

ASB-APPA Travelling Fellowship 2015

Ken McLeay, Riverview School, Kerikeri.

Topic: Principal Appraisal.

An inquiry into apparent inequalities of access to quality appraisals for principals in small and isolated New Zealand schools, and a look into general appraisal provisions for principals in several other countries.

Goal:

To provide feedback on appraisal systems in New Zealand and in several other countries and make recommendations for the New Zealand primary sector.

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Acknowledgements:

Being the recipient of a 2015 ASB-APPA Travelling Fellowship has been an absolute honour and privilege and I am very grateful for all who have made this possible. I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to travel and see the beauty and cultural diversity of many countries, while also being intellectually stimulated and challenged through the chosen topic of study.

I especially wish to acknowledge and thank the following:

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- The ASB Bank, together with APPA and TTPA, for the funds provided for the travel aspect of the Fellowship.
- The Ministry of Education for providing my paid leave for the duration of the Fellowship, and also for the additional costs related to staff in my school who covered the gaps caused through my being away for a term.
- To my Board of Trustees for their approval and support as I have been away.
- To all the staff at Riverview school, and especially to those who stepped up to cover higher duties. I returned to a school in good heart and very well led in my absence, which I take as a very positive reflection on all involved.
- To the students at Riverview School who made my travel blog a worthwhile undertaking.
- To the school leaders (Superintendents, Associate Superintendents, Principals, Vice-Principals, Headteachers, and Educational Authority representatives) who welcomed my visits and who openly shared their experiences and wisdom around my topic of study. Each of you enriched my outlook on schools in general, the leadership these schools need, and the manner in which this leadership can be appraised and evaluated.
- To Jan and Tim Cooper, who assisted in so much of the travel and accommodation arrangements, and who were fantastic travel companions for significant parts of the journey.
- To my wife, Margie, who kept me on a level plain through all the excitement and who made every day away a special memory.

2. REPORT SUMMARY

2(a) Introduction and Background:

In my 29 years as a principal I have been appraised by people in the following professions (number of times in brackets):

- A hospital administrator (5) Note: this post was overseas.
- A secondary science teacher (3)
- A music shop manager (2)
- A farmer (3)
- A window and door frame company manager (3)
- A corporate IT trouble-shooter (2)
- A lawyer (6)
- A retired principal and experienced appraiser of principals (3)
- A secondary general arts teacher (1)
- A university education adviser, with a good skill set in principal appraisal (1)

These appraisals have varied in style from 'a one-off chat over a glass of wine' to a 38 page typed document being presented to the Board. I know of no other profession where the appraisal of an organisational leader is carried out by such a divergent range of people, with such varying degrees of experience or knowledge of the profession being evaluated.

I was awarded this Travelling Fellowship after making a case for some inquiry into an apparent inequality of access to quality principal appraisal in small and isolated New Zealand primary schools. My original proposal is included as addendum 1.

I want to acknowledge the excellent booklet disseminated in May, 2014, by the Education Review Office, entitled: Supporting School Improvement through Effective Principal Appraisal, which summarises recent developments in principal appraisal in the New Zealand context.

It is not my intention to repeat or address the information in this booklet, but I do acknowledge that some excellent information, mostly from the perspective of school Boards of Trustees, is included therein. My interest has focussed on the need for many schools to supplement the funding provided by the Ministry of Education in order to provide the appraisal process, and to fully comply with the requirements as outlined in the Principals' Collective Agreement (see Addendum b). I believe this adversely affects small rural schools.

These processes and expectations for an effective and worthwhile appraisal have evolved considerably since Boards of Trustees were first required to oversee the annual appraisal in 1997. I personally have been a principal

since before that time and have experienced these changes along with my colleagues. I know the increasing expectation of the process and the importance of it in the larger context of school improvement.

When this requirement became mandatory in 1997 many asked where the funding would come from and the oft mooted answer was; "It is in the Operations Grant." A sum of \$600 was understood to be the provision for the costs related to the appraisal of the principal but, to my knowledge, this was not an official figure and, if it was, it has not been updated since. I have checked this with several experienced Ministry of Education personnel, whose understanding is the same.

What has developed, especially over the past decade, is an expectation that this appraisal be carefully linked to the school Strategic Plan and Charter, and that there be a comprehensive report on the principal's performance in relation to these documents.

In June, 2014, I attended a "Principal Portfolio Workshop" in Auckland with around 40 other principals, nearly all of whom were from Auckland schools. I asked the group how many of their schools contracted an "outside consultant" to lead the appraisal process and the response was 100%. Several commented to me afterwards that it seemed a strange question to ask as the task was too complex for regular board members and requires the expertise and time that a consultant can offer.

This added to my growing interest in how small, rural schools manage this responsibility and cost. It is my contention that small schools in the rural sector are often not able to provide a professional appraisal process for the principal on an equivalent level to their urban counterparts. Their disadvantages are:

- They may not have a large enough operations grant to fund a consultant who may well need to come from outside their community.
- The majority of costs in a school budget (support staff wages, heat, light and water, property maintenance, swimming pool costs, etc.) are pretty inflexible - - with the only real flexibility being in the area of curriculum resourcing. These small schools do not want to trade off their Maths or Library budgets for the additional costs of hiring a consultant to appraise their principal.
- The availability of expert appraisers is very limited in many rural areas. In my own school in Kerikeri I have not been able to find a local and suitable person who is available for my school and we have had to go to The University of Auckland for this. The cost for 2015 is \$3289. Our school is fortunate to be large enough to afford this (reluctantly), but such a cost is certainly not provided in our operation grant.

- The costs are likely to be higher for rural schools, with travel and, possibly, accommodation to pay for.
- The statement from Auckland principals that the task is too complex for board members to undertake is even more pertinent in the rural sector where the likelihood of having the required skill set to undertake the appraisal without a consultant may be less than in urban settings.
- Should small rural schools not be able to afford a knowledgeable consultant then they may have to settle for a model that leaves both the Board and the principal disadvantaged. The Board is legally obliged to ensure the appraisal takes place, but may well lack the requisite skills, and the principal will feel disadvantaged having an appraisal that may well lack the professional understanding and depth of knowledge that is needed. They then both have to maintain a positive day to day relationship after this process is complete.

In order to study this topic, I undertook the following:

1. I surveyed New Zealand school principals through the help of the New Zealand Principals' Federation. This survey gives a simple summary of how principals perceive their current appraisal process and shows some variations between those in urban schools and those in rural settings.
2. I travelled to schools in the USA, Canada, Scotland, England and Australia, and interviewed a wide range of schools and education leaders to learn from their systems and experiences.
3. Following these avenues of inquiry, I have suggested some recommendations for the current arrangements for providing appraisals for New Zealand principals might be improved, and in a more equitable manner.

2(b) Survey of New Zealand Primary School Principals – Summary:

The New Zealand Principal survey I conducted in mid-2014 showed that the majority of New Zealand principals support a robust and effective appraisal process and many experience just that. Those who do have a good appraisal process see the benefits of it in terms of the wider school goals as well as their own personal and professional improvements.

While more details are given in the Report section, key findings from the 684 principals who responded include:

- 76% of principals have an external consultant hired by their Boards to carry out the appraisal. Smaller schools have a slightly higher proportion of Principal colleagues doing their appraisals.
- The average cost of a school appraisal was \$1,561, with somewhat less being spent in smaller schools. The survey did not identify just how rural these schools were, but there are often additional costs for rural schools related to travel for the consultant, should one be used.
- Approximately two-thirds of appraisals are developmental in approach, with the appraiser working with the principal in setting, monitoring and reporting on agreed annual goals.
- 88.2% found the appraisal process Satisfactory or better and, more significantly, just over two-thirds found it “helpful/worth doing”, or “very helpful and satisfying.”
- Only 9 respondents indicated that an appraisal didn’t really happen. All but one had the Board Chair or “Other” as the appraiser, all were in the “Less than \$500” cost category, and nearly all found the situation unsatisfactory.
- U1 and 2 schools use a higher proportion of principal/colleagues to carry out principal appraisals and spent less money on the process; two factors that appear connected.
- This survey does confirm my initial expectations about small rural schools being disadvantaged, but the gap does not appear as significant as I had expected.

2(c) Oversees Schools Visited:

Over a 10 week period I travelled to schools in the following countries:

USA – I visited five school districts, interviewed 5 District Superintendents or their Assistant Superintendent designate, interviewed 8 school principals and visited through 9 schools.

Canada: I visited 1 school district and spent two days there interviewing the Assistant Superintendent, 6 principals or vice principals, and visited seven schools (three were Hutterite colony schools).

Scotland: Despite requests to several schools I was only able to visit one school and interview the principal. I also met with and interviewed two officials in the main “Education Scotland” (equivalent to Ministry of Education) offices in Glasgow.

England: I visited 5 schools and interviewed four principals. The one school I visited without interview was a school I passed by and simply met the principal and chatted, but did not have the depth of information needed for this research.

Australia: I interviewed two principals of quite large schools in Queensland.

