

# **CHARACTERISTICS FOR PRINCIPAL EMPLOYMENT:**

## **A BOARD OF TRUSTEE CHAIR PERSPECTIVE**

**Robert Wilson**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of educational leadership and management**

**Unitec Institute of Technology, 2008**

## **ABSTRACT**

Boards are responsible for the appointment of principal and school leader and of all the roles in which the boards find themselves undertaking, none is more critical than the recruitment of a principal. There is a gap in literature representing the view of the Board of Trustees (BoT) and their expectations regarding the characteristics of principals. With an already limited pool of quality and aspiring principals, boards and principal applicants require clarity as this may help stem some of the flow of principals leaving the profession and aspiring principals opting not to apply. Research has been prevalent in listing characteristics from perspectives, which do not necessarily represent the BoT's personal views or interests. In this thesis, I have undertaken this study to find what BoT chairs require as characteristics of effective principals. The research methods used were semi-structured interviews with board chairs and documentary analysis of recruitment packages.

The study found that BoT chairs considered the characteristics of principals to be of great importance to their potential effectiveness; confusion existed in relation to the use of terms such as values, qualities and skills; that four particular characteristics (communicator, collaborator, visionary, motivator) were critical; and that principal characteristics that fostered a positive working relationship were highly valued.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my father for his wisdom instilled in me as I matured and to tell him that this is for him, “thank you dad”. I would like to thank my mother for her love and support throughout my life for which I could not have coped without her.

I would also like to acknowledge my brothers Paul, John and family for their uncompromising support and encouragement in times when I felt the overwhelming weight of this thesis.

A special acknowledgment to Bayjour and Christiana, my nieces who taught me that what we do as adults sets the future for all children and to my Aunty Win and Patricia from their boy.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisor, Professor Carol Cardno for her wisdom and patience over the years. The extent of her guidance can only be measured by the benefit others will gain from this research.

I would also like to thank the boards and schools contacted for their input in this research.

**I would like to acknowledge and praise my Creator for the never-ending love and life, in which he has chosen my path.**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE .....	i
ABSTRACT .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION .....	1
RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY .....	2
RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	5
THESIS OUTLINE .....	5

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION .....	7
BOARD AND PRINCIPAL ROLES .....	7
Role of the boards .....	7
Principal appointment process .....	10
Site based selection variations .....	12
Challenges in principal recruitment .....	15
Role of the principal .....	16
CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS .....	18
Leadership and their qualities .....	18
The missing link in literature .....	27
CONCLUSION .....	29

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

INTRODUCTION .....	30
METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW .....	30
Rationale .....	31
SAMPLE SELECTION .....	32

Recruitment package sample .....	33
Semi structured interviews sample .....	33
RESEARCH METHODS .....	35
Data gathering methods .....	35
Semi structured interviews.....	35
Documentary analysis .....	37
RELIABILITY OF RESULTS .....	38
Limitations of the research .....	41
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	42
CONCLUSION .....	43

#### CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION .....	44
DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS .....	44
Source/Context of person specifications .....	46
Authorship/Intended audiences of recruitment packages .....	46
Intentions and purposes for person specifications .....	47
Recruitment package findings .....	47
Summary of recruitment package analysis .....	51
INTERVIEW FINDINGS .....	53
Board chairs definition of characteristics .....	55
Characteristics derived from the board chair interviews .....	57
Impact of characteristics on school effectiveness .....	60
Impact of characteristics on board and principal relations .....	62
Challenges in determining characteristics .....	65
OVERALL FINDINGS .....	66
Characteristics of an effective principal (Board and chair perspective)...67	
Importance of characteristics (Board chair perspective) .....	69
Setting and evaluating characteristics .....	71
CONCLUSION .....	72

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION .....	73
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....	73
Importance of characteristics from the board chairs perspective .....	73
Board and principal relations .....	76
The need for clarity in listing characteristics .....	78
Critical characteristics .....	80
CONCLUSION .....	84
Strengths and weaknesses of this study .....	86
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH .....	87
Suggestions for future study .....	87
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX ONE .....	88
REFERENCES .....	89

## LIST OF TABLES

### TABLE

2.1	Secondary trustees' sources of advice and support for their role .....	8
2.2	Board of Trustees training received .....	9
2.3	Key stages to the New Zealand principal recruitment process .....	13
2.4	Job specifications for principals .....	14
2.5	Content of advertisements .....	15
2.6	Qualities derived from having self-belief (KLP) .....	22
2.7	Leadership characteristics that facilitate school change (SEDL perspective) .....	23
2.8	Characteristics of an effective principal (UK perspective) .....	24
2.9	Characteristics of an effective principal (Danish perspective) .....	25
2.10	Leadership characteristics that facilitate school change .....	26
2.11	Characteristics from the literature summarised (Broad interpretation)....	27
3.1	Contact details for interviews .....	34
3.2	Timeline for interviews and recruitment package collecting .....	34
4.1	Wellingtons (2000) framework for analysing documents .....	45
4.2	School (1G) principal specifications .....	47
4.3	School (2G) principal specifications .....	48
4.4	School (3R) principal specifications .....	49
4.5	School (4G) principal specifications .....	50
4.6	School (5G) principal specifications .....	50
4.7	School (6G) principal specifications .....	51
4.8	Summary of characteristics from recruitment packages.....	52
4.9	Board chairs interpretations of characteristics .....	55
4.10	Summary of characteristics (Board chair perspective) .....	57
4.11	Evidence of characteristics from the board chair interviews .....	68
5.1	Board interpretations of characteristics .....	78
5.2	Examples of sentence structure from recruitment packages .....	79

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Head Teacher selection .....	11
Figure 3.1	Subset of interviews .....	32

# Chapter One

## INTRODUCTION

### INTRODUCTION

There has been considerable research of educational administration and governance in New Zealand schools, which has described a continually changing playing field of education (Bennett, 1994; Macpherson & McKillop, 2002; Whitaker, 2003; Robinson, Timperley, Parr, & McNaughton, 1994; Robinson & Ward, 2005). As a consequence of the policy known as *Tomorrow's Schools* (Parliament of New Zealand, 1988) introduced in 1989, New Zealand schools changed in the way they were governed with the introduction of parent elected trustees in a self-managed system (Robinson, Timperley, Parr & McNaughton, 1994). This was to change the old ideology of educational leadership, where education was run by a heavily centralised and regulated state system that had become inflexible to the stage of becoming unresponsive to local needs and changing economic imperatives (Robinson et al., 1994; Whitaker, 2003). This meant that Boards of Trustees (BoT) made up of parents replaced and assumed the powers of the former education boards, enabling schools to focus on the quality of education, rather than having to lobby for improved resources and current conditions of employment (Robinson et al., 1994; Whitaker, 2003). Consequently, the role of the school principal changed and they were expected to be the chief executive officer as well as professional leader of the school (New Zealand School Trustees Association, 2005) (NZSTA).

The need to meet the changes brought about by *Tomorrow's Schools* (Parliament of New Zealand, 1988) meant a change in the way the leadership role was perceived, altering tasks and demands required of the principal, that were once undertaken by local education boards (Whitaker, 2003). These tasks were embodied by; site-based or collaborative decision making where school leaders had to work collaboratively with parent elected boards, staff and the community with the intent of improving teaching and learning (Robinson et al., 1994; Whitaker, 2003). It also meant increased accountability for student achievement and public funds to the BoT and the

taxpayer. The reforms altered relationships with the community where principals spend more time with parents and interacting with business communities as well as marketing the school (Robinson et al., 1994; Whitaker, 2003). An issue arising from this role expansion for principals which is a concern, is the high turnover of school leaders (Whitaker, 2003), which Pounder and Young (1996) argue could be indicative of the challenges of site-based management, the tension between management and leadership, increased accountability, altered relationships between parents and community as mentioned earlier.

These changes not only impacted on principals and recruitment, but also on the BoT who have the important job of appointing new principals. Appointing a new principal would be the most critical of all responsibilities undertaken by the BoT (NZSTA, 2005). One difficulty BoT face in the process of recruitment is the changes to the leadership role. These changes mean that school leaders are required to be effective in required skills and competencies that enable successful performance from them as both the chief executive and professional leader (Cardno & Fitzgerald, 2005). This demand as well as stress has influenced recruitment (Bennett, 1994) and this has been highlighted by the reduction of the number of aspiring principals now applying (Pounder & Young, 1996).

## **RATIONALE**

The context of this research is the employment of secondary principals with the appropriate characteristics to fulfil the leadership role. There tends to be a gap in the literature from the BoT point of view and their expectations regarding the characteristics of principals (Law, Walker & Dimmock, 2003). Therefore, aspiring principals may have no clear indication of what characteristics are needed when applying for the position, other than those portrayed in recruitment package documents, which do not necessarily represent the BoT's personal views or interests. With an already limited pool of quality and aspiring principals (Chapman, 2005), clarity is most needed for boards and applicants, as this may help stem some of the flow of principals leaving the vocation and aspiring principals opting not to apply.

Clarity about what boards expect as key characteristics of principals should also help boards to attract and appoint good principals.

Although there are many reasons for the decline in aspiring principals, this research is based around the aim of achieving clarity about the characteristics required to fulfil the role of a principal (from a BoT chair perspective), with the intention of giving aspiring principals insight into expectations that BoT see as essential. The importance of this research lies in its possibility to highlight issues in the relationships between the boards and principals as argued by Pounder and Young (1996), where tension has been known to exist. Another reason for this research is the lack of knowledge in this area (Law et al., 2003). This gap in knowledge needs to be filled especially when the principal serves as both a leader and a role model for values and aspirations of the community (NZSTA, 2005). The importance of this is reflected in the very statement made by the New Zealand School Trustees Association (2005) when saying that, "...it is vital that there is a coherent match between the principal and the community that she/he is to serve" (p. 3). This exemplifies the very reason for principal characteristics valued by the board to be established and communicated to aspirant principals.

Parkes and Thomas (2007) argue that congruence between the values of principals and those of community and school systems influence their success as effective principals and their characteristics. Defining these values therefore, becomes a critical concern because they may influence the way principals are recruited or retained (Whitaker, 2003). These values are encapsulated within characteristics identified as essential, because characteristics help moderate the values of a person (Law, Walker & Dimmock, 2003). Defining the essential characteristics of a principal, means defining the very qualities or features that one wants a person to demonstrate in their professional behaviour (Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford, 2005). The Concise English dictionary defines characteristics as a collective quality especially moral or mental that distinguishes the individual. Therefore, characteristics will be used to encapsulate

the qualities and features sought by boards in an applicant for principal ship and will be the term used throughout this research.

What these qualities are and how they are recognised, remain unanswered in literature from the BoT perspective. Sergiovanni (2001) argues that BoT and school leaders must question what kind of leadership is needed as they look further into the future, for it was not a leadership of the past where changes were brought about by sheer will power or personality, but rather by someone who is focused on learning and the development of civic virtue. Characteristics of effective principals have been defined in a wide range of research such as strategic thinking, having and communicating a vision, understanding and managing change, managing and developing organisational cultures, people skills, effective use of resources, collegiality, professional development, promotion of the curriculum keeping the focus on teaching and learning (Bennett, 1994). These are not necessarily perceived by boards as characteristics of effective principals and this is where tension arises (Bennett, 1994).

In this research, I am aiming to explore what BoT chairs value when they appoint new principals in terms of the characteristics required. I also wish to understand why these perceptions of characteristics count as important and in the same process identify the challenges faced by BoT in determining them. Although the research will not result in a consensus by all BoT chairs, my hope is that this research of characteristics will be sufficient to aid BoT in their recruitment and conception of effective principals. This will also help to close the knowledge gap in the principal recruitment process. I have chosen to use the term “effective” to represent principals that fulfil the roles and expectations required by BoT chairs, as far as characteristics are concerned.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Questions that need to be addressed in order to understand the above context are:

1. What do BoT chairs require as characteristics of effective principals?
2. Why do they hold these perceptions of characteristics as important when appointing a principal?
3. What are the challenges faced by BoT in determining these characteristics?

## **THESIS OUTLINE**

This thesis is divided into five chapters, all expressing steps undertaken in researching the known topic.

Chapter one is the introduction, which gives an overview of the entire thesis explaining what this research is about and why it is being undertaken. It also provides the key questions that will drive this research.

Chapter two is the literature review which gives credibility to this research. This credibility is derived from other research that preceded and expressed the need to fill the knowledge gap that has shown itself in the recruitment of new principals.

Chapter three discusses the theory of methodology and why a particular methodology was chosen. It will also help discuss the methods and practice used throughout this research. In this particular chapter, it will also discuss the ethical issues that underpin this research.

Chapter four is the findings presented and used to find common themes. This chapter discusses how these results were acquired. These themes may or may not agree with the literature and therefore will be discussed at length in chapter five. The findings

will be based on two forms of data collecting and results will be presented for each one. The objective behind this research will be explored with these results in mind.

Chapter five is the discussion stage where reflection is given on the implications of the findings, based on the key questions that drove this research. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations for further research and for practice are made.

## **Chapter Two**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The reforms of education administration in New Zealand in the late 1980s resulted in the creation of a self-managed school system in this country. The policy document, *Tomorrow's Schools* (Parliament of New Zealand, 1988) signalled key changes that would establish a site based governance and management model, with considerable degree of devolution to schools and a smaller Ministry of Education, replacing the overly bureaucratic former Department of Education. A new *Education Act* (Government of New Zealand, 1989) established parent elected Boards of Trustees (BoT) for every school, with the principal as Chief Executive Officer of the Board responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. Consequently, the role of the New Zealand school principal was greatly altered and expanded and the BoT became the official employer with their major tasks being the appointment and management of the principal.

#### **BOARD AND PRINCIPAL ROLES**

##### **Role of the boards**

One unique feature of *Tomorrow's Schools* (Parliament of New Zealand, 1988) is that governance in each school became a partnership between professional staff, principal and the community in which the BoT are representatives (Robinson, Timperley, Parr & McNaughton, 1994). While in the past parents have been involved in schools, the extent in which they are presently, is broader than before especially in school governance. All New Zealand's state and state integrated schools have a BoT responsible for the governance and the control of the management of the school (Ministry of Education, 2008) (MoE). The board is the employer of all staff in the school and is responsible for setting the school's strategic direction in consultation with parents, staff and students (MoE, 2008). Boards are also responsible for the overseeing of management of personnel, curriculum, property, finance and

administration (MoE, 2008). Of all the processes undertaken by the board, none is more critical than the process of appointing a principal to a school (New Zealand School Trustees Association, 2005) (NZSTA).

*Principal recruitment*

Each school board is responsible for appointing staff, including the principal and has been given sole discretionary powers to fulfil this role (NZSTA, 2005). An early study in 2001 by the Education Review Office (2001) (ERO) found that the majority of boards undertook the responsibility of principal recruitment well. The ERO (2001) study also pointed out that many of the boards relied on professional advisors to support them during the appointment process and for advice about the quality of applicants considered for appointment. NZSTA (2005) advise their members to seek advisory assistance in the recruitment process, but does not exemplify what aspects of the process it would take. Table 2.1 below shows the various sources used by boards in seeking advice.

Table 2.1

*Secondary trustees' sources of advice and support for their role*

Source	Trustees (n=278) %
NZSTA-printed material	84
Guidance and information from principal/school staff	68
Ministry of education-printed material	63
Regional STA –material/advice	48
Other BoT members –Guidance and information	45
NZSTA-contact	38
ERO-material	38
NZSTA –internet material	36
Ministry of Education-discussions	29
Regular contact with other BoT	19

Source: Wylie, 2007, p.33

Many board members thought they lacked some expertise in areas tied to governance issues and sought advice, but to what extent this relates to recruitment of a principal was not clarified (Wylie, 2007).

*Board of Trustees training*

Research shows that 81 percent of boards received some form of formal training for their role (Wylie, 2007), but did not indicate whether this was in recruitment. Table 2.2 below shows a summary of the various forms of training received by boards (Wylie, 2007).

