PRIMARY TEACHER WORK STUDY

REPORT

VOLUME ONE

Approach and analysis

Jenny Wilkinson

Adrian Beavis

Lawrence Ingvarson

Elizabeth Kleinhenz

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ACER

ACER Project Team: Lawrence Ingvarson, Adrian Beavis, Jenny Wilkinson, Elizabeth Kleinhenz, Emma Curtin.

Project Reference Group:

Rob Bowie, Ministry of Education
Yvonne Bruorton, NZEI-Te Riu Roa
Chris Collins, Ministry of Education
Colin Davies, New Zealand School Trustees Association
Neil Hammond, NZEI-Te Riu Roa
Tim McMahon, Ministry of Education
Frances Nelson, NZEI-Te Riu Roa
Mick Prior, NZEI-Te Riu Roa
Jonathan Ramsay, NZEI-Te Riu Roa
Maree van der Zouwe, Ministry of Education
Paul van Wamel, Ministry of Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The New Zealand primary teacher work study had three components: a survey component, a case study component and a teacher diary component. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected about hours and conditions of work, and the perceptions of various members of school communities. Information was sought about the workload of teachers and principals and related issues, such as the role of support staff, the role of school organisation, the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), working conditions and the impact of recent government policies. Other relevant issues that emerged during the study were also documented.

This final report is presented in three volumes. Volume One describes the methodology and provides a summary analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data. Volume Two provides the survey data in detail. Volume Three comprises the reports of the case studies and the diaries.

A random sample of 250 schools, including various school types, was selected for the surveys. An additional 93 schools were purposefully selected to ensure strong enough representation of school types of particular policy interest. Twenty-nine schools originally selected for the case study list were also included in the survey study. The returns from the purposefully selected schools were weighted so that their data did not bias parameter estimates. In total, 372 schools were surveyed, with 3171 forms being sent to teachers and 372 forms to principals. Teachers returned 1913 forms (60.3%) and principals returned 253 forms (68%).

Field workers conducted interviews in 25 case study schools. These schools were selected after consultation between ACER and the Project Reference Group to give as broad a representation as possible of school types. A short report/case study was compiled for each of these schools. Thirteen schools were selected to be the subject of more detailed case studies. (Volume Three)

Twenty-two diaries were collected from teachers (not necessarily those who were

interviewed) at the different schools visited. These diaries outlined work-related activities for a period of one week. The diaries provided important additional data, particularly with regard to the "daily run." (See Volume 3, Section 3)

The findings

The findings from the case studies, the diaries and the surveys about the average number of hours teachers work in a seven day week were in close agreement. The respective figures from the three sources are 52, 50 and 49.9 hours. These figures do not include time worked during term breaks or the long vacation (twelve weeks in total), when teachers reported that they worked on average for about twenty two days.

Teachers spent more time on work-related activities outside rather than within classroom teaching time. Workload was heavier at particular times of the year, particularly reporting periods. The qualitative data indicated that planning, preparation, assessment, reporting and record keeping were the major contributors to workload outside classroom teaching time, with meetings at some schools also being a large contributing factor.

The majority of teachers worked outside the hours of 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m, either at home or at school. This was clear from the case studies and from the surveys, with 85% of the survey respondents indicating that they regularly worked outside this time frame.

Senior teachers and syndicate leaders worked for more hours than other teachers, but typically saw the impact and amount of their work in broadly the same way as other teachers. Deputy and assistant principals reported spending more time working, on average, than other teaching staff, but did not perceive their workload to be less manageable and were only slightly more inclined to report adverse effects on the quality of their work.

On average, principals reported working about 58 hours each week, with no statistically significant difference between teaching and non-teaching principals. On average, teaching principals spent more time on playground and clerical duties, while

fully-released principals spent more time on facilities management. Teaching principals also spent more time undertaking activities related to teaching.

Teachers and principals strongly supported recent initiatives to change pedagogical practices, which they saw as improving learning opportunities for their students. However, they often described the pace and frequency of change as excessive. They wanted more time to implement and consolidate the changes they were making. Many teachers also said that they would like to spend more time in planning and preparation and less time in assessment and reporting. Teachers were performing some tasks, such as filing and resource management, which could be carried out by clerical staff or teacher aides.

The nature of primary teaching involves extensive interactions, both scheduled and unscheduled, with a large number of people throughout the day. A factor that became very clear in the diaries in particular was that primary teachers had very little, if any, properly scheduled "down time" during the day. They were often working long hours without a proper break. For primary teachers, time outside the classroom or scheduled teaching duties rarely meant non-contact time.

Although primary teachers will be receiving some planned release time for professional duties, in the past such times have not usually been scheduled. Secondary teachers, in contrast, have regularly scheduled non-contact time during the school day and kindergarten teachers have set times between morning and afternoon sessions.

The commitment and dedication of primary teachers, while clearly very advantageous to students and school communities, was apparently leading many teachers to place unrealistic, "perfectionist" demands on themselves. While the surveys indicated that teachers are not, on average, thinking of leaving their current school or teaching as a result of their workload, many teachers were clearly finding it difficult to maintain a satisfactory work/life balance, with the possibility of "burn-out" in some cases. While 57.5% of survey respondents indicated that their work was "manageable, except for several weeks" each year, a little over 25% of survey respondents indicated that their workload was "hardly ever manageable", with senior teachers being most likely to

report that this was the case.

