures. Further, the potential for difficulties is always present (the staff may warm to one candidate whom the Board does not appoint, and the new principal may consequently get off to a bad start).
- It is reiterated (see Step 2) that someone (probably 'the secretary') must take responsibility for the booking of the interview facility, and for the travel and accommodation needs of the applicants.

<b>Step 7 : Receive applications and referees' reports</b>
--

### **Receiving applications and reports**

- The Board may want to have applications and referees' reports sent to the school. If this is the case, applicants should be instructed to mark the envelope/courier pack CONFIDENTIAL and only a designated person ('the secretary') should handle them.
- If the Board chooses to have the applications and reports sent to another address, then a designated person should collect and handle them.
- It is re-iterated that:
  - good records should be kept (names, dates of receiving applications and reports);
  - proper and secure filing of all documentation is undertaken;
  - receipt of applications and referees' reports should be immediately acknowledged.

### **Access to applications and reports**

- The Board should give thought as to how the Board will access the applications. There appear to be only two alternatives:
  - All documents are photocopies and each Board member is issued with a numbered set. While this is convenient for the Board members, it is a major logistical exercise for someone (the secretary?) and it increases the risk of confidential material becoming public. At the conclusion of the exercise, all numbered sets must be returned, checked off and destroyed.
  - All documents are kept in one place and Board members go to that place to read them, and to make cryptic notes. This is less convenient for Board members, but confidentiality risks are greatly reduced.
  - Whatever is decided, the Board must take every care to see that confidentiality is maintained not only for the candidates but also for the referees who have committed to paper opinions and judgements that range from the sensitive to the explosive, and are clearly not designed for wide or public dissemination.

## **Step 8 : Prepare a contract for the appointee**

### **The Secondary School Principals' Collective Agreement**

- The simplest form of contract for a principal is one based on the terms and conditions of the Secondary School Principals' Collective Agreement (SSPCA), and relatively straightforward letter to that effect can be drafted. A principal who is a member of the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) can be offered a contract on those terms and conditions. A principal who is not a PPTA member can be offered a contract on the same terms and conditions of those of the SSPCA.
- The SSPCA is a very comprehensive document, and covers all the key areas required such as:
  - remuneration
  - performance
  - leave
  - disciplinary provisions
  - termination for medical reasons
  - disestablishment of the school
  - resignation
  - removal expenses
  - employment problem resolution procedures

To try to draw up an alternative contract, and to get it right for both the principal and the school, is likely to be expensive and akin to reinventing the wheel.

- Schools who require additional responsibilities to be taken by the principal (such as school hostels, farms or the recruitment of overseas students) might need to recognise those responsibilities in drawing up an addendum to the SSPCA.

### **Tools of the Trade**

- Apart from the formal contract, Boards should give thought to the provision of 'tools of the trade' which are required for the principal to effectively and efficiently carry out the requirements of the job description. Most schools include the following in such provisions:
  - a laptop computer, a mobile phone, and perhaps a fax machine at the principal's home;
  - inservice training, including attendances at relevant conferences (including travel and accommodation);
  - allowances for entertainment of school guests and others, and travel on school business;
  - payment of the principal's home telephone account in recognition that the principal is always 'on duty' day and night, and works from home as well as at school.

## **Step 9 : The Short-listing Meeting**

### **Prior enquiries**

- This is a critical step in the process, to which Boards must give serious thought. Generally it requires a full meeting of the Board.
- As a preparation for this meeting, the Board should have designated one, or perhaps two people to make enquiries on behalf of the Board. Prior to this, of course, each application and referee's report should have been carefully read, and any points needing clarification should have been noted by Board members.
- It is in this preparatory stage that the Board's adviser can be very helpful, for he/she may well be able to pick up from what is written (or not written) issues that need further exploration. Further, the adviser may know of other persons who can or should be spoken to regarding the applicants.
- All Board members who have read the applications and reports and noted matters needing elaboration or enquiry, and those who have made enquiries on behalf of the Board, should report back to the Board at this meeting.

### **Coming to a decision on the short-list**

- Board members, now having information provided by the applicant and the referees, and having heard the results of enquiries, can now place that information over and against the person specification and the job description that the Board has agreed to after consultation with appropriate parties.
- The Board should aim to produce a short-list of 3 or 4 candidates. A Board which decides to interview 5 or more risks being seen as lacking confidence and also to have some deficiencies in the person specification and job description.
- Further it is very difficult for a Board to handle more than 4 interviews in one day, so two days would be needed for interviews.

### **After the short-list is compiled**

- The Board Chair should telephone those who are short-listed to inform them. The opportunity can be taken to chat about travel and accommodation arrangements. A letter confirming the short-listing should follow.
- Letters should be sent to all candidates not short-listed.
- Travel and accommodation requirements should be actioned.