Table 2.2

*Board of Trustees training received*

Training provided	Percentage of boards
Individual training or full board training	40
Sessions bringing different boards together in clusters	56
Sessions focussing on individual roles of BoT	24
Trustees conferences	25
ERO post review assistance	13

Of the 81 percent of boards who received training, 72 percent felt that the various training providers normally supported by the MoE met their needs. Boards themselves acknowledge that they have the need for more training for better understanding of the areas in which they are responsible (Wylie, 1997), but I reiterate again, there is no detail as to what extent this training relates to principal appointments. ERO (2001) argue that it is not necessary for boards to have skills and experience in carrying out the entire principal appointment, but to know enough to be able to select and direct the professional advisors.

*Skills and characteristic requirements by boards*

Directions that boards set and give to advisors during the principal appointment are an integral aspect to finding a successful applicant (NZSTA, 2005). Much of the direction boards give to advisors is based on; community consultation, staff

consultation, appointment criteria and most importantly related to the skills and characteristics of appointees (NZSTA, 2005; MoE, 2008). Skills and characteristics are a reflection of what boards and their communities understand of the professional standards and what has a positive impact on student learning. Boards should look at the types of skills and attributes a person needs to lead the school and build the culture defined in the school charter (NZSTA, 2005; NZSTA, 2006). Boards know where their school will be going in the future and therefore should understand the sort of person required to achieve the school goals (NZSTA, 2005). When the board has articulated its vision of what it wants the school to deliver, then the key elements of that vision will point to some of the qualities sought in successful applicants (NZSTA, 2005).

NZSTA (2005) argue that characteristics are equally important as identifying indicators of what principals need in order to influence student outcomes and their effectiveness within their communities. However, how the boards define these qualities has yet to be fully understood, although it has been acknowledged that boards tend to give their communities and staff chances to express qualities they see as critical (NZSTA, 2005). Two benefits to community feedback are that the boards show their respect for the community's views and that; they seek an applicant who will reflect that community (NZSTA, 2005). Feedback to the community also shows that community's critical status in the appointment process. Another form of expression for qualities fed to advisors are in the core competencies for school principals by ERO (1995), which express various characteristics that help provide the most favourable performance for that community.

### **Principal appointment process**

#### *An overseas perspective of the appointment process*

A study commissioned in England by the National College for School Leaders (NCSL) on the selection process of principals was undertaken and a model of recruitment was derived at (Figure 2.1), after interviews with board chairs and newly appointed principals. The process shows sub groups of key players made up of

governors, Local Education Authority (LEA) and the candidates. The LEA meets with the governors to help produce the advertisement, job descriptions and person specifications (Earley, 2004). It is interesting to note that the advisors such as the LEA advise on the characteristics that are essential or desirable. A critical decision during the early stages of the selection process is to what degree the governors and LEA wanted the new principal to introduce change or maintain continuity (Earley, 2004). This was normally dependent on the school context, influenced by the governors and LEA perception of the outgoing principal, pupil performance and results of recent Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted) reports.

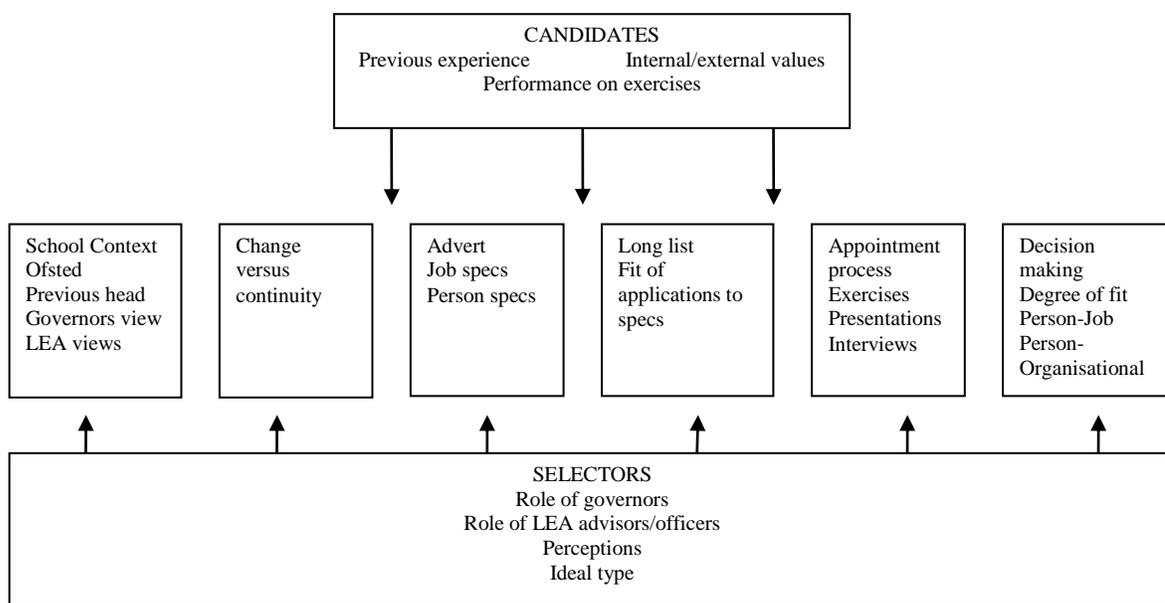


Figure 2.1: Head Teacher selection  
Source: Earley, 2004, p. 134

NCSL recommended further study to compare the processes in other countries to prove the reliability of the model portrayed in Figure 2.1 above. The study tended to show a reliance on the one model and a tendency to recruit people already known to the selectors, or the LEA.

### *Variations of site based selection*

Gronn (1999) describes three selection types for BoT in the montage of a school leader, and they are:

1. site based governing bodies or councils which are employing authorities which appoint candidates or employ someone else to do it for them which fall into the *stand alone* category;
2. site based governing bodies or councils which are part of the school and to which authority has been given them by the crown are *system* based; and
3. Site based governing body that contract an agency to screen and reduce prospective candidates. This falls into the *stand alone* category.

Depending on the degree of authority given to site based personnel, the selectors then devise documentation. Documents encapsulate profile, *values and characteristics* of the prospective appointee. Gronn (1999) points out that this will give expression to the consensus or majority rule, stopping assumptions about the desired replacement amongst the contending site based interests. He goes on to mention four types of selections, each with its own peculiarity and consequences for the incoming leader.

He lists:

- *crown heir* as that where the principal is publicly designated and probably even groomed to succeed the incumbent. Because this is more likely to be an inside appointment it would fall under the category of *stand alone*;
- *coup de`état* occurs when insurgents oppose the incumbent regime and makes it known to the preferred candidate. This is purely *stand alone*;
- *horse race* is when a field of evenly matched internal applicants apply and is purely *site based*; and
- *comprehensive search* is when external applicants are called in order to offer new blood to the institution and normally falls in the *stand alone* category.

### *New Zealand principal recruitment process*

There is no New Zealand research into such specific aspects of principal recruitment other than what NZSTA give to boards as a guide. Like their United Kingdom contemporaries, the New Zealand principal recruitment process is a matter of

knowing the requirements and needs to fill the specific role of principal (NZSTA, 2005). Also like their contemporaries in the United Kingdom, certain aspects of the process are similar such as; advertising, job specifications, person specifications to name a few. The major difference between the two is in the make up of the selection teams. In New Zealand, the immediate board and consultant/advisor undertake the recruitment process. In the UK, they use the Local Educational Authority (LEA) to work with the school governors in place of advisors. Table 2.3 below represents the recruitment process in New Zealand advised by the NZSTA (2005). It reflects the main concerns that boards need to deal with in the recruitment process, but does not stress this as the only model of principal recruitment. Other sources of input and guidance are through advisors or ERO.

Table 2.3

*Key stages to the New Zealand principal recruitment process*

Task
Procedure developed by those delegated the task of selection (decide if full board or committee)
Vacancy identified
Appointment process committee meets:
Analysis job
Job description/person specifications up to date?
Compile information pack
Decide on interviews: date(s), venue, and budget, in keeping with policy, e.g. reimbursement policy
Appoints an appointment secretary
Advertises job, with closing date
Written referees` reports requested if required (ensure that requirements of privacy are met)
This may also be done following interviews
Short listing based on selection criteria and reports
Inform unsuccessful and successful short listed applicant(s)
Committee prepares for interview: Room, travel arrangements, facilities, reimbursement claims
Interview
Recommend preferred applicant, with reasons, to board
Board decision on applicants
Letters sent to all applicants who were interviewed
Confirm appointment or re-advertise (as applicable)
Return documents as requested

Source: NZSTA, 2005, p. 9

### *Recruitment specifications*

Person specifications are to inform applicants of the expectations the board has regarding a new principal (ERO, 2001). There seems to be a consensus about what sort of information should be included in those specifications. Of the documents normally sent to applicants, 95 percent sent job descriptions and 78 percent used person specifications to assist with the appointment process. While some used person specifications and not a description, most had both. Ninety one percent of board's job descriptions specified the working relationship between the principal and the board. Table 2.4 below lists eight dimensions included in their person specifications.

Table 2.4

#### *Job specifications for principals*

Dimensions	Percentage
Educational qualifications required	72
Teaching experience required	89
Curriculum management knowledge required	99
Curriculum management experience required	87
Resource management knowledge required	78
Resource management experience required	69
Personnel management knowledge required	91
Personnel management experience required	91

Source: ERO, 2001, p. 8

No referral to attributes of the principal was made in the job specifications, but when the boards were asked what information was placed in their advertisements, 77 percent of boards gave out a statement of desired attributes (ERO, 2001) (see Table 2.5).

Table 2.5

*Content of advertisements*

Information	Percentage
Description of the school	95
Description of the school district	74
Description of the school community	72
A job description	59
A statement about desired qualifications	63
A statement about desired experience	68
A statement about desired personal attributes	77
A statement about the boards priorities for school development	32

Source: ERO, 2001, p. 6

**Challenges in principal recruitment**

A survey undertaken by ERO in 2001 of the appointment of school principals presented a worrying outlook for education in New Zealand. Many of the boards received very few applicants for the principals jobs advertised, especially in small rural schools. Other aspects related to the low numbers of applicants raised by the ERO study were recruitment and selection of principals. In this survey 25 percent of boards interviewed, stated they had difficulty with recruitment or selection. Around two thirds of the boards had encountered difficulty in getting sufficient numbers of applicants and quality applicants as well. A number of the boards felt the need to re-advertise the position, which turned out to have no more success than the first attempt (ERO, 2001). Of concern is that some boards mentioned that they had received only one or two applicants. Another area that boards found to be challenging was in selecting the right person for the job. One aspect to this was that some felt the enormity of the responsibility especially in making the right decision for the community. Another aspect worth noting was the pressure they felt as a board from the community to get a principal quickly.

### *Influences on recruitment and retention of a principal*

Changes in the role of principal and the board have had a major influence on recruitment and retention of principals today. The partnership that *Tomorrow's Schools* (Parliament of New Zealand, 1988) reforms hoped to bring about meant that principals were to take on more administrative tasks (Robinson, Timperley, Parr & McNaughton, 1994). Principals now take on roles that are encapsulated with new educational initiatives, new conceptualisations of leadership and changing student characteristics. An aspect of the new role is the high turnover of school leaders due to stress (Pounder & Young, 1996). A survey by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) in 1997, showed that school self-management meant greater workloads for principals affecting their quality of life outside the job (Wylie, 1997). These stresses can be indicative of site-based management, tension between management and leadership, increased accountability and altered relationships between parents and community (Whitaker, 2003).

A survey by the NZCER showed that tension between BoT and principals was an area least satisfying for a principal (Wylie, 1997). It was also discovered that certain areas of conflict arose from personality problems between boards and principals, and communication by the principal to the boards (Wylie, 1997). Past tensions between principal and boards play on the perceptions of job attractiveness when they influence the boards and the role they play in the selection procedures (Pounder & Young, 1996; Whitaker, 2003). Effectiveness of school leaders has become another demand on the selection process, expanding on an already critical aspect to the BoT's role.

### **Role of the principal**

The principal's role has been researched and delineated, and has been pivotal in pointing out how the *Tomorrow's Schools* (Parliament of New Zealand, 1988) reforms affected principals and the role they play in schools (Bennett, 1994; Wylie, 1997). New Zealand principals considered their roles to have changed significantly because of the changing aspects of their job. Change in the principal's role came from the shift of emphasis from leading professional to chief executive bringing about an

increase in administration and accountability (Bennett, 1994; Whitaker, 2003). Increase in administration meant that principals spent less time teaching (Bennett, 1994; Earley, 2004) and more time in leading communities of learners, general day to day running of the school and management of resources (MoE, 2008).

### *Human resource management*

Management of resources includes all the physical, human and organisational assets controlled by the school (Macky & Johnson, 2000) and the principal's role encapsulates a huge variety of human resource management. The human aspect to resource management is Human Resource Management (HRM) a synonym for personnel management (Macky & Johnson, 2000). HRM covers the strategies, policies and practices which organisations use to manage and develop the people who work for them (Rudman, 2002). HRM typically contains features such as:

- measuring actions against strategic objectives of the organisation;
- emphasising the central importance of line managers;
- advocating customised and individual responses to interventions;
- focussing on positive motivation rather than negative control;
- using process rather than standardised procedures;
- being proactive rather than reactive;
- being fully integrated into the day to day management of the organisation; and
- encouraging purposeful negotiation and resolution of potential conflict between managers and managed (Middlewood & Lumby, 1998).

HRM is predicted on the concern of principles for the quality of relationships and a desire to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy (Middlewood & Lumby, 1998). HRM approaches are considered normative where staff motivation, commitment and involvement is emphasised. The main feature of HRM is that it provides the background to rapid complex changes within education (Middlewood & Lumby, 1998).

### *Principal expectations*

The focus of the principal's role is that of building and leading a community of learners, staff and board, all with the integrated aim of improving student learning (MoE, 2008). More specified aspects to this role came in the setting of strategic goals with the intention of enhancing the role as educational leader and the obtaining and managing of resources that would be required to achieve the strategic goals (MoE, 2008). Other specifics to the role are in leading change, problem solving, building relational trust, managing of complex issues that are normal within a community of learning, and the interpretation and delivery of the national curriculum (MoE, 2008). The role of chief executive differs, in that principals are responsible for the management of policy and operational matters, including personnel, financial, property, health and safety (MoE, 2008).

Although school-based management reforms brought more opportunities and freedom for principals to make their own decisions, it also brought more accountability, consultation and adherence to assessing the teaching/ learning process (Whitaker, 2003). Principals also had to face the altered relationships with parents and community in collaborative decision making, interacting with businesses as well as marketing the school. Collaboration expresses partnership, co-operation, agreement, consent and working in combination to accomplish institutional objectives (Cardno, 1997).

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS**

### **Leadership and their qualities**

A major assumption in the past has been that leaders possessed universal characteristics that made them into leaders and accordingly research has tried to identify traits associated with great leadership (Nystedt, 1997). A study emanating from Ohio University identified two leadership style dimensions; behaviour directed towards task accomplishment, and behaviour focussing on interpersonal relations (Nystedt, 1997). In the 1960s, researchers had the view that effectiveness of leadership depended on interaction between leadership styles and situation. In other

words, leadership is dependant on the situational context in which a leader operates (Nystedt, 1997). This thinking was to change when leadership theories developed in the 1980s, focussed on charismatic, transformational, and visionary leadership and behaviour that attribute importance, both explicitly and implicitly to personality traits. This theory of charismatic leadership suggested that personality traits help to predict how a leader behaves, and which leaders will be effective (Nystedt, 1997).

Nystedt (1997) argues that leadership itself is a multifaceted phenomenon and cannot be captured by focussing on small numbers of variables. Describing leaders on only a few dimensions such as personality traits or leadership style dimensions, means that we cannot gain deep insight into the complexity of behaviours of leaders in different social settings. Nystedt (1997) argues that characteristics be examined from the perspective of the dynamics of the relationship between the leader characteristics and leader behaviour in different situations, rather than on the relationship between leader characteristics and group performances. Bock (1995, cited in Nystedt, 1997, p. 12) argues that the personality structure of an individual energised by motivation, dynamically organises perception, cognition, and behaviours to achieve certain system goals. Nystedt (1997) argues that from this perspective it is possible to account for predictable variability across situations and invariant qualities of the underlying personality. In other words, to study the whole person in context is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the importance leadership plays in organisations, which helps reduce fragmentation in individual functioning.

