



Rethinking and redesigning the role of the principal.

Principals occupy a unique position - one which provides a distinctive view of how policies and systems of work shape the practices, culture, and performance at a school level.

This research project is grounded in the reality that successful educational change and school improvement is achieved by bringing principals into the foreground of education strategy, delivery, and evaluation.

Through this research project we have identified seven key priorities for redesigning the role of the principal.



Principal accountability and autonomy

Issue: As the public education system has expanded its school-based accountabilities, principal autonomy has been diminished.

First step: Principals must have a defined role with increased discretion in school leadership, inclusive of leading school improvement.

Next step: Such increased autonomy and trust in professional judgement must be codified in new job and person specifications.

Reduced managerial tasks



Issue: The managerial based administration school leaders perform has crowded out quality time for educational leadership.

First step: Principals identify the administrative tasks currently undertaken in schools that are best performed elsewhere or dispensed with altogether.

Next step: The advice provided by principals form the backbone of a systemic approach to maximising quality time for educational leadership.



Support from the corporate infrastructure

Issue: The full complexity of the principal's role has been under-recognised, and this has adversely impacted how principals have been supported by the corporate infrastructure.

First step: Rescope regional and corporate model of school support to provide differentiated approaches based on the principal's context, experience and need.

Next step: Identifying options and opportunities for service and support ongoing improvement.



School improvement



Issue: The responsibility for school improvement became blurred between the internal leadership of the school and the Local Education Team.

First step: Ensure that the school improvement is the responsibility of the internal leadership of the school.

Next step: Clearly communicate responsibilities and structure of accountabilities associated with school improvement.



Distributed school leadership

Issue: The demands of school leadership are not adequately supported by current industrial models and funding formulas.

First step: Identify priority areas where additional leadership time is needed to successfully support a school.

Next step: Ensure principals are empowered to make responsible local decisions about their school leadership structure and positions.



Pathways to the principalship

Issue: There is dwindling interest from leading educators wanting to become principals.

First step: Conduct an end-to-end review of the existing procedures for principal identification, recruitment, induction, mentoring and professional learning.

Next step: Use review findings to develop a future focused pathway for school leadership roles.



Equity

Issue: The diversity, complexity and unique contexts of our public schools have been under-recognised and, consequently, under-served. This is most acutely felt by those schools which are difficult to staff, and those which serve the needs and interests of our most disadvantaged student populations.

First step: Commission an independent review investigating options and opportunities for achieving more equitable distribution of resources, including human resources, to support our diverse student cohort.

Next step: Use review findings to develop equitable policies for distribution of financial and human resources.



Our change process:

Nothing about us, without us.

Our lived experience is something that policy makers need to draw upon as a matter of routine for school-related policy development, implementation and evaluation. *Nothing about us, without us* is our principle of change management.

Our commitment is to positively work with Government and the Department for Education over an extended period of time to redesign the role of the principal.