From the top corridor to the back field: supporting senior leaders to lead effective change

SUMMARY

Senior leaders in secondary schools make a big difference to how well schools function, in particular when it comes to implementing change. They have a significant impact on student learning as well as the work of other teachers. Currently there is little in the way of specific professional learning, support or career development for senior leaders. This paper, from PPTA's Senior Positions Advisory Committee makes recommendations to improve senior leadership in secondary schools, including proposals for collective agreement claims to ensure that these positions remain attractive to potential applicants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the report be received.
2. That executive advocate to the Ministry of Education for increased leadership development opportunities for senior and middle leaders by of way access to on-going professional learning and development, on-going mentoring and reflection opportunities.
3. That executive develop a Best Practice in Senior Leadership guide and promulgate it to schools.
4. That executive consider increasing the values of management units and senior management allowances as a priority, as part of the claims development process for the STCA and ASTCA rounds in 2018/2019.
5. That executive consider as a claim in the 2018/2019 STCA and ASTCA rounds, that the acting up allowance is made consistent with that negotiated for senior leaders acting up for the CoL roles.

Contents

1.   Background

1.1   This paper has arisen from a series of meetings of the PPTA Senior Positions Advisory Committee, which is made up of assistant and deputy principals. It was motivated by increasing concern around the lack of support for senior leaders by way of leadership development and remuneration for these increasingly complex roles and the impact this is having on middle leaders and teachers within their schools.

2.   An expanding and complex role

2.1   Distributed leadership

The role of principal continues to expand within the New Zealand context of self-managing schools. Secondary school principals are now expected to lead and manage a range of portfolios, including raising student achievement[1]. Reports by Wylie and Ingvarson et al.[2] have found that whilst principals have increasing workloads, so do the other leadership roles such as deputy and assistant principals and middle leaders. This is resulting in school structures changing, with an increase in the range of leadership roles that sit beneath and alongside traditional hierarchical structures, and in particular, with more teachers involved in some form of leadership role over and above their classroom duties[3].

2.2   Leadership development- where is it?

With the expansion of school leadership within schools, leadership development should now be seen as a priority for policy makers. With little prescription and in the context of self-managing schools, the New Zealand policy environment talks about creating opportunities for leadership development, however, the reality is that leadership development in secondary schools is too often left to chance[4]. Furthermore,

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[1]Gronn, P. (2008). The future of distributed leadership. Journal of Educational Administration, 46(2), 141-158.

Harris, A. (2008). Distributed school leadership: Developing tomorrow's leaders. New York: Routledge.

Robinson, V. (2008). Forging the links between distributed leadership and educational outcomes. Journal of Educational Administration, 46(2), 241-256.

[2] Wylie, C. (2013a). Secondary schools in 2012: Main findings from the NZCER national survey. Wellington: NZCER.

Ingvarson, L., Kleinhenz, E., Beavis, A., Barwick, H., Carthy, I., & Wilkinson, J. (2005). Secondary teacher workload study: report. . Camberwell: Australian Council of Educational Research.

[3] Reid, I., Brain, K., & Boyes, L. (2004). Teachers or learning leaders? Where have all the teachers gone? Gone to be leaders, everyone. Educational Studies, 30(3), 251-264.

Wylie, C. (2013b). Vital Connections: Why we need more than self-managing schools. Wellington: NZCER Press.

[4] Pont, B., Nusche, D., & Moorman, H. (2008). Improving school leadership. OECD, Volume 1: Policy and Practice, 1-199.

with the discontinuation of policy such as the Professional Leadership Plan (PLP)[5] which focused on the identification, recruitment and retaining of leaders, it appears that New Zealand policy makers are continuing their changes with an ad hoc approach to succession planning and leadership development in secondary schools.

2.3   Change and more change

The increasing pace of change in a 21st century schooling environment cannot be underestimated. Emergent leadership skills are essential as leaders are now required to adapt and modify in a constant state of change. The impact this has on how leaders manage themselves and lead others can have a huge effect, both positive and negative, on those working with and for them.

3.   The impact on senior leaders

3.1   Perceptions of senior leaders

Senior leadership roles appear to have developed a climate of negativity around them. On one hand senior leaders are seen by others as having more time, autonomy and pay to carry out their duties and are therefore perceived as having higher morale than those in middle leadership roles[6]. To some extent, this makes a senior leadership role appear desirable.

3.2   Learning on the job

On the other hand, senior leaders are increasingly having to carry out duties that they have had little or no training in, with the assumption that good teachers will make good leaders. Duties such as effective change management, the management of complex situations and the ability to effectively problem solve are left to individuals to learn on-the-job. When this does not go well, the implications for the whole school can be significant.