Despite the absence of a broad and common theoretical framework for interpretation of results, it has been recognised that personality may have a role to play in explaining leadership behaviour and leadership effectiveness. It also can be assumed that personality traits offer insight into why some people choose leadership positions. Personality also explains why people act the way they do in situations but more importantly, it is necessary to see personality relative to other factors when explaining aspects of leadership, especially when it is dependent on the nature of the situation (Nystedt, 1997).

### *Principal qualities*

Principals are now required to promote and implement change in education and this requires certain qualities (Mendez-Morse, 1993). Knowledge of these qualities is minimal, considering the importance they play in the lives of principals and the creation of effective schools (Orr, 2007). Nevertheless, research on effective principals has changed organisations effectively and has been significant in setting standards for, and giving other organisations a place to start. In New Zealand, like other countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shortages of quality principal applicants has undergone some research in the past. A Model: “Kiwi Leadership for Principals” (KLP) sent out to schools in New Zealand, is one initiative from the MoE (2007) to strengthen and support developments to fill the principal shortages. After much research, the vision for the future was based on the following question: what kind of leader/s will our schools need in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? This question and past research has raised issues that required further examination in order to fulfil the future expectations of the principal role:

- What personal qualities should they have;
- What professional characteristics might they need;
- What professional learning opportunities might enhance their educational and management practices; and
- How can we ensure that we have a good supply of the right people? (MoE, 2008)

The KLP provides a framework made up of *qualities*, *knowledge* and *skills* required of principals as we move further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It portrays four leadership qualities that underpin that of effective principals. The leadership qualities are leading with moral purpose (Manaakitanga), being a learner (Ako), guiding and supporting (Awhinatanga) and having self-belief (Pono).

*Leading with moral purpose (Manaakitanga)*, from a moral standpoint, principals see the central reasons for education as that of being centred on student learning and well being (MoE, 2008). This centred learning is the principal’s commitment to

professional growth and support of staff (MoE, 2008). Haydon (2007) also made this connection calling this the ethical path that principals pursue. *Being a learner (Ako)* is building collaborative learning and relationships within the school. The principal sets the example by his own learning, so that students, teachers and community can work together with the principal in contributing to the knowledge base of the school. The principal knowledge base would be substantial when it comes to professional knowledge and expertise. Being a learner also helps the principal to become up to date on new ideas, which is a fundamental expectation. Another form is in collaboration and support given to the principal to reflect and learn due to the crucial link between the principal learning and improving the teaching and learning of all students.

*“Guiding and supporting (Awhinatanga)* refers to the level of interpersonal care from the school leadership and is evident in staff relationships” (MoE, 2008, p. 23). Interpersonal skills are about working with and supporting others. This can be through encouragement, receiving and giving constructive criticism. It is concerned with listening to and valuing others opinions, and being able to convey a point clearly to a group. Spoken communication skills can overlap with interpersonal skills due to the part it plays in good interpersonal skills. The MoE (2008) talks of empathy, which involves the principal’s ability to sense feelings and perspectives of others. This empathetic caring for others strengthens the connectedness across the staff as a whole and produces productive relationships within the school. Guiding and supporting is also in the recognising and developing of leaders. By creating opportunities for leadership skills, staff, students and other members of the school community help to strengthen school wide commitment. This is not only important for the growth within the school, but also in sustaining school leadership capacity. The other aspect is support for teaching and learning by allocating resources in alignment with the school goals and expectations.

*Having self-belief (Pono)* conveys certain aspects to an effective principal and many come down to having self-belief (MoE, 2008). Having self-belief is characterised by

many qualities that describe an effective principal. Some of these qualities are presented in Table 2.6 below.

Table 2.6

*Qualities derived from having self-belief (KLP)*

<u>Qualities</u>	
Integrity	Self belief enables an effective principal to lead with integrity.
Convictions	Self belief also enables them to remain motivated even in times of conflict and difficult conditions because of the conviction they have that what they do will make a difference in their student learning. I must point out that these convictions stem from the right way of doing things rather than the wrong way due to the ethical neutrality in which convictions can be interpreted (Haydon, 2007).
Self aware	Principals understand their emotions and are clear about their goals.
Self confidence	Leaders with self confidence embody an upbeat and optimistic enthusiasm that become infectious.
Enthusiasm	Portrayed by the confidence in them.
Courage	Their courage to deal with issues with the belief that what they do is right even in times of conflict.
Resilient	Based on confidence in their own strengths and abilities to realistically plan, show skill in communication, problem solving, and ability to demonstrate, manage feelings.

Source: Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 22

Although the principal's job can be demanding, many aspects of self-belief of the principal have known to be ignored while fulfilling the role of educational leader and manager in negotiating the tensions that are involved.

*School based characteristics*

The Living Webster Encyclopaedic Dictionary of the English Language defined characteristics as distinguishing features, traits or qualities that define a person and research has been very definitive in recognising that there are certain aspects to the

principal that makes him /her function in making an effective school (Mendez-Morse, 1993). Gurr et al., (2005) argue that personal characteristics contribute to a principal’s ability to influence and succeed in encouraging a range of powerful interventions that can affect ranges of student outcomes. To establish what particular characteristics are recognised as essential in changing school culture, we must first look at the characteristics derived from other research and understand the principles on which schools may draw upon in their quest for effective leaders. There is no doubt that the characteristics of a principal are important, by the extent in which research as been undertaken in the past.

The South West Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) in America undertook a project to promote leadership and facilitate change amongst educational professionals. The intention of the project was to foster systems and schools in increasing achievement for all students. The focus of this synthesis was on the following questions:

- What types of individuals are these leaders who initiate and maintain successful educational change?
- Do leaders of educational change share similar characteristics? and
- Which characteristics are unique to specific roles?

Mendez-Morse (1993) submitted a literature review on “Characteristics of Leadership of Change” suggesting that effective leaders require sensitivity when dealing with less successful students. Other characteristics discussed by Mendez-Morse (1993) in her literature review to facilitate school change are summarised in Table 2.7 below.

Table 2.7

*Leadership characteristics that facilitate school change (SEDL perspective)*

---

Observed characteristics

---

Vision

Believing that schools are for student learning

Valuing human resources

Communicator and listener

Proactive

Risk takers

---

The characteristics in Table 2.7 above exist in the two dimensions considered necessary for effective leadership; *initiating structure* which is primarily a concern for organisational tasks, and *consideration* which is the concern for individuals and the interpersonal relations between them (Mendez-Morse, 1993). Leaders of educational change illustrate this with their vision and belief that the purpose of schools is for student learning. Valuing human resources as well as communicating and listening are directly associated with the dimension of consideration. Being a proactive leader and a risk taker demonstrates the dimension of initiating structure. Leaders of educational change respond to the human as well as the task aspects of their schools and districts.

In a Department for Education and Skills (DfES) funded study into leadership, Earley (2004) made an extensive examination of characteristics portrayed by highly effective principals. The schools chosen for the study were schools recognised by the Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspection reports, where leadership and management were highly rated. Central features of highly effective head teachers are summarised in Table 2.8 below. Input in this study was from teachers, middle management, students and Local Education Authority (LEA) advisors.

Table 2.8

*Characteristics of an effective principal (United Kingdom perspective)*

---

Observed characteristics
Problem solvers and solution drivers where they try to solve problems themselves or encourage staff to work towards solutions
Consulting
Respectful
Good listeners
Assertive leader
Accessible enough to staff and students knowing that the school still wants to be led
Supportive
Drives high expectations, but with a no blame culture
Always in a continual dialogue with staff
They showed courage in dealing with problems and staff
High visibility
Collaborated and set up a strong and effective leadership team

---

This study found that many of the head teachers saw themselves as problem solvers or were solution driven. It was noticeable that many commented on being visible to staff. Many were consulting, respectful and listening and seemed to be accessible, enough to staff and students knowing that the school needed to be led (Earley, 2004). The head teachers seemed to hold high expectations of performance with a no blame culture. Continual dialogue of school aims and processes was common. The head teachers showed courage in tackling staff and students who underperformed and had the vision to offer opportunities for improvement (Earley, 2004).

A study by Moos, Krejsler, Kofod & Jensen (2005) showed strong similarities to other schools that are known to have the SBM system in their schools. The exception in this study is that Moos et al., (2005) had preconceived ideas that leadership *depended* on such characteristics as communication, decision making and community building. Superintendents recommended the choice of schools for this research from local school districts based on principals they deemed successful. These recommendations were dependant on marks achieved and peer acknowledgement.

Table 2.9

*Characteristics of an effective principal (Danish perspective)*

---

Observed characteristics

---

Listening to students and teachers

Principals put an emphasis on student achievement

Principals were open to ideas from staff

Open to critical reflection and critical analysis

Concern for the welfare of the teachers and students

Supportive of values in the school shown by teachers and students alike

Teacher encouragement and continuous affirmation of doing right

Encouragement of teacher involvement in policy making and meetings

---

This study found that principals were good listeners and is emphasised as an important trait for school principals in Table 2.9 above (Moos et al., 2005). There was a strong emphasis on student learning, influenced in indirect ways by the principal

rather than on student attainment and results. Critical reflection and analysis, and concern for the welfare of others are prevalent. Teachers were encouraged to involve themselves in the decision-making. Principals showed great trust in the competencies of their teaching staff, which allowed teachers to seek advice from the principal on acceptance of their ideas from a parental perspective. The seeking of advice from the principal by the staff on ideas they had, was accepted as a form of feedback by the principal on what is going on and the communication in these situations was evident (Moos et al., 2005).

Table 2.10 on the other hand shows characteristics of successful school principals from an Australian perspective. As part of the International Successful Schools Principalship Project (ISSPP), Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford (2005) conducted multiple perspective case studies in Tasmania and Victoria. The focus was on leadership of principals acknowledged by their peers as being successful, and who led schools that could demonstrate success through student learning outcomes and positive school review reports. The findings showed remarkable commonality in all the schools demonstrating that core aspects of principals can be identified in ways that can help explain the complexity of principal leadership.

Table 2.10

*Leadership characteristics that facilitate school change (Australian perspective)*

Observed characteristics
Passionate
Enthusiastic
Highly motivated
Persistent
Determined
Assertive
Excellent communicators
Achievement orientated
Good interpersonal skills
Held high standards and expectations

All the principals were recognised for their distinctive characteristics and qualities, which are listed in Table 2.10 above.

*Summary of the Tables from the literature*

Table 2.11 below is a broad summary of the eight most desired characteristics summarised from the Tables above. Two characteristics: student oriented and good listeners were the most desired above all the others.

Table 2.11

*Characteristics from the literature summarised (Broad interpretation)*

Characteristics	Evidence from Tables
Student oriented	Principals put an emphasis on student achievement
Listener	Listening to students and teachers...
Communicator	Excellent communicators ...
Encourages	Encouragement of teacher involvement in policy making and meetings...
Consults	Always in continual dialogue with staff...
Assertive	Assertive leader...
Supportive	Supportive of values in the school shown by teachers and students alike...
High expectations	Held high standards and expectations...

Characteristics such as assertive, persistent, interpersonal skills to name a few were also named. The listing of the eight main characteristics does not demean the importance of the other characteristics mentioned, for quite often; they are linked or are based on situational aspects of the role. What these characteristics do show, is that all the schools involved see their priorities as those of student achievement, reflected by characteristics such as encouragement and being a good listener. Although literature holds strong similarities in many aspects, the immediate difference is in the context in which the various researches were undertaken.

**The missing link in literature**

Literature has been prevalent in discussing the characteristics of effective principals from the perspectives of other researchers and although many of the characteristics held strong similarities, the research differed in how characteristics were examined and on what they interpreted an effective principal to be. The different variants on which the literature is based are:

- the personal characteristics of educational leaders that appear to facilitate the implementation of school improvement interventions, especially for at-risk students;
- characteristics portrayed by highly effective principals. These studies were in schools recognised by the Ofsted inspection reports where leadership and management were highly rated;
- preconceived notions by the researchers that leadership *depended* on such characteristics as communication, decision making and community building. Superintendents recommended these schools from local school districts on the principals deemed successful; and
- focusing on leadership of principals acknowledged by their peers as being successful, and led schools that could demonstrate success through student learning outcomes and positive school review reports.

The endless lists of research show effective leadership from aspects individual to the researchers and the organisations that contracted them, or from organisations that suggested what were an effective principal and school.

Many of the schools researched related to how the principal affects education and the achievement of students based on recognition from parties other than the BoT. One unique feature of *Tomorrow's Schools* (Parliament of New Zealand, 1988) is that governance in each school became a partnership between professional staff, principal and the community in which the Board of Trustees are representatives (Robinson, Timperley, Parr & McNaughton, 1994). This sharing of governance has exposed a gap in the literature. The sharing of governance has shown that schools rely very much on collaborative relationships between the boards and principals. The importance of characteristics is not just from the aspect of the role, but also in dealing with the boards on matters that are important to school effectiveness. Unfortunately, representation from a board perspective in literature seems to be missing whether in New Zealand literature or from overseas. Another aspect to the missing literature is how boards actually establish characteristics required to fulfil the role of principal.

## **CONCLUSION**

There can be no denying that leaders today now stand at the threshold of an exciting era and yet at the same time will take on greater roles, expectations and accountability than ever before. The roles of leaders now seem to be endless and these changing roles require some changes in principal and board thinking. What will perpetrate these changes will be in the recruiting of a visionary leader with appropriate characteristics to bring about these changes and work closely with the BoT. To find this leader will require new mindsets in recruitment and possibly new ideas in what roles these leaders should play.

## **Chapter Three**

### **METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is concerned with the research design where the process of inquiry or framework is decided, based on the research problem, personal experience and the audience in which this research is to inform (Creswell, 2002). Qualitative research explores what Boards of Trustees (BoT) value when appointing principals in terms of characteristics. This chapter will justify the reasons for choosing the qualitative methodology over all the others and the inductive nature that lies behind it. Reliability and limitations of this research will be discussed with accuracy of the results in mind.

#### **METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW**

The purposes of this research is enlightened by two conceptions of social reality; epistemological and/or ontological views of the researcher to whether qualitative, quantitative or the use of both, through the mixed methods methodology is used. Although both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in social research can be utilised, there are distinctions between them. Qualitative research is a humanistic approach compared to the scientific approach of quantitative research (Keeves, 1997). Quantitative research is testing of theories using the practices and norms of positivism and the scientific models, while at the same time viewing social reality as that of an external objective reality (Bryman, 2004). On the other hand, qualitative research is in contrast to quantitative research in that it emphasises an inductive approach on individuals and their social worlds, while at the same time seeing social reality as constantly shifting (Bryman, 2004). This justifies the reason for using qualitative research and not quantitative, because human nature cannot be analysed using numerical analysis.

## **Rationale**

There are two alternative paradigms that could have been used in this research; the interpretive and the positivist views and although both are practical in their own way, the interpretive view is directed more towards viewing human behaviour of the BoT, rather than the forces deemed to act on them (Creswell, 2002). The positivist paradigm is inclined to focus on explaining human behaviour rather than on the understanding of human behaviour (Bryman, 2004). The central reason for choosing the interpretive paradigm for this research, is that it conceptualises human nature from within the board chairs and helps understand their subjective worlds (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006). Bryman (2004) argues that the interpretive stance is the laying bare of the way the social group interpret their worlds and that the researcher is attempting to interpret their meanings. This is a fundamental aspect to this research because there are no guidelines to what the BoT perceive as appropriate characteristics and many boards may differ in their views.

The ontological view can alter somewhat, the epistemological view for ontology consists of whether the BoT have a reality external to themselves, or whether entities should be built up from the social actors themselves. Constructivism is the continual accomplishing of meanings for certain phenomena, therefore is in constant revision by the actors, through social interaction (Bryman, 2004). Constructivism challenges the idea that the rules for BoT in defining a quality principal are pre-given and have no role in fashioning. This research relies more on the actions of the BoT members in their decisions and their interpretations of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2002). Areas of expertise and experience outside of education influence BoT and therefore, the researcher must look at the complexity of views rather than at the narrowing meanings or ideas (Creswell, 2002), which are too definitive.

