

Effective Leadership

Principals have a substantial impact on student outcomes. Their impact may be less direct than teachers', but their effectiveness is felt by all students in a school. The most effective principals have a sustained focus on improving teacher quality and student learning.

Today, expectations of school principals are higher than ever before. Principals are not just seen as educational leaders, knowledgeable about teaching and learning, they are also expected to know how to work with data, make funding decisions, engage with their wider community, support children with a range of special needs and navigate a complex operational environment. With increased local decision-making and authority, principals in NSW government schools are also called upon to implement new reforms involving change, financial and people management skills.

The NSW Government is engaged in an ambitious reform agenda for its schools. The Local Schools, Local Decisions (LSLD) plank of this reform commenced in 2012. Under this reform, NSW government schools have increased flexibility over their staffing mix and will manage more than 70 per cent of the total public school education budget at full implementation (compared with 10 per cent previously). LSLD allows principals, in consultation with their school communities, to decide how to use their resources to best meet the learning needs of every student in their school, guided by a single school plan. In this context, effective leadership of NSW government schools is more important than it has ever been.

This Learning Curve presents a snapshot of the current workforce profile of principals in NSW government schools and outlines the research evidence on what makes an effective principal and how best to identify, develop and support aspiring school principals.



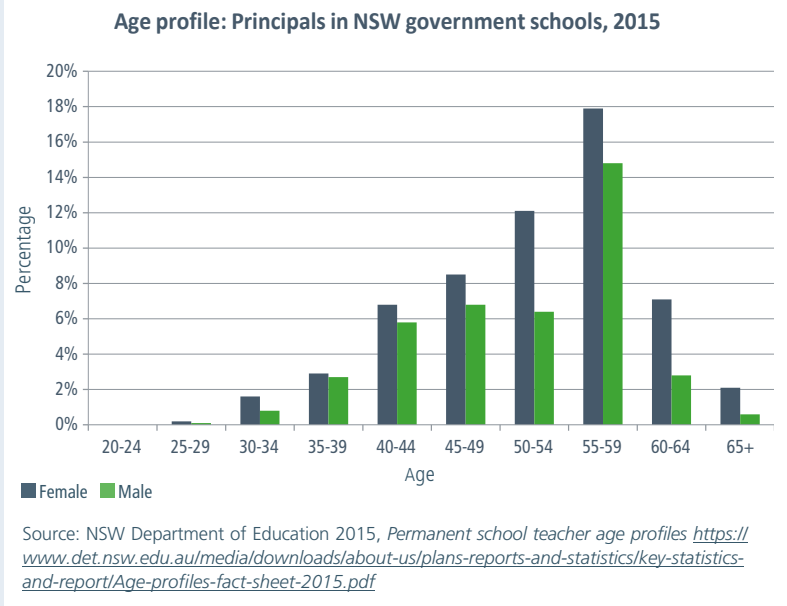
KEY MESSAGES

- Many NSW government school principals are at or nearing retirement age, with nearly two-thirds aged 50 years or more, making succession planning important for NSW.
- Principals have the second biggest in-school impact on student outcomes after classroom teaching, though it can take several years for them to achieve their full impact in a school.
- The most effective leadership has a very strong instructional focus and is constantly seeking to improve student learning and outcomes.
- The leadership practice with the greatest impact on student outcomes is promoting and participating in teacher learning and development.
- Effective principals are especially important for schools that are struggling in difficult circumstances.
- The Australian Professional Standard for Principals is the nationally agreed description of what principals need to know and understand to be effective leaders, though engagement with the Standard varies across jurisdictions.
- High-performing school systems proactively identify candidates and place them on a leadership development track.
- Formal mentoring and coaching is an important component of leadership preparation, and is a feature of the best pre-service and in-service leadership development programs.

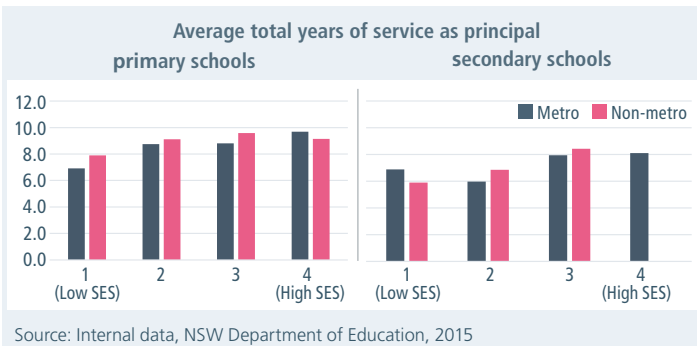
Principals in NSW government schools: a workforce profile

The Department of Education operates 2,212 government schools in NSW, each with a principal position. In addition, there are currently 1,098 deputy principals, 3,872 assistant principals (in primary schools) and 3,779 head teachers (in secondary schools) (internal Department of Education data, September 2015). Principals comprise four per cent of the permanent teacher workforce in NSW government schools, while executive teachers (deputy principals, assistant principals and head teachers) make up 16 per cent of the total teaching workforce (CESE 2014a).