While the surveys indicated that teachers were satisfied with most aspects of their work, they were, on average, clearly dissatisfied with the amount of non-teaching work they were expected to do, the balance between their working time and their private life during term time and their salaries. Interestingly, the question of salary level was rarely raised during the school visits and interviews as a source of dissatisfaction.

More central provision of curriculum material and less paperwork were issues for both principals and teachers. A large proportion of principals' workload revolves around the development of curriculum areas and educational leadership with their schools' professional communities. Some principals reported that they would appreciate more central support in the form of more curriculum templates, for instance. Teachers, too, reported that they appreciated centrally-provided curriculum materials and would like to see more of them.

The surveys indicated that the most common cause of stress for teachers was the amount of paperwork generated within the school by, for example, assessment requirements. A large contributor to principal workload was analysing and recording assessment data. Principals indicated in the surveys that the factor that would most assist in making their workload more manageable would be simplified accountability procedures.

Principals said that they would benefit from more clerical and office assistance. Rural school principals could use both more assistance and more central support. At rural schools, changing enrolments during the year and consequent re-grouping could cause considerable difficulty and frustration for teachers and principals.

Within some school communities, principals, teachers and Board members saw the system of decile ranking as an unsound basis for estimating funding needs and for the allocation of funds to schools.

Management and curriculum leadership were very important in facilitating teachers'

work. Effective professional communities, the assistance of teacher aides and other support staff, and organised and efficient meetings were identified as factors that increased teacher effectiveness. Teachers felt that working effectively with a teacher aide significantly increased learning opportunities for children.

Many schools had developed effective policies and practices to manage teacher and principal work more effectively. These included the use of electronic systems, home/school card systems, restricting meetings and/or ensuring meetings had a mostly professional focus. Case studies documenting these practices would be beneficial for consideration by other schools.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and in particular the provision of laptops, had been an effective tool in assisting teachers to carry out their core work. The Ministry's ICT initiative was much appreciated by teachers.

Survey respondents reported two important factors in making their workload more manageable: smaller classes and more guaranteed classroom release time for planning and preparation.

Possible areas for change

The research in this work study indicated a number of areas where changes could be considered that would enable teachers and principals to carry out their core work more effectively. Areas to consider for possible change include:

- The pace and frequency of change

- Workload during the especially heavy months of February, June and November

- Suitably spaced genuine breaks for teachers during the day

- The amount of required "paperwork"

- Class sizes

- The frequency and length of meetings

- The provision and timing of professional development

- More teacher aide support

- More clerical support for teachers and principals

- More ICT technician assistance

- Extra provision for changing enrolments at rural schools

The effects of pressures arising from "teacher perfectionism" – that is the demands teachers place upon themselves – are of some concern. Extra ways for teachers to maintain a healthy work/life balance may need to be considered. Greater mutual trust between the Ministry and its schools, and the support of Boards of Trustees for teachers and principals are also factors that could have a positive impact on working conditions and morale.

In conclusion, the commitment and dedication of New Zealand primary teachers and principals were very much in evidence throughout the school visits and interviews. Schools that have established or are establishing strong professional communities can significantly benefit teacher workloads. Consideration of the areas listed above could lead to further improvements and strengthening of the system, to increased retention of its teachers and to improved outcomes for children.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In May 2005, the New Zealand Ministry of Education commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to undertake a primary teacher work study.

The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of the nature and patterns of primary teachers' work, to explore practical and innovative ways in which teachers manage their work and what factors caused work pressure for them. The researchers sought to provide information to the New Zealand Ministry of Education that would identify best practice and help them to consider how the work of primary teachers could be better structured, supported and organised to support more effective classroom teaching.

The study gathered and analysed information about the hours and conditions of the work of primary teachers, including professional and contextual conditions. It also gathered and analysed information about primary teachers' perceptions of their work and the factors that affected it.

Many research studies have investigated the nature and drivers of both primary and secondary teachers' work. In 2004, ACER conducted a study of the workload of secondary teachers in New Zealand. This study analysed a selection of six other major teacher workload studies. Common threads of these six studies emerged:

- Teachers were spending more time in school-related activities than in classroom teaching.

- Teacher workload had increased at social, political and economic level, at the education system level, at the school level, and at the individual teacher level.

- Participating teachers agreed that their "core work" – helping children to achieve their potential – was the most satisfying aspect of their professional lives.

- Various strategies to improve workload were suggested, such as a redesigning of school processes and effective use of ICT for administrative and curriculum

purposes.

The 2004 ACER/NZ Ministry of Education project report offered an analysis of the workload of teachers and middle managers in New Zealand secondary schools, identifying the main factors affecting workload and the connections and relationships between these factors. The report also identified areas where improvements could be made.

Some of the area for consideration and identified areas for possible improvement in the primary study are similar to those of the secondary workload study. Others address the specific nature and needs of primary schools. The full list of areas for consideration for primary schools, arising from the primary study, is to be found in Chapter Five. A brief comparison and overview of some of the common focuses of the primary and secondary studies follows.