Detailed records of these visits are included after this Summary Report.

Summary of Feedback from Interviews carried out overseas:

A number of concerns or recommendations were expressed in these interviews with the most common including:

1. That a fair and thorough appraisal process for appraising principals is needed in all schools.
2. The appraisal needs to be transparent and carried out in an environment of trusted relationships, with no hidden agendas.
3. The appraisal needs to link into the wider needs of the school.
4. The appraiser must be competent in how to carry out the appraisal process, and factors that help this include:
 - a. Having been a principal at the same level (primary, secondary) as the person being appraised. However....
 - b. The appraiser might well compensate for this if s/he has a good understanding of leadership and current education practice and requirements, and uses these wisely in the process.
 - c. Knowing the right questions to ask and how to interpret the responses in a fair and constructive manner.

5. Principals in several countries shared that there is a current trend to use student achievement data as the main measure of successful principalship and they expressed serious concern about this trend.
6. Most overseas appraisal systems where I visited have a list of professional expectations of principals which are used for their appraisals. These are elaborated on in reports from each country and include:
 - a. Texas District 2 has 10 professional criteria
 - b. Colorado has a rubric of 6 competencies
 - c. Montana had 11 professional standards
 - d. Alberta has 7 professional practice competencies
 - e. Scotland has 5 professional actions of headteachers
 - f. England has four domains for headteachers.

I list these examples as they illustrate the general acknowledgement that the professional expectations of school principals covers a wide and complex spectrum of responsibilities, and any appraisal system ought to accommodate and include this wider context of principalship. The trend toward using student achievement data as the primary appraisal tool is a move away from acknowledging this wider complex set of responsibilities.

2(d) Recommendations:

Having considered the New Zealand scene and studied appraisal processes in several countries overseas, I propose the following structure be adopted for New Zealand primary school principals and their boards of trustees.

1. **That the current guidelines and expectations for principal appraisal (see addendum B) be continued.** These are clear and achievable, so long as suitable resourcing is provided.

2. **That there be clear minimum standards related to the professional competence and knowledge required of those appraising principals.**

This competence and knowledge should include, but not be limited to:

- a. Experience either as a principal or in a significant role working with principals and school leaders.
- b. An understanding of the wide diversity of the role of principalship and the ability to evaluate how well a principal is performing these roles.
- c. Knowledge and understanding of strategic planning processes and how to set and measure objectives within these.
- d. An understanding of strategies for improving student achievement and how these can be implemented in a school context

3. **That there be a national register of approved appraisers of New Zealand school principals.**

Just who ought to oversee this register may be a point of significant debate, as there are many national bodies with a vested interest in both the process and the outcomes. These include: the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF), the New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI), the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA), the New Zealand Education Council and, perhaps, others.

NZSTA has begun work on this, and are developing a list of appraisers they have approved. This is a good step, but seems to be developing outside of Ministry resourcing and leadership, and without the input of other key professional groups. I do question why the Ministry has allowed NZSTA to take this lead, when most professions in New Zealand have their members monitored by their own professional bodies. It is my view that the NZPF must be central in both the design of a model and in approving the registration of such appraisers. There would be a strong case for either the NZPF or NZ Education Council to lead this process ahead of the NZSTA.

4. **That a national minimum expectation of what is included in an annual appraisal cycle be approved**, so that all principals and boards are assured of a reasonable process. For example these expectations might include, but not be limited to:
- a. An initial meeting with the appraiser, board chair and principal to review the school's charter, strategic plan and annual plan, and identify goals for the principal for the next school year.
 - b. At least one form of seeking feedback from the school community (or agreed sectors of it) in regards to the performance of the principal.
 - c. At least two meetings between the appraiser and principal during the year to monitor progress towards these goals and offer advice and support in the process.
 - d. A written summary of the progress made toward these goals, with input from the principal and from the board chair.
 - e. A final review meeting with the board chair and principal to "sign off" the report. This meeting could well include discussion of goals for the year ahead.
5. **Funding: I propose that the Ministry fund appraisers directly**, and that they not be funded from school operation grants. This could be done as follows:
- a. Schools all have access to the official register of approved appraisers, and may approach any listed appraiser to work with their school within reasonable geographic limitations – i.e. a school here in Northland might be able to choose any appraiser as far as Auckland, but not from further south. T
 - b. That the selection of an appraiser be for a period of not less than two years and not greater than five years, thus building in some continuity for professional growth, while also ensuring some freshness to the process at least every five years. This selection would need to be formalised between the Board, Appraiser and Ministry on an annual renewal basis.
 - c. That the minimum expectations as espoused above, be known to all parties and carried out.
 - d. That the Ministry set a standardised fee structure for registered appraisers and that these be paid in a set of instalments upon completion of each stage in the minimum schedule outline.
 - e. That additional costs to provide appraisal service to the rural sector, such as travel and accommodation (depending on distance), be claimed from the Ministry by the appraiser in the normal manner.
 - f. Any additional work asked of the appraiser be funded by the school.

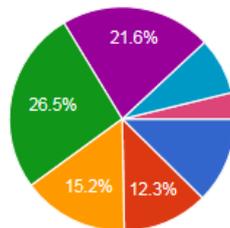
3. Supporting Documentation

3(a) Survey of New Zealand Primary principals (May, 2014)

In May, 2014, through the assistance of the New Zealand Principals' Federation office, I sent a survey to all member school principals. I kept the survey quite short and manageable, in order to gain as wide a return as possible and was pleased to receive 684 responses.

A summary of the survey follows:

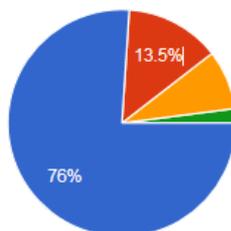
What is your school U rating?



U1	85	12.4%
U2	84	12.3%
U3	104	15.2%
U4	181	26.5%
U5	148	21.6%
U6	56	8.2%
U7 or greater	26	3.8%

I was pleasantly surprised by the number of responses received to my survey, and this first graph shows the wide diversity of school sizes that took part. Approximately one-quarter of schools that responded have less than 100 students (U1 and U2), which is the primary area of my interest for this study. However, many U3 – U5 schools may also be in small towns and may find access to quality external consultants a difficulty.

During your latest appraisal, which would best describe who did the appraisal?

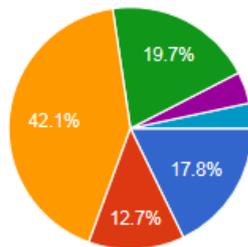


Outside expert (consultant)	520	76%
Board Chairperson	92	13.5%
Principal / Colleague	58	8.5%
Other	14	2%

- 76% of respondents report having a consultant to oversee their appraisal on behalf of the Board.
- For U1 and 2 schools the ratios are almost the same, with 74% utilising the services of a consultant.

- Smaller schools used a higher proportion of Principal colleagues to carry out the appraisal
 - For U2 schools this figure was 11.8%
 - For U1 schools this figure was 14.3%.
- In contrast
 - For U6 schools this figure was 7.1%
 - For U7 and larger schools this figure was 3.8%

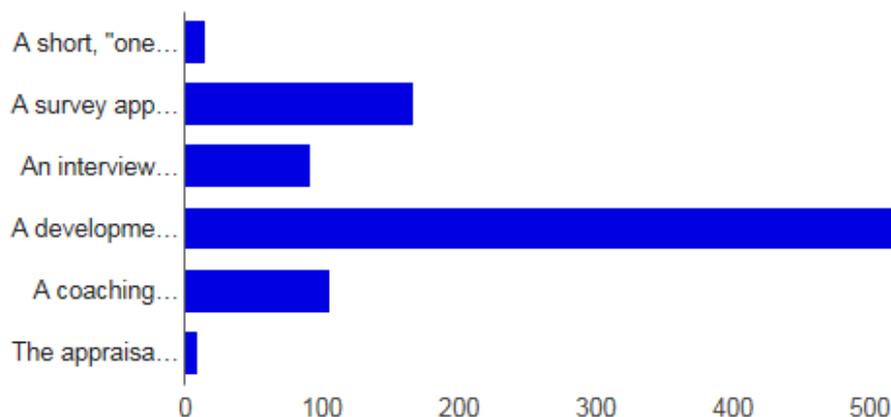
How much did your appraisal process cost your school for that year?



Less than \$500	122	17.8%
\$500 - \$1000	87	12.7%
\$1000 - 2000	288	42.1%
\$2000 - \$3000	135	19.7%
\$3000 - \$4000	29	4.2%
More than \$4000	23	3.4%

- I did not seek specific costs for the appraisal process but, using a mid-point for each range (eg \$250 for "Below \$500," \$750 for "\$500-1000," etc.) an estimated average cost of the appraisal for each school principal was \$1,561.
- Using the same method, the average cost to Boards of U1 and 2 schools was \$1,321. U1 schools spent an average of \$1,296.
- Where 30% of all schools spent less than \$1000 on the appraisal process, this percentage grew to 36% of U1&2 schools, and even higher to 38.1% of U1 schools. This shows that smaller schools spend less on Principal appraisal, although the difference is not as great as I had anticipated.