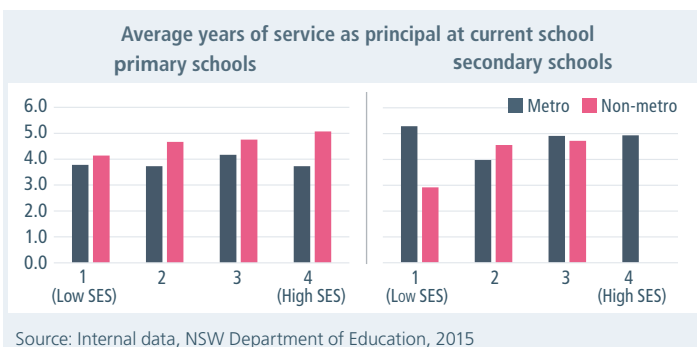
Nearly 64 per cent of NSW government school principals are aged 50 years or more (NSW Department of Education 2015). Around 30 per cent have already reached notional retirement age (conservatively set at 55 years for women and 60 years for men), and a further 18 per cent of principals are aged between 50–54 years. While this large group remain in the workforce for now, their impending retirement will leave a sizeable gap in the principal ranks if left unattended.



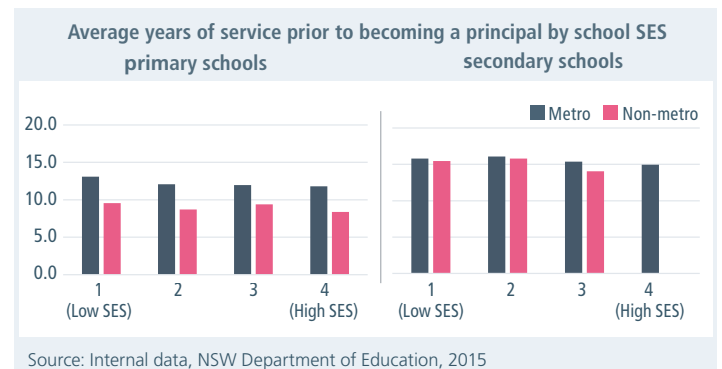
Principals in NSW government schools have an average of 8.5 years' experience as a principal (8.9 years for primary and 7.1 years for secondary). On average, principals have served 4.2 years as principal at their current school, with the average for secondary principals being slightly longer. Principal experience and years of tenure in a school differ by school community. Principals of schools in lower socio-economic status (SES) communities tend to have fewer total years of experience as a principal than their colleagues in higher SES schools.



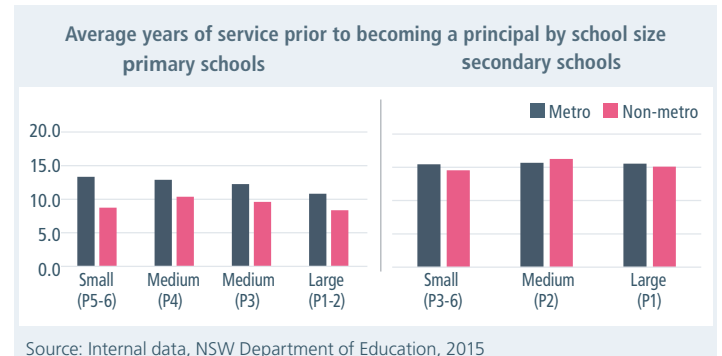
Principals of non-metropolitan primary schools have spent longer at their current school than their metropolitan peers. In contrast, principals of non-metropolitan secondary schools in the lowest SES quartile have the fewest years of service in their current position, suggesting high turnover in these schools. Principals of low-SES metropolitan secondary schools, however, have the most years of service in their current position.



There is a pronounced difference in the number of years of prior teaching experience held by metropolitan and non-metropolitan primary principals. On average, principals in non-metropolitan primary schools have considerably fewer years of service when they become a principal. This pattern is not evident for secondary school principals, most of whom have around 15 years of prior experience before entering the principal role.



Looking at the data on the basis of school size, primary school principals in metropolitan areas have more years of experience before they become a principal regardless of the size of the school. Principals in the smallest (P5-6) and largest (P1-2) non-metropolitan primary schools have the least prior experience. The picture is more consistent for secondary school principals, who have around 15 years prior experience regardless of the size or location of the school.



How important are principals to student outcomes?

Principals have the second biggest in-school impact on student outcomes, after classroom teaching. An extensive review of the evidence concludes that leadership explains about one quarter of the total difference in student outcomes explained by all school-level variables (once student intake and background factors are controlled), compared with classroom factors which explain around one third (National College for School Leadership 2010).