The other ontological view is objectivism, which would mean that the BoT have rules, regulations and standardised procedures of defining characteristics of effective principals (Bryman, 2004). This is highly unlikely when discussing characteristics, for they are responsible for defining each individual interdependently and therefore

the phenomena's existence is dependent on the social actors themselves (Bryman, 2004) and their interpretation of each individual principal applicant.

### **SAMPLE SELECTION**

To better understand what BoT value when they appoint new principals in terms of their characteristics, depended on the techniques used to investigate this phenomena (Mills, 2003). The data gathering tools: semi structured interviews and documentary analysis required two separate sets of samples. A reason for data analysis and semi-structured interviews was the geographical difficulty in getting information from a good representation of boards throughout New Zealand and for triangulation purposes. The recruitment packages were required to cover the geographical problem, while the interviews were for triangulation purposes. The samples for the interviews were chosen from a subset sample of city schools (see Figure 3.1 below).

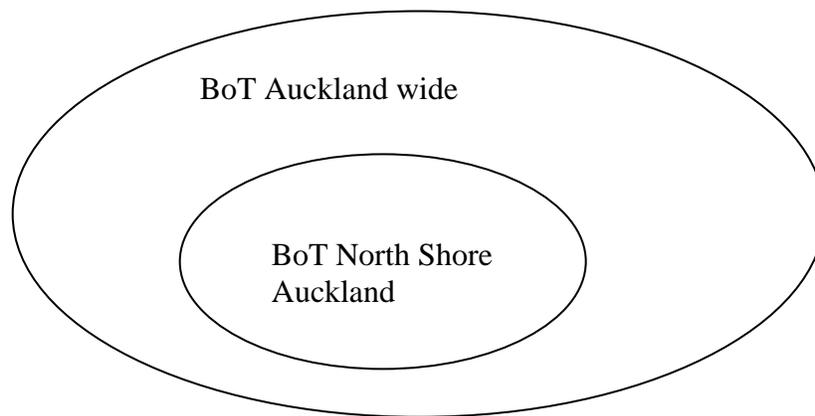


Figure 3.1: Subset of interviews

Getting samples from schools around New Zealand became an issue that needed to be rectified. Valuable feedback from other areas of the country lacked representation and could challenge the reliability of this study, especially when characteristics could differ to their city counterparts. In the end, getting coverage of other areas in the country did not prove too difficult, after opting to use documentary analyses on recruitment packages normally sent out to principal applicants. Another aspect to

using the semi structured interviews and recruitment package analysis was that they would make transparent differences between city and country schools.

### **Recruitment package sample**

The recruitment package analysis needed a good representation, which could substantiate the findings of the interviews. The process of finding such schools was by contacting those that had recently advertised for a principal, but unfortunately, this was to prove very slow and therefore would not be consistent with the timeline set. To remedy this, was by searching all the education gazettes, to find schools that had advertised over the last three years. Contact with schools was by e-mail, requesting recruitment packages that they normally send out to applicants. This was to benefit this research for it gave a good spread of participating schools and informed me of principal movement around New Zealand.

After e-mailing 37 schools an overwhelming response was immediate. Of the 37 emails sent out to schools, 30 percent of the schools replied. Lack of response by others could imply a number of reasons, but immediate thoughts would be on the age of the principal appointment, where old records were not kept and the use of agencies. Therefore the sample I chose for this research came down to six documents which after further scrutiny, many of them showed strong similarities to each other.

### **Semi structured interviews sample**

Five BoT chairs were interviewed using semi structured interviews. My original intention was to interview all members of each board to gain a good cross section of characteristics. Due to the timeline set, this option was not practical; therefore limiting the characteristics to the board chairs perspective only. The third question which helped drive this research was on what challenges are faced by boards in determining characteristics and this question was explained from the board chairs perspective based on experience in working with entire boards in the appointment process. Another aspect to be considered was the impossibility of interviewing the whole country, picking a representation for all boards therefore required a good

sample. A sample was selected from the North Shore of Auckland, where there were eight schools in close proximity to each other and not affiliated to any religious or private backgrounds. Selection of the North Shore was for two immediate reasons; less distance to travel between schools making interview scheduling easier and the similarity in decile ratings of the schools concerned.

Contact with the eight BoT chairpersons was by letter requesting their presence in an hour-long interview. Initially five replies came back with three accepting the opportunity to be interviewed and two declined. To get a good sample meant one of two options; seek other board chairs around Auckland, or chase up the board chairs that originally declined and offer other alternatives for an interview. Table 3.1 below represents the details of my contact with the different board chairs. One accepted the other option, which was an interview by telephone.

Table 3.1

<i>Contact details for interviews</i>		
	First time	After follow up
Agreed to interview	3	5
Failed to reply	2	1
Declined	3	2

To contact other board chairs around Auckland would have changed the timeline holding up the process presented in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2

<i>Timeline for interviews and recruitment package collecting</i>	
April	Contact schools inviting submission of documents
May	Send out letters to Board of Trustee chairs
June	Collect all documents for analysis. Collect all letters of reply. Start summation of documents
July	Complete all interviews
August	Start collating results

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

A major element of research is the data gathering and data analysis (Creswell, 2002). There are various methods that could be utilised for collecting and analysing the data and although they all have their place in research, some are more applicable to certain methodologies. This places importance on choosing the correct methods after predetermining their nature (Creswell, 2002). The difficulty that challenged this research was the fact that the BoT are defining new ground, when choosing principal characteristics and therefore meant that anything substantial in which to compare characteristics would be absent. There is little literature to guide the BoT and therefore data had to be gathered and defined based on patterns and themes, from both the interviews and recruitment packages involved.

### **Data gathering methods**

Data gathering is an activity that seeks to increase our understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Mills, 2003) and therefore is determined by the nature of the problem. In this case, it lies with the BoT chairs perceptions of characteristics of effective principals. To gather the required data for this research, documentary analysis was selected using recruitment packages normally sent out to principal applicants. To help triangulate the data collected, one-to-one semi structured interviews were used.

### **Semi-structured interviews**

Interviews in qualitative research can vary depending on the samples interviewed and the information you require. In this research, interviews were conducted to clarify and give greater in-depth information required for this research (Hinds, 2000). Two types of interview could be employed for collecting data; semi-structured and structured. Semi-structured interviews tend to be less structured in qualitative research (Bryman, 2004) due to the nature of interpretive and inductive research. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because of the leeway granted to the interviewee and the feeling of not being threatened during the interview process. Although the semi-structured interviews are less structured, their purpose is to create spontaneity that

allows further questions during the interview process to arise (Bryman, 2004). Due to the nature of the BoT chairs backgrounds and possible inexperience in interviews, semi-structured interviews was the best option. The human perspective of this comes to the forefront and it is important that the interviewee understood the issues and was able to expand on views he/she saw as important (Bryman, 2004).

### *Implementation of the interviews*

The majority of interviews conducted were in the boardrooms at the schools that those board chairs represented. The board chairs seemed to be relaxed and quite forthcoming in answering the necessary questions when posed. Three out of the four interviews held at the schools were during the week in the late afternoon. For transcribing the data, the Dictaphone was to prove very helpful. The Dictaphone caught the essence of the interviews giving the researcher a chance to decipher the discussions at length, especially when transcribing the data. Transcribing data is a crucial step in the process of data gathering, for it has great potential to lose data or create distortion, causing reduction in the complexity of the data collected (Cohen et al., 2000). To cut the distortion down to a minimum required continual referral to the Dictaphone. This research was not dependant on emotional or physical manoeuvrings of human nature, but rather the comments made. This meant that punctuation had to be correctly utilised when formatting responses, which as mentioned earlier required continuous referral to recordings made, and followed up later if required.

Coding of the transcripts was undertaken using questions from the interviews to stabilise the context in which the discussions were intended. These questions were to help in creating the appropriate coding necessary for interpretation. Such codes as char, echar, recr and imp were used. These codes were to prove necessary, due to the interpretative nature of semi structured interviewing and the ability of board chairs comments to cross over, or link to other questions. Analysing transcripts in qualitative research is almost inevitably interpretive, therefore becoming a less accurate representation between the researcher and the data (Cohen et al., 2000).

## **Documentary analysis**

Recruitment packages from around New Zealand were utilised to find potential trends that would direct my questioning. I had considered using professional standards for principals, but felt that these would set guidelines to ethical issues and expectations that might have influenced this research in some way. The recruitment packages are a source of information that would help portray the individual boards' stances, due to their authorship of the documents. This would help gain insight into processes and factors that lie behind the divergence, which can extend to such things as subcultures within the various boards (Bryman, 2004). The alternative to the recruitment packages is the interviewing of each individual member of the board, which is impractical from the perspective of time, and the nature of the research. Documents are objective in their writings and therefore require interrogation and study, to study human nature indirectly (Hinds, 2000; Bryman, 2004). This research instrument was utilised to examine content that offers credibility to the other research tools used.

### *Analysing the recruitment packages*

Documentary analysis comprises of searching out underlying themes in the materials being analysed (Bryman, 2004) and was discerned using Wellingtons (2000) framework for exploring documents. Wellington (2000) provided four immediate points that were necessary for analysing the recruitment packages. Those four points were context, authorship, the intended audiences, and the intentions and purposes for writing them (Wellington, 2000). In analysing these documents, it became quite clear that there was a link between context and authorship. The recruitment packages were written by the boards to attract appropriate applicants for the position of principal. Further analysis pointed out that the intended audiences were principal applicants with the intentions of being informed of what boards seek in the applicant to fulfil the role of principal.

Essentially three types of analysis can take place: an analysis of the number of times specific words or phrases are used, an analysis across ranges of material to establish topics or themes, and analysis that seeks more than one topic or category (Hinds,

2000). They were to be the motivating factors in which to construct data. The recruitment packages showed three immediate themes:

- the characteristics were listed differently in each package;
- the use of headings identifying characteristics to skills differed; and
- the layout of the recruitment packages.

The characteristics listed in the recruitment packages, were in either sentence form or singular terms making interpreting them difficult. To overcome this problem, meant that double interpretation had to occur throughout the analysis, when analysing and interpreting the characteristics. This double interpretation was in deciphering the singular characteristics listed and in turning the characteristics listed in sentence form into singular formats. The coding for the characteristics was established from three elements: personal, interpersonal and organisational qualities. Coding such as per, int and org were used to differentiate between them. Templates were utilised to record the most widely used characteristics.

## **RELIABILITY OF RESULTS**

### *Reliability of semi-structured interviews*

Integrity of results is ensuring that information gathered and interpreted is reliable and in the knowing *what is* and *what is not* reliable in qualitative research. Bryman (2004) mentions external and internal reliability both as options in qualitative research. Reliability in quantitative research is the extent in which things can be replicated (Bryman, 2004). On the other hand reliability in qualitative research is dependant on the fit between what the researcher records and that which actually occurs in its natural setting (Cohen et al., 2000). It was suggested by Cohen et al (2000), that the difficulty in replicating qualitative research is its strength. This is due to qualitative researches naturalistic, unique and idiosyncratic interpretation of the situations observed. In this research, replication of the exact moments of each interview is impractical (Bryman, 2004).

The interviews all depended on:

- the venue in which the interviews were held;
- interviewees understanding of the questions;

- times of the day in which the interviews were exacted; and
- the mental state of the interviewee and interviewer.

Cohen et al (2000) argues that the interviewer and interviewee both bring their own unconscious experiential and biographical baggage into the interviews and therefore question the reliability of each of the statements mentioned above.

Internal reliability on the other hand, is when there is more than one observer and that they all agree on what they saw and heard (Bryman, 2004). Cohen et al (2000) speak of internal reliability from the aspect of one observer and the ability of that observer to record accurately what occurred in its natural setting. Three immediate forms of reliability suitable to this research are respondent validation, seeking credibility from respondents and making sure that each question is phrased exactly and sequentially for each interview. Respondent validation offers reliability to the results in qualitative research through corroboration of the data. Respondent validation is where the researcher offers data to the people they have conducted interviews with (Cohen et al., 2000). For this research, respondent validation from the board chairs can be beneficial for the researcher, during the transcribing of the data from the interviews. Another aspect to respondent validation is that the boards receive copies of the finished research, which Bryman (2004) defines as giving credibility to the research. Another way of controlling reliability is by having highly structured interviews with the same format, sequence of words and same sequence of questions for each respondent (Silverman, 1993, cited in Cohen et al., 2000, p. 121).

Reliability does not just deal with the conduct of interviews but also in the recording of the interviews. Transcripts of interviews, however detailed and full they might be, still have the ability to remain selective, since they are selections of social situations (Cohen et al., 2000). Transcriptions of interviews can become decontextualised and abstracted, requiring an effective way of recording the interviews. To overcome some of these problems required the use of a Dictaphone for recording and transcribing the data. Another strategy used was in taking notes of the interview where necessary, to help with capturing the essence of the conversation (Mills, 2003).

### *Reliability of recruitment package analyses*

The analysing of the recruitment packages requires interpretation of the content in order to find meanings (Bryman, 2004). Interpretation of the recruitment packages was to help focus the problem being researched, by limiting and defining more clearly the topic being researched (Hinds, 2000). It was emphasised that the recruitment packages are required to help show potential categories or issues, which might be presented (Hinds, 2000). The opportunity to interview the originators of the recruitment packages would normally provide sufficient input to better the researchers understanding of the topic being researched, but this was not possible due to the time set for this research and the age of the documents. Reliability of the recruitment package analysis comes down to the matching of perceptions by the researcher of one package against another and the information given by the semi structured interviews mentioned earlier.

### *Triangulation*

Triangulation is characterised by the use of two or more methods of data collection utilised in the research of human nature. It helps to map out, or explain the complexity of human behaviour in social sciences (Cohen et al., 2000). Research without triangulation, can be insufficient enough to question the reliability of the results. It can also allow bias on behalf of the researcher to occur, or distort the researcher's picture of the reality in which they are investigating (Cohen et al., 2000). The variation on triangulation is structural triangulation, which explores the structural aspects of a problem rather than capture the essential elements discussed. To help triangulate the data collected, semi structured interviews with six BoT chairpersons and recruitment package analysis was undertaken. Triangulation in interpretative research is to investigate the various artists' viewpoints (Cohen et al., 2000), which recognises the different views of the individual sample groups of board chairs and national differences. In other words, triangulation comes down to what the board chairs say in the semi-structured interviews, compared to those in the recruitment packages. Triangulation is also between the individual results of the analysis against the literature from other sources.

### **Limitations of the research**

Limitations of this research were inherent in many aspects of the data gathering. These limitations fall into the following categories:

- broad understanding of the questions during the semi structured interviews;
- interviews organised with board chairs rather than total board input;
- lack of literature from the perspective of the boards;
- ability to generalise on the data and meanings rather than known facts;
- lack of input by the immediate writers of the recruitment packages; and
- interpretation of listed characteristics and their written formats.

The questions composed throughout the interviews were rather broad in their request for meaning and this was noticeable when transcribing the data from the individual interviews. Some questions were seen as similar by the board chairs and this was evident from the given data. To overcome this required some form of transmutation of data, to make sense of the data given.

The interviews were with board chairs rather than the collective due to time constraints. The challenges by boards in establishing characteristics may have included the relationships within the boards themselves and yielded further challenges faced in getting total consensus. The immediate limitation here is whether all board members preferred the given characteristics. The lack of literature was another limitation to this research, because it meant entering this research blindly. In most instances literature will help guide the researcher to direct their observations at certain areas of the subject that is normally devoid of facts.

Interviews were conducted around times suitable to the board chairs, which meant times in the evenings and during the working week. The attitudes of the board chairs differed and were reflected by comments made, or by body gestures. I must mention here the mental state of the interviewee and interviewer, for this was an important aspect that had to be taken into account. Unfortunately, decision wise, the interviews had to be held at times appropriate to the board chairs and their main occupations. Most board chairs would be tired and not motivated enough to answer questions fully

and this was made clear by one board chair. Another aspect was in the mental attitude of the interviewer, where questions could have changed or were posed, and possibly showing feelings originating from previous interviews or pre-emption of facts.