Strong leadership and high levels of professional community were found at the six secondary case study schools. At the secondary schools, subject departments were the main units of professional community and professional learning. In the primary schools visited, professional community and learning were very much 'whole school.' Deprivatisation of practice and collegial sharing across curriculum and grade levels were established practice in primary schools. This is a marked highlight of educational practice in New Zealand primary schools.

In the secondary schools, ICT use varied between schools, as did impact on workload and efficiency. In the primary schools, ICT was widely used and generally seen as a very positive factor in increasing effective teaching and learning.

Four of six secondary case study schools did not report student behaviour management as a major workload issue. At most primary schools in this study, behaviour management was also not a major issue, although in a minority it was an issue that interfered with effective teaching and with instructional time.

Many secondary teachers were concerned at the extra "paperwork" and time demands created by the implementation of the New Zealand Certificate of Education (NCEA),

although this concern varied and those who philosophically supported it were less likely to report problems or to express resentment. Primary teachers expressed concern about the increase in paperwork created by changed pedagogical approaches and curriculum initiatives, but overwhelmingly supported the changes. Their major concern appeared to be the pace and frequency of change, and a desire to be allowed to consolidate one change before another was introduced.

The secondary teacher workload study indicated that secondary teachers found it hard to find uninterrupted periods of time to complete professional duties outside the classroom. This situation is exacerbated for primary teachers, who for the most part do not have "down time" during the day (as do secondary teachers during 'spare periods'.) The lack of an uninterrupted interval and lunch period for primary teachers was particularly notable, as was the lack of uninterrupted time in the periods before and after school when they were usually "on call" for their students.

Areas for improvement identified at secondary level that were also identified in the primary study included the amount of "paperwork" involved in various areas and the deployment of teachers' time. There were also some common factors at individual teacher level. These included variation in capacity to manage workload (with school-based factors also affecting this capacity) and in particular unrealistic expectations and possible burn-out.

While some areas for possible improvement overlap in the secondary and primary studies, the areas for consideration in Chapter Five arise from and in the context of the primary study qualitative and quantitative data.

CHAPTER TWO: APPROACH TO THE STUDY

This study sought quantitative and qualitative data about the following matters in particular:

- the hours worked by primary teachers during the school term and in school holiday breaks

- the work related tasks and activities of primary teachers, when they perform them and how much time they take

- the factors that contribute to heavy workload and uneven distribution of workload at different times

- the methods used by schools to alleviate workload, and the measures they take to reduce pressure on staff

- whether the workload of primary teachers makes it difficult for them to perform their core work of teaching students effectively

- whether some tasks could be carried out by non-teaching personnel

- impact of support staff on the work of primary teachers

- management and leadership roles in schools and how they impact on primary teachers

- principal workload that does not contribute to student learning and the role of the teaching principal

- the use and impact of ICT

- the impact of recent government policies on primary teachers' work

- other factors and working conditions that may impact on primary teachers' ability to work effectively and/or add to work pressure.

The project was carried out in four phases:

- *Phase One*: Fieldwork in twenty-five selected schools across New Zealand. Five researchers interviewed teachers, support staff, principals and members

of Boards of Trustees in June and July 2005.

- *Phase Two*: Development and administration of survey. Surveys were sent to principals and teachers in a random sample of primary schools across New Zealand.

- *Phase Three*: Analysis of survey findings.

- *Phase Four*: Preparation of final report. This final report includes the findings of the research, an analysis and discussion of the findings, identification of areas for improvement, and recommendations.

Phase One

The Project Reference Group provided the list of schools to be visited by researchers as part of this study. The schools were a representative sample across New Zealand and included urban, regional and rural schools, and a range of sizes, locations, deciles and school types. Researchers visited these schools in June and July 2005. Interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, support staff and members of Boards of Trustees.

A range of areas to be investigated, together with related questions, was developed for the school visits. Three interview schedules were prepared, two for teachers (also used for support staff where relevant) and one for principals and members of Boards of Trustees. The two teacher interview schedules addressed both qualitative and quantitative issues. The first addressed mainly quantitative issues, such as the estimated number of hours worked on various tasks and when and where these tasks were carried out; the second addressed mainly teacher perceptions. Teachers were asked to comment on a range of issues, such as perceptions of their workload, ways of enabling them to concentrate on their core tasks and the impact of recent government policies. A separate interview schedule, also mainly addressing perceptions, was prepared for principals and members of Boards of Trustees.

A team of five researchers visited the twenty-five schools. Researchers spent between

one and two days at each school and compiled comprehensive field notes. Principals provided documents such as school policies, meeting schedules, duty allocation and other records on request. Interviews were arranged by principals and generally lasted between forty minutes and one hour. With the consent of interviewees, researchers tape-recorded interviews. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity throughout this report, pseudonyms have been used for all persons interviewed. Schools are referred to by randomly selected letters, and some changes have been made to identifying details.

A short report was prepared for each of the twenty-five schools. The reports cover mainly quantifiable aspects of teachers' professional lives. A table of estimated hours worked by interviewed teachers is included in each report.

Thirteen visited schools were selected for more detailed study. These "case study" schools were selected to give a wide as possible range of schools and issues, and were chosen after consultation between ACER and the New Zealand Project Reference Group.