Other findings from the research on principal impact include:

- The difference made to student achievement by highly effective principals is considerable – one study using Texan data on student gain indicates that a highly effective principal raises achievement of a typical student by between two and seven months of learning in a school year (Branch, Hanushek & Rivkin 2013).
- Principals may make more difference to some outcomes than others – a study using data from British Columbia, Canada finds that principals had significantly greater impact on final year English exam scores than they did on Year 12 graduation rates (Coelli & Green 2012). Another study using data from British Columbia finds that more effective principals are associated with higher reading and maths gains from Year 4 to Year 7, though the performance boost is greater for maths (Dhuey & Smith 2014).
- It may take time for a principal to achieve their full impact in a school – Coelli and Green (2012) estimate that principals achieve over 90 per cent of their full impact by the end of their fourth year in a school.
- Effective principals are especially important for schools that are struggling in difficult circumstances. Branch, Hanushek & Rivkin 2012 find principal effectiveness varies more among lower-SES schools, which is consistent with the view that principal skill is most important in challenging schools and that there is less consistency of principal quality in these settings. A substantial British study found schools achieving high value-add in student achievement from a low starting point were more likely to report substantial change in leadership practices over the period of improvement than schools with higher initial student attainment. Principals in these schools are also more likely to have to lead change across diverse areas of school culture – from behavioural climate to the effective use of performance data (Sammons et al. 2011).

What makes an effective school leader?

Over the last 25 years, research has focused predominantly on two types of educational leadership: instructional and transformational. Instructional leadership is shown to be the most effective style of leadership (Hattie 2009), having three to four times greater impact on student outcomes than transformational leadership (Robinson, Bendikson & Hattie 2011). It is likely that it is the 'educational specificity' of the instructional model that accounts for the difference.

Some research indicates that well distributed leadership is one of the factors of effective principal leadership (ACER 2008; National College for School Leadership 2010). To be effective, however,

Three models of educational leadership

1. **Instructional** leaders focus more on students. They look to the teachers' and the school's impact on student learning and instructional issues. They conduct classroom observations, ensure professional development that enhances student learning, communicate high expectations and ensure that the school environment is conducive to learning (Hattie 2015).
2. **Transformational** leaders place their major focus on teachers. They set a vision, create common goals for the school, inspire and set direction, buffer staff from external demands, and give teachers a high degree of autonomy. The majority of school leaders see themselves as primarily transformational leaders (Marks 2013, cited in Hattie 2015).
3. **Distributed** leadership recognises that sustained improvement cannot be achieved by one person alone (ACER 2008). In practice, distributed leadership can mean a range of things, from the delegation of leadership functions particularly common in larger schools to a focus on shared decision-making across the school community. It is about the process – rather than the focus – of leadership.

distributed leadership must reinforce core instructional priorities (Dinham 2005, cited in ACER 2008). In addition, the extent to which leadership can be distributed in a school will reflect that school's circumstances (Hallinger 2010; Schrum & Levin 2013). Schools in very difficult circumstances may need a more directive style of leadership, at least at first (Hallinger 2010; National College for School Leadership 2010).

What do effective leaders focus on?

In reality, principals combine elements of instructional, transformational and distributed leadership in response to the contextual and developmental needs of their school community (Gurr 2015).

In all contexts, effective leaders focus on¹:

- establishing goals and high expectations
- planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum, including systematic use of assessment data to monitor learning and adjust provision
- leading teacher professional development
- ensuring a supportive and orderly environment
- resourcing strategically, and
- developing and maintaining an evaluative mindset for ongoing improvement.

¹ The description of key leadership practices in this paper draws on the formulation proposed by Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008), which reflects the broad research consensus on the elements of success.

1. Establishing goals and high expectations

Establishing a clear sense of direction and purpose is repeatedly identified as one of the core practices of effective principals (Hattie 2015; National College for School Leadership 2010). Having a sense of purpose is not enough, however. To impact on student outcomes, research indicates that:

- The school's vision should be translated into concrete goals – there is evidence that goals may be particularly important for schools in challenging circumstances, who can use clearly defined goals as a means of developing 'a shared vision and direction for improvement' (Hallinger 2010, p. 130).
- Goals should focus on teaching and learning – clear academic and learning goals are associated with positive impact on student outcomes (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe 2008). Effective principals 'are "obsessed" with the instructional core of personalising learning and getting results for every student. Instruction is the priority' (Fullan 2010, p. 14).
- Goals must be shared – leaders impact student outcomes indirectly, through the work of teachers in classrooms. Clearly communicated and shared goals support teachers' sense of efficacy, a culture of trust, and collective responsibility for student outcomes (Robinson, Bendikson & Hattie 2011; Bezzina 2007).
- Goals must embody high expectations but focus on a small number of core priorities to avoid innovation overload (Fullan 2010) – in NSW, the newly streamlined school planning process requires that government schools focus on just three strategic priorities for the duration of the three-year planning cycle.

2. Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum, including systematic use of assessment data to monitor learning and adjust provision

This aspect of effective leadership practice is one of the few areas in which leaders can *directly* impact student outcomes (compared with the indirect impact, for example, of establishing an orderly environment). Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) identify four interrelated subdimensions to this aspect of instructional leadership:

- active involvement in collegial discussions of instructional matters, including how instruction impacts student achievement
- active oversight and coordination of the instructional program (e.g. developing learning progressions across year levels)
- active involvement in classroom observation and feedback to teachers
- ensuring systematic monitoring of student progress at school and classroom levels.

There is some evidence that planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum is less common in secondary than primary schools, due to the larger size, broader and more specialised curriculum, and departmental structure of secondary schools. Nonetheless, these practices remain powerful predictors of secondary school performance. In secondary schools, 'the ability of the principal to draw departments and teachers with differing interests together around a common understanding of how to treat students and what they need to learn is a key instructional leadership skill' (Robinson, Bendikson & Hattie 2011 p. 136).

3. Leading teacher professional development

Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development is the dimension of leadership identified in the literature as having the greatest impact on student outcomes². One of the ways in which effective leadership of teacher professional learning impacts student outcomes is by reducing the within-school variation in teacher effectiveness (National College for School Leadership 2010; Hattie 2015b). Effective leadership of teacher professional development also helps to sustain motivation and commitment among the teaching team, reduce teacher turnover, and support succession planning.

In leading teacher professional learning, effective leaders ensure that:

- All programs in the school are guided by 'a common and coherent framework of teacher and student learning' (Sebastian & Allensworth 2012, p. 629).
- Individual teacher development is integrated with the development of the school as a whole (Fullan 2010).
- Professional learning has a strong focus on student outcomes, effective learning progression and building school-wide consistency of quality teaching practice.
- Professional learning reflects the evidence base on effective teaching strategies and modes of professional development.

Overall, effective principals are leading professionals, who are seen by staff as a source of instructional advice (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe 2008). They lead the school's development as a learning organisation in which teacher practice is 'deprivatised' and 'school members consistently take collective responsibility for student learning' (Seashore 2009, pp. 133-134).

4. Ensuring a supportive and orderly environment

Principals have a critical role to play in creating the conditions for effective teaching and learning. Ensuring positive community relationships is a primary foundation of this, with the development of shared goals one of its key expressions. Positive community relationships are important in all schools but particularly highlighted in schools serving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Research into successful school leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities emphasises the need for schools to develop and embrace a positive sense of Indigenous identity (Sarra 2010), while promoting high expectations for all their students.

To maximise time spent on learning, school environments need to be orderly. Creating such an environment – which includes supporting attendance and general student wellbeing – can be a productive first focus for schools in challenging environments (National College for School Leadership 2010; Sammons et al. 2011). In orderly environments, conflict (including conflict between staff) is quickly and equitably resolved (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe 2008).



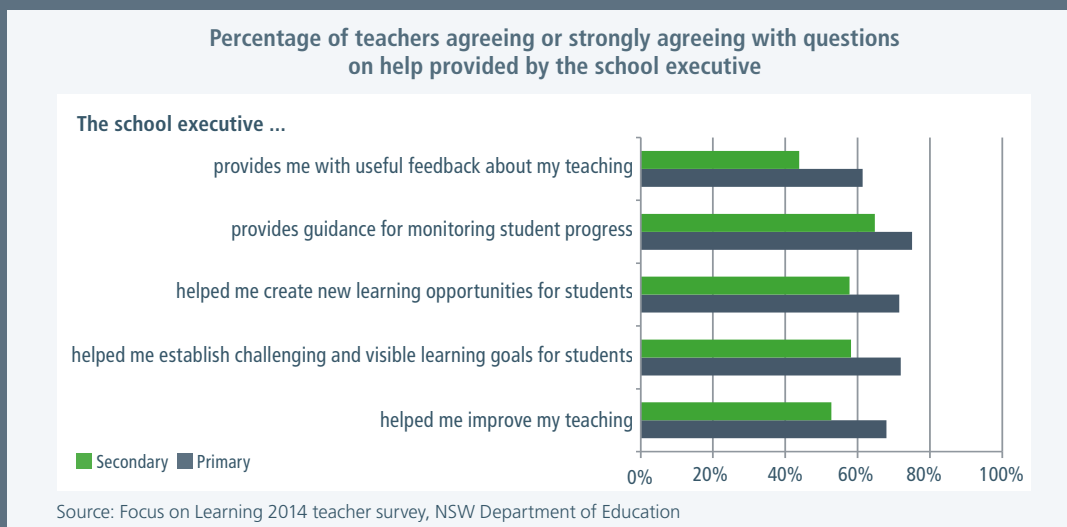
2 Both Hattie and Robinson estimate an effect size above 0.8, which is extremely high by the standards of education research.