#### *Limitations of the semi structured interviews*

In the context of the board chairs and this research, the limitations of these interviews came down to four immediate aspects: based on misinterpretation of the questions by the board chairs, lack of serious structured questions, time being an issue and analysing of the comments made. Due to the nature of semi-structured interviews, questions are broad in coverage, therefore giving room for misinterpretation of the questions posed, by the board chairs. Bryman (2004) intimates this when saying that semi structured interviews are more general in their frame of reference. Time is also an issue with semi-structured interviews, because board chairs sometimes digressed from answering the questions intended. Time limits the patience and energy of the interviewee bringing about a change in concentration of the latter questions. Because of the misinterpretation of questions, analysing the data was also to prove difficult and time consuming, especially when trying to piece together the answers to the appropriate questions.

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics is the way we treat others in this research and is especially important where research involves the thoughts of others (Wilkinson, 2001). There are many ways in which to express the thoughts of others and the most important aspect to this expression is in the idea of seeking permission through informed consent. Ethical issues arise at varying points in research (Bryman, 2004) and must be clarified at the beginning to enable research be undertaken. The recruitment packages used as part of this research have the school identities withheld. The board chairs had their rights explained to them prior to the interview-taking place and consent was given by letter.

Another aspect to this is the protection given to the participants by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee who approved the requirements for this study.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter has discussed the legitimacy of the qualitative approach to this research. Researching interpretations of characteristics from a board chairs perspective was interpreted and not measured. The data gathering tools, semi-structured interviews and recruitment analysis suit the purpose of this research, because of the nature in which the board chairs perceive characteristics and the form in which they represent themselves to principal applicants. The reality of this research will lie in whether this methodology is enough to gain sufficient data to explain the board chairs conceptions and perceptions of characteristics.

## **Chapter Four**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is concerned with the findings presented from both the analysis of the recruitment packages, and transcripts from the semi-structured interviews. The focus of this chapter is in the collating of sufficient information to help substantiate or disconfirm literature and present an argument for further research. My intention is to list the responses from both data gathering tools in three sections; those from the recruitment package analysis, those from the semi structured interviews and then the consolidated findings. The consolidated findings will act as a summary of the first two sections, showing possible links to be later connected to literature in the next chapter.

#### **DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS**

Recruitment packages listing person specifications for principal applicants were analysed. The analysis was undertaken in an interpretive mode while acknowledging the possible difficulties in decoding the essential meaning of each recruitment package (Wellington, 2000). The difficulty in analysing these documents came down to one major factor; that of a document having the capability of having multiple meanings which made analysing them more challenging (Wellington, 2000). The alternative to using the points (Table 4.1 below) suggested by Wellington (2000), would be to interview the source of these packages which would have posed numerous problems without a guarantee of success. Two barriers to interviewing the source would stem from the fact that many of the boards may have new members since the origination of the documents and the other is guaranteeing that their attitudes would not have changed since the originals were defined, based on their experience of the present principal.

Table 4.1

*Wellingtons (2000) framework for analysing documents*

Framework	
Source/context	Meaning behind the document from what position the author is taking in writing them
Authorship	Who wrote it? Who are they? What are their position and their bias?
Intended audiences	Who was it written for, why them? What assumptions do they make including assumptions about the audience?
Vested interests	Not applicable
Genre, style and tone	Not applicable
Presentation and appearance	Not applicable

Three of the six points suggested by Wellington (2000) as a framework for analysing qualitative data were used due to the nature of the information being sought. The vested interests involved in this analysis were scrutinised from the researcher's perspective and not the vested interests of the boards. It was not necessary to look at the genre and style of such documents or tone; but rather the context in which they were written. The presentation of such documents did not require an in-depth scrutiny, but comments were made where applicable, referring to the headings used. Another point I must stress here is that comments made while trying to decipher these packages, were in alignment with the main questions as the source, so that some integration with the interviews in the next section can be made. The research questions were:

- What do BoT chairs require as characteristics of effective principals? This was answered from the recruitment packages that were analysed and characteristics mentioned during the interviews with the board chairs;

- Why do they hold these perceptions of characteristics as important when appointing a principal? This information was analysed from the interviews with board chairs; and
- What challenges are faced by BoT in determining these characteristics? This question was answered from the interviews.

### **Source/Context of person specifications**

The person specifications sheet/s being scrutinised were written to inform prospective principal applicants of required specifications and expectations of the board. They make clear the obligations required of the BoT, from a community perspective. One critical aspect to the boards role is the recruitment of a new principal, not only to fulfil the obligations, not only as a chief executive, but also as a leader of learning (New Zealand School Trustees Association, 2005) (NZSTA). Part of the principal appointment process is in notifying prospective principal applicants of the specifications required to fill the principal role. This is normally through recruitment packages sent out to applicants.

### **Authorship/intended audiences of recruitment packages**

Recruitment packages are compiled to alert applicants to the type of skills and characteristics required to fill the role as principal in that community (NZSTA, 2005) and are therefore prepared by the individual boards in which the principal will eventually become accountable to. The board being responsible to the community lists the required specifications in conjunction with community feedback and teachers. This feedback may come from the previous experience of principals, past results, changing community expectations, teachers and advisors. The specifications are written to attract quality applicants for the role of chief executive within the school.

### **Intentions and purposes for person specifications**

The intentions of the specifications sheet/s are to inform applicants of what boards expect when it comes to skills and characteristics. In saying this, it gives the applicants a chance to search within themselves and judge whether they are qualified to fulfil that role. There is an assumption made by the boards in presupposing that the applicants understand the context in which a lot of the listed characteristics are written. Many of the boards list specifications in the order in which they perceive and prioritise them to be important and this is shown by the layout in which they are delivered.

### **Recruitment package findings**

In this section, characteristics listed by the individual school boards reflecting their intentions and wishes for principal applicants have been analysed. Each Table below has not been refined or interpreted in any way, other than displaying what the boards have specified. A search for meaning was undertaken with the three main questions that drove this research in mind and although this cannot be confirmed; will try to analyse them discreetly. By this, I mean that unless we can actually interview the recipients, what the boards might be asking can only be interpreted loosely. Also ethically, the names of schools will be deleted from the listings and therefore ownership of such documents cannot be placed at any particular door. The coding shows the order in which the school has been listed with either a (G) state schools or (R) special character schools.

Table 4.2

#### *School (1G) Principal specifications*

---

##### Characteristics

---

Seeking a principal who is passionate about education and also working with adolescents

We want someone who can communicate and motivate students, staff and community

---

School 1G in Table 4.2 above was different to many of the recruitment packages submitted in that they mentioned several characteristics (which I have underlined) in

a paragraph. There was no heading to define the characteristics and yet the characteristics were easily recognisable and clear in meaning. The packages` overall title was “position outline” and showed two smaller titles, “responsible to” and “responsible for”, both in bold print. The rest of the package summed up the skills required. The characteristics portrayed, showed strong tendencies towards achievement and motivation from the top. This is reflected by the use of *passionate*, which intimates that they seek someone with education of adolescents as an essential characteristic and will *motivate* students, staff and community in following that passion. *Communicate* was also used which intimates communicating direction in which the school community must follow.

Table 4.3

*School (2G) principal specifications*

---

Content (Broad/ General)

---

Personal Qualities:

1. Personable.
2. Positive.
3. Honest.
4. Professional.
5. Ethical.

Knowledge, Ability and Skills

Our principal will be:

1. Skilled in leading a shared vision with all stakeholders
2. An excellent communicator able to build a cohesive team
3. Able to demonstrate high personal values
4. Able to inspire, motivate and challenge staff and students,
5. Sensitive to people of all cultures and differences

---

School 2G portrayed in Table 4.3 above, had their recruitment characteristics specifications listed under two separate headings; “Personal Qualities” and “Knowledge, Ability and Skills”. What is interesting is that the first heading; “Personal Qualities” was mixed with both values and characteristics. Such words as *honest* can be interpreted as a value and so can *ethical* depending on the context in which it is used. The list for the “Knowledge, Ability and Skills” started with “Our principal will be:” presenting a feeling of pride and ownership by the board of the specifications being sent out. The heading did not mention characteristics, and yet it

gives a good coverage of characteristics. The characteristics listed show strong leanings toward a principal with strong personal qualities, who is positive about themselves to *inspire* and *motivate a shared vision* among the staff and students.

Table 4.4

*School (3R) principal specifications*

---

Characteristics
Integrity
Sensitivity
Relationship with others
Resilient
Approachability
Commitment
Vision for the school
Perseverance
Enthusiasm
Warmth
Create team approach
Cares for each student
Encourages and supports
Firm, fair

---

School 3R in Table 4.4 above, showed a lot of depth and time spent on the production of this package in respect to the layout of the characteristics and the use of sub headings. The sub headings intimated possible areas of interest to the board other than just job specifications. The main heading “Key attributes for principal” at the top of the page suggested that the content was the central principle on which recruitment of a principal will depend. Many of the characteristics in the package show strong leanings toward relationships and support of learning. Characteristics such as *perseverance*, *create team approach*, *encourage* and *supports*, are directed towards learning within the school, while characteristics such as *approachability* and *sensitivity* reflect the empathetic aspect of the principal role. *Relationship with others* is mentioned, but does not explain whether this was with the board or with staff and community, so I would assume that it was with both. *Resilient* reflects the ability of the principal to take the highs of the job, as well as the lows and bounce back.

Table 4.5

*School (4G) principal specifications*

---

...High school is seeking a principal who is passionate about education and also working with adolescents. We want a leader who can communicate with and motivate students, staff and the community.

---

Table 4.5 above has strong similarities to Table 4.2. The similarities are in how the characteristics are laid out and the particular characteristics (underlined). Another possible similarity could be in the use of a consultant for both recruitment packages.

Table 4.6

*School (5G) principal specifications*

---

Characteristics

---

Very Good, energetic, resilient and robust.

Team Person

Evidence of leading and working effectively in a collaborative manner with a range of school...

Demonstrates decisive action when required.

Evidence of working with and reporting to BoT

---

Table 4.6 above was set out under three headings “professional, personal” and “general”. Each of these areas expressed the level of expectations required in two vertical columns; one called “desirable” and the other “essential”. Under the “professional” title, was an assemblage of skills. The other two titles “personal” and “general”, both showed a mixed bag of expectations as well as characteristics. Characteristics such as *very good* and *energetic* tend to be more directed towards personality. The characteristics overall tend to express the board’s wish to employ a principal who is able to show change and make changes when necessary. Being *a team person* reflects the principal’s ability to be able to work with all parties in a supportive role and this was expressed further when requiring evidence of working with the board was mentioned. The characteristics also reflect the need for a principal who can be fair and at the same time *decisive* in actions that are required when dealing with staff.

Table 4.7

*School (6G) principal specifications*

---

Characteristics

---

Our principal will be decisive, assertive, flexible and able to demonstrate initiative

Our principal will be an excellent communicator able to build harmonious and purposeful working relationships with staff, school board, students and the community

Demonstrate a professional integrity and ability to lead, appraise, delegate and motivate staff

A shared vision for the school, and capacity to support and assist the school board to break this down into short and long term goals and priorities

---

In the Table 4.7 above under the heading “Knowledge, Ability and Skills” started with “Our Principal...” This might suggest a feeling of ownership in the recruitment process by the board. There tended to be confusion over the use of characteristics and borderline values, when using terms such as *integrity*. The characteristics mentioned reflected a strong emphasis on the role of the principal from the board perspective. The characteristics *decisive*, *assertive* and *demonstrate initiative*, show a need for a principal who can guide and lead the school while recognising their own professionalism and expertise in this area. Also mentioned was that the principal must be able to build a culture of harmony within the staff and students and this was also expressed in the line that the principal must have good working relationship with staff, boards and the community. What is interesting is the use of the word, integrity especially when using such characteristics as *appraise*, *delegate* and *motivating staff*. It is also noted that the board require someone who can be *supportive* and assist the board in governing the school.

**Summary of recruitment package analysis**

Key findings from the analysis are:

- key characteristics;
- Structure of the characteristics listed;
- inconsistent use of headings; and
- clarity of priorities;

Table 4.8

*Summary of characteristics from recruitment packages*

Characteristics	Totals	Supporting Evidence
Communicator	4	1G: We want someone who can communicate and motivate students, staff and the community. 2G: ...an excellent communicator able to build a cohesive team.
Collaborative	4	3R: ...relationships with others 5G: Evidence of leading and working effectively in a collaborative manner with a range of school groups 6G: ...and capacity to support and assist the school board to break down into short and long term goals and priorities.
Visionary	4	2G: Skilled in leading a shared vision with all stakeholders 3R: Vision for the school. 6G...a shared vision for the school...
Motivator	4	1G: we want someone who can communicate and motivate students and staff... 2G: ...motivate and challenge staff and students.
Empathetic	3	5G: Evidence of empathy and recognition of... 2G: Sensitive to people of all cultures and differences
Passionate	3	1G...seeks a principal who is passionate about education..... 4G...is seeking a principal who is passionate about education.....
Enthusiastic	2	3R: Enthusiasm 8G: ...requires in its principal, an enthusiastic, committed, and forward thinking ...
Committed	2	8G: ...requires in its principal, an enthusiastic, committed, and forward thinking ... 7G: Commitment to improving academic achievement and fostering...
Inspirational	2	2G: ...able to inspire ... 7G: Inspiration and innovation

The characteristics; *communicator*, *collaborator*, *visionary* and *motivator* were the four that stood out as important from all packages. In most cases, the presentation of these characteristics tended to give obvious meanings to what the boards require. The structure in which the characteristics were expressed tended to differ in many of the recruitment packages. Many of the characteristics were written in a sentence format expressing what role the characteristics were to play (see Table 4.8). An example of this is “Our principal will be an excellent communicator able to build harmonious and purposeful working relationships with staff, school board, students and the community”. Other recruitment packages used singular terms such as “interpersonal” or “motivator”. Another point to make here is that some packages used both formats in which to list the characteristics.

Inconsistent use of headings was immediately noticeable when the recruitment packages used various headings to describe the same expectations. The most abundant was “Knowledge, Ability and Skills”. One critical inconsistency was in describing where to locate the characteristics. Many of the packages did not attach any immediate recognition to the characteristics and this was made clear by the numbers of characteristics scattered amongst specified skills. Some packages showed a paragraph expressing the characteristics sought, but this was not classified in any way apart from what the content expressed. This is not to say that characteristics were not identified at all, because some schools used the headings of “Personal Qualities” or “General”. The priority in which the characteristics were placed seemed unclear and did not seem to specify any particular order. Many of the recruitment packages tended to list characteristics in the skills, or were placed in paragraphs at the top of the page, or at the very bottom. One aspect worth noting here is that skills happened to overshadow everything else on the page in all instances.

## **INTERVIEW FINDINGS**

This section shows the findings from the interview questions. The immediate questions used to motivate response from the board chairs (BC), have been arranged

in groupings that are contextually linked and identified by ‘what, why’ and the ‘how’ categories. For the full set of questions, see Appendix A.

What characteristics are required?

- What is your interpretation of characteristics?
- What characteristics do you think a principal should have to fulfil the role expectations of the board?

Why are characteristics important?

- Why/ how do characteristics of a principal impact on the school effectiveness?
- How do characteristics of the principal impact on the relationship between the board and the chair?

How did they go about defining the characteristics?

- How do boards set the characteristics when recruiting a principal?
- What challenges does the board face in determining these characteristics?

The categories are explained in more detail to show how they were used and why they were used, so that the process of the interviews will be understood. The “what, why” and “how”, do not signify how the questions were written, but how the researcher understood them in the overall pattern.

- The “what” questions were used to investigate what board chairs interpret as characteristics and what they think characteristics actually mean. This was to help define the problem board chairs might have with the term characteristics if any, and what their understanding of the interviews were;
- The “why” questions were used to focus on what problems may arise if characteristics are ignored by boards and the effect this will have on the performance of the school and why they are necessary. It looks at two areas;

the relationship between principal and board and the effect this may have on the performance of the school, and secondly; how the characteristics of the principal affect the school overall. The reason for this is that in the long run, the effectiveness that the characteristics have on the school can be moderated by the relationship of the principal and the board; and

- The “how” questions were used to obtain feedback from board chairs in relation to the setting of characteristics and the challenges faced in establishing them.

