



GAME! Consultancy Newsletter

Governance and Management in Education

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GAME! Consultancy some background

This is now the second year of GAME! Consultancy.... and what a wonderful first year it was!

The idea of an independent professional service for principals and trustees came from an understanding that there appeared to be an increasing lack of support available for schools in the area of governance and management. This was seen in the University's advisory service's continuing focus on areas of government interest, the loss of ERO's facility for post review assistance, and the Ministry's increasing emphasis on intervention programmes for the most needy of schools. In 2010 this situation was further exacerbated by the Ministry's intention to make all government in-service training funds totally contestable, with a focus on very specific initiatives. The government's support for schools had narrowed and diminished.

Throughout last year I visited 80% of the primary and secondary schools in the central and southern Wairarapa, the Kapiti Coast, Hutt Valley, Porirua and Wellington areas. What I found was that many boards and principals were doing a fantastic job, many under some very trying conditions. The one characteristic that defined them all was their isolation from each other, the unavailability of meaningful professional development opportunities, and the unrelenting pace of work. Expectations on principals particularly were considerable. Many were struggling to see the wood for the trees.

Interestingly it was a real mix of schools that used the GAME! Consultancy services in 2010. Of those schools I worked who were having ERO reviews during the year, all received very positive reports. The supplementary one year review schools, all moved onto the regular 3 year cycle, and a number of the high performing schools were rewarded with 4-5 year returns. The common theme prevalent among all the schools I supported was that the principal was committed to improvement. As a consequence, much of my time was simply spent in affirming good practices, tweaking effective managerial systems, and suggesting 'next steps'. It was a great year for me to establish and rekindle many new professional and personal friendships.

Principals were kind enough to show their appreciation thank you!

"Everyone said how valuable they found your session. Looks like they will be asking for extra staff development meetings without me having to coerce them and that's got to be good. I thought you were marvellous and so did the staff. Personally I found both our sessions this week very worthwhile. Thanks for leaving me feeling positive and confident about all we are trying to achieve at Paparangi."

Sue Blyther, **Paparangi School Principal**

"Bryan gave Kapiti Primary School staff an enlightened preparation talk on ERO which was very useful as we had a review soon after. He had a great style of delivery which had my staff spellbound."

Graham Conner, **Kapiti School Principal**

"This is the first year I have used GAME Consultancy to conduct my appraisal. I have found Bryan to be very professional and enjoyed his practical, down to earth approach. Having had recent experience as a principal, Bryan has a good understanding of what the profession entails. His experience and wisdom enabled the appraisal to be meaningful, resulting in constructive dialogue about next steps. I appreciated his insightfulness and clarity of thinking around current educational issues."

Dawn Ackroyd, **St Oran's College Principal**

"Thank you very much for your assistance with this difficult [teacher appraisal and competency] task, and for the thoroughly objective and professional manner in which the evaluations have been carried out."

Dr Barry Newcombe, **Van Asch Deaf Education Centre Principal**

"Bryan completed two major surveys for us this year. The presentation of the feedback was highly professional and the results were very easy to use."

Lisl Prendergast, **Sacred Heart College Principal**

"Thanks for your work with Raumati South School this year. Because of his background as an advisor, senior principal and brief experience with both the Ministry of Education and ERO, Bryan brought a wealth of knowledge to the principal appraisal process. Staff and Board members included in the process found Bryan to be very professional and they felt able to communicate easily with him. The GAME Consultancy appraisal included interviews, a user friendly survey and professional discussion with me. Our Board Chairperson and I felt the appraisal had integrity and I got a sense of affirmation and direction from it."

Graham McDonald, **Raumati South School Principal**

"It is so important to a principal that the person appraising them understands the context within which they operate. Bryan Gwilliam did this really well. He also quickly perceived the kind of principal I am. The rigorous process he used ensured I was given helpful feedback and provided with a real picture of how I am viewed by board and staff."

Clifford Wicks, **Otari School Principal**

"You did a great job staff members have said how much they enjoyed listening to you. I enjoyed it too. We felt we learnt much and you also confirmed many of the good practices that we were already doing. I'll be recommending you to other schools."

Steve Black, **Naenae Intermediate Principal**

"Bryan Gwilliam was approached by the St Matthews' board to undertake a full and comprehensive Principal's Review. The Board found Bryan very easy to work with and it was apparent that he held a very sound working knowledge of the process. During the review I felt comfortable, and know that staff members found Bryan professional and very easy to communicate with. The final report was detailed and it was obvious that he had fully understood the issues in a Day and boarding School."

