**Educational Leadership Practices survey**

Information Sheet  September 2010

What is the purpose of this survey?
This survey is designed to provide the principal with a robust picture of how effective the school’s teachers perceive the school’s educational leadership to be, in those key aspects that our current evidence shows are the ones most likely to have an impact on teaching and learning. Its main purpose is formative, to support ongoing school leader and principal development, and feed into school planning.

Why have this survey?
The impetus for this Educational Leadership Practices survey came from a shared realisation from the Ministry of Education and sector group representatives (NZPF, NZEI, PPTA, SPANZ, and NZSTA) that we needed a practical tool for principals to support their work and continued professional growth, a tool that was consistent with the Kiwi Leadership Framework and the Educational Leadership Best Evidence Synthesis. It was also preferable that such a survey could be used to give a national picture to support that growth. Viviane Robinson, who led the Educational Leadership Best Evidence Synthesis, and Cathy Wylie, NZCER, developed the trial version of the survey, which was used in a good cross-section of 37 schools. This trial showed which items could be dropped to provide a survey that was relatively quick to complete and yet would yield useful and reliable information on each aspect of leadership.

The survey has been used in most of the schools taking part in the Experienced Principals’ Development programme in late 2009, as part of their needs analysis. Feedback on its usefulness has been very positive.

What does the Educational Leadership Practices survey cover?
It covers these different aspects of educational leadership:

- Goal Setting
- Strategic Resourcing
- Ensuring Curriculum Quality
- Ensuring the Quality of Teaching
- Promoting and Participating in Teacher Learning and Development
- Ensuring a Safe and Orderly Environment
- Ensuring Educationally and Powerful Connections with Families, Whanau and Community
- Ensuring Māori success
- Effectiveness of principal leadership.
These aspects are based on the vision for school leadership set out in the Kiwi Leadership for Principals (KLP), and the six dimensions for effective educational leadership practice described in the Educational Leadership Best Evidence Synthesis (BES). Most of the survey items are concerned with distributed leadership of teaching and learning. This includes all types of leadership, whether or not those who exercise it hold formal leadership roles. In a primary or intermediate school, leadership includes syndicate and curriculum leaders, as well as those with formal leadership roles. In a secondary school, it includes deans, HoDs, and specialist classroom teachers, as well as those in the senior management team.

Each of the aspects of educational leadership is covered through a set of survey items that focus on the effectiveness of school leadership in ensuring that a particular practice is carried out.

There are three further sets of items. One set of items focuses specifically on the leadership of the principal. There is also a set of items for the principal on the context for their exercise of educational leadership. Items relating to teacher morale and workload are also included in the teacher survey.

**Who should do the survey?**

Every teacher in the school who has ongoing classroom or school-wide responsibilities, including long-term relievers, should do the survey. The survey should take around 20-25 minutes. The higher teachers’ participation rate, the more solid the picture you will get of how your school leadership is performing.

Ways to maximise teacher participation include planning for the survey as a school-wide activity some time ahead, choosing a week that will not be too busy for staff. Some schools have set aside a given time or used existing staff meeting time for teachers to all do it at the same time. In your communication with staff about the survey, emphasise the value you place on this collective picture of school leadership performance, and that you intend it to have a practical use in the ongoing development of the school. Offering a small celebration if the participation rate reaches 75 percent or more could be an additional incentive.

**What reports will I get back?**

There are two sets of reports from the survey. One gives a high level picture, showing the collective views of teachers on each of the aspects, on a common scale that means they can be easily compared. Teachers collectively might, for example, rate the school leadership highly effective in relation to goal setting, but not so highly in relation to ensuring a safe and orderly environment. The second set of reports let principals focus on particular practices related to each aspect of school leadership, showing responses for each item. This more detailed look allows principals to identify some practices as good areas to start working on, in relation to their own school and leadership priorities, and other data about the school, such as levels of student engagement and achievement.
The reports will also provide a comparison of your school with the aggregate benchmarks from the 282 participating schools from the Experienced Principals Development programme.

**How can the results of the survey be used?**

Principals can use the reports from the survey as their own “reality check”. You can use these reports for school planning, including discussions with other staff. Such discussions have proved particularly useful for those who have done the Educational Leadership Practices survey so far. You can also use the reports in discussions with anyone you are working with who is providing you with ongoing professional development or support related to your school leadership, and with your school colleagues about any areas of leadership that you would like to develop further. In a sense, the survey information is like 360 degrees feedback, except that most of the scales are about the whole-school leadership, which the principal steers, as well as the principal’s individual leadership.