**Board chairs definition of characteristics**

This question explored the understanding board chairs had of the term characteristics. The definitions are summarised in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

*Board chairs interpretations of characteristics*

(BC)	Interpretation of Characteristics
BC 1	Attributes of a person that drives their thinking
BC 2	How the principal reflects their style as a manager, this is viewing him as a chief executive. (Characteristics reflect their style)
BC 3	The personality of the candidate along with their values, strengths and weaknesses.
BC 4	Knowledge, qualities, attributes and skills.
BC 5	This is difficult because values and characteristics are quite similar.

The responses reflected a good understanding by many of the board chairs of characteristics, although some board chairs did express difficulty in trying to define the difference between values and characteristics.

BC 5: I was going to ask you how you separate them from the values. They are so difficult because characteristics and values are so intertwined. I don't know how you would separate them to be honest.

BC 2: Have I got the right interpretation for characteristics?

A number of the board chairs mentioned values in their comments on characteristics and one or two had difficulty trying to see one without the other. One board chair spoke of balance between the school culture and values and the prospective principal's values and culture.

BC 3: For us there are candidate's culture and values and there is the schools culture and values. That alignment is very important. At some point there has to be a connection between values and culture and it is important for a school to know what characteristics they need in order to match these in a principal.

BC 4: Values of a principal and what he/she values. Personal values.

One board chair felt that although characteristics are important, certain terms describing particular characteristics were being used as phrases to describe some form of trend, rather than being realistically appropriate for the chief executive role.

BC 5: I don't like the word visionary. Visionary is a bit aggh, like a catch phrase for leadership characteristics. We had a consultant who spoke of visionary this and visionary that, a lot I consider to be hype and not realistic.

BC 5 then went on to expand further by saying:

BC 5: ...both were good but both had that hype that people go through; charismatic, visionary etc. But in my view a good principal is quite different.

BC 5 reflected concern over the use of characteristics rather than values and skills and explains why:

BC 5: The principal's job is multifaceted in skills, which is the most difficult part about it. So you would have a set of skills and the principal, not any one principal will have them. Then you would have values and how you would (pause) lot of things are not measureable, they are more in-depth of people. Their experience and characteristics of, you know how some people don't have depth, but measure in a surface way in a materialistic world ...

### **Characteristics derived from the board chair interviews**

The characteristics reflected throughout the interviews are listed in Table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10

#### *Summary of characteristics (Board chair perspective)*

---

Characteristics
Integrity
Ability to get on with people
Work ethic
Good interpersonal skills
Ability to manage themselves
Ability to deal with requirements of the job (e.g. boards, ministry, welfare, staff, students and teachers etc)
Ability to inspire and influence staff and students
Ability to inspire the boards
Be a team player (e.g. with parents and boards)
Be an educational leader and manager. (Chief executive)
Empathetic
Visionary
Self motivated
Need to have courage and commitment to deal with adversity
Ability to uphold the values of the school
Collaborative with the board
Ability to lead change and people
Be emotionally intelligent
Be able to delegate
Bridge builders

---

What is interesting about Table 4.10 above, is that many of the characteristics expose the impact they have on board chairs conception of school leadership, by the way they have been worded. An example of this is “...need to have courage and commitment to deal with adversity”. Here they are asking for a principal who can solve difficulties no matter how much pressure may be exerted on them. This comment suggests possible difficulties in the past between a principal and either staff or community. Other characteristics mentioned are used singularly, such as *integrity* and *visionary* to name a few. Another point to raise here is that the majority of characteristics mentioned, fall into the interpersonal skills category which leads me to believe that communicative skills, social skills and emotional intelligence has been rated quite highly by the board chairs. An aspect of emotional intelligence was mentioned by a board chair when discussing a principal’s ability to rise above petty feelings.

BC 5: ...they are an intelligent lot and know how to look after themselves but can be precious about things, so a good principal must know how to absorb them and rise above them and then join them back together and that’s a big skill. Another thing that helps is that they are not defensive in themselves ...

Another aspect to relationships reflects certain aspects of interpersonal skills.

BC 2: ...these are some characteristics you would find in any common company who have a board, it is about their ability to manage themselves differently in relation to the various groups of people and organisations that they need to deal with.

BC 1: In this day and age in a school, you cannot lead by decree for it does not work. Teachers are interesting ... they need to feel they are participating in what is happening to get the best out of them. It is way of life not a job to be a decent teacher.

A comment made that linked interpersonal skills with leadership and learning:

BC 3: The principal needs to have the ability to influence, inspire and motivate staff and students with respect to the school vision.

The comment made by BC 4 talks of change and implied that leading change must be linked to the ability to lead people.

BC 4: ... most important is the ability to lead change and people. The principal must be a leader of people which leads to a leader of change .....

BC 4 and 5 both mention some qualities that bring about leading change. They both expressed the need for the principal to be emotionally intelligent when it comes to leading people and BC 5 goes further in linking it to board and principal relationships. BC 1 spoke of the need of the principal to interact with the staff on a social, emotional and communicative level and goes on to mention that from a social skills point of view that:

BC 1: The principal needs the ability to get on with people and have a functional working relationship with them. One person who can get someone to do what they want them to do without having to tell them how to do it.

Other characteristics commented on were collaboration, being a learner and delegator. Collaboration was placed very high on the list by some boards and BC 3 made the comment to support that by saying:

BC 3: We look very much for a person who considers the board as a team in which the principal is an integral part of that team in terms of governing the school, so the characteristics of the principal has to be that they collaborate with the board in order to govern and manage the school effectively. So that

ability to collaborate in a team like way, we consider to be a very high and valuable characteristic of a principal.

Courage as a characteristic was mentioned in terms of the relationship between the board and the principal and can be see in a similar vein to that of collaboration.

BC 5: Courage is a big one, principals go before the board and they have the courage to be open about what's going on, mistakes and otherwise. You don't have to look behind closed doors.

Another comment made as a continuation to the previous comment implied that BC 5 was talking about collaboration when he said that:

BC 5: Another thing that is helpful is that they are not defensive in themselves and the board brings to the table a wealth of experience that is why you pick them...

Being a learner was mentioned when it was expressed that the principal:

BC 4: .....must be a learner in so far as being a learner themselves and has the will to do their own professional development.

### **Impact of characteristics on school effectiveness**

The majority of board chairs had a similar comment to make in this area which set the tone immediately on how in their view, characteristics of principals impact on school effectiveness. It was interesting to note that all the board chairs saw the principal as the holder of such characteristics. This helped generate the feeling of how important these characteristics are on all facets of the school. Three areas expounded on were the managing of the school, setting of standards and the influence the principal plays on staff and students in the school.

One facet mentioned, was the strategic planning of the school where one board chair made the connection between governance and administration of the school and the relationship they both had. This relationship benefited the school, with positive working relations in such aspects as the drawing up of the school strategic plan, in conjunction with the school charter.

BC 1: The boards deal with the strategic direction of the school, the principal shows the direction...

BC 1 then goes on to mention that although the boards work with the principal in strategic planning, the principal also sets the standards in order for the school to have any consistency at all. An analogy was given to support the previous comment:

BC 2: Principals are like parents in a house, if they are good managers of the household, the household functions well.

This was also touched on by another board chair:

BC 3: I actually think the person at the top has a huge influence over the performance of the organisation and is no more pronounced than in a school where the values, the culture and the standards of the school comes very much from the top and the difference between a good school and a bad school is quite often down to a bad principal.

These comments place emphasis on principal leadership as the fundamental guide to how the school functions, rather than on the board. It also tells us that the board chairs are more inclined to acknowledge the importance they play in recruiting an effective principal.

BC 2: ... in a school the principal has to inspire a whole range of different people and if they don't inspire the teachers, nothing happens the school blunders along because the teachers have to inspire the kids.

BC 2: .....and then of course apart from inspiring the teachers, they have to inspire the students and the board as well as the community.

### **Impact of characteristics on board and principal relations**

Although the question was seeking what impact, characteristics had on board and principal relations, the board chairs spoke in terms of the principal rather than the characteristics per se. All the board chairs interviewed, commented on how important the relationship is between the board and the principal from two aspects; collaboration and working relationships. Although one could say that both aspects are similar, some of the board chairs made the point of separating the two when making certain comments. An example of this is the comment made by BC 2 intimating that the relationship, although a working one, can be more collaborative in order to get the support a principal needs from board members:

BC 2: Boards of Trustees employ their chief executive, the chief executive appoints the professional staff and the chief executive is answerable to the board. I think there is a comfort in that because although the chief executive should know about education, it's like running a company on your own and is a very lonely place at the top and you can't know everything. And what you've got is a bunch of supporters and sometimes specialist supporters.

The previous comment was expanded further:

BC 2: The principal has someone to support him in areas that they are not an expert in.

This makes the point that the relationship between them both can work together rather than apart and to be apart means that the principal leads alone. This is possibly based on the two aspects to the relationship, where one is collaborative and friendly compared to the other, where both work together, but not always as a governing body. When they are not working together as a governing body, this can cause conflict and this is supported by the comment that BC 3 made when saying that:

BC 3: Any division between the principal and the board is detrimental to the school.

He goes on to elaborate that although they may be in conflict on some issues, they can still forge a relationship in a collaborative way.

BC 3: There will be times when we disagree, but if the relationship is healthy then disagreements can be discussed openly and properly so the whole team including the principal move forward, accepting the decisions being made within the board.

This healthy relationship mentioned, suggests a relationship where the principal and the board place the school above personal feelings, allowing the principal to be up front and honest with the board on important issues. This is intimated by the comment BC 5 made that:

BC 5: Courage is a big one for a principal to go before the board and have the courage to be open about what's going on, mistakes or otherwise. This means that the governance issue becomes straightforward.

BC 5 spoke of personal conflict from another perspective placing the focus on a personal level about board members creating a rift with the principal over the amount of power the principal might have when saying:

BC 5: You may get people who are shallow in the sense that they will conflict with each other because principals are bosses in their own right and tend to be decision makers and effective ones, which causes jealousy or resentment from board members.

This causes relationships to change and the board drives the principal rather than collaborating, which is not always beneficial to the running of the school. This point was made in the next comment:

BC 1: Having a good working relationship at that sort of level, you cannot have a master servant relationship where the board tells the principal to go and do this, go and do that for this cannot work at all. It has to be a good working relationship where both sides believe in what they do rather than have the board say go and do that. If you do, you have a dysfunctional school.

This relationship can come under attack when there is a new turnover of board members and not the original board members who employed the principal. This would mean that characteristics may need to change and therefore require someone who has the appropriate characteristics to share. This was intimated by the comment:

BC 3: Characteristics are important to the relationship because the principal has to see the board as a team and therefore must collaborate with the board in order to govern and manage the school.

BC 3 then went on to mention required values. These required values are what the boards believe in and the values required in leading the school and working with the board. If the principal does not have similar values as the board, then problems arise in the school.

BC 3: The principal must be happy to feed the board on all information rather than just enough to satisfy the board. The relationship between the board and the principal is fundamental in order for the school to progress.

BC 2: The principal and the board must get on, that relationship is fundamental because the relationship between the board and the principal makes the school work and this relationship is like a mayor and a council or chair of a company, you have a chief executive with whom you don't have a good relationship with, then one of you is wrong".

### **Challenges in determining characteristics**

When asked what challenges faced the board chairs in the undertaking of this process, it was confirmed that many of them found this whole process of recruitment a challenge. Although some themes arose, some board chairs did not see any challenge in determining the characteristics.

BC 2: ...the character defined for the principal in some respects is not that hard because they are of the community, so they are able to say, "you know this is a community..."

Other board chairs comments presented themes that exposed the challenges that many of them had. Aspects to the recruitment process that they referred to were in:

- lack of experience of boards;
- assessing appropriate characteristics in applicants; and
- time assessing applicants of the appropriate characteristics.

### *Lack of experience of boards*

One board chair referred to the competency of boards in the recruitment process and the assessing of appropriate characteristics required.

BC 2: I am not sure; there are not too many challenges in determining characteristics. The only challenges you would get with the board is where they don't have expertise. For an example, you advertise the job and get ten people apply. You narrow down to three and at the end of it you say "oh well, they aren't that great" so the board picks the best of the three.

### *Assessing the appropriate characteristics of applicants in a limited space of time*

One board chair expressed that the difficulty lay in assessing whether the applicants have the required characteristics, in the time allowed between the individual members of the board and the applicants.

BC 3: You only have two short hours with the candidate, so the challenge is to make sure what you see is what you get because you know what you are looking for, but it is the question to whether that person matches the characteristics you are looking for.

BC 3 then emphasised the link to the community.

BC 3: I would say no to that.....in our area so has its own unique characteristics as well. It is important that we appointed a principal who was in tune with the community here.

## **OVERALL FINDINGS**

This section summarises both the interviews and the recruitment package analysis to form an overall view of the findings and will later be linked to known literature with the hope of finding a conclusion to this research. In order to compare the findings against known literature, meant that this section had to be based on the board chairs

interpretation of characteristics and what characteristics are required from a board chairs perspective. To understand why they interpret characteristics the way they do, required some understanding of the impact characteristics have on school effectiveness and board and principal relations. Another important aspect is how these characteristics were set and the challenge boards had in establishing them as a requirement, and also in applicants being interviewed. The summary below is very broad and can be defined more from the information listed above.

### **Characteristics of an effective principal (Board and board chair perspective)**

Responses to this question came from both the recruitment packages and interviews. The questions I used to get the desired responses were: *what was their interpretation of characteristics* and *what characteristics did they think a principal should have to fulfil the role expectations of the board?* The first question; their interpretation of characteristics was to get them thinking about what characteristics actually were. This was imperative in helping authenticate the results. It was to confirm that the board chairs understood the definition of characteristics.

#### *Board chairs interpretation of characteristics*

The board chairs interviewed reflected a good understanding of what characteristics actually meant. In saying this, a couple of board chairs had difficulty dividing values and characteristics, which did not reflect ignorance, but rather the close similarities that can create confusion in dividing them. It also reflected the board chairs comparative understanding of where they saw characteristics, compared to values or that one cannot exist without the other, especially in this important job in which they are required to fulfil. This would suggest that what board chairs value are not just the characteristics, but also the very values which underpin the characteristics of a good principal or chief executive. This told me immediately that there would be difficulty in getting a good response from all of them and could reflect difficulty later on.

*Characteristics from a board and board chair perspective*

What is interesting about the characteristics that were listed in the recruitment packages and the interviews, is that many of them make transparent the impact they have on the boards and board chairs conception of school leadership, by the way they are written and answered. By this, many of the characteristics were listed in sentence form, forming a descriptive format rather than singular such as integrity and visionary (see Table 4.11 below).

Table 4.11

*Evidence of characteristics from the board chair interviews*

Recruitment packages characteristics	Interview characteristics
Integrity	BC 1 ...integrity, top of the list...
Collaborator	BC 3 ...so the characteristics are that the board has to be that he collaborated with the board ...
Visionary	BC 3 ...clear vision of the strategic direction and...
Empathetic	BC 2 ...we like him to have empathy with that...
Motivator	BC 3 ...inspire and motivate both staff and students ...
Committed	BC 3 ...needs to have courage and commitment...
Inspirational	BC 3 ... ability to influence, inspire and motivate ...
Communicator	BC 3 ... values are and communicate them well and understands ...
Emotional intelligence	BC 4 ...emotional intelligence is also important...
Delegator	BC 4 ...be able to delegate so that they can be a leader of people ...
Courage	BC 3...they need to have courage and commitment to deal with...
Learner	BC 4 ...must be a learner in so far as...

Many of the characteristics mentioned in Table 4.11 fall within the category of interpersonal skills, which led me to believe that communicative skills, social skills

and emotional intelligence had been placed quite highly by the boards and board chairs. Interpersonal skills are how one relates to another person or persons through social communication and interactions and this was supported by use of such terms as inspiration, emotional intelligence to name a few. As mentioned earlier, trying to define what the boards actually mean cannot be an easy task, so therefore I have given a broad summary which is presented in the first column. To get a more definitive understanding of what they are asking can be established by returning to Tables 4.2 to 4.10 above, in the first section of this chapter. The second column is copied as is from the transcripts given.