Researchers also asked, via the principal, for one or two teachers from each school to return a weeklong diary recording all school related activities, both within and outside classroom teaching hours. A sample diary in note form was provided to assist with this task. In addition to recording hours on various tasks, the diaries give an overview of what one rural principal described as "…the tumult, reacting to circumstances and events in the daily run."

Twenty-two diaries in a variety of styles and details were returned from teachers in the visited schools. These were not necessarily the teachers who were interviewed. As in other sections of this report, care has been taken to preserve confidentiality and anonymity by means of the insertion of pseudonyms and occasional changes to details.

The short reports, case studies and diaries provide a range of qualitative and quantitative data about the work of primary teachers in New Zealand. This data includes specific information such as the number of hours worked on various tasks

both in and out of school hours, and information about how different members of school communities perceived primary teachers' work.

Phase Two

In the second phase, survey instruments were designed and administered to teachers and principals. Details of the methodology and weighting are provided in Volume 2 of the report.

Phase Three

The third phase of the study involved the analysis of survey data. A variety of methods was employed in these analyses using weighted data.

Phase Four

The final report presents the findings of the research, an analysis and discussion of the findings, and identification of areas where changes or improvements could be considered.

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION FROM THE SHORT REPORTS, THE CASE STUDIES AND THE DIARIES

The short reports, case studies and diaries provide a range of information about primary teacher work. This information includes quantitative information about work hours and duties, and qualitative information about how teachers, support staff, principals and members of Boards of Trustees perceived primary teachers' work.

Quantitative Information

How many hours do primary teachers work?

The short reports and diaries provide quantitative data about how many hours primary teachers work. Figures provided by teachers at interview indicate that primary teachers were working about 52 hours per week during term time. Estimates taken from the diaries indicate that they were working about 50 hours per week during term time. These are estimated averages over a seven day week.

When and where do primary teachers work?

The short reports, case studies and diaries provide information about when and where primary teachers carried out school-related tasks. Primary teachers carried out school-related work both at school and at home. They did this work during the working week, during weekends and during term breaks and the long vacation.

During the week: Monday to Friday

At most schools teachers came to work well before classes commenced and stayed until well after classes finished. Many teachers also worked at home in the evenings. "I don't go home until I am ready for tomorrow's teaching but I take other work home" was a typical comment. Another teacher said: "By the time the children get here I feel like I've been here all night." Working at home during the week was often dictated by family needs or by having a suitable working environment, such as a home office. Working at home had also been greatly facilitated by the Ministry provision of laptop computers, a very popular initiative.

During the weekends: Saturday and Sunday

The majority of teachers also worked for part of at least one day in the weekends. They found this necessary to keep on top of their work. The time spent on school-related tasks in the weekend ranged from several hours on one day to eight or more hours over two days. Teachers who lived near the school, particularly in rural areas, tended to do part, at least, of their weekend work at the school. A teacher at a regional school said that so far (June 2005) there had been only two weekends when she had not been at the school. This was in a school where all teachers and administrators appeared to be working very long hours.

Almost all diarists indicated that they worked in the evenings and/or weekends. Some preferred to work at home, after they had attended to home related matters. Others liked to stay at school longer on weekdays in the hope of avoiding taking work home.

During term breaks and the long vacation (twelve weeks in total):

To give an overall view of hours worked by primary teachers, it is also necessary to consider the hours worked during the term breaks (three two-week periods) and the six week long vacation.

The New Zealand school year is divided into four terms, with two weeks break at the end of each of the first three terms and a six week break at the end of the fourth term. All primary grade levels remain at school for the full four terms.

The majority of teachers spend part of each of the term breaks and part of the long vacation working at school and/or at home on school-related activities. Individual teachers reported working for between three days and one week during each of the three term breaks during the year. At the end of the school year, many teachers usually spent two or three days working at school and between one and three full weeks in the second half of the long vacation. Prior to the start of the school year, some schools also organised whole school activities.

Towards the end of school terms, many teachers began to defer tasks until the term

breaks. One interviewee commented:

> Everyone always says we have a lot of holidays, but then how much of that time is spent at school updating school records, organising new class groups, planning and finding resources etc.

From information provided by the teachers who were interviewed, an average figure for time spent on school-related activities when schools were not in session would be about four full days during term breaks and two full weeks during the long vacation – about twenty-two working days in total.

What tasks do primary teachers perform and how much time is spent on each?

The short reports and the diaries in Volume 3 provide information about what tasks primary teachers performed and how much time was spent on different tasks.

The twenty-five reports also include a table for each school outlining the time spent on various tasks each week for each teacher interviewed. Researchers asked teachers about classroom teaching time, non-classroom supervisory duties, meetings, planning and preparation, setting up the classroom, assessing and record-keeping, extra curricular activities, talking to parents, and "other" activities. Apart from classroom teaching hours, scheduled duties, extra-curricular activities and meeting times, figures are estimates as provided by teachers in interviews. All twenty-five principals reviewed final reports and tables. A minority of principals commented that the estimated hours in their schools were possibly a little over-stated.

A summary of hours spent in each activity at the twenty-five schools can be found in Table 1; an explanation of each column heading follows the table. In almost all schools, teachers were spending more time on school-related tasks outside classroom teaching hours than they were in actual teaching. By far the greatest contributors to the work were planning/preparation and assessment/record keeping/reporting. Teachers often found it difficult to separate out these activities, with one commenting that "they are all inter-related, all aligned."