The impact of NSW government principals on teachers' classroom practice

In 2014, 15,600 teachers from over 500 NSW government schools participated in a feedback survey that measured aspects of teaching and school practices known to have a positive impact on student outcomes.

Teachers were asked a number of questions relating to their school's leadership team and the role of leaders in helping teachers improve student learning. Teachers who perceived the school executive to be providing them with feedback and strategies for improved student learning were more likely to implement these kinds of strategies in their own classrooms.

Consistent with the literature, there was a clear difference between the proportions of primary and secondary teachers who reported receiving assistance from their executive. Only 44 per cent of secondary teachers reported receiving useful feedback about their teaching from their school executive, compared with 61 per cent of primary teachers.



5. Resourcing strategically

Principals exercise instructional leadership primarily through the organisation and management of their schools – through the allocation of capital, financial and human resources. To ensure that increased investment in education has maximum impact on student outcomes, principals need to allocate their resources wisely, ensuring there is a clear line of sight between resource expenditure and improved teaching and learning, and that initiatives are well supported by the evidence base.

Strategic resourcing is becoming more important in the context of devolving authority, which gives NSW principals responsibility for increasingly large proportions of their school budget, and in which the operational aspects of managing a school become more complex.

Research indicates that better management practices are correlated with better student outcomes, though it is not possible to infer a causal relationship, and country or systemic settings account for about half the variance in management scores (Bloom et al. 2015). Analysis of the UK data in Bloom et al's study finds that the correlation is stronger with value-added data than absolute attainment, suggesting that the relationship between management practices and student learning is not demographically driven.

Strategic resourcing is critical to 'protecting what's important' in a school (Hallinger 2010, p. 128). There are indications, however, that it can be difficult for principals to focus consistently on the important issues amidst multiple, competing priorities and 'myriad administrative tasks that must be done' (NAASP & NAESP 2013, p. 6; ACER 2008). This can be particularly pressing in small schools where principals combine leadership and classroom teaching roles.

6. Developing and maintaining an evaluative mindset for ongoing improvement

Effective leaders need to be continually 'evaluating the impact of all in the school on the progress of all students' (Hattie 2015b, p. 15), with a view to building on what works best and changing what doesn't. Consistent with good management practice in other sectors (Bloom et al. 2015), this means using data effectively to inform planning – to identify priorities, set benchmarks and improvement measures, and monitor progress against them.

In adopting an evaluative approach to ongoing school planning and improvement, school leaders model one of the characteristics of effective teaching: use of data to inform practice (CESE 2014b). The International Successful School Principal Partnership Project found that 'successful principals have demonstrated considerable skill in collecting evidence to help inform the progress of their schools, and to help teachers and, in some cases, students to collect evidence to improve their individual practices' (Gurr 2015, p. 10). Where the data indicates, principals need to be able to intervene quickly to correct poor performance (ACER 2008).



What skills and capabilities do effective school leaders need?

School systems that are improving, notably those moving 'from good to great', ensure that teaching and school leadership is regarded as a fully fledged profession. This involves putting in place the necessary practices and career paths to ensure that the teaching profession is as clearly defined as the medical and legal professions (McKinsey & Co 2010b). This may include the development of a leadership standard, a leadership credential and a leadership pathway. Internationally, research exploring effective school principals identifies the increasing complexity and challenging nature of the role (Moos 2011).

Some countries have undertaken considerable work to articulate the set of skills and capabilities needed for effective leadership and outline the trajectory of their development. The UK has had National Standards for Headteachers³ for over a decade. Updated in 2015, they cover four 'Excellence as Standard' domains: qualities and knowledge; pupils and staff; systems and process; and the self-improving school system. The Standards provide guidance to underpin best practice, and can be used to inform headteachers' own practice and professional development, to support recruitment, and as a framework to train leadership aspirants (UK Department for Education 2015). In the US, the Inter-State School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards were first developed in 1996 and most recently reviewed in 2014. Although voluntary, the Standards are reflected in many US principal development programs (AITSL 2015b). The 2014 standards, eleven in all, have a clear focus on leadership for learning, and are intended to provide guidance for every phase of a school leader's career, including preparation for a principal role (Council of Chief State School Officers 2014).

The Australian Professional Standard for Principals is the nationally endorsed standard which authentically describes what principals need to know, understand and do in order to achieve excellence in their work (AITSL 2011). The Standard recognises that all good leaders share common qualities and capabilities, expressed in the Standard as three leadership requirements: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and personal qualities, social and interpersonal skills. Leaders draw upon these requirements within five areas of professional practice: leading teaching and learning; developing self and others; leading improvement, innovation and change; leading the management of the school; and engaging and working with the community. The components are interdependent and integrated, rather than hierarchical. They can be adapted to suit the individual leadership contexts in which principals work (AITSL 2014).