Which of these best describes the style of appraisal undertaken



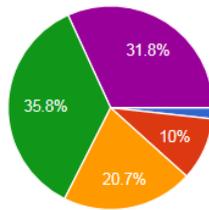
The full wording of these categories is:

- A short "one-off" approach summarising the appraiser's views
- A survey approach where key stakeholders were consulted and a summary written
- An interview with report, perhaps with you writing some of it.
- A developmental approach with goals being set, monitored and completed with a report on these going to the Board.
- A coaching model, where the appraiser assisted you in dealing with matters of mutual agreement.
- The appraisal didn't really happen but was ticked off by the Board

General Comments and Trends:

- Quite clearly the developmental approach is most widely used, and this was evenly spread across schools of differing size. This model fits with the findings and recommendations of the Education Review Office in their "Supporting School Improvement through Effective Principal Appraisal," May, 2014, page 25. The emphasis is on having what ERO call "SMART and challenging goals." The fact that this developmental approach was used by differing categories of appraisers is encouraging, although it was particularly prominent for those using outside expert/consultants.
- Thirteen respondents reported their appraisal model as being "A short one-off approach summarising the appraiser's views" which appears to not really meet the expectations of the Collective Employment Agreement (Section 4.2) or, perhaps, it meets the requirements but in a minimal manner. Interestingly, principals in this category generally found the process to be "satisfactory."
- Of significant concern are the nine respondents who ticked "The appraisal didn't really happen but was ticked off by the Board." Included in these nine are:
 - Three U2, one U3, three U4, and two U5 schools.
 - Only one had an outside expert/consultant carry out the appraisal. Six of the appraisals were carried out by Board Chairs and two ticked the appraiser category of "other."
 - All nine were "less than \$500" in cost.
 - Two did tick "Satisfactory" (one was an NZSTA Emergency Staffer). The rest ticked either "Not very helpful" or "Unsatisfactory" to describe their overall view of the helpfulness of the process.

How satisfactory was the appraisal experience for you



Unsatisfactory	12	1.8%
Not very helpful but satisfied the requirements	68	10%
Satisfactory	141	20.7%
Helpful / worth doing	244	35.8%
Very Helpful and satisfying	217	31.8%

It is very pleasing to note that 88.2% found the appraisal process Satisfactory or better and, more significantly, just over two-thirds found it “helpful/worth doing”, or “very helpful and satisfying.” This confirms that a well-managed and professionally delivered appraisal is something Principals are keen to experience.

1.8% of respondents did not find the process helpful or, indeed, simply “Unsatisfactory.” While this may be pleasing statistically, the needs of these principals to have a better quality appraisal is very significant to them and their Boards.

3(b) Visits to schools in the United States of America

(i) Two Texas School Districts.

My first school visits were in central Texas, in two neighbouring school districts, each geographically tied to a rural town.

Texas School District 1.

The first was a relatively small district with three schools, an elementary school with around 500 students, a junior high with around 300 students and a high school, also with 300 students.

I interviewed the Superintendent first, who had been in the position for two years and who had implemented a new appraisal system for his three principals. From this interview I noted the following:

- The State of Texas allows for a lot of independence for school districts in how they appraise (they say evaluate) principals. However, there is a state-wide standardised evaluation system for teachers (PDAS)
- His evaluation system for the three principals is based on relationship, with lots of routine discussion on how things are going throughout the year. He uses the phrase "Tell me your story..." to hear from his principals on how things are going.
- Once a month he holds a lunch meeting with his CFO and with each principal.
- He considers this an effective appraisal system.
- Principal appraisals are not tied to remuneration in Texas but can result in a bonus.
- He does not support a differentiated (performance based) pay scale for teachers as he believes this stops collaboration.
- I was given a copy of the Superintendent's own evaluation summary from his previous school district, which he uses as a model to appraise the principals he currently oversees.

The Elementary Principal shared the following:

- He is in his second year as principal having been appointed by the new Superintendent.
- He appreciates the relaxed evaluation process where he is able to set his own annual goals and then talks this through on a regular basis with the Superintendent.
- He evaluates how he believes he has done late in the year and then discusses this with the Superintendent. The Superintendent also rates the Principal against the goals as part of the evaluation.

- He would appreciate more actual guidance and input from the Superintendent, especially while he is a new principal.
- He told me of a new Texas, state-wide, evaluation programme for principals which is to be introduced in the next couple of years.
- The Superintendent has no elementary principal experience and he considered this something of a negative factor. His appraiser did not understand some of the challenges in an elementary school, especially in relation to the junior classes and programmes.

The Junior High Principal shared the following:

- She has been employed in this school district for 34 years and had been principal of the elementary school and also in charge of special needs across the district before her present role. She has now been principal of the Junior High for the past 20 years.
- She was not so happy with the new appraisal system.
- Her own philosophy is one of “catching people when they are at their best” and then affirming them and inspiring them to be the best teacher / principal possible.
- In her opinion, her current appraisal system seems to be based on a philosophy that we are all in need of continual improvement, (“There are always things you need to improve on”) resulting in a sense of failure and inadequacy.
- Her first year in this process was frustrating. It took a long time to write up her own self-evaluation, and the feedback from her appraiser left her feeling frustrated and disappointed.
- She believed that anyone appraising principals needs to have additional training for this, as the role of a principal is complex and quite different to that of teachers.

My Own Reflections:

- I was impressed with all three people I interviewed, but especially with the Junior High Principal who came across as quite inspirational and very competent.
- The apparent conflict of philosophy about appraisal of principals seemed to be mostly related to experience and expertise. The system seemed to better suit the relatively new principal. However, the highly experienced middle school principal (awarded as an outstanding principal) would have benefitted from a different approach, where her experience and expertise were more valued and, perhaps, used to mentor the newer principal.
- I also noted that the elementary school was incredibly well resourced, with specialist teachers for Music, Art, P.E., and ICT, and that class sizes were in the low 20s across the school.

Texas School District Two

It was a privilege to be hosted by the Assistant Superintendent (AS) with responsibility for principal appraisals for the whole of my time in this district. The district is comprised of the following:

- A total of 6,400 students (a mid-sized school district)
- 1 high school
- 1 “alternative” high school.
- 2 middle schools
- 7 elementary schools

My interview with the AS included the following points:

- The district has a new Superintendent, the third in 12 months.
- The AS is responsible for principal appraisal.
- The appraisal is based on the Job Description, which is standard for principals across the district, and I was given a copy. I also received copies of the district policy for administrator appraisals, and a procedures guide.
- The appraisal is built around the following criteria, and each criteria has sub-headings and definitions of what the criteria include:
 - Instructional Management
 - School Morale
 - School Improvement
 - Personnel Management
 - Management of Fiscal, Administrative, and Facilities Functions
 - Student Management
 - Professional Growth and development
 - School / Community Relations
 - Supervisory Responsibilities
 - Working Conditions
- Each principal is required to complete a self-evaluation against these criteria and grade themselves on a three point scale for each. The options are:
 - Below expectations
 - Meets expectations
 - Exceeds expectations
- The AS then evaluates the principal on the same criteria and scale and this acts as the core document for discussion and formalising the appraisal.
- Currently Texas has a core set of state requirements for principal appraisal, but there is a lot of flexibility for districts in how they carry this out. This is going to change in the near future with T-PESS (see below).

- The AS visits each campus twice per term, going into classrooms and getting an overview of how each school is performing which feeds into the appraisal process.
- The AS shared with me information around the new Texas state-wide appraisal system being prepared for implementation. It is called the "Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System" and known as T-P ESS. I have a copy of T-P ESS and supporting documentation (around 100 typed pages so am not including this here).
- The AP explained the teachers' evaluation system as well. They had implemented incentive (performance) pay for a period of time but it undercut teacher collegiality and the system was considered a failure and was stopped.

The AP then hosted my visit to three schools. Each school had a roll of over 500 students and together they represented a cross section of the district's catchment area, with what we would describe as a low decile, mid-decile and high decile school.

Principal 1 comments included:

- The principal had had three appraisers in three years.
- There was not enough emphasis on identifying strengths and weakness and helping to improve one's professional performance. The process was more like a check list than a developmental tool.
- Believes more emphasis needs to be placed on evaluating the school "climate" and how the people working and learning there were doing as a reflection of the principal's leadership.
- Believes that appraising a principal is significantly different to appraising teachers and that additional training in this process is necessary for those undertaking this work.

Principal 2 comments included:

- Had appreciated the previous Superintendent's appraisals which gave more explicit feedback on areas of strength and areas to grow in.
- Found that the self-appraisal tended to be harder on oneself than the scores recorded by the AP appraiser.
- Found the process to be somewhat of a "hoop to jump through" rather than a process to inspire and empower professional growth and competence. The main component that is missing is that of professional development.
- Enjoys the professional networking with other principals and learns a great deal through this.

