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Confirmed New Principal Appointments

Congratulations to following new appointees:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Cardinal McKeefry | Tania Savage |
| Dalefield | Carol Pilcher |
| Evans Bay Intermediate | Louise Bray-Burns |
| Linden | Gaylene Hill |
| Mangaroa | Lisa Malones |
| Petone Central | Trina Bennett |
| Seatoun | John Weston |
| St Francis de Sales School | Steve Douglas |
| Tuturumuri | Jo Mahoney |

ERO Reports 4-5 year

Congratulations to the following schools which, in the last 6 months, were acknowledged for their effectiveness by ERO.

| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Johnsonville* | Normandale |
| Muritai* | St Orans College* |
| Eastern Hutt* | Clifton Tce* |

* repeat 4-5 year returns

What are principals including as personal goals in their Performance Agreements?

Since the inception of GAME Consultancy, it is now into its 6th year, I have had the privilege of working in 63 different primary and secondary schools as principal appraiser. Almost all of these schools are located within the wider Wellington region. In many I have appraised successive principals in the same school, most I have appraised more than once and some I have been involved in their performance management programme every year.

So what has interested principals? What are they and their boards seeking to include in their Performance Agreements each year?

By far the most common goal identified by principals in both primary and secondary schools is the need to understand and implement **Teaching as Inquiry**. In its various forms (eg. Peer Coaching, Professional Learning Groups, etc), this topic has remained consistently popular. It is clear that principals have seen the introduction and utilisation of Inquiry as a cornerstone in the development of school initiatives. Many have repeated its inclusion in successive years, as they and their staff come to develop a best-fit model.

Almost as common, especially in the early years of the 4-5 Year ERO reporting model, was an interest principals took in unpacking the components of **School Self Review**. As with Teaching as Inquiry, the incentive promoted by a good ERO review was a strong motivator for them.

Another must for many principals has been the need to develop a more effective model of **Teacher Appraisal**. Most schools have accepted that the evolution of an appraisal process in the last 20 years has been fraught with difficulty, and many are keen to learn from the successes of other schools.

Often principals seek to use their appraisal to focus on what they see as deficiencies in their **leadership style**. Examining ways to motivate staff, engage communities, communicate and collaborate effectively, enhance management practices and generally develop stronger professional relationships are all seen by them as ways to support improvements in their leadership effectiveness.

The sceptre of ERO continues to hang over the goal selection of many principals. **Preparing for ERO** directly or indirectly consumes those who feel most responsible. As such, the periodic examination of school documentation (particularly curriculum prescriptions), ensuring that National Standards reflect best practices and overseeing the development of Strategic Plans have dominated the minds of many.

Although not as prevalent among the primary schools, the secondary school principals are concerned about developing **Assessment Systems**. Particularly in reference to Year 9 and 10.

New principals to schools were frequently interested in including goals that enable them to better **understand the systems and culture** that pervade their new schools.

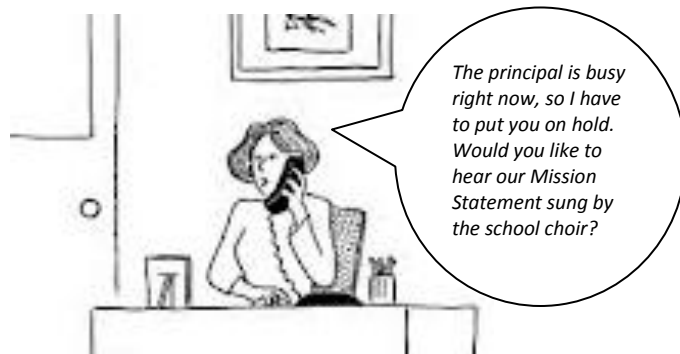
ICT implementation in its many guises crops up relatively frequently.

Principals concerned about the impact **national initiatives** are having on their schools are growing in number. PB4L, Choice Theory, Blended e-Learning, Schooling Improvement Projects, Learning and Change Networks, Ka Hikitia and others are now being scrutinised and recommendations for future planning being developed.