## **Step 10 : Action prior to the interviews**

- Make arrangements for any short-listed candidate who wants to visit the school. (A Board member might show them around.)
- Finalise the questions to be asked at the interviews (Who will ask the questions? How will the Chair handle the proceedings?)
- Thought should be given to the best way to set up the room in which the interviews will be conducted. As Board members will want to take notes, it is best to sit around a large table. Hopefully the atmosphere, while necessarily formal, can be as relaxed as possible at the interview. So the applicants should not be crowded, nor should they be able to see either what any Board member writes or any list of questions. It is helpful to the applicants if Board members can be identified by name plates on the table, and a glass of water is provided.
- Some equipment may be needed:
  - for the Board, a white board for later deliberations;
  - for the applicant, equipment for their presentation (OHP and/or power point requirements).

## **Step 11 : Interviews and appointment**

### **Organisation**

- A whole day is required, and all Board members should make every effort to attend. As the Board can be sure that the candidates will be smartly dressed, it is simple courtesy for the Board also to be similarly attired.
- A suggested timetable for the day could be:

8.30am	Board assemblies		
9.00am	Candidate A (interview 60-70 minutes, followed by Board discussion)		
10.30am	Morning tea		
10.45am	Candidate B		
12.15pm	Lunch		
1.15pm	Candidate C		
2.45pm	Afternoon tea		
EITHER:		OR:	
3.00pm	discussion and Decision-making	3.00pm	Candidate D
	making	4.30pm	Discussion and decision-

- The programme above is deliberately not rushed and allows plenty of time for discussion, thought and reflection.
- The Board's adviser can assist the Board by being the person who meets the candidates, explains how the process will run, brings the candidates to the interview room and introduces him/her to the Board Chair. The Chair can then introduce all Board members. Following the interview the adviser can show the candidate out.

### **Final questions**

- Each interview should end with these questions (which can sometimes be overlooked):
  - "Is there anything you (the candidate) want to ask the Board?"
  - "If you were offered the principalship, would you accept it?"
  - "Where can you be contacted tonight/tomorrow by phone?"

### **Saturday interviews**

- Most schools conduct interviews on a Saturday. Not only are most Board members likely to be freest on a Saturday, but it allows the following day to be used:
  - to continue discussions if the Board has not reached a decision by Saturday evening;
  - to interview a candidate in the unlikely event of sickness or travel foul-ups.

- Saturday interviews allow the whole process to be concluded over the weekend, and the school and community can be informed of the decision on the Monday following.

### **Decision to appoint**

- Once the Board, after discussion, has come to the decision to offer the position to one of the candidates, a formal motion to this effect should be put to the Board and recorded in the minutes. (For the purposes of minutes, it is not necessary or advisable to record the main points of the discussion, or the arguments for and against any candidate. It is enough simply to record that discussion took place, when it started and when it concluded.)
- Hopefully the decision will be unanimous. If it is not, perhaps the members who were in the minority might consider, having seen the majority view, to so vote as to make the motion unanimous.

### **After the decision**

- The Board Chair's task is now to contact the chosen applicant (probably by phone) and make a verbal offer of appointment, to be followed as soon as possible by the written offer. It may be possible to include the new principal's contract with this offer, or it might be sent later.
- Once the Board Chair has received an affirmative answer, the other interviewed candidates should be contacted as soon as possible by phone, with a letter to follow.
- The final task is to destroy all applications (except that of the appointee) and all referees' reports. If any copies have been made, these must also be destroyed. Someone should take personal responsibility to see that this done.

## **Step 12 : Announcement of the appointment**

- In order to circumvent the education rumour mill, and in everyone's interests, the announcement should be made public as soon as possible:
  - the Board Chair should inform the school's senior staff, the teaching staff and the school;
  - parents can be notified by a brief letter (posted or taken home by students);
  - the media can be informed via a press release.
- It is important that this announcement is made as soon as possible, for understandably, the applicant now appointed will need to inform his/her school and community. It is not good for the school to hear word of what has occurred regarding the appointment from sources other than the Board.

## **Step 13: Welcome**

### An outside appointee

- If the newly appointed principal is from outside the school, the Board should consider how to welcome him/her according to the traditions of the school.
- Some new principals are 'handed over' by the school from which they have come in a welcoming powhiri. All schools generally conduct special assemblies to introduce the appointee to all students. Boards may consider hosting special gatherings where the principal is introduced to the parent body and to the community.

### An inside appointee

- If the appointee is from within the school, then it is even more important for the Board to make a feature of its welcome in order that all can see that the appointee is no longer, say, the deputy principal, but is now the principal of the school.