Principal 3 (a first time principal) comments include:

- Felt that the current system includes both assurance and developmental aspects.
- The appraiser listens to the story the principal shares about their performance and gives good feedback.
- Training in how to appraise principals would be beneficial. The only training the appraiser has is in appraising teachers and there is a big difference.
- The appraiser needs to know the school well and the principal well in order to be effective.
- Has a wish to have more time with the appraiser to discuss various sections of the appraisal in more depth.

My Own Reflections:

- I visited this school district the week that the State of Texas was undergoing standardised testing and there was a great deal of stress caused by this. Every Grade 5 student would be doing the same Reading test at the same time across the state, with a great deal of future district resourcing and status dependent on the outcome of such tests. The principals told me that very little learning happened during the weeks of state wide testing (twice a year) and that basically two weeks of learning was lost.
- The AS who hosted me knew each principal and school very well and was warmly welcomed into each school. She enjoyed mentoring them and they seemed to appreciate her work. She was also well known in the schools by teachers and staff.

Summary for Texas

Both school districts had formal and planned appraisal programmes for their principals. The first district was smaller and the appraisals seemed less formal and built around conversations, with principals being asked to “write their stories” for the Superintendent (appraiser) to review with them. The second district, with many more schools, had a more structured approach, requiring each principal to make a self-evaluation, which was then compared to the appraiser’s evaluation, with discussions and future goals coming out of that.

The State of Texas is introducing a structured and comprehensive process for principal appraisal which is yet to be disseminated to districts and schools.

(ii) Two “One School” School Districts.

The first of these was a very rural school in southern **Colorado**. It is Pre-K (3 and 4 year olds) to Grade 12 (end of secondary) with a total student enrolment of 220. The district covers over 500 square miles and has a significant bus network. This very small model of one school districts is not uncommon in south-east Colorado with at least another 5 in the area. Some have one person covering the role of Superintendent and Principal together, although in this school these are distinct positions.

The Board appoints the Superintendent and he (in this case) appoints all other staff, including the Principal. The Superintendent carries out the appraisal of the Principal and the Principal oversees the appraisals of all other staff. The Board is elected from within geographical regions within the school's catchment.

In Colorado the Superintendent does not have to be a registered teacher, and there is no certification needed for being in that role.

Within this school the Superintendent and Principal know each other well and work in offices next to each other. They have negotiated a shared work package together. The Superintendent oversees human resource management, fiscal management, transport networks, and property. The Principal is focused on managing curriculum delivery, being responsible for timetabling, staff evaluations, and all aspects of teaching and learning.

The framework for the Principal's appraisal is negotiated each year. At present it has a split of 50% focus on appraisal documentation and 50% on student outcomes, but the percentages can be altered at the Principal's request.

The appraisal is completed annually and the structure of the process and annual goals for the ensuing year are set. The Superintendent simply reports the completion of the Principal's appraisal to the Board, but not any of the content.

In Colorado there is an official “Rubric for Evaluating Colorado's Principals and Assistant Principals” which has the following outline:

Quality Standard 1. Principals demonstrate strategic leadership

Element A. School Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals

Element B. School plan

Element C. Leading change

Element D. Distributive leadership

Quality Standard 2. Principals demonstrate instructional leadership

Element A. Curriculum, instruction, learning and assessment

- Element B. Instructional time
- Element C. Implementing high-quality instruction
- Element D. High expectations for all students
- Element E. Instructional practices

Quality Standard 3. Principals demonstrate school culture and equity leadership.

- Element A. Intentional and collaborative school culture
- Element B. Commitment to the whole child
- Element C. Equity pedagogy
- Element D. Efficacy, empowerment and a culture of continual improvement.

Quality Standard 4. Principals demonstrate human resource leadership.

- Element A. Professional development/learning communities
- Element B. Recruiting, hiring, placing, mentoring and dismissal of staff
- Element C. Teacher and staff evaluation

Quality Standard 5. Principals demonstrate managerial leadership

- Element A. School resources and budget
- Element B. Conflict management and resolution
- Element C. Systematic communication
- Element D. School-wide expectations for students and staff
- Element E. Supporting policies and agreements
- Element F. Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment

Quality Standard 6. Principals demonstrate external development leadership.

- Element A. Family and community involvement and outreach
- Element B. Professional leadership responsibilities
- Element C. Advocacy for the school

I have a copy of the full document where each of these headings and sub-headings has clear definitions and expectations. Interestingly, while 60% of the expectations relate to the Principal's specific work, 40% of the expectations are worded as expectations of the school staff members as led by the principal.

The second "One school" school district I visited was in **Montana**. The school is a K to Grade 8 School with 220 students.

This school has one person in the dual role of Superintendent and Principal. In fact she has twelve specific job roles with separate job descriptions for each. These include:

- School Superintendent
- Elementary Principal
- Special Education Director
- Transportation Supervisor
- Food Service Supervisor
- Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Title 1 Supervisor
- Maintenance Supervisor
- Athletic Director
- Adult/Community Education Director
- School 504 Coordinator, and
- School Liaison.

The Superintendent/Principal showed me through the school and then shared with me the appraisal process she goes through. The Board as a whole oversees and carries out an annual appraisal for the Superintendent/Principal. This comprises of the whole Board meeting together to interview her on an annual basis, and this involves going through the job descriptions for all 12 job titles.

In the official documentation it states: "Each Trustee shall complete an individual evaluation form, and each form shall be signed and dated."

I have a copy of the Superintendent position evaluation form which is 11 pages long and is built around the following Standards:

1. Leadership and district culture
2. Policy and governance
3. Communications and community relations with community
4. Organisational management
5. Curriculum planning and development
6. Instructional leadership
7. Human resource leadership
8. Values and ethics of leadership
9. Labour relations
10. District goals

Each of these has a series of statements which each Board member rates as outstanding, very good, satisfactory, needs improvement and unacceptable. These are then all collated for an overall appraisal summary.

It is my understanding that a similar appraisal process happens for each of the other 11 job titles. This process can take several days to work through.

The Superintendent/Principal has been in this multi-role position in this particular school district for 16 years and this appraisal process has developed under a series of elected Boards over this time. She has become

frustrated with the ever increasing detail of the process and the general trend of moving from a “developmental” philosophy to what is now (especially the past couple of years) a “tick box” approach. The consequence of this has been a “loss of meaningful conversation” and more and more micro-management by the Board.

The Board acknowledges a lack of expertise in the appraisal process but has not sought outside expertise or help.

My Own Reflections:

- The two “One-school school districts” I visited were geographically isolated (especially the Colorado one) and had many similarities to the “Tomorrow’s Schools” structure here in New Zealand. The Boards oversee one school only and the school manages its own budgeting, property, human resources, and the appraisal of the Principal. The similarity was most obvious in the Montana setting with one person covering all those job titles.
- The Colorado model, where a Superintendent oversees all the structural and management matters surrounding the school, while the Principal is focused on teaching and learning, seemed to work well, but I did wonder about the robustness of the system where the Superintendent made the Principal appointment and also carried out the annual principal appraisal alone. This model is similar in larger school districts, but those districts have a district leadership team and they tend to have more checks and balances in their appointment and appraisal of principals.
- The appraisal process in the Montana school appeared to be a nightmare, and the person interviewed was highly frustrated and felt her work was hampered by such a restrictive and micro-managed work setting. Since returning to New Zealand, I note that the school is advertising for a new administrator (superintendent/principal).

(iii) An Oregon School District.

I had the privilege of visiting a mid-sized school district in the State of Oregon, where I met with key leadership people in the District office and then visited and interviewed principals in two schools. The district included two large towns (they called them cities) and a range of smaller communities. It did not include any large metropolitan areas.

The district includes 10 public schools and 3 charter schools, and serves a total student community of about 5,000.

District Office Interview:

My first interview was with the “Director of Elementary and Special Education” and also with the “District Mentor of Principals and Mentor Teachers.”

Principal appointments are made by the district superintendent who usually forms a district leadership team for the process which often includes teachers, parents and district office staff. Appointments are made from within the district (promotion), from outside the district and, sometimes, out of state.

The successful appointee then has a “principal mentor” for the first two years in the position, and this continues on an “as needed” basis after that.

The Principal Mentor works separately from the Director of Elementary and Special Education, who is responsible for overseeing the annual appraisal process. Within this school district the following is in place:

- During the first three years a principal is in that job, each year there are two informal observations made using a “shadowing” process, and one formal observation focused on a pre-agreed responsibility.
- From then on the process includes:
 - Self-assessment and goal setting. There have to be three goals, two on student learning and one on professional growth.
 - Two informal observations and one formal one.
 - A mid-year review.
 - By March 15 (late in the year) the appraiser has to make a recommendation regarding the renewal of the person’s tenure. The principal has a three year tenure. A good appraisal will result in the tenure being extended out for a new three year period, while a poor appraisal may result in confirming that the tenure has only 2 years to go unless some significant changes happen.
 - In the case of a non-renewal of tenure, specific goals are set out to rectify the problems and a three month period is given to do this. If the improvements are not made, the matter is referred up

the line (I presumed to the Superintendent). In extreme cases the situation could lead to a dismissal.

