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What a really exciting first few months it has been for GAME Consultancy. Work is increasing and the variety of requests from schools is developing in its challenge, interest and diversity. I am not sure if it is just the high quality of the principals who are presently seeking my advice and support, but it is clear that a considerable number of schools are doing some highly innovative things. As the year unfolds it is my intention to look to share some of these with you. I do not profess to know everything about governance and management but I am beginning to believe that collectively we all probably do. Developing networks is a priority for this consultancy.

I feel privileged and proud to be working with you. Thanks to the many principals who now seek and endorse GAME's services on a regular basis.

Check out www.game.school.nz for the full services available from the consultancy.

After a number of major initiatives this year (National Standards, Implementation of the new Curriculum, Board elections) I sense that things are beginning to settle a little for most principals. Although keeping your head above water will remain a priority for many, smelling the roses is now seen to be increasingly more common place. A number of observations I have made on my early rounds:

- ERO reviews have taken on greater importance and therefore greater stress and toll on teachers and school leaders.
- Staffing, including principalship, is now more stable than in recent years, leading to an increased 'buy in' by staff to school culture and practices.
- The age of principals is increasing.
- Very few schools have fully developed the national curriculum within their own school context. Literacy and Numeracy have been done well but the Arts, Science etc. seem to need further work. Those schools committed to 'inquiry learning' are grappling most with these areas.
- Anxiety over the election of new boards is dissipating.
- Most schools now carry a lot of student achievement information centrally located on the school server. However accumulated achievement

data is still largely literacy and numeracy information.

- Conflicting messages about National Standards have led 'thinking' schools to simply tweak changes in reporting rather than reinventing new models.
- Buildings and grounds are generally looking good.
- In the last few years there has been a significant increase in the amount of classroom release time given to senior management staff and 'teaching' principals.
- Principals are increasingly valuing the importance of communication within their school and to their community. Considerable efforts now go into the dissemination of information.

Board of Trustee training



So your new board is now established and you're wondering what to do about trustee training. You sense (or maybe you know) that there will be courses available, mostly from the Ministry, STA and advisers, but you understand that the unique nature of your board suggests that individualised school-based training would be most effective.

You understand that:

Some new trustees appear not to have much knowledge or experience of school governance and the legal responsibilities that come with trusteeship

or

The responsibilities and pressures of principalship are poorly understood by trustees

or

The board potentially has operational or interpersonal issues and characteristics that may impact negatively on its future cohesiveness and effectiveness as a group

Conversely you may feel that:

- The board is destined to function well but that it will perform better if trustees are given the opportunity to develop a shared

understanding of governance practices particular to the culture of your school.

Whatever your reasons for instigating training you are also aware that the board would benefit from a guiding document committing trustees to a clear structure, organisation and code of practice. You need a brief and easy to follow Governance Manual.

You understand these things but you haven't got the time or inclination to do anything about it yourself.

Have I got the GAME plan for you!

There are a growing number of principals now requesting two hour and four hour training courses aimed at upskilling their trustees and introducing them to high quality governance practices. GAME Consultancy training packages are designed and delivered specific to your school at a time that suits you, and guided by the direction proposed by the principal.

Leadership coaching / mentoring

Principal appraisal includes the coaching of school leaders as much as it does the evaluation of their performance.

However if all you require is 'head to head' professional stimulation then GAME Consultancy has other packages available.

All principals need to be supported in the complex role of leadership. New principals entering their roles for the first time or more experienced principals wishing to extend their leadership and management skills will benefit from the assistance of experienced external and professional advice and guidance.

GAME offers individualised one-to-one and face-to-face support programmes based on a specific principal's identified needs.



Community Consultation



Schools are required to consult with their communities to determine information that will identify issues that impact on school planning and development.

Consultation empowers school stakeholders and develops close links between the school and home. This consultation may be significant and cyclical (eg. school strategic planning) or minor and responsive (eg. school uniforms)

GAME Package 1: This introduces strategies and systems that will enable the community, and other

stakeholders, to communicate information and expectations to the school. Models of effective communication are shared with school management / board.

GAME Package 2: A consultation area is identified, a collaborative strategy determined and a process of extracting and analysing information implemented. This will involve varying levels of consultant intervention including, if required, the development of a comprehensive report.

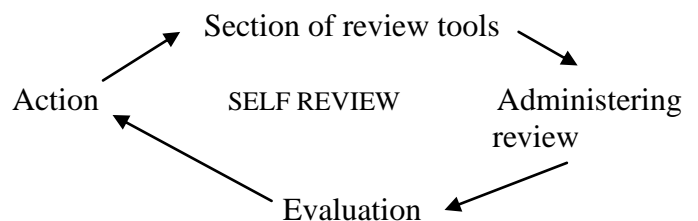
Self Reviewing



- What is Self Review?