Table 1: Summary of estimated hours spent at the twenty-five schools

	Average classroom hours	Average hours outside the classroom	Total
Classroom teaching	22.10		22.10
Non-classroom duty		1.46	1.46
Meetings		4.05	4.05
Planning		8.24	8.24
Setting up classroom		3.58	3.58
Assessing/record keeping		6.17	6.17
Extra curricular activities		1.38	1.38
Talking to parents		1.39	1.39
Other		2.21	2.21
Total	**22.10**	**30.08**	**52.18**

The short report summary table explained

Classroom teaching hours per week

Classes at primary schools generally operated from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm, with a twenty minute interval in the morning and a one-hour lunch break. Students received four hours and forty minutes of instruction per day, or twenty-three hours and twenty minutes per week. Thus, in most cases, the maximum time that can be entered under this heading is twenty-three hours and twenty minutes. If a teacher was part-time, the fraction was adjusted accordingly. Some teachers had time allowances during class time for certain duties. Time spent on these duties is included in column one (classroom teaching hours). Apart from column one, hours indicated are all outside classroom teaching hours.

Grounds and similar duty per week

Examples of these specified and rostered duties included supervising children in the playground or in classrooms, supervising children arriving at and leaving school, and

supervising children as they boarded and alighted from school buses.

Meetings

This included school-based meetings, which comprised the majority of meetings, and others such as cluster meetings held away from the school campus. For rural teachers in particular, travel time to outside meetings was often an additional factor in extending the length of the working day.

Planning

This included preparing content and resources for all lessons and units. The planning time represented was spent in addition to any collegial planning done at meetings.

Setting up classroom

This included time spent out of classroom teaching time in preparation for particular classroom activities. Examples included arranging displays and preparing boards.

Assessing and record keeping

This included all "paperwork" (for the purposes of this report this is a "generic" or "catch-all" term including planning, testing, assessment, and maintaining of individual, class and school running records, whether in hard copy or electronic). The time indicated does not include any recording, assessment or testing done during class time.

As Table 1 indicates, assessing and marking students' work was a large consumer of time. Usually, teachers of senior classes spent more time out of class on these tasks than teachers of junior classes. Assessment and reporting tasks also occurred in large blocks at specific times in the school year and involved many extra hours of teacher time.

Extra-curricular activities

Extra-curricular activities included activities such as a gifted and talented programs or music programs run out of class time as extensions of the curriculum. It also included activities such as coaching team sports or preparing a drama production.

Talking to parents

This included meetings or informal conversations with parents. It did not include formal parent/teacher interviews. In primary schools, particularly at the lower levels, this could be a significant amount of time.

Other

This heading included the many other out of class time tasks and duties that were part of a primary teacher's workload. Examples common to most schools included:

- preparing for meetings and meeting reports

- professional reading and professional development outside meeting or release time

- supervision and mentoring of student teachers

- liaising with teacher aides and other support staff

- behavioural management and pastoral care issues

- supervising children at lunch and intervals outside regularly scheduled whole school duty times – for example in the classroom on wet days, or daily with younger levels.

Further examples, varying from school to school and teacher to teacher, included:

- liaising with outside agencies

- organising relief teachers

- providing homework classes and supervision

- maintaining the school library

- breakfast clubs

- preparing entries for competitions

- preparing letters to parents

- opening rooms and buildings

- organising excursions and funds

- sorting out stationery requirements

- shopping for supplies.

The diaries provided extra information about how, how long and when and where teachers work.

Diarists indicated that the time spent during the week on work-related tasks outside the classroom teaching times of twenty three hours and twenty minutes, was about 27 hours.

Most teachers recorded school-related activities in their diaries from Monday to Sunday, with a minority recording only from Monday to Friday. Diary entries have been tabulated as for the short reports, under the same headings as in Table 1. A summary table - Table 2) for the diarists follows.

Table 2: Summary of estimated hours from diaries

	Average classroom hours	Average hours outside the classroom	Total
Classroom teaching	23.20		23.20
Non-classroom duty		1.28	1.28
Meetings		4.11	4.11
Planning		8.40	8.40
Setting up classroom		3.20	3.20
Assessing/record keeping		3.20	3.20
Extra curricular activities		0.42	0.42
Talking to parents		0.35	0.35
Other		4.51	4.51
Total	**23.20**	**27.06**	**50.26**

In looking at Table 2 it is immediately clear that a larger proportion of teacher time was spent in "other" tasks than was indicated during interviews. It is also clear that for primary teachers non-teaching time did not necessarily mean non-contact time. Time outside classroom teaching time was often also student contact time. Even apart from specified interval or lunchtime duties, primary teachers very rarely had interval or lunchtime as uninterrupted "student free" time. On wet days, for instance, children usually ate their lunch in their classrooms with their teachers. Most teachers were in their classrooms, in the staffroom or around the school attending to the various needs of their pupils for at least part of interval and lunchtime. This was also noted during many interviews and school visits. As a teacher aide at one school commented, "on some days they're lucky if they get five minutes to have their lunch."