Table 4.11 above represents three categories of characteristics, those of personal, interpersonal and organisational characteristics. Such terms as *integrity* and *courage* to name a few would tend to point to personal characteristics that are born of a principal that has self belief. On the other hand there are characteristics that reflect interpersonal skills, such as *empathy* and *emotional intelligence*. Other aspects to interpersonal are the communication aspect, which tends to be used often by literature. Interpersonal skills have been used as an umbrella term representing a wide range of characteristics, such as *listening* and *emotional intelligence*. On the broader scale falls the organisational aspect to characteristics which represent a great proportion of the characteristics listed. Another aspect to these characteristics is the link they make to relationships of one kind or another again reflecting certain aspects of interpersonal skills.

### **Importance of characteristics (Board chair perspective)**

Two questions from the interviews were used to compose enough information required to answer the importance of characteristics in the appointment process. The two questions asked, sought information on *what impact characteristics may have on school effectiveness and principal relations*. It was inevitable that characteristics would affect the schools performance whether this is from a relationship basis with the board, or with school matters. But to what extent they affect each other had to be

given by the board chairs themselves in order to understand the reasoning for their choices in what they perceive are appropriate characteristics.

#### *Impact of characteristics on school effectiveness*

The tone for this section was set immediately when the board chairs commented on the principal as the holder of such characteristics and how the principal's character impacted on school effectiveness. This only helped generate the feeling of importance that characteristics played on all facets of the school. Where this impact could occur was expounded on in three areas; strategic planning, setting of standards and the influence the principal has on staff and students. These were later to be expressed in connection to an analogy given by a board chair, who intimated that "principals are like parents in the house, if they are good managers of the household, the household functions well". This analogy was expanded on in terms of collaboration between the board and principal and their responsibility for the strategic planning of the school. From this relationship; the principal sets the direction in which the school will follow. The other aspect to the given analogy was the huge influence that principals have over the school when it comes to the values, culture and standards and if he/she does not influence the teachers, then teachers do not influence the students, the school then breaks down and will not function.

#### *Impact characteristics have on board and principal relations.*

Other aspects to a school not functioning were given by board chairs emphasising the importance characteristics play on board and principal relationships. One particular point made was in the working relationship where the boards were the employers of the principal and this then set the direction for future consistent feedback between employer and chief executive. Two aspects to this relationship that were raised, were in the board and principal working together and collaboration. Although some might see them as the same, there are distinctions between the two given and this was directed more towards the support a principal would get in comparison to not. The support intimated was in areas the principal is least expert in, or when things go wrong for the principal. It was expressed that the chief executives role was a lonely

place and it was necessary for a principal to adopt courage to be open about mistakes. It is not unusual for disagreement on certain issues to arise between both board and principal, but because of the healthy relationship they have, the governance becomes straightforward. This is the justification for boards to seek the appropriate characteristics that will help fulfil the needs of the school and therefore stop that division between, them that can give cause for problems to arise within the school itself.

### **Setting and evaluating characteristics**

This section was derived from the interviews with the intention of understanding what challenges boards have in determining the characteristics. Generally it is a known fact that characteristics in any person can be difficult to decipher at the best of times and unless forward knowledge of that person is known; only time can tell. This generalisation comes from personal experience rather than on facts, but generally most would agree. The questions used to derive information were; *how boards set the characteristics and evaluated them in applicants*. The focus was on how the boards set the characteristics, how they are assessed during the interviews and how they determined them in applicants.

### *Challenges in determining characteristics*

The challenges in the process of determining characteristics came down to three points of issue:

- lack of experience of boards;
- assessing appropriate characteristics in applicants; and
- time assessing applicants of the appropriate characteristics.

The challenges mentioned tend to deal with aspects in assessing characteristics during the interviewing of the applicants, rather than on the production of the characteristics themselves. Many mentioned using the teachers, consultants, ex-principals in the development of the characteristics so they did not seem to feel this was the immediate challenge. What they found challenging was that they knew they

are inexperienced in assessing the characteristics in the applicants. Another challenge the board chairs found was the time factor in which they had to decipher the applicants characteristics. One board chair intimated that this was due to the inexperience of individual members of the board. Many found that time was not adequate and therefore they had very little time with each candidate. It was acknowledged that getting a board that had the required expertise was made even more difficult when the board was chosen in board elections, therefore necessary qualities are not always forefront to being elected. This concern came from the point that it was important to get this process right the first time and find the applicant that was in tune with that community. The necessity to choose a system that would give them the maximum insight into the applicant's characteristics as possible was required.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter demonstrates possible links between the recruitment packages and interviews with the board chairs. Although the responsibility for writing of the person specifications comes down to individual boards, the differences between the board chair interviews and recruitment packages seemed to contrast in certain aspects. Many of the board chairs comments showed a good understanding in the process, and this is also portrayed in many of the recruitment packages. Some integration of consultant input was visible in the way they are listed. Another point is that some of the recruitment packages intimated a history in the way the characteristics were listed as far as context is concerned, especially when discussing the relationships between principal and board. The majority of characteristics tended to define three major areas; personal, interpersonal and organisational characteristics. The definition of an effective principal in the eyes of board chairs may differ to the general perspective one has of effective principals and therefore now needs to be examined against known literature, to see just what differences there are between board chair characteristics and characteristics of other sources.

## **Chapter Five**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the data collected from the interviews with Board of Trustees chairpersons and recruitment packages will be examined against known literature. The difficulty here is that much of the literature is based on the perspective other than the Boards of Trustees (BoT). The importance of this chapter lies in highlighting three immediate areas; characteristics from the BoT chairs perspective, why characteristics are important to them and the challenges in determining them. The discussion of these findings will take into account the lack of literature specific to a trustees` perspective of characteristics that are important for them in appointing a principal.

#### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Four themes were evident from the findings:

- the importance that characteristics play from a board`s perspective;
- relations between board and principal;
- the need for clarity in the listing of characteristics; and
- four critical characteristics.

#### **Importance of characteristics from the board chairs perspective**

The board chairs saw the principal as the most important figure in the school and this was reflected in the board chairs recognition of the principal as the holder of such characteristics and therefore spoke in terms of the principal. Another view of the principal by the board chairs was that of chief executive and manager of the school making them the most important figure in the school. The role of the principal changed significantly from leading professional to chief executive bringing about an increase in administration and accountability (Bennett, 1994; Whitaker, 2003). One important aspect of the role is the input into the strategic planning of the school as

chief executive on the board. The development of the strategic plan and the monitoring of progress against annual targets is the core role of the board (Ministry of Education, 2008) (MoE).

One board chair stated that as chief executive of the board, the principal has a huge influence on the strategic planning and as the setter of the standards in which the school is to operate. The influence principals have on the performance of the school is comprehensive and is no more pronounced than where the values, culture and the standards are concerned. The values and culture are written in alignment with the local community in which the school serves (MoE, 2008). The importance characteristics play in relation to the values, culture and the standards of the school are expressed through the skills and attributes of the person who is leading and building the culture of the school (NZSTA, 2005). This was discussed by a board chair when expressing that there has to be a connection between the values and culture of the school to the characteristics of the principal. The standards describe the important knowledge, skills and attitudes that all principals, deputy/assistant principals and teachers are expected to demonstrate. They form part of performance management systems in schools as part of the government's willingness to maintain and improve quality teaching (MoE, 2008).

As the setter of the standards, the principal is required to inspire a range of different people and if they do not, then the school loses focus. Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford (2005) argue that personal characteristics contribute to a principal's ability to influence and succeed in encouraging a range of powerful interventions, which can affect ranges of student outcomes. A board chair made the comment that principals need the ability to influence, inspire and motivate staff and the students, with respect to the school vision corroborating this. A board chair noted an important characteristic for a principal was the ability to manage and to relate to different people within the community. Principals also had to face the altered relationships with parents and community in collaborative decision making, interacting with businesses as well as marketing the school (Whitaker, 2003). The principal's ability to manage themselves in various situations and groups was evident in the recruitment

packages. The characteristics listed associated themselves with interpersonal relationships involved in a school. Much of the characteristics listed related themselves with building working relationships. Personal characteristics were also explicit in the recruitment packages and tended to be more aligned to how they act around others in the organisation, or outside of the organisation.

### *Leadership traits*

One board chair made the comment that the most important ability of a leader is to lead change and people. The board chair went on to say that the principal must be a leader of people, which will make them a leader of change. A study emanating from Ohio University identified two essential leadership style dimensions; behaviour directed towards task accomplishment, and behaviour focussing on interpersonal relations (Nystedt, 1997). Different board chairs expressed behaviour focusing on interpersonal relationships a few times. One board chair felt that principals need the ability to get on with people and have functional working relationships with them to get things done. It was further expressed by a board chair in deference to the last comment that the principal needs to be a person who can get someone to do what they want without having to tell them how.

A point made by a board chair that the principal's job is multi-faceted requiring sets of skills and characteristics that are specific to certain people. These skills and characteristics are not measurable, but are more in-depth. Nystedt (1997) argues that leadership itself is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Nystedt (1997) goes on to say that, leadership should be examined from the perspective of the dynamics of the relationship between the leader characteristics and leader behaviour in different situations, rather than on the relationship between leader characteristics and group performances. Bock (1995, cited in Nystedt, 1997, p. 12) argues that the personality structure of an individual, energised by motivation, dynamically organises perception, cognition, and behaviours to achieve certain system goals. This theory of charismatic leadership suggested that personality traits help to predict how a leader behaves and which leaders will be effective (Nystedt, 1997).

### **Board and principal relations**

A unique feature in New Zealand education is the partnership shared in the governance of the school between the principal and board (Parliament of New Zealand, 1988). From the board chairs perspective, this partnership is based on two aspects: collaboration between the principal and the board, and that of an employer/employee working relationship. The collaborative relationship between the principal and board is where the principal sees the board as a team in which the principal is an integral part in terms of governing the school. This relationship is based on trust and personality which in a study by Wylie (1997), showed to be a problem. A board chair commented that the chief executives role is a lonely place and it is necessary for a principal to adopt courage and trust in their relationship with the board, enough to be open about mistakes so that support from the boards can be forthcoming. Levels of trust appear to be enough for good working relationships between board and principals, and boards tend to place more emphasis on trust (Wylie, 2007). Although disagreements are inevitable, because of the healthy relationship they have with each other, governance of the school will be straightforward rather than a master and servant one.

Another problem mentioned by the board chairs in their relationships with principals was communication. This was expressed in an example by a board chair that the principal must be happy to feed all information rather than just enough to satisfy the board. In a study by Wylie (1997) communication was expressed as a problem faced by boards in their relationship with principals. This was expanded on further by another board chair that the principal needs to be willing to feed the required information to the board, without fear of being made accountable for mistakes made. On the other hand there is the employer and employee relationship where the principal becomes answerable to the board on issues to do with the general running of the school. This does not necessarily mean a relationship of amicability, but rather a relationship of accountability between both parties. This shared governance of the school is an important issue where conflict between them both can be detrimental to the school and progress made within the school.

### *Personality/interpersonal/organisational skills*

During the interviews and the recruitment package analysis, board chairs and individual boards used interpersonal skills to reflect many areas of the relationship between the board and the principal, and in the effectiveness of the school. The use of the term interpersonal skills, reflects behaviours and feelings that exist within us that influence our interactions with others. The use of the term interpersonal was used by boards, but did not specify any aspect of the role so it would be understood to mean in relation to the whole principal role. In the principal and board relations and school effectiveness, the characteristics mentioned fell into all three categories: personal, interpersonal and organisational skills. Characteristics used in this section were, *collaboration*, *courage* and *inspiration*. *Collaboration* is an interpersonal skill, which brings about interactions between both the principal and the board members. A board chair made the comment that the principal needs to be a team player with parents and boards. Principals have to face the altered relationships with parents and communities in *collaborative* decision making, interacting with businesses as well as marketing the school (Whitaker, 2003). Principals need to manage themselves differently in relation to the various groups of people and organisations.

*Courage* is a personality trait that was strongly suggested by board chairs as important for the principal to experience, so that board and principal relations can be collaborative. They expressed this in terms of having the courage to be open about mistakes. The other characteristic used was *inspiration*. *Inspiration* is both an organisational skill and personality trait. The principal's role is in motivating staff to follow the vision of the school and the personality trait is more inclined towards motivating one's self.

### **The need for clarity in listing characteristics**

Three themes from the analysis of the recruitment packages and interviews were evident; confusion in the terminology used, structure of the characteristics and observance of characteristics. These themes tended to be more pronounced in the recruitment packages rather than in the interviews with the board chairs. The understanding of characteristics as a definition and supported by the characteristics listed, generally showed a good understanding of what characteristics actually are (See Table 5.1). Although the understanding of characteristics was positive, there was some conflict over the differences between characteristics and values. The feedback was not extensive enough to understand the full reason for this conflict, other than possible motives such as the board chairs interpretation of characteristics compared to values, prioritising of values above characteristics, or the dependency of both characteristics and values on one another. The conflict with characteristics and values was more noticeable in the recruitment packages where in most cases certain values were reflected as characteristics in their own right.

Table 5.1

*Board interpretations of characteristics*

(BC)	Interpretation of Characteristics
BC 1	Attributes of a person that drives their thinking
BC 2	How the principal reflects their style as a manager, this is viewing him as a chief executive. (Characteristics reflect their style)
BC 3	The personality of the candidate along with their values, strengths and weaknesses.
BC 4	Knowledge, qualities, attributes and skills.
BC 5	This is difficult because values and characteristics are quite similar.

### *Structure of the characteristics*

Many of the packages expressed the characteristics in context of the role in which boards saw them being utilised. An example of this taken from the table below as, “...an excellent communicator able to build a cohesive team.” or “...able to inspire, motivate and challenge staff and students”. Table 5.2 below gives further examples taken from recruitment package.

Table 5.2

#### *Examples of sentence structure from recruitment packages*

Characteristics	Totals	Supporting Evidence
Communicator	4	1G: We want someone who can communicate and motivate students, ... 2G: ... an excellent communicator able to build a cohesive team
Collaborative	4	5G: Evidence of leading and working effectively in a collaborative manner with a range of school groups 6G: ... and capacity to support and assist the school board to break down into short and long term goals and priorities
Visionary	4	2G: Skilled in leading a shared vision with all stakeholders 6G: a shared vision for the school ...
Motivator	4	1G: we want someone who can communicate and motivate students and staff ... 2G: ...motivate and challenge staff and students

On the other hand there were recruitment packages that tended to be ambiguous. This was through the use of singular terms such as *communicate* or *motivate*, which do not translate into any particular aspect of the principal role. A study by Hartog, Caley and Dewe (2007) discuss this very problem when looking at recruitment advertisements in organisations. They found that singular terms or double terms were vague in interpretation, especially when using terms like *transformational* or *people orientated*.

### *Observance of characteristics*

Inconsistent use of headings was immediately noticeable when the recruitment packages used various headings to describe the same expectations. The most abundant was “Knowledge, Ability and Skills”. One critical inconsistency was in describing where to locate the characteristics. Many of the packages did not attach any immediate recognition to the characteristics and this was made clear by the numbers of characteristics scattered amongst specified skills. Some packages showed a paragraph expressing the characteristics sought, but this was not classified in any way apart from what the content expressed. This is not to say that characteristics were not identified at all, because some schools used the headings of “Personal Qualities” or “General”. The priority in which the characteristics were placed seemed unclear and did not seem to specify any particular order. Many of the recruitment packages tended to list characteristics amongst the skills, or were placed in paragraphs at the top of the page or at the very bottom. One aspect worth noting here is that the skills happened to overshadow everything else on a page in all instances.

### **Critical characteristics**

#### *Literature based characteristics*

Analysing the characteristics in the literature offered a broad range of characteristics that made accurate interpretation difficult. The uniqueness of the following characteristics from the literature was expressed from different aspects of leadership being studied. An example of this was that some researchers observed effective principals in the context of student achievement, rather than board relations, and therefore a possible preconceived opinion was formed by the researchers. The research used in the literature base was written from the perspective of other authors but not boards. Therefore the common characteristics are better understood and better defined in context to the role the principal plays from the researcher’s perspective.