Erik Pedersen, **St Matthews Collegiate Principal**

".....personalised, professional appraisal process with understandable and achievable next steps for the staff and school.....highly recommend Bryan to all schools."

Gail Marshall, **Solway School Principal**

"[Bryan] has an easy way with people, puts them at ease. Interviews with staff, parents and board members were conducted with little fuss but in a very professional manner. I found the appraisal nonthreatening but the hard questions were asked. The process involved the necessary amount of rigor to ensure integrity. I would be happy to use Bryan again for an appraisal, or other professional services."

*John Wootton, **Korokoro School Principal***

"Thanks for your work. I have really enjoyed our conversations. Already you are challenging my thinking and that's very good for me."

*Mary Jones, **Pukerua Bay School Principal***

"Early in 2010 I met with Bryan to chat about all things 'education'. Because of Bryan's wide and varied work experience in this sector, his commentary was very well informed and useful."

*Warren Owen, **Wellesley College Principal***

"Brian has done a very rigorous and professional job of my appraisal. Our staff, the Board and I all enjoyed working with him and I found the process both encouraging and affirming, whilst useful for identifying where to go next."

*Ian Dewar, **Tawa School Principal***

"The appraisal process was developed in partnership with Bryan and was focussed around my goals for the year. It provided opportunities for ongoing professional discussion with an experienced practitioner. The report has given me valuable feedback on my practice and an opportunity to reflect on my role as a principal."

*Neil Worboys, **Wainuiomata School Principal***

What does the consultancy offer in 2011?

Largely restricted to the Wellington, Wairarapa and Kapiti regions, the following forms of assistance will be available:

- Assessment systems development
- Board of Trustee training
- Communication training
- Community consultation and analysis of responses
- Curriculum development
- Event organisation
- Education Review Office preparation / support / response
- Financial management
- International Fee-Paying student applications
- Leadership coaching
- Mediation
- National Standards implementation
- Principal appraisal
- Property management
- School marketing
- School self review
- Staff appraisal system development
- Senior staff appointments
- Teacher evaluations

Refer to www.game.school.nz for details, costs and contacts. You will be interested to see that payment can now be made using either an invoice or through 'banked staffing'.

It is likely that **Principal Appraisal** will continue to dominate the consultancy's support programmes. This was particularly successful in 2011 with many large and small secondary and primary schools seeking this service. A standard process was followed for first time appraisals but this will be more individualised for principals wishing to repeat the process this year.

Another big area last year was the independent role of the consultancy in teacher appraisal. Sometimes these were related to competency but most often they were instigated by school management and staff to give a different perspective to the school's appraisal process. This was particularly the case with itinerating or resource teachers attached when these staff members worked across a number of schools.

When will I be visiting your school?

As was the case last year, I intend to visit as many schools in the Wairarapa, Kapiti and Wellington regions as possible. This will happen in February and March. All schools will be contacted by email in the week preceding the visit. I really look forward to seeing you all again.

A reminder as to who I am and what I bring to GAME! Consultancy.

From 1990 - 1995 I was employed by the Wellington College of Education as the Adviser to Rural Schools. The area included Wellington, Wairarapa and Horowhenua. This was an especially exciting time in NZ education (and particularly in rural schools) due to the onset of Tomorrow's Schools. My masters degree from Massey was completed during this period. In 1995 I was appointed as the principal of Wadestown School. This large inner city decile 10 school was characterised by its very high community expectations. I worked at the school for nearly 13 years.

At a still 'sprightly' young age, in May 2008 I left Wadestown thinking it was time for the school and me to have a change. There was a growing market for independent professional services to be made available to schools, and I believed I had a role to play. However my experience remained limited. In late 2008 I spent time in the local Ministry office as a development officer in the student support section. This provided a valuable insight into a government department, the services provided by the Ministry of Education and the characters who represent us at the local level.

Knowing that ERO dominates so much of our thinking and planning as principals, a stint in the ERO office was essential. For all of 2009 I was contracted to ERO in Wellington and, because of potential conflicts of interest in the primary sector, spent much of this time reviewing secondary schools and early childhood centres.

With my CV more broadly based, GAME Consultancy came into existence in the beginning of 2010.

On the personal note, my wife Ann teaches at Eastern Hutt School (keeps me grounded to developments at the chalk face) and I have 3 children Kate (26), Abbie (24) and Evan (22).