- The Principal Mentor has a different role. She operates as the “Guide on the Side” with a view to help lift the professional role of each principal. She explained that she was currently working with six principals, spending one and half to two hours with each of them weekly; some of the time in the office and some of the time shadowing them in their work. She joins them in undertaking teacher observations, staff meetings and so on.
- This Mentor, also works with beginning teachers across the district.

In relation to the process, there is a certain amount of Compliance required by state law, and they aim to supplement this with developmental and professional growth aspects.

Interview with Oregon School Principal 1.

This Principal leads a school of around 500 students in a K – 6, with 17 classroom teachers and a variety of other teaching staff. This is his first year as principal of an elementary school, having previously been the assistant principal in the local high school, with a subject specialisation in mathematics.

He explained that this was a big shift for him and that he did not have expertise in elementary education, especially in the junior classes, but that he was confident that good teaching practice applies across all age levels. He works regularly with the Mentor of Principals and this is a very helpful process. He also gets advice and counsel from his previous high school principal.

In regards to his appraisal process he shared the following:

- All administrators meet once a month for a half day.
- The elementary principals also meet once a month for a half day.
- There is a great deal of collegial support.
- The district provides a good amount of professional development.
- His appraiser visits regularly and he shares what he is doing. He feels her focus is on assurance and is somewhat of a tick box approach.
- The mentor comes more often and he is able to be more candid with her as there is not an evaluation component to her visits. Her focus is more developmental
- His professional goals are all “on-line” and are shared with both the appraiser and mentor.
- At the end of the year he does a self-evaluation of his work and achievement of goals and then the appraiser does the same. New goals for the following year are set together.

An interesting factor I picked up in this school is that there is no deputy or assistant principal in the school and no structure of team leaders amongst the teachers. If the principal is out of the school for any reason the office staff take over his responsibilities.

Interview with Oregon School Principal 2.

This principal was experienced in elementary leadership. She had been the assistant principal in this school 5 years ago and was then co-opted to work in the district office and also as principal of another school in the district, before returning here.

The school has 574 students in Kindergarten to Grade 3. It was recently part of a redevelopment in the town, where the two primary schools (previously both K – 6) were restructured to have a K – 3 and a 4 – 6 campus. Reasons for this were not elaborated on but some reference was made to dealing with the town (and district) perceiving there to be one school more popular than the other.

She has set up a goal (requirement of teachers) where all students must make at least one year's academic growth each year. She believes this is achievable.

She enjoys strong collegial support within the district and has the same arrangements with the appraiser and mentor as for Principal 1 above.

Comments she made included:

- She carries out a certain amount of training through the “Teacher Centre” in Sacramento and Santa Cruz in California (refer to: newteachercentre.org)
- She feels her appraisal is mostly compliance focused.
- Her school has a “Title Teacher” who helps find sources of funding to support the curriculum delivery. She also runs small groups for children needing extra assistance.
- She said that the charter schools are licensed to the local school district. Their charter is renewed each year by the district and can be revoked. Teachers in charter schools are paid less than those in the state schools in the district (about two thirds) and there is no union for them.

My Own Reflections:

- I enjoyed the visit to this school district. The role of a Principal Mentor seemed very worthy of consideration and seemed to sit comfortably alongside, but separate from, the appraisal system.

C. Canada

It was an absolute pleasure to visit a quite exceptional school district in Alberta, Canada. The district is comprised of the following:

- 40 schools including
 - 14 Hutterite colony schools
 - 3 outreach programmes
 - 1 LGM alternative programme and
 - 6 alternative Christian schools.
- There is a total of 6,500 students, 450 professional staff and 500 support staff.
- The district covers a geographic region stretching from the USA border to schools close to the southern tip of Calgary, but does not include major metropolitan areas.

The district had recently reviewed and updated its district wide appraisal programme, including that for school administrators (principals and vice-principals) and welcomed my visit. They were pleased to share what they were doing and gave me complete access across the district, including being hosted and driven around by the Assistant Superintendent (AS) with responsibility for appraisals of “school administrators (principals and assistant principals).

The district had made a conscious move from what they termed “site-based” evaluation structures to a district wide structure where a collaborative management system across all schools would benefit and strengthen professional practice. The AS explained that the old system was dependent on the individual school leaders making a success, or not, of their schools, enhancing a competitive winner – loser model, and the district felt this was not in the best interest of all schools and all students.

The district has improved from being a “struggling” district to being the top ranked district in the province for the past three years and they credit this primarily to this cooperative, district wide approach.

Today their evaluation system stretches across all schools and is a “needs based” system. Each school is looked at in terms of the needs and specific dynamics of its students and community and management staff are moved around to best meet those needs. A top school administrator in one context may not “fit” so well in another, and these dynamics are paramount in placing administrators in schools.

Under their old system a principal appointment was “for life” and there was a sense that many schools were “stuck” and needed new leadership, with skills targeted to the needs of that school community.

Today principals and vice-principals are initially appointed for 1 year. During that time, they are mentored and visited regularly and training in the job is provided by the district. At the end of that first year, an assessment of suitability is made and, if positive, a three year contract is offered. Each year a positive appraisal results in an extension of the three year tenure, and a poor appraisal can result in the two years left in the tenure being all that is offered. This certainly gives rigour to the appraisal outcomes.

The district has had two major areas of focus for all principals: safety and care for all students, and assessment for learning, with a specific focus on literacy.

One of three Assistant Superintendents oversees school leadership across the district. He currently is involved in selection of leaders, mentoring of all new leaders, and appraisal of these leaders. A successful, experienced principal does not go through an annual appraisal. Rather, that person is appraised in the final year of a set tenure, which would normally be a three to five year period. No principals are “permanent.”

The visit was of interest to the wider community and the local newspaper carried a story which is included as addendum 4C.

The Appraisal is built around the following framework:

- A. Anomalies (Any factors specific to the person appraised or the school setting which may affect the appraisal process. Eg. First time principal, change over in staff, change of principal from secondary to primary or vice-versa, etc.)
- B. Professional Practice Competencies (with a substantive list of indicators given for each one):
 - a. Fostering effective relationships
 - b. Embodying professional leadership
 - c. Leading a learning community
 - d. Providing instructional leadership
 - e. Developing and facilitating leadership
 - f. Managing school operations and resources
 - g. Understanding and responding to the larger societal context
- C. Summary Statement from Appraiser
- D. Areas for Growth.

During the year the administrators (principals and vice-principals) maintain a portfolio covering each competency and collate evidence ready for the final evaluation meeting.

Each of the administrators I interviewed mentioned the appraiser's insightful question, "So what?" This process of talking about what was happening in their school and then thinking about the implications for the future (so what?) was a feature of all those I spoke with.

Principal Interviews.

In this school district I visited two high schools, three public primary schools and three Hutterite schools. This last group did not fit into my research project and were more of a personal interest.

Principal 1.

This was actually the vice-principal of a high school in a low socio-economic area. She shared the following:

- For her appraisal she reports directly to the Assistant Superintendent with this responsibility, rather than to her school principal.
- As a first year vice-principal she has a robust mentoring programme in place from both the AS and the school principal and appreciates this greatly.
- She has very positive relationships with both, and this is the foundation for her confidence in the appraisal process.
- The district sent her to Phoenix, Arizona, for an initial training programme in her new role.
- The mentoring programme includes a programme of professional reading, regular meetings with colleagues and with the administration, and her keeping of a professional portfolio.
- The appraisal is ongoing through the year but is summarised at the end of the year in a formal interview with the Assistant Superintendent.

Principal 2

The setting was a K – 6 rural school with 125 students. The principal was quite new in her role and shared the following:

- She appreciated the strong mentoring programme and the in depth discussions that came from the oft repeated question, "So what?"
- She enjoyed working through her portfolio, gathering her quality indicators for the appraisal process.
- She liked to focus on the "big rocks" – the most important needs in her school and these were based mostly around literacy. She was very keen on the NZ Reading Recovery approach for struggling readers.

- She found her first year evaluation as a principal “reflective and energising.” The process was carefully managed, with good coaching on what evidence should look like and there were no surprises. The process was affirming.
- Another area of focus she had identified for her school was the “lack of urgency” some teachers seemed to have in terms of moving children forward in their literacy. Her school had set a goal of having all children at their expected reading age by the end of three years at school.

Principal 3.

This person was a first time vice-principal in a large elementary school. She has been a teacher for only 5 years and the school district has identified her as having strong leadership ability and wish to prepare her for future leadership roles. She stated:

- She considered it an honour to be chosen for training in school leadership and loved being in the school as the vice-principal.
- Her school principal is highly experienced and gives a lot of mentoring and guidance to her, along with the Associate Superintendent.
- Her induction into leadership has been with a group of several colleagues and they have a strong network of support within the group.
- She was currently preparing for her formal appraisal meeting and did not feel overly concerned as the process had been transparent and this would simply be a formality.

Interview 4 with three administrators.