Wylie, C. (2011). The development of leadership capability in a self-managing schools system: The New Zealand experience and challenges. In T. Townsend & J. MacBeath (Eds.), International Handbook of Leadership for Learning (pp. 653-672). London: Springer.

[5] Ministry of Education. (2009). Professional Leadership Plan 2009-2010. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

[6] PPTA Workload Taskforce Report, 2016, Available from http://www.ppta.org.nz/resources/publication-list/3650-ppta-workload-taskforce-report-2016

3.3 Workload

The flow on effect of lack of leadership development for those in senior leadership roles is huge. The PPTA workload taskforce report[7] identifies the top three factors that have a negative impact on teacher's day to day workloads. They are: general administrative duties, NCEA administration and school driven initiatives. These top three issues are directly related to the portfolios of senior leaders. Without leadership development for these roles, senior leaders are having a large impact on the workload of those within their schools, either directly or indirectly. This also strengthens the negative perceptions of senior leaders.

3.4 Variability of the role

There are a wide array of portfolios and roles that senior leaders occupy. Some schools decrease teaching time and allow senior leaders to focus on leading areas of the school that are pivotal to increasing student achievement. Some schools have their senior leaders busy shifting chairs in the hall, working out relief schedules whilst juggling three classes.

The balance of portfolios, the equity of management units (MUs) and senior management allowances (SMAs) and the amount of teaching time varies greatly within schools. Senior leaders should be able to use their influence and capacity to develop systems and structures, so that teaching staff can get on with teaching. Using these roles poorly has a huge impact on the teaching staff and therefore, once again, creates a negative perception.

4. Why leadership development is essential

4.1 Becoming, being, and moving on

A systemic approach to leadership development for both senior and middle leaders is essential. Career development phases such as making, becoming, being and moving out/on[8] are examples of successive phases that are said to support how an individual

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[7] Ibid

[8] Barnett, B., & O'Mahony, G. (2008). Mentoring and coaching programs for the professional development of school leaders. In G. Crow, J. Lumby & P. Pashiardis (Eds.), International Handbook on the Preparation and Development of School Leaders (pp. 232-262). New York: Routledge.
Ribbins, P. (2008). A life and career based framework for the study of leaders in education: Problems, possibilities and prescriptions In G. Crow, J. Lumby & P. Pashiardis (Eds.), International Handbook of the Preparation and Development of School Leaders (pp. 61-80). New York: Routledge.

moves into and maintains a leadership role. Barnett and O'Mahony[9] state "because school administration has become so complex, principals need constant development throughout their careers" thus highlighting why theorists believe career stages are so important to identify. However, a lot of the career development stages are focused solely on the role of principal with researchers focused on leadership development at the top end of an individual's ladder within secondary schools.

4.2 Preparation for leadership

This has been somewhat addressed in England with the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (NCLSCS) where leadership development is offered further down the ladder where individuals are more likely positioning themselves for leadership[10]. Aspirant leaders are more likely to be positioning and testing themselves well before headship is considered. As Gronn and Lacey[11] explain, the positioning is likely to occur when aspirant leaders have access to some type of leadership where they can trial different approaches. Although career development stages and phases are being acknowledged in other countries, they have yet to further progress into New Zealand secondary schools. Providing leadership development opportunities at all stages of a teacher's career can ensure that individuals remain motivated towards progressing their careers within education[12]. Leadership opportunities act as stepping stones for which aspirant leaders can begin their accession towards leadership roles[13] and thus ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles, both current and future, effectively.

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[9] Barnett, B., & O'Mahony, G. (2008). Mentoring and coaching programs for the professional development of school leaders. In G. Crow, J. Lumby & P. Pashiardis (Eds.), International Handbook on the Preparation and Development of School Leaders (pp. 233-234). New York: Routledge.
[10] Coleman, M. (2005). Theories and practice of leadership: An introduction. In M. Coleman & P. Earley (Eds.), Leadership and management in Education: Cultures, Change and Context (pp. 6-25). New York: Oxford University Press.
Gunter, H. (2012). Leadership and the reform of education. University of Bristol, United Kingdom: The Policy Press
[11] Gronn, P., & Lacey, K. (2004). Positioning oneself for leadership: Feelings of vulnerability among aspirant school principals. School Leadership and Management: Formerly School Organisation 24(4), 405-424. doi: 10.1080/13632430410001316516
[12] Anderson, M., Kleinhenz, E., Mulford, B., & Gurr, D. (2008). Professional learning of school leaders in Australia. In G. Crow, J. Lumby & P. Pashiardis (Eds.), International Handbook on the Preparation and Development of School Leaders (pp. 435-451). New York: Routledge.
Huber, S. (2003). School leader development: Current trends from a global perspective. In P. Hallinger (Ed.), Reshaping the landscape of school leadership development (pp. 273-288). Lisse Swets and Zeitlinger.
Oldroyd, D. (2005). Human resources for learning. In M. Coleman & P. Earley (Eds.), Leadership and Management in Education: Cultures, change and context (pp. 187-207). New York: Oxford University Press.
[13] Gronn, P., & Lacey, K. (2004). Positioning oneself for leadership: Feelings of vulnerability among aspirant school principals. School Leadership and Management: Formerly School Organisation 24(4), 405-424. doi: 10.1080/13632430410001316516