When teachers recorded their daily activities in the diary form, as opposed to being asked for estimates, it became very clear that the volume and nature of what one teacher described as the "myriad small tasks" (entered under "other" in Table 2) contributed significantly to teacher workload. One diarist wrote:

took one child to staffroom to make a sandwich as she had not had lunch today, helped with missing jumpers, made sure tied three sets of shoelaces, helped another teacher with computerised roll system, discussed cross-country program with PE teacher, cleaned some of the desks, approached by student grandparent, put class books in library and tidied shelves, made labels, feed the goldfish and clean tank, bring plants inside, transported children in van, check doors and windows, write letters about competition, check e-mails.

The diaries provide a clear picture of factors that affected teachers' work on a daily basis, such as the nature and volume of interactions required, both predictable and unpredictable, and a general lack of uninterrupted work breaks during the day. Other factors that emerged were the difficulty of being able to complete all major professional tasks, such as planning and assessment, during a normal working week. Many teachers devoted large portions of weekend time to these activities, or deferred tasks until the "holidays", when they would be able to work in blocks of time. For many teachers, work and home life were blurred. As one diarist commented, "trust me, being a teacher is not just a job but a lifestyle."

The diaries indicate that teachers in general were interacting with a very large number of people each day. Apart from their major interaction in the classroom and with other staff, they interacted with parents, support staff, volunteers, student teachers and various outside agencies.

Many of the activities recorded in the diaries were the "myriad small tasks" and duties of short duration, and were often not mentioned by teachers when they listed activities during interviews. They impinged in particular on times allotted for breaks – interval and lunchtime. The activities recorded also give an idea of the range and variety of skills exercised by primary teachers in the course of their professional lives. The necessarily "ad hoc" nature of many tasks and functions carried out by teachers becomes very clear in the diaries. Overall responsibility for young children in particular does not come with clear parameters and the "in loco parentis" aspect of teachers' work is not easily quantifiable. The small tasks mentioned by teachers in the

diaries are an indication of the time and work involved in meeting this responsibility. Teachers performed this aspect of their role not just in classroom teaching hours and duty times but at all times when children were present in the school.

A factor that becomes clear in the diaries is that teachers were not only working long days and many hours outside the classroom but that they were often doing so without adequate breaks. A lack of uninterrupted work breaks is likely to have a significant impact on teachers' ability to do their jobs as effectively as possible. More effective teaching and learning is likely to occur if teachers are able to have "room to breathe" during the day. The diaries indicate that teachers usually arrived at school at least one hour before the start of classes, and often did not leave the building until five or six o'clock. Intervals and lunchtimes were often taken up with scheduled duties, attending to their students' needs, or preparing for the next teaching session. Comments such as "no lunch today" and "grabbed an apple" are common throughout the diaries. With meetings at many schools commencing as soon as the students left for the day, some teachers may have worked for ten hours without a proper break or a "down time." Even if there was a short break after school hours, teachers may still have worked for about seven hours without a break

Summary of quantitative information from short reports and diaries

Teachers usually worked for 23 hours and 20 minutes in the classroom. Data gathered from the interviews indicated that teachers spent about 30 hours per week outside classroom teaching time on work-related tasks. The dairies indicated that they spent about 27 per week outside classroom teaching time on work-related tasks. Thus the average number of working hours per week during term from the interviews and the diaries and including classroom teaching time was 51 hours and 22 minutes.

An average number for days worked during the twelve weeks of term breaks and the long vacation would be about twenty-two working days or 4.40 weeks

In both the interviews and the diaries, teachers indicated that they were usually spending more time on work-related tasks outside rather than within classroom teaching time. The diaries indicated that many short tasks related to their work made

up a considerable portion of this time. Time outside the classroom or scheduled supervisory duties did not mean non contact time. Apart from their interaction with students, primary teachers interacted with a large number of other people. A major factor worthy of further investigation is the provision of adequate "downtime" or breaks during the school day.

Qualitative information from the interviews and the case studies

The case studies were prepared after visits to twenty-five schools, with thirteen schools being selected for case studies. The case study schools included:

School A: A small Decile 10 school in a regional town

School C: A large Decile 1 school in a large city

School D: A Decile 3 sole teacher/principal primary school in a rural area near a provincial town

School E: A moderate sized Decile 9 school in a large regional town

School F: A large Decile 5 school in a regional town

School H: A moderate sized Decile 4 school in a rural area near a regional town

School J: A large Decile 5 school in a large city

School K: A large Decile 8 school in a large regional town

School Q: A large Decile 1 school in a rural area

School S: a moderate sized Decile 4 school in a large regional town

School V: a small Decile 7 rural school

School X: A large Decile 8 intermediate school in a large regional town

School Y: A moderate sized Decile 5 special setting school in a large city

The case studies provided qualitative information about the working lives of primary teachers in New Zealand. Areas that were investigated included:

- School vision

- Behaviour management and pastoral care

- Perceptions of workload and its management

- Government initiatives and requirements

- ICT

- Administrative and other support

- Professional community and leadership

- Resources and environment.

Some of these factors appeared to be significant across all schools, while some were specific to the school visited. "Meetings" and "paperwork" were two recurring themes. Other factors that appeared to play a significant role in at least some schools emerged during the course of the interviews. These included decile rankings, fund-raising, changing enrolment numbers, the position of teachers returning from extended leave, the issue of trust between Ministry and teachers, and the support of the Board of Trustees. A major qualitative issue that emerged during the interviews was the issue and impact of "teacher perfectionism." – an expectation by many teachers that they will be able to meet at all times all professional demands placed on them by themselves and others

How important was school vision in teachers' work?