This interview involved a group of two principals and one vice-principal. One principal and vice-principal were from a small town high school, and the third person was a first-time principal in a small rural school. The following comments come from the group:

- All three were new in their positions and appreciated the strong mentoring programme provided by the school district.
- Two had completed their formal appraisal and said it was an affirming and constructive process. They shared that at the meeting several goals were clarified for the year ahead, and these goals were already known to them (no surprises).
- The elementary principal still waiting his formal evaluation interview, and was a little nervous, although he knew what was expected and was comfortable with this.
- The mentoring programme had used the 7 professional practice competencies (see above) from the appraisal programme as a framework. They all talked about the “So what?” discussions and how

these helped them to consider strategies for school improvement and direction.

- One person had used a 360 degree survey of staff and this had helped immensely. This was self-initiated and I have a copy of the document.
- The requirement for each administrator was to “show evidence” of progress in each of the 7 competencies. Most used a portfolio but this was not the only method and flexibility was included.
- They expressed appreciation that members from the central office, including the Assistant Superintendent, visited regularly and that they all worked within an environment of support and nurture.
- They saw the appraisal interview as simply a summation of the ongoing process of visits, readings, mentoring and professional growth.

My own Reflections:

I was very impressed with this school district and the excellent programme they have for administering their schools. The whole district was buzzing with collegial interaction, clear professional support and growth programmes focussed on improving student outcomes.

I appreciated seeing the workings of the school district as a whole. The central office administered all finances, including payroll, bus transportation systems, human resource management, property management and leadership development.

This allowed school principals and vice-principals to focus on teaching and learning. They were able to do this in a setting where training and support were high priorities and where people were assigned to schools which were a “best fit” and benefitted both the administrator and the school community.

I believe that this model is well worth looking at as New Zealand tinkers with optional “Communities of Schools.” Perhaps a small community of around 8 – 12 schools and only one high school is not the ideal model. Such a community still has repetition of management function in each school (finance, human resources, property management, etc.) whereas a larger “district” would have the capacity to combine many of these administrative functions into one office. In order to succeed I believe structure would need:

- An overall manager (not one of the current principals)
- A common geographic area
- More than one high school
- Not be too large – a key feature of this school district was the relationship and trust between those in central office and the school administrators.

D. Scotland

My visit to Scotland was very enjoyable, but the access to visit schools was not very successful. I made contact with five schools but only one invitation to visit and interview eventuated.

In the process I made contact with the main Education Scotland office in Glasgow and received a very warm offer from there. I was invited to meet with the "Senior Officer for Primary Education" and with a primary Headteacher currently seconded to the office. This interview was very worthwhile and gave a good overview of the appraisal system in Scotland in general.

The one school I visited was also very worthwhile and comments are reported below.

Interview in the Education Scotland central office:

Education Scotland has a goal "to develop leadership in schools" and to this end several strategies have been implemented.

- The General Teacher Council of Scotland (GTCS) now oversees teacher registration with three sets of standards:
 - Full teacher registration
 - Career long professional learning
 - Leadership and management, including aspiring head teachers.
- The Scotland Council for Educational Leadership is working with several universities on a Scottish qualification for Headteachers. It will be akin to a Masters degree.
- Scotland has 32 Local Education Authorities and each is responsible for the appraisal of headteachers in its district. These Authorities range in size from the 23 schools in Orkney to larger authorities with 150+ schools. The city of Glasgow is the largest with several hundred schools.
- Each local authority must follow national requirements but may implement these in their own ways.
- The funding each authority receives can vary greatly. A number of factors are included in the funding allocation. For example the Argyll and Bute area is very rural and spread out and the funding takes this into account.
- A mentoring programme for new headteachers has been set up, but is not yet a formalised programme.
- Education Scotland picks up trends and needs across the sector and plans for professional development or other strategies to respond to these.
- In recent years several situations have arisen where one headteacher is responsible for more than one school. This happens in the rural sector where a small isolated school cannot find an appropriate head

teacher and a neighbouring headteacher is asked to take over the leadership of that school, while continuing in their own school.

- If a headteacher is struggling and not meeting expectations in the role, there is a process for this which includes: formalised meetings, union support, expected outcomes and time frames set in place and professional support given.
- Most schools work in informal clusters, usually with contributing schools that feed into a local secondary school. Cluster improvement plans are set for all schools involved and can be around a commonly perceived need; eg Science.
- Appraisers: Most Authorities have training for those involved in appraising headteachers. They explained that appraisers must have the right skill set (eg good questioning) and have experience and understanding of the role of a headteacher.
- They have a desire to see headteacher appraisals linked to the school improvement plan and to headteacher professional growth.
- They shared with me the expectations of headteachers in Scotland and gave me a copy of what they call....

The Professional Actions of Headteachers (disseminated from the GTCS):

1. Establish, sustain and enhance the culture of self-evaluation for school improvement (There are 5 sub-sections to this)
2. Develop staff capability, capacity and leadership to support the culture and practice of learning (with 7 sub-sections)
3. Ensure consistent, high quality teaching and learning for all learners (with 5 sub-sections)
4. Build and sustain partnerships with learners, families and relevant partners to meet the identified needs of all learners (5 sub-headings)
5. Allocate resources effectively in line with identified strategic and operational priorities (4 sub-headings)

Interview with Principal (Scotland)

The school visited was in a rural village in which the headteacher had responsibility for her school of 75 primary and 20 pre-school students, and a neighbouring school with 14 primary and 6 pre-school students.

Comments made by this headteacher included:

- The requirements for her appraisal comes from the GTCS (see above).
- In her Local Authority area she had a programme of having a peer review every alternate year and a review by a member of the senior management team from the local authority other years.
- There are two "quality improvement officers" in the authority.
- Her experience of appraisals was largely influenced by the person doing the appraisal. In those years when it was done by a colleague

(peer review) it varied. The person is appointed by the Authority and sometimes is less experienced and knowledgeable than she is. In such instances the process can lack rigour and is less worthwhile. Where the peer is as, or more, experienced as she is, it can lead to very worthwhile conversations and outcomes. The appraisals done by Authority representatives are usually thorough and worthwhile as most were previously headteachers with plenty of experience.

- Her appraisals have been based on the Professional Actions of Head Teachers (see above). She has been responsible to complete a self-review against these standards and prepare other documentation including a "360 degree survey" with her teaching staff.
- She works within a local cluster of schools based around the local high school and believes it helps with transition. There is no such thing as a middle school or intermediate. Children go directly from primary to high school.

My own Reflections:

I found a great deal of similarity between Scotland and New Zealand. Scotland has a large rural sector and many isolated primary schools.

The concept of one principal (headteacher) overseeing two or more small rural schools does have merit. I know of one case in the north of New Zealand where this is happening and it could be considered elsewhere, should the need exist.

E. England

My time in England was very worthwhile and I had the opportunity to visit schools which were quite divergent. Those interviewed also represented quite different thinking with, for example, one being very supportive of the Charter school movement in England, while another was sceptical of it.

I did not visit any central education office or authority, so my picture of appraisals in England is perhaps not fully rounded out. However, the interviews with four headteachers gives an insight into the process as they see it.

A new set of professional standards for headteachers is being introduced in England and can be viewed on the [Department For Education](#) website. The framework is as follows:

The *National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers* are set out in four domains, beginning with a Preamble. There are four 'Excellence As Standard' domains:

- Qualities and knowledge
- Pupils and staff
- Systems and process
- The self-improving school system

Within each domain there are six key characteristics expected of the nation's headteachers.

Headteacher 1.

This headteacher has been in her role for 5 years and leads a school of 100 students aged 4 to 11 years. This school is in the Lancashire Local Authority which has over 500 primary schools and around 120 high schools.

She explained that in her local authority there are many advisers, mostly previous headteachers, and these people are involved in appraising the headteachers within the authority area. Each adviser works with a group of schools and headteachers and these advisers also carry out the annual appraisals for these heads.

The headteacher may request a different adviser/appraiser should s/he feel there is a reason for this.

The appraisal is carried out annually and includes targets chosen from the OFSTED requirements, usually based around:

- Student achievement data
- Leadership
- Teaching and learning
- Behaviour/safety/attendance

These goals are also linked to the school's strategic plan.

Each school also has a local "Board of Governors" which, in her case, is comprised of three parents, three community representatives and two local authority representatives. There have been recent steps taken to give these local governors more responsibility. Their main role is to work with the headteacher, monitor the school and how it is doing and, if they feel it necessary, express concerns to the adviser/appraiser. These governors are essentially volunteers and do not have a lot of authority.

The appraisal process is an ongoing one between the adviser/ appraiser and the headteacher. There are multiple visits to the school through the year with discussions around the strategic plan, annual goals, student achievement data, and so on. This leads to the actual appraisal report.

This report is shared with the "Heads Appraisal Committee," a sub-committee of the governors, and they make a recommendation about any pay increment for the headteacher.

The headteacher said that her appraisal process is mostly developmental in focus, with lots of emphasis on her professional growth and that this is in direct contrast to their recent OFSTED review (two days) which was almost exclusively focused on student achievement data.