4.3 The IES effect

With the Community of Learning (COL) we now have a different layer of leaders being appointed. Lead Principals, Acting up Deputy Principals, Across School Roles and Within-in School roles. All of these are new roles with little to no support as to how to effectively lead change management or how to manage complex situations. Adding to the already under resourced and under-trained middle and senior leaders in existing roles it begs the question of how long this system is sustainable and how long leaders are expected to cope without support.

5. Improving the role of senior leadership

5.1 Senior leaders in secondary schools are crying out for formal leadership development opportunities. Increasing the quality and capacity of leadership will impact teachers and student outcomes. Access to a sustained and systematic leadership development is highly sought after[14], but unfortunately is woefully lacking.

5.2 PPTA could play a useful role by developing and providing a *Best Practice for Senior Leadership* guide. Areas to explore would be example portfolios including recommendations around time allocations and remuneration. The purpose would be so schools could ensure that they are using these roles effectively.

5.3 Recognising the pressures faced by senior and middle leaders, increasing the value of MU's and SMAs for the next STCA claims round should be a priority. Those in leadership positions have acknowledged that remuneration acts as a motivator for these positions,[15] however MMU's, MMA's and SMA's have not had their value increased for approximately 12 years. Those working with a position of leadership have not been acknowledged for the ever increasing workload or for the skill required.

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[14] Harford, S. (2013). *Stepping-stones and glass ceilings : the motivations and challenges of aspirant leaders* (unpublished Masters Thesis). UNITEC, Auckland, New Zealand.
[15] Harford, S. (2013). *Stepping-stones and glass ceilings : the motivations and challenges of aspirant leaders* (unpublished Masters Thesis). UNITEC, Auckland, New Zealand.

5.4 Further to this, it is inequitable that the Acting Principal Allowance is different when a senior leader is acting up for a principal that is out of schools in an IES role and when they are out of school for different reasons. The appointment of a Lead Principal allows for Deputy Principals to act up into the role of Principal, and as soon as this appointment has been made the Acting Up allowance kicks in; however, this is not the the case for those acting up outside of the CoL environment who have to wait 14 days before this allowance is payable.

Recommendations

1. That the report be received.

2. That executive advocate to the Ministry of Education for increased leadership development opportunities for senior and middle leaders by of way access to on-going professional learning and development, on-going mentoring and reflection opportunities.

3. That executive develop a *Best Practice in Senior Leadership* guide and promulgate it to schools.

4. That executive consider increasing the value of management units and senior management allowances as a priority as part of the claims development process for the STCA and ASTCA rounds in 2018/2019.

5. That executive consider as a claim in the 2018/2019 STCA and ASTCA rounds, that the acting up allowance is made consistent with that negotiated for senior leaders acting up for the CoL roles.

2016 Annual Conference Minutes

Minutes of the Annual Conference of the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association (Inc) held at the Brentwood Hotel, Kilbirnie, Wellington, commencing at 9.45 a.m. on Tuesday 27 September, continuing at 9.00 a.m. on Wednesday 28 September and 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 29 September 2016.

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C16/71/09   Moved

1.   THAT the report be received; and

2.   THAT executive advocate to the Ministry of Education for increased leadership development opportunities for senior and middle leaders through equitable access to ongoing professional learning and development, ongoing mentoring and reflection opportunities; and

3.   THAT executive develop a Best Practice in Senior Leadership guide and promulgate it to schools; and

4.   THAT executive consider as a claim in the 2018/2019 STCA and ASTCA rounds, that the acting up allowance is made consistent with that negotiated for senior leaders acting up for the CoL roles.

5.   THAT executive consider increasing the values of management units and senior management allowances as part of the claims development process for the STCA and ASTCA rounds in 2018/2019.

                                                                                                    Carried