However, we wouldn’t recommend the survey to a school that is in the thick of dealing with major staff issues, though it would probably be useful to the school leadership when the school is heading back into calmer waters.

Aggregated national profiles will also give the Ministry of Education and the sector a wider picture of educational leadership in our schools. This national picture can be used to see how well the Professional Leadership plan is supporting school leadership, and to provide valuable feedback to policy makers about the effectiveness of their leadership policies and programmes.

**Who gets to see the school reports?**

Individual school reports belong to the principal, and decisions about any further sharing of the results are left to the principal. They are given in two formats, one where the principal can compare their own survey responses with those of their teaching staff, and one with the principal’s responses omitted, so that the principal can decide what to share, as appropriate. Comparing your own responses with those of your staff, and thinking about why there may be differences, can be a powerful starter for reflection and further inquiry.

Your staff is likely to be interested in the outcomes of the survey. Sharing reports with them is a good way to have data-informed discussion about school practices and priorities, to develop shared understandings. If you judge that it would be unhelpful to share all or some of the reports with staff, then it is important to let staff know what use you are making of the survey results.

These reports are intended for formative use to support school leadership and student learning. They are not intended to be used as part of any formal performance appraisal. They do not need to be shared with the school board, though you may want to let them know what use you are making of the results. ERO is not likely to want to see the reports from this survey during an ERO review, although a review officer does have the right to read any material in a school.
The information used in the school reports can only be accessed by the NZCER research team providing the reports. Anonymity for individual teachers is ensured through online completion of the survey and the use of a password. Confidentiality of schools and individuals is ensured through the safeguards provided by the work being undertaken as a research survey, with voluntary, informed consent, so that no government agency, media, or individual can legitimately access the data. Any data that is used to report national trends is made anonymous so that information cannot be linked to other data-sets in ways that identify the school. In any national reports, no individuals or individual schools will be able to be identified.

**How does the online survey work?**

The online survey is administered using NZCER’s online survey platform. Each principal nominates someone in the school to act as the survey platform administrator for the school (this can be the principal themselves). The survey administrator is someone who will log onto the survey site and control a small number of administrative functions. These include monitoring how many people have completed the survey, and notifying NZCER when the school has completed the survey and is ready to receive reports. The administrator is the first line of contact with NZCER and should be prepared to help teachers who may need support using the online system to complete the survey.

Teachers will use the school link provided by the administrator to access the survey. They are asked to provide their email address, but this would only be used to contact them for any technical difficulty. Principals will be emailed their own principal’s password directly by NZCER.

Principal and teachers email addresses (including the school survey administrator) remain totally separate to any survey data or reporting generated.

Most principals and teachers have completed the survey in one session; it is also possible to enter the survey site at different times to complete it. The survey can be done at home or school.

**How do I get started?**

NZCER will contact the principal to confirm the administrator and principal details. Further information will then be sent out to ensure all processes are clear for the school prior to the survey opening on Oct 11, day one of Term 4 2011.

**When does the survey have to be completed?**

All surveys must be completed by December 7. You can set an earlier completion date you’re your school if preferred. The time period the survey is available should be limited so that the data can be collected and reports returned in a timely fashion. NZCER will create the reports when the school’s survey administrator notifies us that the school has completed the survey. We will be producing school reports on a fortnightly basis during Term 4. This means that most schools should get their school reports within a week of notifying us that they have completed the survey.
Informing staff

We strongly encourage you to give staff notice that the survey will be taking place, and encourage them to take part so that the school is able to get the most use from its participation in the survey, before providing them with the school’s unique link to the survey. This could involve an introduction to the survey at a staff meeting and/or a preliminary email.
NZCER confirms contact details with the principal at each participating school.

The principal is emailed a password and uses it to complete the survey online.

The survey administrator is emailed a username and password so that they can log on and use the online survey’s administrative functions.

The survey administrator provides teachers with a link and unique school code to the survey site.

Teachers use the link and school code to access the survey, providing their own email and optional personal password if preferred.

The survey administrator monitors the completion rate and contacts NZCER when the school is ready for the reports.

Any questions? Please contact us at leadershipsurvey@nzcer.org.nz.