Headteacher 2.

This headteacher has been in his current position since 2011. The school had 172 students when he arrived and now has just over 200. The school is part of the Cheshire East Authority with 123 primary schools in the catchment.

In his first years here the local authority had responsibility to appoint an appraiser and carry this out. However, "funds for this have now dried up" and, instead, an experienced headteacher is now carrying out appraisals for three local schools. This appraiser appointment is made by the school's governors, in consultation with the headteacher.

The appraisal process starts in the autumn where student achievement data from the concluding year is analysed and goals are set for the coming year.

The local authority provides a "School Improvement Partner" (SIP) who works alongside the headteacher during the course of the year, helping him to meet the goals that have been set.

This school has had a successful OFSTED review and has a growing roll, both being indicators of an achieving school. The headteacher shared his frustration that as his school improved its success rate, the funding allocations reduced by around 12%, being put into schools that were failing.

He was regularly being asked to consider “academy status” for his school. As long as his school was having successful reviews, this was not really an issue, but he stated that should his school receive a poor review, then academy status might well be imposed on the school. Interestingly a week after my visit, the government Secretary for Education announced that up to 1000 failing schools (based on recent OFSTED reviews), were to be rebranded as academies.

This headteacher shared his concern that some companies were “empire building,” taking over failing schools and including them in clusters that were geographically isolated from each other and not linked professionally in any way.

Headteacher 3.

This headteacher was very experienced, although he had been in his current school just this year. He saw his role as needing to turn the school around from being a failing school to a successful school. The school had around 380 students.

His appraisal is carried out officially by three members of his Board of Governors, with support and advice from an external adviser. This external adviser is chosen by the governors and is usually from the local authority and is usually the School Improvement Adviser (SIA). Any pay increment for the head is decided by the governors.

This headteacher shared with me that, while his current appraisal system is reasonably satisfactory, in his previous school he had experienced several years of extremely worthwhile professional evaluation and support. This previous appraiser was very forward thinking in the manner in which the appraisal was carried out and the Governors were included in the process. The appraiser had previously been a headteacher herself and knew the right questions to ask and how to challenge him to improve the school's performance. The appraisal began with an in depth study of student data with the appraiser and headteacher and the formulation of some tentative goals. A meeting, led by the appraiser, and with the headteacher and governors all in one room, is held and, following recommendations from the appraiser, the governors adjust and/or confirm the annual goals. The appraiser would work with the headteacher for the following school year and, at the end of the year, after consultation with the headteacher, would report back to the governors, with the headteacher present. This gave rigour

and transparency to the whole programme. The only meeting that excluded the headteacher was when the governors met to consider a pay increment.

Several other comments made included:

- Those who appraise headteachers need additional training as this is a very specific professional field and requires more than general skills.
- Many headteachers in England are become quite insular, not getting out and seeing the big picture of education in general. They tend to only know what is happening in their own schools, and not much outside of them
- He is a supporter of Charter schools but believes that, for them to truly succeed, they need to be geographically clustered together, and that they need to have a minimum of 2 high schools so that there is diversity and exchange at that level as well. He thinks that they also need to be small enough to work together and to build accountability. His ideal cluster would be 12 to 15 schools.
- He sees his current situation, where his School Improvement Adviser is also his appraiser, as being a potential conflict of interest. If the advice given to the headteacher does not result in school improvement, is s/he really free to challenge the headteacher and/or report candidly to the governors, as this would reflect negatively on his/her own advice.
- Each academy school has to have a “sponsor” – usually a nearby successful school. In his new position he is trying to help a low achieving school make improvements. Should this not happen quickly enough, his next OFSTED review could result in his school becoming an academy school sponsored by the local high school which he believes may be a totally unsuitable match.

Headteacher 4

This school is a Church of England School, and the headteacher has been here since 2011. There are around 240 students, up from around 180 when she arrived.

The appraisal process is led by a retired OFSTED inspector and the headteacher finds the process very thorough, helpful, professionally challenging, and well appreciated by the governors. The process begins with the headteacher putting together records of student achievement and other school data and the appraiser then analyses these and identifies areas for improvement. In a rigorous meeting the headteacher and appraiser work this through and identify annual goals and targets which are then shared with the governors for approval.

The appraiser undertakes a mid-year report (with headteacher input) and sends this to the governors.

A final review of the data and goals is carried out at the end of the year and a final report prepared for the governors.

The governing body is now held responsible for student data for an OFSTED review. There has been a significant shift to evaluating schools and headteachers on the basis of student data and a shift away from other school dynamics such as school culture, the Arts, staff management, etc.

My own Reflections:

- Headteachers shared with me that there has been a significant shift in focus in their appraisals. The shift has gone from the wider role of headship to a much narrower focus on student achievement data and that there is now extensive pressure coming from this.
- One principal showed me from his data that if he could move three students up a level in literacy, then his whole school would move from being rated as an “achieving school” to an “excellent” school. Principals are understandably concerned that all of their other vital work in school leadership is being overshadowed in this way.
- Most agreed that having a focus on student data did have a beneficial effect on building urgency into teaching programmes and made a difference to some students in their schools, but with an added sense of tension and stress.

F. Australia

I had a very limited opportunity to visit two schools in Queensland on my journey back from the UK. This was their last week of term and I could only arrive in time for the Thursday and Friday of that week, hence I am very appreciative of the opportunity to do this. The schools are both quite large in size (around 700 students in each) and both appear to be high achieving schools with very capable principals.

Principal 1.

The following was shared with me:

- The appraisal is completed annually
- The appraisal system is all “on-line” and available to key people involved in the process.
- The local region is divided in sub-regions and in this sub-group there are over 30 schools. Principal appraisals are carried out by the Director and several Assistant Regional Directors (ARDs) for the area.
- There is no local Board of Trustees or equivalent, so the appraisal is between the principal and the educational region the school is in.
- In this case the appraisal consisted of the following:
 - The principal prepared an annual plan for the school and, without any discussion or co-construction, this was approved by the ARD (appraiser).
 - There could be visits during the year by the ARD but these did not occur. They probably do happen if a school is struggling, but the principal could not confirm this.
 - The ARD visited late in the year, went through the principal's documentation, and a short summary statement was completed in the on-line box.
- The principal found the appraisal covered the requirements and “ticked the boxes,” but lacked depth and any sense of challenge or personal professional growth.
- He shared that there is a growing pressure in Queensland schools to focus on student data as the primary focus for appraisal and school review.
- In order to get better feedback on his role, and the school as a whole, the principal had initiated a 360 degree survey of staff and school community input on how things are going.
- He suggested that there is a need for a “head of professional learning” in each school district to look after the well-being and professional growth of principals.
- He expressed a desire to see an accreditation process for those who appraise principals.

Principal 2.

This principal explained a similar appraisal process, with a line manager (ARD) having an initial meeting at the beginning of the year to set goals and strategies for the year ahead, a 6 month “check in”, and an end-of-year summary meeting. The experience of the Principal was a little more rigorous and helpful than that of the first interviewee.

He shared the following with me:

- He was part of a cluster of 6 schools which he found very helpful and through which a good amount of professional learning took place
- A significant amount of his appraisal is based on student data from national testing. This testing gives a snapshot of how students are doing.
- In his school there is a “teacher coach” who is free from classroom duties and who coaches teachers across the school, with special focus on how to move students needing to get to the next level. This is funded as a separate project and he was fearful that the funding was about to stop and he would have to disestablish the position, which he felt had had a significant positive impact.
- He expressed a strong concern against (student) performance based pay scales for principals. He knew of schools where cultural and /or socio-economic factors have huge impacts on student learning and the principal would be strongly disadvantaged – even if he or she was doing an outstanding job. An example he shared was with a cultural group where a family funeral might result in children being away from school for one or two weeks and that this might happen several times a year. This has a huge negative impact on the children’s learning and their principal has little control over such factors.
- He had experienced appraisals led by ex-secondary principals and felt that the lack of knowledge and experience in the primary sector was a significant factor.
- Appraisals must be open and transparent, where the principal knows the “ground rules” and has confidence in the process.

My own Reflections:

- The appraisal process for both principals seemed quite “light-weight” and did not build much rigour or encourage professional growth.
- Both appreciated having an appraiser who had experience as a primary principal, and who knew the principal role well.
- The concept of a teacher coach is a good one, and the feedback from the principal was that it had been invaluable in improving teaching and learning.

4. Addendum

(a) Initial Proposal (July, 2014)

Appraisal of Principals in small, rural New Zealand schools A Question of Equity.

Ken McLeay

Riverview School, Kerikeri, Northland.

There is a dilemma facing small, rural, New Zealand schools, especially for the board chairpersons and principals. Every public school in New Zealand is required by law to complete an annual appraisal of the principal, and the responsibility to ensure this happens is specifically assigned to the board chairperson.