Programmes that have been available and practiced within some schools for many years are now seen to be in need of evaluation. These include such areas as Inquiry Learning, Pastoral Care practices, Writing PD, Boys Education, Student Transitioning, Maori Engagement and Special Character.

In recent years more sophisticated goal setting is beginning to emerge, often related to the **implementation of new initiatives**. Such programmes include Visible Learning, BYOD's, Future Focused Learning and Inclusion.

Principals are taking very seriously the place that their appraisal has on the refocusing of a direction for their school. There is no doubt that those with whom I have worked see a real benefit in the use of appraisal, supported by an outsider to better understand and hone their leadership skills.



Mentoring as a way of developing Principals

In the last couple of years, a number of principals with whom I have been consistently working have chosen to separate our relationship from that of Appraisal to that of Mentoring.

As you know a mentor is not a self proclaimed luminary. Achieving in the position of mentor frequently relies on a respect that has developed through a prolonged professional and personal relationship. It is the mentee (principal) who must identify his or her mentor. I remember a Board Chair I once had who thought it useful to suggest a mentor for me. Needless to say it didn't work. A mentor is more than an adviser. A mentor provides the principal with wisdom, technical knowledge, assistance, empathy and respect throughout, and often beyond the school leadership role.

Mentoring helps principals to better understand the impact they are making on their schools and communities in a way that is supportive and nonjudgmental. An effective mentoring relationship evolves.

Effective mentoring also requires that eventually the principal will require some separation from the mentor to test his or her own ideas. This distancing is a sign that the mentoring relationship is maturing. The principal working independently is the end goal.

Ultimately both the principal and mentor may redefine their relationship as one of equals, characterized over time by informal contact, collaboration and mutual assistance, resulting in them becoming true professional colleagues.

If you see merit and are interested in such an arrangement or relationship, please get in contact.

Legal requirements for appraising registered teachers

We all appraise our teachers but why and how?

The mandatory requirements for appraisal consist of two sets of documents:

1. The legislated requirements for the appraisal of primary and secondary registered teachers as reflected in the Professional Standards
2. The Registered Teacher Criteria for the appraisal of provisionally registered teachers (and teachers registered subject to confirmation) who are seeking full registration, and for the appraisal of experienced teachers seeking to renew full registered.

The Appraisal of teachers has been a legal requirement of schools since 1996.

The primary purpose of these requirements is to provide a positive framework for improving the quality of teaching (and therefore learning) in New Zealand schools.

The prescribed Ministry requirements are intended to set minimum standards of accountability and quality assurance while also being flexible enough for boards of trustees to establish appraisal systems appropriate to their school and community. In particular, schools are required to integrate appraisal into their planning and organisation for professional development. This includes ensuring that school-wide goals and objectives are linked to the professional goals of individual members of staff.

Principals must ensure that policies and procedures for the appraisal of teacher performance:

- are part of an integrated performance management system operating within the school
- are appropriate to individual teachers, the school, and the wider community
- are developed in a consultative manner with teachers;
- are open and transparent
- have a professional development orientation
- are timely and helpful to the individual teacher
- give consideration to matters of confidentiality

Board of trustees are expected to ensure that their school's policy is in line with these principles. This includes formally delegating responsibility for implementing the policy and process of teacher appraisal to professionally competent people (usually the principal and other school leaders).

Other requirements include ensuring that:

- the appraisal of each teacher is carried out in line with a policy
- each teacher participates in appraisal at least once every 12 months
- appraisal includes agreement on written performance objectives
- teachers are observed as part of appraisal
- teachers conduct self-appraisal
- appraisal includes discussion between teachers and their appraisers
- appraisal reports are prepared in consultation with the teacher.

