EDITORIAL
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Editor

The question of who leads and how they lead is at once simple and complex. The act of leading transcends positional title, organisational hierarchy, and school or centre boundaries. Within the immediate school or centre community, principals, centre leaders, teachers, students, and parent trustees exercise leadership in diverse ways. It is therefore fitting that every general edition of the Journal of Educational Policy and Practice features articles that focus on who leads and how they lead, both in New Zealand schools and centres and beyond. Complementing local research in this edition, three international perspectives from American, Mexican and Turkish settings illuminate leadership in other contexts, offering points of concordance and departure that invite reflection on our ways of thinking and doing in Aotearoa.

In the opening article, Who will lead? Principal succession in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools, Francine Bennett examines the additional challenges that Catholic and evangelical Christian schools face in recruiting, retaining and replacing professionally competent leaders whose spiritual capital also aligns with the school’s special character. Findings from her two-phase research revealed that although “principal succession is an inevitable event in every school … a documented formal process for succession planning was not a focus of attention” in any of the 157 schools studied. This led Bennett to develop and advocate the use of an Impact Model to support strategic succession planning in faith-based schools, one that can readily be adapted for secular settings.

Tufulasifa’atafatafa Ova Taleni, Angus Hikairo Macfarlane, Sonja Macfarlane, and Jo Fletcher turn readers’ attention to what principals need to do in order to support Pasifika students in New Zealand schools. Drawing on a small scale study in which the first author used Talanoa methodology to elicit the perceptions of four primary and secondary principals, O le Tautai Matapalapala weaves participant narratives into evocative metaphors. The identification of seven key supports necessary to “harvest” the “pearls” of student belonging, achievement and self-actualisation echoes and expands pivotal New Zealand research on culturally responsive pedagogies of relation.

Attuned to the paradox that distributed leadership requires strong positional leadership, Rachel Denee and Kate Thornton explore the manner in which professional leaders distribute leadership in the early childhood sector. Using mixed methods to garner 631 survey responses and in-depth insights from leaders and teachers in a kindergarten, community-based, and private centre, they crystallise findings into three essential themes underpinning effective distributed leadership: “mentoring and coaching; fostering relational trust; and creating vision and designing supportive structures.” While participants from all three service providers expressed consensus over the importance of these activities, dissension between leaders and teachers over the relative effectiveness of their implementation leads the authors to suggest fruitful arenas for further research.

In the fourth article, and with deference to Fullan’s (2007) initiation, implementation, and institutionalization change construct, Tamara Shilling synthesises 12 American teachers’ perspectives of the school leadership strategies necessary to successfully implement a curriculum mapping change initiative. Findings emphasise the need for leadership to be both constant and contingent. Specific to this particular initiative, and more widely applicable, are the need for initial and ongoing training; the provision of requisite time and resources; collaborative implementation planning and regular open communication; development of an internal leadership cadre; early detection of, and response to emergent problems; and institutionalisation to the point that the initiative will sustain “change[s] in leadership at any level.”

Translated from the original Spanish, Claudia Navarro-Corona’s and Charles Slater’s comparison of the functions of secondary school principals and deputy principals, in a district of northwest Mexico, concludes
that the management activities performed by deputy principals constitute poor preparation for principalship and recommends greater integration of function. Reading their work prompts reflection on the manner in which positional roles are conceptualised and enacted in different countries, and consideration of the extent to which the apprenticeship that aspiring New Zealand leaders serve, in deputy and assistant roles, positions them to take on the role of head.

In *Local logics versus centralisation: A possible dilemma for the boards of trustees of New Zealand’s small primary schools*, Denis Slowley considers how encroaching government policy impacts the motivations and activities of boards of trustees in two “at risk” primary schools. He argues that centralised policies, a complex regulatory environment and increasing compliance expectations run counter to the objectives of many local parent trustees, limit their freedom to design local curriculum, compound public concern over individual trustee and collective board competence, and compromise the ability of small and “at risk” schools to attract willing, let alone suitably qualified trustees.

The seventh article offers another international perspective, this time on the role of school counsellors in Turkish K-12 schools. Acknowledging the American antecedents of Turkish school counsellor training, Olcay Yavuz, Carol Dahir, and Ali İkler Gümişeli translate and employ a U.S. School Counsellor tool to survey public and private school principals. Their synthesis of 1466 responses suggests gradual but by no means uniform shift in the perceived role of school counsellors, from a singular focus on traditional counselling services to a more holistic and collaborative approach to students’ emotional, academic and career wellbeing. More pronounced in latter schools than the former, the authors advocate for a new understanding of school counsellor roles, responsibilities and practices in Turkish public schools.

Finally, Murray Fletcher offers a review of *Educational leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand: Issues of context and social justice*, a collection of narratives “rich in practice reality” and “further enhanced by the reflective commentary and conceptual frames created around them.” Consistent with social justice tenets, royalties from the sale of this book support worthy recipients to participate in New Zealand Educational Administration and Leadership Society (NZEALS) endeavours, including the forthcoming biennial conference in April 2018.

Broad in scope and methodology, the articles within this edition nonetheless contain recurring, if not perennial themes that will continue to command researcher attention in the foreseeable future: leadership formation, capability, and succession; role transformation and change; centralisation and local governance. Over a decade ago, for example, Hargreaves and Fink (2004) observed that few things in education succeed less than leadership succession. Sustaining a strong leadership pipeline in times of teacher shortage and dwindling applicant pools will require concerted rather than haphazard succession planning, reconsideration of leadership roles and preparation, and deeply embedded distributed leadership, matters that several articles in this edition touch upon.

As this academic year draws to a close, I would like, on behalf of NZEALS, to thank authors, reviewers, copy and production editors (Professor Emerita Ann Briggs and Yvette Shore), without whom the *Journal of Educational Leadership Policy and Practice* would not exist.

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**References**