Leadership Profiles were developed to support the Standard in 2014. The Profiles are presented as a set of actions that effective principals take as they progress to higher levels of proficiency in leadership. These actions can be viewed through the lens of professional practices, the lens of leadership requirements or the lens of leadership emphasis. The Profiles are intended for use by principals and aspiring principals to help them grow and develop as school leaders (AITSL 2014).

In the NSW context, the importance of effective school leadership is reflected in the inclusion of the 'Leading' domain in the NSW Schools Excellence Framework. Under the Framework, principals are accountable for the pursuit of excellence and the provision of high-quality educational opportunities for every child.

³ In the UK, principals are known as 'headteachers'.

How do systems identify, develop and support future school leaders?

While it is common for systems to rely on the self-identification of potential future leaders (OECD 2012), more effective systems do not leave such critical activity to chance. Gronn (2007, cited in AITSL 2011) notes that self-identification is really only satisfactory where the number of volunteers exceeds the number of vacancies and where there is sufficient candidate quality to allow for choice in selection. Fink (2011, cited in AITSL 2011) describes the need for education systems to move from a 'hire and hope' mentality to a 'grow your own' mindset. Hargreaves and Fink (2005) identify succession planning as a key practice that should guide and underpin educational change and leadership. In more proactive models, potential leaders are actively identified and their careers guided and supported so that they gain more leadership experience progressively through new roles taken on within their schools (McKinsey & Co 2010a).

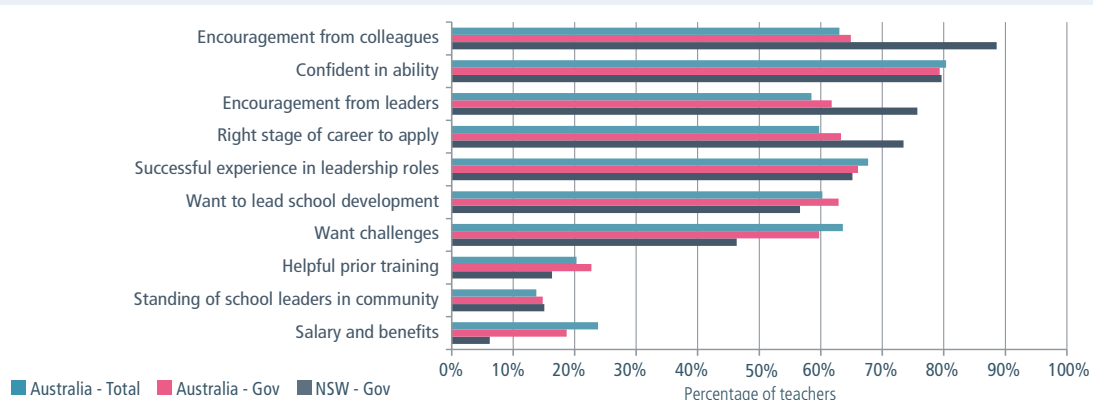
A proactive approach also enables a school system to address equity and representational issues amongst its leadership. In most countries, the teaching profession is dominated by women yet there is a significantly lower proportion of female principals than male principals at all education levels (OECD 2014). Singapore, however, had the largest proportion of female principals of any system surveyed by McKinsey & Co (2010a). In Singapore, potential leaders are identified by schools (usually within the first five years of their career) and are put on a leadership track. These teachers can progress through the ranks of subject/year level head, head of department, deputy principal and principal. They may be recruited to academic and administrative committees and secondments to the Ministry of Education prior to becoming a principal. The final step before becoming a principal is the six-month, full-time Leaders in Education Program at the National Institute of Education (AITSL 2015b).

McKinsey & Co (2010a) identify a number of examples of proactive leadership identification programs. In York Region, Ontario, every school board must have a succession and talent development plan. Principals and superintendents are required to identify and nurture aspiring leaders, who are placed on a formalised leadership development track. In the United States, the national, non-profit New Leaders program provides successful teachers and assistant principals with free, high-quality professional development, creating a pathway to school leadership for effective people in schools who may not have actively considered that path before (OECD 2012). The New York Leadership Academy relies on a network of mentor principals, former graduates and district leaders to recruit promising candidates, although application is open to all qualified candidates (Institute for Education and Social Policy 2009, cited in AITSL 2015b).

An international survey conducted in 2010 found that early experience of leadership roles was one of the main reasons for becoming a principal. It also found that for most principals, either 'being identified as a future leader' or 'opportunities to take on leadership responsibility' was a major contributor to their development, with a large proportion selecting both (McKinsey & Co 2010a). This is consistent with teacher responses in the Staff in Australia's Schools (SiAS) survey. In the 2013 survey, NSW government school teachers nominated encouragement from colleagues or their leaders, successful experience in leadership roles, and confidence in their ability, as the key reasons why they intended to apply for a leadership role in the next three years.