Boards of trustees are also expected to ensure that the appraisal process incorporates agreed sets of expectations understood by both the appraiser and the appraisee. These expectations should be specific to each teacher, taking into account differences in people's responsibilities, areas of performance, and levels of experience. The requirements outline, in general terms, the aspects of teachers' performance that should be appraised:

Key professional responsibilities/performance areas are:

- teaching responsibilities (such as planning and preparation, teaching techniques, classroom management, classroom environment, curriculum knowledge, and student assessment);
- school-wide responsibilities (such as contribution to curriculum leadership, school-wide planning, school goals, the effective operation of the school as a whole, pastoral activities and student counselling, and community relationships); and

- management responsibilities (such as planning, decision-making, reporting, professional leadership, and resource management).

1. Professional Standards

The Ministry of Education published the Interim Professional Standards (1998) for primary school teachers that expand upon each key areas, setting out more formally the government's expectations of professional performance. A set of professional standards and criteria (1999) was published for teachers in secondary schools.

2. The Registered Teacher Criteria

The purpose of the Registered Teacher Criteria (2013) is to set out mandatory criteria for teachers who are seeking to gain full registration or to renew their practising certificates.

The Registered Teacher Criteria were developed by the New Zealand Teachers Council. The 12 sets of criteria describe elements of professional knowledge in practice and the relationships and values required for successful teaching. Because these elements are common to all teaching, regardless of the context or teachers' experience, the Teachers Council regards the criteria as able to support professional growth for teachers at all stages of their careers.

The evidence required to ensure a teachers is fulfilling the criteria comes from the observations of teacher practice, professional discussions and documents such as assessment records, planning records, and reflective journals.

The Myths of Effective Communication

Sometimes reluctantly, principals want to include specific reference to the enhancement of 'Effective Communication' in their Performance Agreement (although it is already part of the Professional Standards). You may be surprised how common this is. I am a little cynical about the reasons for this, believing that communication is almost always highly effective when the message itself is what the recipient wants to hear. But there are other reasons to be careful. What happens when you, your trustees, parents or staff have a different view on what is effective communication. There are many misguided understandings as to what effective communication entails. Consider these popularly held myths:

1. Logic makes communication effective

Logic can often destroy relationships if it is not couched in empathy and understanding. The next time you see two 'logical' people in an argument, listen to what they are saying. Even sound fact can be quickly dismissed if they do not resonate with the recipient.

2. Effective communication is about the blunt truth

A person who always tells the blunt truth is often disliked by those who always get told the blunt truth. Truth is hurtful when delivered in the absence of care and thought.

3. Communication solves everything

You can articulate yourself brilliantly, but it is how your feelings and thought processes are reflected to the recipient that is a greater influence on the outcome.

4. Learning communication makes you a better communicator

Learning communication skills makes you a better communicator when the lessons invariably lead to behavioural changes in the way you communicate.

5. Communication is one-way

Communication in human relationships is always two-way. Even active listening can be understood as a strong form of communication.

6. The message sent is the message received

The next time you talk to someone, stop assuming your message is the message being heard. Understand that many people will interpret your message differently to its intention. Check to ensure you are both on the same page.

7. Adapting to people is necessary for good communication

If everyone is adapting to everyone else's adaptations people become chameleons in a paisley room, disabled by the shifting pattern of their social context. Adaptable people can come across as contortionists who may be viewed as insincere, two-faced or guarded.

8. Sometimes it is best not to communicate

People think that ignoring other avoids communicating with them. If you choose to completely ignore someone, your body language can sometimes communicate ignorance rudeness, or even cruelty.

9. Meaning is in words

Words are representations of images, symbols, and events. They do not solely give messages their meaning. The attachments we have to what we say and hear gives communication most of its meaning.

10. Speaking talent is important for effective communication

Speaking with a good vocabulary, clarity, directness, and structure does not equate to effective communication.

11. More communication is better

More communication can further foster poor communication by amplifying problems. Less communication can actually help understanding by providing opportunities for digestion and reflection.

In a recent conversation I had with an educator he made the comments in defence of inaction that you can 'lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink'. The truth is, highly effective communicators can make it drink.