A unified school vision was an important factor in the communities of all schools visited. At some schools, teachers or other members of the school community immediately articulated a particular vision, often with a concept such as "learning stars" that was distributed throughout the school at age appropriate levels. Staff at all schools raised the importance of maximising each child's potential. One teacher described her school as having "a strong school culture - we are a caring community who look after all [student]types, with a strong emphasis on thinking skills." At one school, staff stated that they wanted their students to become participants and indeed leaders in "a global community." Staff at small rural schools were particularly concerned that they extend boundaries and possibilities beyond their communities for

their students.

At many schools, the community as a whole was a particularly important part of the school profile and vision; in smaller rural schools the school and wider community were very closely entwined. In some urban schools a major focus of the vision was to raise the image of the school in the wider community.

There were, however, some factors that could sometimes interfere with teachers' ability to focus on their school's vision. One major factor was a school community's fear that the school might be subject to closing or unwelcomed merging. When discussing the school vision, one principal commented that "if they do come looking, we want to be sure they can't find any reason to close us down."

Another principal described the recent vision of the school as "survival." It was obviously difficult for schools to focus on abstract school visions when it was unclear if the school would remain open.

Even when a school facing merger or closure remained open or completed a merger, additional stress factors for teachers and administrators could remain. Teachers and administrators at one school had been anxious to ensure its security and sustainability, and were still working very long hours each week. At another school that had already merged, many extra requirements of time and energy had arisen. With the establishment of two sites, staff were anxious that the focus on teaching and learning not be diverted. The logistics involved had placed extra demands on them and increased their workload.

One principal commented that when enrolments keep decreasing over several years, even if clearly as a result of demographic changes, the decrease in enrolments may have an effect on teacher mental health and self esteem. While a two to three year plan before closure may be necessary, "there is a lot of pain in such activities."

When a school community was functioning confidently, the articulation of a particular school vision appeared to play a role in helping teachers to teach as well as they could. When negative factors such as a fear of closure had impacted on staff, the core

task of improving educational outcomes for children continued to be carried out with "sheer hard work", as one Principal commented, but stress and pressure on teachers often increased.

How important to teacher workload were behavioural management and pastoral care policies and practice?

Behaviour management was not a major source of stress or workload at most schools visited, although in a minority of schools behavioural management could be debilitating and stressful for teachers. At these schools behaviour management was an issue that impacted on teacher time and energy, with attention at times being diverted from effective teaching and learning and significantly interfering with instruction time.

At most schools visited, however, teachers reported that learning programs were seldom interrupted because of behavioural issues, and they appreciated the increased time that could be devoted to effective teaching and learning. A teacher at one such school estimated that behaviour management on a scale of one to ten was about one or two, compared with about nine at a previous school. "This helps with your perception of workload, you're here to teach the kids, you can get through things…there are good systems in place." At a school with similarly few issues of behavioural management, teachers commented: "We can extend the kids, go deeper into subjects…We are very fortunate not to have behavioural problems, so we can attend to individual needs."

Several schools reported that the introduction of effective strategies had made real improvements in effective teaching and learning. At one Decile 5 school, staff described student behaviour as very good, "supported by high behavioural standards and a clear disciplinary process." At this school a new deputy principal had introduced a seven step graduated disciplinary process with clear sanctions, and incentives and rewards for good behaviour. At another school, a teacher commented:

> Our students are generally very well behaved. The principal is pro-active
> and we have quick contact with parents…years ago consistency was more
> of an issue, but we have a school wide discipline plan, with the same set of

rules and structures.

This school also had a Home/School Card system, whereby parents and teachers could work together to monitor a child's behaviour. This close alignment was an important factor in reducing stress and enabling effective teaching and learning to occur. One teacher commented: "Behavioural management is close to dreamlike. I am teaching functionally in my room all the time." The same school had abolished all homework apart from work such as reading, spelling and tables, a strategy that also reduced pressure for everyone concerned.

In addition to good behavioural strategies, this school demonstrated a strong sense of all adults – teachers, parents, Board of Trustees – working as a team. Parents actually contacted the school for structured assistance in dealing with difficult behaviour at home. The Board of Trustees chairperson was clearly proud of the productive and amicable relationship that existed between the Board and the teachers. At another school, truancy had been reduced to zero as a result of effective school policies, including communicating early with parents and developing a computerised behaviour tracking system.

The use of tracking systems of various kinds proved effective in a range of schools. Several schools used the staff intranet to keep notes of behavioural and pastoral care issues. Notes could be brief, but enabled teachers to be aware of issues impacting on their students and to have an overview of incidents.

In most schools, then, issues of behavioural management played little part in teachers' work during class hours. When schools had effective behaviour management strategies in place and when these strategies were consistently utilised by staff, behaviour management was not cited as a significant issue. However, "follow-up", particularly of pastoral care provision, could take considerable time.