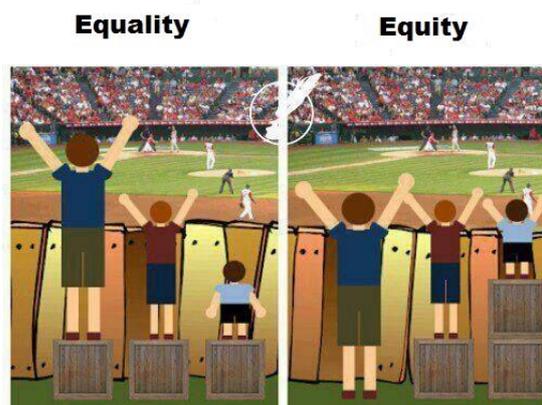
Traditionally there have been three potential appraisers for this task, each with strengths and weaknesses. The Board Chair can do this him or herself, a principal colleague can be called upon to help, or an "outside expert" or consultant might be hired to do this on behalf of the Board.

Large urban schools have the luxury of using any of these options, and the financial resources to cover expenses. In these schools, the Board Chairpersons are likely to be endowed with skills and experience in appraising staff in other settings and, at the least, has some knowledge of what is required.

Small, rural schools, and especially those a long distance from main centres, have more need for specialised help and fewer resources to access them. In very rural areas U1 and U2 schools have rolls under 100 students and many are under 50. The elected parent board members are likely to have a much lower educational level than their counterparts in urban schools, and many have little in the way of skills and experience in appraisal. Of all New Zealand schools, these are the ones most in need of the expertise of knowledgeable consultants.

The situation is compounded when the annual operations budget of small, rural schools are compared with larger urban schools. In large schools, the cost of paying for someone to appraise the principal is only a small percentage of the operation budget (perhaps 1%) while in very small schools, using a consultant might well cost the school 5 - 8% or more of the annual budget.

Small, rural schools then have to weigh up which is more important: having a strong appraisal programme for the principal or spending the money on curriculum resources for the students. With costs of property, utilities, support staff, etc., being mostly inflexible, the only part of the budget from which this money can be taken is the curriculum. Additionally the costs of a consultant for these rural schools is greater than in the city as travel and accommodation has to be factored in.



The outcome is self-evident. With the needs of the children and their learning programmes being paramount, the principal and board chair inevitably agree to not pay for a consultant, and use the money where it is needed; for the children.

Now this is a matter of inequity. All schools and Boards want to carry out the principal's appraisal well. The work and leadership of the principal is intricately linked to the school's strategic plan, quality of education, and general reputation. Large schools have both the expertise locally available to call on for this purpose, and the funding available to carry it out.

But, despite the best wishes and intent of the small, rural school board and principal, they simply do not have the opportunity to have the best appraisal system. The outcomes are significant:

- The board chairperson is left with a requirement to carry out the appraisal of the principal and, in all likelihood, does not have the skills to do so, or the resources to buy in those skills. He or she will probably sit down with the principal and ask for advice and will simply do the best they can in the circumstances.
- The principal will probably need to lead the board chair through the process, and set up and manage their own professional goals and steps to measure them against. Keep in mind that many of these principals are first time principals and are geographically isolated. The principal, in this situation, might well feel professionally vulnerable, having their appraisal, including salary increments, being held in the hands of a volunteer parent with minimal education, little knowledge of the work of a principal, and few skills to carry out the task.

My wish is to take the time to check the reality of this in a variety of small, rural, New Zealand schools, and then compare similar settings in Australia, North America and Great Britain, to see what happens there.

I would like to find any alternative structures in these countries, weigh them against the New Zealand scenario, and put together some suggestions for addressing this inequitable situation.

Addendum (b): Official Requirements for Principal Appraisal (quoted from page 8 of the Primary Principals' Collective Agreement – 8 March 2013 to 7 November 2015)

Part 4: Professional Leadership and Annual Performance Review

4.1 Performance Agreement

4.1.1 a. The Board shall put in place an annual performance agreement and carry out a review (appraisal) of the principal every year. Provided that, where a principal is newly appointed, it is expected that the Board and principal will put in place a performance agreement within two months of the appointment.

b. The purposes of this process are to ensure the principal is aware of the Board's objectives, assist the principal's professional learning and development and improve/acknowledge performance (i.e. it is about both accountability and development).

c. The performance agreement shall reflect the school's strategic and annual plans and the principal's job description and shall take into account the professional standards, the preceding year's review report where relevant and the New Zealand Teachers Council criteria for registration as a teacher.

d. The performance agreement shall be in writing and a signed copy kept by both the Board and principal.

4.1.2 The performance agreement shall be developed in consultation with the principal and it shall detail:

a. objectives for that year including relevant professional standards;

b. a professional learning and development plan for the principal to identify strategies and support (including any agreed resourcing) to enable the principal to carry out his/her responsibilities, meet the objectives and improve professional knowledge and performance; and

c. the process and criteria, as per 4.2 below, by which the principal's performance is to be reviewed for that year.

4.1.3 a. Every endeavour shall be made by the Board and principal to reach agreement on a performance agreement that is acceptable to both of them.

b. Where this has not been achieved, the Board or the principal may seek professional advice to assist them.

c. Where a performance agreement acceptable to both parties is not achieved, the decision of the Board in relation to the contents of the performance agreement for that year will be final. In such circumstances the principal shall have the right to attach written comments including any professional advice obtained under 4.1.3(b) above and/or noting any objectives that he/she considers unreasonable, to the performance agreement which shall be considered during the review or other proceedings.

4.2 Performance Review

4.2.1 a. The Board will carry out the annual review of the principal's performance in accordance with the annual performance agreement.

b. The review is in relation to the objectives in the performance agreement and to professional standards.

4.2.2 While the Board shall retain responsibility for the review it may delegate the management of the process to Board member(s). The Board or delegated Board member(s) may decide to engage, following consultation with the principal, an external reviewer.

4.2.3 Evidence used in the review should be relevant and should be objective and robust.

4.2.4 The principal will assist the Board to conduct any review under this clause and in particular will give to the Board such information as the Board requires to carry out the review.

4.2.5 a. The Board will, in consultation with the principal, prepare a final report based on the review.

b. The principal shall have the opportunity to comment on the final report, but is not obliged to do so. Primary

Addendum (c)

Newspaper article in Lethbridge Herald following my visit to the Palliser School District, Alberta, Canada

Seeing how the other half lives

BY VILLENEUVE, MELISSA ON MAY 8, 2015.

Melissa Villeneuve

Lethbridge Herald

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He's a man on a mission, from a faraway land.

Award-winning principal Ken McLeay of Riverview School in Kerikeri, New Zealand, spent two days visiting Palliser Regional Schools as part of his North American tour researching how school leaders are evaluated.

He's been travelling across North America by motorhome since mid-April. His journey started in Houston, Texas, then north to Lethbridge, where he is touring Palliser Regional Schools on Thursday and today. Then he will head west to Vancouver and south to Los Angeles.

On Thursday he visited Sunnyside School. Palliser is the only Alberta school jurisdiction on his six-week tour.

McLeay is the recipient of the ASB-APPA Travelling Fellowship, described as "one of the most prestigious awards that a primary school principal can receive in New Zealand." It's awarded to two principals each year.

The goal is to travel internationally and investigate a topic based on a national interest in public education. McLeay said he chose to research evaluation processes for school principals, primarily in small rural primary schools.

In New Zealand, it is a requirement by law for principals to be appraised annually, and it is the responsibility of the school board chairperson. Every school operates independently and has a separate parent school board. This proves to be a challenge in rural areas as it's difficult to find five parent volunteers to be on the board, or there isn't enough financing to cover the cost of a consultant for the appraisal.

"They just don't have enough resources to do it the way larger, urban schools might do."

He said he's learned that by having a centralized administration, there isn't an inequity among smaller schools in the Palliser school district.

"Here, I've been really impressed in the way the school district looks after all the administration and management of structures, resources, property, and finances, freeing up the principals to be the educational

leaders of learning for the children,” he said, adding those responsibilities tend to fall on the principals in New Zealand.

The board of trustees is responsible for policies and procedures in terms of how the school runs.

“I think the New Zealand school system is fantastic. I’m looking for good practice that might be of interest in the New Zealand setting. It may not work, but my responsibility is to report on what I find, make suggestions, and leave it with the authorities that be.”

At the end of the tour, he must write a paper for the Minister of Education on his findings, as well as present at several conferences.

Palliser Regional Schools has an evaluation process for principals, which measures whether they are meeting key competencies according to provincial standards.

“It’s all about building evidence that says what we’re doing is working or here are some areas for growth,” said Ken Garinger, Palliser associate superintendent. “I really believe our entire evaluation process is about growth.”

Garinger said anytime there’s an opportunity to connect with someone with an international perspective, there’s so much learning that can take place.

“I think what we have here is outstanding, but there are also other models out there and we need to learn from those to understand everybody’s reality.”

McLeay also visited Coalhurst High, Jennie Emery Elementary, Champion and Vulcan County Central High School. He will visit two of Palliser’s Hutterite Colony schools today.