Self review involves investigating evidence about student outcomes in relation to teaching practices to find out where

improvement is needed. Planning for school development requires schools to set goals and targets for better student outcomes and make changes that are necessary to bring about this improvement. It is the deliberate and on-going process of finding out how well your practice enhances children's learning and development. Reviewing allows schools to see which aspects of existing practices are working well and what you could do better. As a result you can make more informed decisions about the selection of new programmes and ways of doing things. Through self review your practice is transformed, and ultimately, your children's learning benefits.



- Self Review is:

- Centred around giving *all* students the most successful educational experiences possible
- Set in a collaborative culture of continuous self reflection and constructive critique
- Self-initiated by a desire to seek constant improvement and development; mostly planned strategically but sometimes spontaneous
- Celebrating and sustaining what is working well while striving to improve what is not
- A willingness to embrace challenge and change
- Setting long term goals and mid-term targets and gathering rigorous and wide-ranging evidence to examine the extent to which these have been achieved

- Research tells us that:
 - Quality school self review can improve student outcomes
 - Quality self review can improve teacher performance which impacts on student outcomes
 - Where self review is seen as important in its own right it is more likely to be successful
 - Improved outcomes are more likely when internal and external reviews are complementary
 - Self review needs a high level advocate or champion for it to become fully embedded in school operations
 - Self review requires a comprehensive long-term focus
- There are three types of self review:
 - *Strategic self review* is long term and focused on key goals related to the school's vision
 - *Regular self reviews* are about "business as usual". They are smaller, focused and on-going, feeding regular data into the strategic self review
 - *Emergent self reviews* are in response to unplanned events or issues that have arisen. They are one-off spontaneous reviews but should fit with overall goals and link to other reviews.
- Where do you start?
 - Decide on a model that suits your needs (there is no right way). Document this model and ensure that you have buy-in from trustees and staff
 - Be clear about which is strategic self review, which is "business as usual" and which is emergent
 - Make it part of your regular goal setting, planning, data gathering and reporting cycle
 - Start small and focused and build on success
 - Use what you already have
 - Don't just gather data, dig in and interrogate it.
 - Develop an action plan
 - Ask how you will know if you have succeeded
 - Questions to ask about your self review:
 - Does your self review identify how well the school serves *all* its students?
 - How does your school compare with comparable schools?
 - Is self review integral to key management systems?
 - Is your self review based on a wide range of telling evidence?
 - Does your self review involve key stakeholders and seek the views of students, their parents and communities?
 - Does your self review lead to action designed to achieve the school's longer term goals?

The GAME Golf Tournament

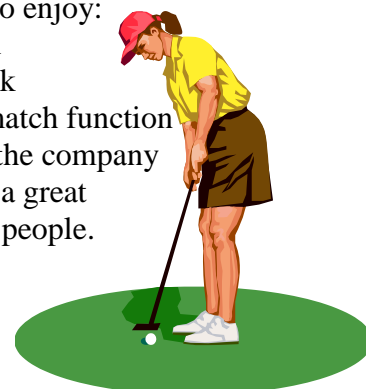
Keep the afternoon of Wednesday 17 November free. Put it in your diary now and let the staff know that you be on a 'course' that day!

Shandon Golf Club, Petone (one of the great golf courses in New Zealand) is privileged to be hosting the inaugural, GAME initiated, golf tournament for school management teams and trustees in the wider Wellington region. The purpose of the event is to introduce (or reintroduce) school leaders to the honoured pastime of golf - one of the most common leisure activities of school principals. This tournament is designed for people wanting to get into the game and have fun and also for those wanting to show off your talents. The afternoon will provide the opportunity to enjoy:

- a delightful lunch
- a picturesque walk
- a relaxing after-match function

while taking pleasure in the company of others of like mind. It a great opportunity to meet new people.

More of this later.



I hope that the year continues to go well for you. Let me know when GAME can plan something for your school.

All the best and hope to see you soon.

Bryan

PS. I thought you would enjoy a little principal humour to lighten up your day.



"Principal Smith, this is a parent of a student in your school. I'd like to discuss my son's grades. Is this a good time?"



"Angry parents on lines 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5."



"IT SAYS, THE BOARD HAS AGREED TO ALLOCATE THOSE EXTRA FUNDS YOU REQUESTED."



"Here is a printout of the results of our recent standardized tests and here are the same results printed with a very small, hard-to-read font, to make the implications less obvious."



"Yes, I received the review copy of *Running a School Is a Snap* that you sent. I found it to be a very useful book."



"Unfortunately, we're approaching the expiration date on most of our quick-fix solutions."



**"The principal will be with you shortly.
He still has a few e-mail jokes to read."**



**"I purchased this great book on time
management, but with my schedule
I don't have the time to read it."**