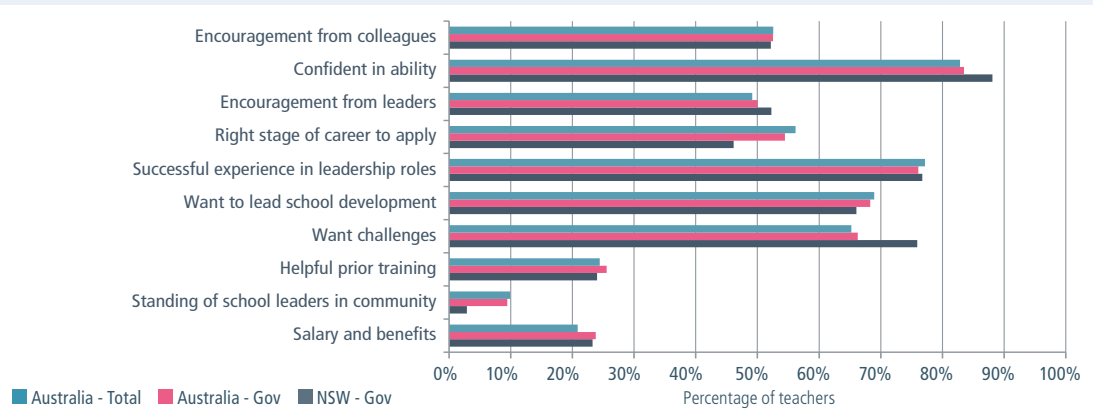
Important factors in teachers' intention to apply for a Deputy Principal or Principal position within the next three years: Primary schools

Source: Staff in Australia's Schools 2013 survey, NSW Department of Education analysis



Important factors in teachers' intention to apply for a Deputy Principal or Principal position within the next three years: Secondary schools

Source: Staff in Australia's Schools 2013 survey, NSW Department of Education analysis





What does high-quality leadership development look like?

A nationwide study of principal development programs in the US led by Darling-Hammond identified common features shared by exemplary preparation programs regardless of their operating contexts. Excellent principal development programs have a curriculum aligned with professional standards and work from a philosophy and curriculum emphasising leadership of instruction and school improvement. They have carefully targeted recruitment and selection processes, a cohort structure and formalised mentoring from expert principals. These programs also offer supervised administrative internships to provide extended leadership opportunities (Stanford Educational Leadership Institute 2007). Similarly, the OECD identifies effective leadership programs as those that focus on school improvement and student performance, have a coaching or mentoring component and allow networking amongst participants (OECD 2008; OECD 2012).

In Australia, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has recommended improvement in the current approach to principal preparation. AITSL's recommendations include identifying and nurturing talented potential leaders early in their careers, and matching learning to an individual's capabilities, career stage and context. AITSL has identified three broad stages of learning for aspiring leaders, and notes that principals can begin acquiring relevant knowledge for two of these stages from early in their careers: the development of pedagogical knowledge as a foundation for leadership; and the development of interpersonal and social skills that equip a principal for change management and strategic thinking. The third stage, the development of management skills, is most usefully undertaken immediately prior to taking on a leadership role and then consolidated by on-the-job experience (AITSL 2015a).

The provision of a qualification or a principal preparation program for future principals is by no means universal, though it is a feature of some systems. In considering the content of such programs, AITSL (2015b) supports aligning the content of principal preparation programs to the Standard as a way of managing the breadth and complexity of knowledge, skills and competencies that such programs need to cover. Alignment between program content and leadership standards can also help shift principals' thinking and expectations about their new role and build their identity as instructional leaders (AITSL 2015b).

Whether a principal qualification should be compulsory is not agreed (OECD 2012). A small number of systems require aspiring principals to undertake a formal qualification prior to becoming a principal. Singapore's aspiring principals must undertake a six-month, full-time course that includes placement in a school, an action research project and mentoring from the principal in whose school they are placed (AITSL 2015b). Aspiring principals in Ontario, Canada must undertake a Principal Qualification Program, which includes a theoretical component, a school practicum placement and completion of a piece of research. The program is offered by Ontario universities, teachers' federations and principals' associations (Ontario Ministry of Education 2012). While no longer mandatory, the UK also has a professional qualification in the National Professional Qualification for Headship, provided by the National College of Teaching and Leadership (National College of Teaching and Leadership 2014). New Zealand's national First-Time Principals' Program is optional and includes a mentoring component, along with residential courses, an e-learning component and research (Centre for Educational Leadership 2012).

Studies on school leadership programs have shown that these programs can increase the quality of a school. A longitudinal study of 35 schools in Sweden revealed that leadership training resulted in more collaboration among teachers (Blossing & Ekholm 2005). Research on the impact of programs in England revealed that in schools with principals who had participated in the National College for School Leadership's development program, students' assessment outcomes improved more quickly compared with non-participating schools (OECD 2012).