The Tables analysed in the literature show eight common key characteristics:

- student oriented;
- listener;
- communicator;
- encourages;
- consults;
- assertive;
- supportive; and
- high expectations.

Being *student oriented* and being a *listener* were the two most sought after characteristics. Student oriented is linked to leadership of education and much of the research sees this as a priority. The Ministry of Education (2008) argue from a moral standpoint, that principals must see the central reasons for education as that of student learning. *High expectations* was also listed, but could not be defined to student achievement so one would assume that this is with the staff as well as students. Many of the characteristics such as *listener*, *encourages* and *supportive* are means for achieving high student achievement by inspiring teachers to set goals for themselves and show effective teaching and courage to try new things. The characteristic term *consults* was not defined in relation to any specific role and therefore possibly aligned to principal consultation with other stakeholders such as boards, parents, community and teachers.

#### *Recruitment packages analysis*

The term ‘characteristics of principals’ was defined by board chairs as the attributes of a person that drives their thinking and is reflected in their style as a principal and chief executive (see Table 5.1 above). The Living Webster Encyclopaedic Dictionary of the English Language, defined characteristics as distinguishing features, traits or qualities that define a person. Research has been very definitive in recognising that there are certain aspects to the principal that makes him/her function in making an effective school (Mendez- Morse, 1993). In Table 5.2 above, characteristics

expressed in the recruitment packages and interviews have been summarised. The characteristics portray many dimensions and expose personal, interpersonal and organisational skills.

In this study, four key characteristics were consistently prioritised by both the interviews and recruitment package analysis. These were:

- communicator;
- collaborator;
- visionary; and
- motivator.

It was expressed by both the boards and board chairs how important being a *communicator* was to the relationship between both the principal and the board. Being a communicator is an important characteristic required by principals. Being a communicator is perceived as a form of feedback by the principal on what is going on and this was evident from the research Moos, Krejsler, Kofod and Jensen (2005) initiated. The other aspect to being a communicator is when principals find themselves in difficulty and in need of support. The need for the principal to have courage to communicate these difficulties brings about a trusting relationship between both the board and the principal enabling board support to take place. This support minimises the problems and shows a concerted approach to the problems by both the board and the principal in all aspects of the job. Another expression given to this relationship is *collaboration* that was perceived by boards as another important aspect to the relationship that can evolve from communication.

Being a *collaborator* in respect to principal and board relations was seen as an important characteristic. It was expressed that the characteristic collaboration is important to the relationship between the board and principal as well as the effectiveness of the school. The principal must see both board and principal as a team and therefore must collaborate to govern the school. The board chairs felt that lack of collaboration between them and the principal brings about conflict that is detrimental to the school. The fostering of collaborative relationships between school

administrators encourage and promote collaborative relationships across the school (Mendez-Morse, 1993). The other side to board and principal relations is a master servant relationship where the principal was required to work with the board out of ethical responsibility. Haydon (2007) called this the ethical path that principals pursue. There are two aspects to collaboration from the master servant aspect; collaboration to govern and second, collaboration to govern and relate well to each other. The board chairs saw the latter as the more attractive of the two options. The other aspect worth noting is collaboration with staff and community. Collaboration with the community is more often represented through the relations with the board as an important characteristic.

*Visionary* was expressed by both the boards and board chairs as an important characteristic when working with them and in making the school effective. Mendez-Morse (1993) found that visionary was common to successful principals and exists in two dimensions of effective leadership; initiating structure, which is primarily a concern for organisational tasks, and consideration, which is the concern for individuals and the interpersonal relations between them (Mendez-Morse, 1993). Valuing human resources as well as communicating and listening are directly associated with the dimension of consideration (Mendez-Morse, 1993). One board chair spoke of school vision and the connection to the vision the principal has of where they see the school going. This was also expressed in terms of the values and culture of the school.

It was expressed by the board chairs that principals need the ability to influence, inspire and *motivate staff* and students with respect to the school vision. Motivating staff was seen as an important characteristic from two perspectives, that of motivation of the principal and motivating others. The motivation of self to take part in the running of the school and work together in relationship with the board is the first one. The second one is their ability to motivate other staff in following the school vision. Middlewood and Lumby (1998) talk of motivation from a Human Resource Management (HRM) perspective, where the principal must focus on positive

motivation rather than negative responses. It was also mentioned that HRM is based on staff motivation, commitment and involvement.

## CONCLUSION

The questions that drove this research are:

1. What do BoT chairs require as characteristics of effective principals?
2. Why do they hold these perceptions of characteristics as important when appointing a principal?
3. What are the challenges faced by BoT in determining these characteristics?

In this study there is evidence that boards and board chairs value principals who can contribute to an effective governance-management relationship. They value the impact of the principal on the working relationship and believe that this has an impact on school effectiveness. Therefore the characteristics they value most, are those that assist them as possibly not educational practitioners to contribute. The characteristics of principals most valued are: *communicator, collaborator, visionary and motivator*.

Being a *communicator* is important to both the relationship between both the principal and the board and school effectiveness. Being a communicator is perceived as a form of feedback to the boards. The need for the principal to have courage to communicate about problems brings about a trusting relationship between both the board and the principal, enabling board support to take place and support to come from the principal as the educational professional. This support minimises the problems and shows a concerted approach to the problems by both the board and the principal in all aspects of the job. Another expression given to this relationship is collaboration which extends from communication.

Being a *collaborator* in respect to principal and board relations is an important characteristic. Collaboration is important to the relationship between the board and

principal as well as to the effectiveness of the school. The principal must see the board and principal as a team and therefore must collaborate to govern the school. Lack of collaboration brings about conflict that is detrimental to the school. The fostering of collaborative relationships between the board and principal will help to promote collaborative relationships across the school. There are two aspects to collaboration: collaboration to govern and collaboration to govern and relate well with/to each other. The other aspect worth noting is collaboration with staff and community. This collaboration with the community is more often represented through the relations with the board.

*Visionary* is an important characteristic when working with boards and in making the school effective. Being visionary is common to successful principals and exists in two dimensions of effective leadership; initiating structure, which is primarily a concern for organisational tasks, and consideration, which is the concern for individuals and the interpersonal relations between them. Valuing human resources as well as communicating and listening are often directly associated with the dimension of consideration. Principal's vision is also expressed in terms of school vision; where they see the school going. This is also expressed in terms of the values and culture of the school.

Principals need the ability to influence, inspire and motivate staff and students with respect to the school vision. Motivating staff is an important characteristic from two perspectives, that of self-motivation of the principal and motivating others. The motivation of self to take part in the running of the school and work together in relationship with the board is the first one. The second one is their ability to motivate other staff in following the school vision and focus on positive motivation rather than negative responses. This is pronounced in terms of HRM which is based on staff motivation, commitment and involvement (Middlewood & Lumby, 1998).

### **Strengths and weaknesses of this study**

The interpretive paradigm helps view human behaviour of the board chairs rather than the forces deemed to act upon them. The central reason for choosing the interpretive paradigm, was that it conceptualised human nature from within and helped understand the subjective worlds in which boards work. The interpretive paradigm led to positive findings; it helped make transparent the way the boards and board chairs interpreted their worlds. This was a fundamental aspect to this research because of the lack of guidelines to what BoT perceive as appropriate characteristics and many boards and board chairs differ in their views. Board chairs are lay people influenced by areas of expertise and experience outside of education, and therefore this research has to be from their perspective in order for them to express their views. Their interpretation of the system and background in which they work has a great impact on how they think.

The weakness of this study lies in the interpretation of the characteristics given by some of the recruitment packages and interviews. The context in which the characteristics are used means that summarising them can be difficult. General use of singular terms, means that summaries of characteristics are quite broad, but alternatively they do give a general idea to the fact that boards do acknowledge the broad range of characteristics that principals need. Another weakness, which has been made clear throughout this study, is the lack of literature from the perspective of the boards. International and national literature does not credit the individual boards in schools as having a voice. This gap in literature from a board perspective provides an opportunity for future development.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

To enhance clear communication of characteristics valued by boards, I recommend that:

- All boards list required characteristics in sentence form, to help with the identification of applicants with appropriate characteristics for the role of principal;
- Boards are more explicit in the use of certain terms such as ‘interpersonal skills’. Interpersonal skills are very broad and boards must be more specific in what they value;
- Each school respond to their own needs in determining more clearly characteristics based on their own communities values, rather than use generic terms proposed by consultants for all schools; and
- Characteristics be prioritised above the skills of leadership or be equally listed. Board chairs see the importance of characteristics on board and principal relationships and school effectiveness. This is beneficial due to the relationships they must forge between each other and the staff.

### **Suggestions for future study**

This research has been fundamental in pointing out the characteristics perceived by boards and board chairs to be important in recruiting effective principals. However, the extent to which teacher input is included in establishment of the characteristics is not measured and therefore research on this issue would benefit the recruitment of suitable applicants.

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is your interpretation of characteristics?
2. What characteristics do you think a principal should have to fulfil the role expectations of the board?
3. Why/how do characteristics of a principal impact on the school effectiveness?
4. Could you comment on how characteristics of the principal impact on the relationship between the principal and the board?
5. How would this affect the governance of the school?
6. From your experience, how do boards set the characteristics when recruiting a principal?
7. What guidelines are used to establish the characteristics of aspiring principals?
8. What are the challenges faced by the BoT in determining these characteristics?
9. What systems do boards apply to gain information on the character of a principal applicant?
10. And are they effective?
11. When recruiting a principal, what systems do you use? E.g. advisors etc.
12. To what extent do the advisors/consultants set expectations in characteristics of a principal?
13. What packages are sent out to applicants by the boards?
14. To what extent do they control the interviewing of aspiring principals?

## REFERENCES

- Beck, C. (1999). Values, Leadership and School Renewal. In T. Begley & P. Leonard (Eds.), *The Values of Educational Administration* (pp. 223-231). London: Falmer Press.
- Bennett, C. (1994). The New Zealand principal post-picot. *Journal of Educational Management Administration* 32(2).
- Brooking, K. (2007). *Summary of the New Zealand literature on recruitment and retention of school leaders: Issues challenges, trends and strategies for succession planning*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cardno, C. & Fitzgerald, T. (2005). Leadership learning: A development initiative for experienced New Zealand principals. *Journal of Educational Administration* 43(3).
- Cardno, C. (1997) Collaborative Management – Potential and Pitfalls for Schools. *New Zealand Principal*, March pp. 17-21.
- Chapman, J. D. (2005). Recruitment, retention, and development of school principals. *Education policy series. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation*. Paris: Stedi Media.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Earley, P. (2004). *Understanding school leadership*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing. Retrieved February 18 2008 from <http://site.ebrary.com.libproxy.unitec.ac.nz:2048/lib/unitech/Doc?id=10076767>
- Education Review Office (1995). Core competencies for school principals, 6, Winter. Retrieved June 11 2002 from <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Publications/eers1995/95no6h1.htm>.
- Education Review Office (2001). *The Appointment of School Principals*. Retrieved October 28 2001 from <http://ero.govt.nz/Publications/pubs2001/ApptPrincipals.http>.
- Government of New Zealand. (1989). *Education act*. Wellington: Government Printer.

- Gronn, P. (1999). *The making of educational leaders*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Gurr, D., Drysdale, L. & Mulford, B. (2005). Successful principal leadership: Australian case studies. *Journal of Educational Management Administration* 43(6).
- Hartog, D., Caley, A. & Dewe, P. (2007). Recruiting leaders: an analysis of leadership advertisements. *Human resource management journal* 17(1).
- Haydon, G. (2007). *Values for educational leadership*. New York: Sage Publications.
- Hinds, D. (2000). Research instruments. In D. Wilkinson (Ed.), *The researchers toolkit: The guide to practitioner research* (pp. 41-54). London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Hoog, J., Johansson, O. & Olofsson, A. (2005). Successful principalship: the Swedish case. *Journal of Educational Administration* 43 (6).
- Keeves, J. P. (1997). Methods and processes in educational research. In J. P. Keeves (Ed.), *Educational research, methodology and measurement: An international handbook* (pp.277-285). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Krishnan, V. R. (2005). Transformational leadership and outcomes: role of relationship duration. *Journal of Educational Administration* 26 (6).
- Law, Y.S., Walker, A. & Dimmock, C. (2003). The influence of principals' values on their perception and management of school problems. *Journal of Educational Administration* 41(5).
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 191-215). Thousand oaks: Sage Publications.
- Macky, K. & Johnson, G. (2000) *The Strategic management of Human Resources in New Zealand*. Auckland: McGraw-Hill.
- MacPherson, J. S. & McKillop, A. (2002). Mentoring school governance and management: An evaluation of support to schools' boards of trustees. *Journal of Educational Administration* 40 (4).
- Mendez-Morse, S. (1993). *Leadership characteristics that facilitate school change*: South West Educational laboratory. Retrieved June 18 2008 from <http://www.sedl.org/change/leadership/character.html>
- Middlewood, D. & Lumby, J. (1998). *Human resource management in schools and colleges*. London: Paul Chapman.

- Mills, G. (2003). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher*. New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Ministry of Education. (2007). *Kiwi Leadership for Principals: Supporting the professional learning of principals*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (2008). *Kiwi Leadership for Principals: Principals as educational leaders*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Moos, L., Krejsler, J., Kofod, K. K. & Jensen, B. B. (2005). Successful school principalship in Danish schools. *Journal of Educational Administration* 43 (6).
- New Zealand School Trustees Association. (2005). *Guidelines for Boards of Trustees: Principal Appointment*. [Electronic version].
- New Zealand School Trustees Association. (2006). *Good Practice Processes*. [Electronic version].
- Nystedt, L. (1997). Who should rule? Does personality matter? *European Journal of Personality* 11(1)
- Parkes, S. E. & Thomas, A. R. (2007). Values in action: observations of effective principals at work. *Journal of Educational Administration* 45(2).
- Parliament of New Zealand. (1988). *Tomorrow's schools: The reform of education administration in New Zealand*. Wellington: Government Printer.
- Pashiardis, P., Costa, J., Mendes, A. & Ventura, A. (2005). The perceptions of the principal versus the perceptions of the teachers: A case study from Portugal. *Journal of Educational Administration* 19 (7).
- Pounder, D. G. & Young, I.P. (1996). Recruitment and selection of educational administrators: *Priorities for today's schools*. In Leithwood, K, et al (Eds.) *International handbook of educational leadership and administration* (pp. 279-308) Netherlands: Kluwer Academic publishers.
- Quin, D. M. (2002). The impact of principal leadership behaviours on instructional practice and student engagement. *Journal of Educational Administration* 40 (5).
- Robinson, M. J., Timperley, H. S., Parr, J. P. & McNaughton, S. (1994). The Community-School Partnership in the Management of New Zealand Schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 32 (3).
- Robinson, V. & Ward, L. (2005). Lay governance of New Zealand schools: An educational, democratic or management activity. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(2).

- Rudman, R. (2002). Human resources management: Nature, role and scope. In *Human resources management in New Zealand (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)* (pp.3-21). Auckland: Prentice Hall.
- Sergiovanni, J. T. (2001). *Leadership: What is in it for schools?*. London: Routledge/Falmer.
- Wellington, J. (2000). *Educational research: Contemporary issues and practical problems*. London: Continuum.
- Whitaker, K. S. (2003). Principal role changes and influence on principal recruitment and selection: An international perspective. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 41(1).
- Wilkinson, T. M. (2001). The core ideas of research ethics. In M. Tolich (Ed.), *Research ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 13-24). Auckland: Longman.
- Williams, H. W. (2008). Characteristics that distinguish outstanding urban principals: emotional intelligence, social intelligence and environment adaptation. *Journal of Management Development*, 27(1).
- Wylie, C. (1994). *Self managing schools: The fifth year*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Wylie, C. (1997). *Self managing schools Seven Years on: What have we learn't?* Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Wylie, C. (2007). *School governance in New Zealand-how is it working?* Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Reprint pg 87