Mentoring and coaching for new principals

Mentoring and coaching is frequently referred to in the literature as an important part of leadership preparation (e.g. Duncan & Stock 2010). Coaching provides individuals with constructive feedback on the management of specific tasks and situations while mentoring may be more focused on the development of a supportive, sometimes longer-term, professional relationship (AITSL 2015b). Pairing new principals with experienced former or current principals enables the former to access counsel and advice as required (OECD 2012). Australian research into the characteristics of pre-retirement principals confirms that 'pre-retirement principals continue to be a committed and valuable resource' and suggests mentoring as one way of capitalising on this (ACER 2008, p. 58).

A number of countries have employed mentoring and coaching as part of proactive leadership development strategies. In North America, formalised mentoring and coaching was a shared element of both exemplary preparatory programs and in-service programs identified by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute. This was one element that had an effect beyond the program, as the mentors and advisors often provided continuing support to principals (Stanford Educational Leadership Institute 2007). In Canada, the Ontario Principals' Council (2011) has developed a continuum of *MentoringCoaching* to support newly appointed school leaders as part of the Ontario Leadership Strategy.

New Zealand's national, optional First-Time Principals' Program includes a mentoring component, along with residential courses, an e-learning component and research. A newly appointed

first-time principal is paired with a current or recent, experienced and high-performing principal for 18 months. The mentor guides the mentee through a program of activities aimed at supporting the mentee to assess their leadership capacity, learn how to build relational trust, set goals and engage in action planning (Centre for Educational Leadership 2012). A 2014 evaluation surveyed participating principals from 2008-2009 on their perception of the sustained impact of the program strands on teaching and learning, school management, self-efficacy and relationships. The mentoring strand was perceived by principals as having had a moderate sustained impact on their leadership, a much greater impact than other components of the program (Centre for Educational Leadership 2012).

Ongoing support for new principals

There is agreement that it is not sufficient to focus solely on principals up until the time of their appointment (McKinsey & Co 2010a, AITSL 2015b). Early in their career, principals will benefit from high-quality mentoring and professional development (The Wallace Foundation 2012). In some instances, mentoring or coaching continues to be available to new principals for the first year or two of their appointment, including in Ontario, Canada (OECD 2012), the New York City's Aspiring Principals' Program, and the US New Leaders Program (AITSL 2015b).

The existence of learning networks or clusters can provide ongoing support for principals, and is another feature of systems with exemplary principal development systems. While different from the cohort structure of a formal leadership program, peer learning provides opportunities for collaboration and teamwork, and can expose participants to colleagues with a broader range of experiences and different ways of thinking about issues (AITSL 2015b, citing Barnett et al. 2000 and Strebel & Keys 2005). It is important, however, that peer networks have clearly specified goals or high levels of accountability, and a strong supporting network to ensure that they operate effectively (McKinsey & Co 2010a). In its fullest expression, 'system leadership involves principals and other leaders working beyond their own schools as consultant leaders, school improvement partners and so on' (ACER 2008, p.65; Fullan 2010).



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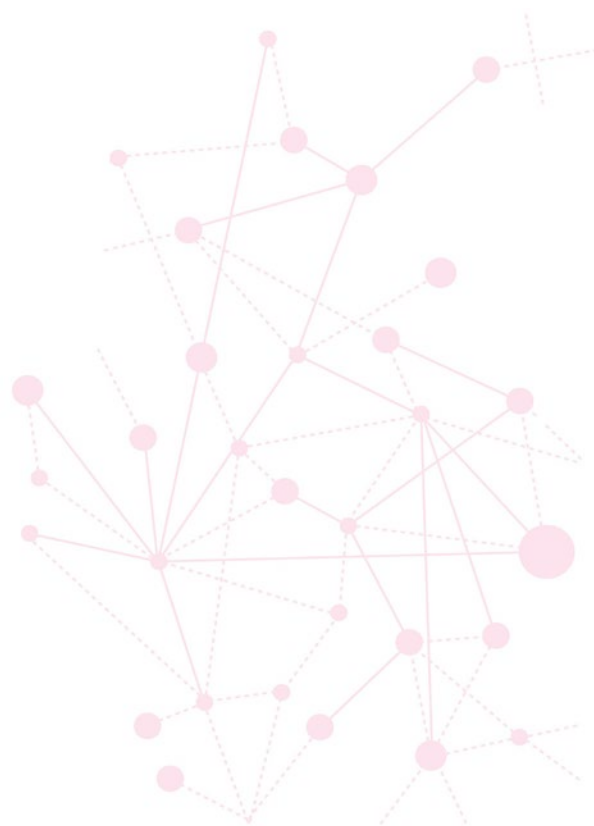
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