Teachers clearly saw the provision of pastoral care, where appropriate, as an essential part of their overall professional responsibilities and as an important part of ensuring positive outcomes for students. Some students clearly had very difficult home situations and at one school teachers monitored these students daily. The deputy

principal of this school described it as being "like an ark", with the aim of ensuring that every child stayed on board. There was collective responsibility for all students in a syndicate.

At one school the provision of emotional and physical safety for the children was an important priority, with teachers estimating that they spent between 10% and 20% of teaching time on pastoral care. The percentage of time being spent on pastoral care and related behavioural management issues did not necessarily have a negative impact on teaching effectiveness, with one school reporting that it was "an important way of maintaining harmony in the classroom" and that there was little bullying in the school.

The provision of staff under the Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) program was described as very helpful for schools, although the isolation of some small rural schools could make frequent visits difficult.

Some reported successful behavioural management and pastoral care strategies to support effective teaching and learning were:

- Having a clear and consistent system of behaviour management, incorporating incentives and consequences that are understood and referenced by all staff and supported by the school leadership.

- Using the "Chance Program", in which students are given warnings about anti-social behaviour and time to alter their behaviour.

- Keeping students busy. One school had purchased a large range of sport and play equipment, and closely monitored playground behaviour.

- Introducing a Home/School Card system so that parents and teachers can work closely together.

- Abolishing homework that needs direct parent supervision.

- Early communication with parents.

- Establishing behaviour and/or pastoral care tracking systems on the staff computer network.

- Having shared responsibility within the school for the behavioural management and pastoral care of children – for example, having a "buddy system", whereby one teacher can contact another for assistance.

What were teacher perceptions of workload and its management?

Teachers' workload and their perception of their workload impacted on their ability to work effectively. In general, teachers reported that their workload was very heavy. At one school, teachers described workload as "too much, unreasonable, horrific, unfair, stressful." They were hoping that planned time release would help them to manage their workload. The words teachers used to describe their workload included: tiring, depressing, frustrating, overwhelming, ongoing, never finished, challenging, demanding, mountainous, changeable, frantic, terrifying, extreme, a bit crazy, and overloading.

In many cases the work/life balance of New Zealand primary teachers was suffering. Comments included: "I don't really have a life…There is not a lot of time for family life." One administrator commented that "there is definitely a long term health impact if teachers lose the ability to find their own individual space." At one school a teacher commented that she did not feel able to have a good work/life balance. "There have been a few weekends when I haven't come to school, but then I feel guilty." A number of teachers and administrators saw teacher burnout as a problem, although their concern was often for other staff members rather than for themselves. The teacher who felt guilty if she did not come to school in the weekend expressed concerns for a beginning teacher: "There have only been two weekends when she didn't come to work. She's a very talented teacher and nothing will burn her out faster." These concerns about teacher burnout were also shared by the school's Board of Trustees Chairperson: "One staff member left because she couldn't meet what she saw as the expectations. She was a good teacher and we were sorry to lose her."

One principal was particularly concerned about her teachers' stress and workload: "Teachers are always here in the weekend. They are caring, dedicated teachers, but burnout is a concern." Support staff also often commented on teacher workload. One

teacher aide described it as "incredible…I wouldn't like to manage it. I can go home and sit in a chair – they've still got to keep going." Teacher aides in general were very aware of teachers' workload and frequently commented on it: "Most of [the teachers] are here after school, weekends and holidays, getting things in order."

At one rural school, the Board of Trustees considered itself lucky that the sole teacher did not have children. The teacher herself commented: "It's reasonable for someone with no children. I can put the hours in but I don't know how easy it would be for someone with a family." Other teachers interviewed also felt that they were able to manage their workloads only because they did not have family commitments: "If I finished at four forty or five it'd be OK but I have to work at home too. It's not a healthy balance….it encroaches on all free time, I wouldn't do it if I had a family at home." Several teachers reported that their professional workload had led to their dropping hobbies and fitness programs. Teachers without family or other commitments were in a minority, and many teachers found it difficult to balance their personal and professional lives.

Some teachers felt, however, that although they had heavy workloads they still had satisfactory personal lives. One younger teacher commented: "Teaching gives me a chaotic life style but I enjoy it." Other comments were: "I am on top of my workload more days than not…I have learnt how to balance home and work." Teachers also used words such as: "fun…important…rewarding…fulfilling…I love my job and am generally happy with my workload."

Personal traits and circumstances appeared to play a role in teacher perception of workload. Teachers interviewed for this study demonstrated high levels of commitment to the learning of their students and were clearly in many cases working well outside the hours of a "normal" working week. Yet in the cases of teachers with similar workloads there could be marked differences in perception of workload demand. Part of these perceptions seemed to relate to aspects of the school environment such as professional collegiality and support, but part also seemed to relate to individual factors such as a clear retention of enthusiasm for the profession. While it is of course easier to retain this enthusiasm in a conducive environment,

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personal circumstances and a personal sense of optimism also appeared to play a role.

At one rural school, a teacher with a clearly heavy workload that impinged on her every day of the week and on most aspects of her life nevertheless appeared to be satisfied with her work/life balance. What influenced this teacher's perceptions? Apart from factors related to this school, such as the lack of behavioural management problems and the presence of a strongly supportive school and local community, her personal circumstances and professional vision were playing a role. She had maintained an interest in all aspects of her profession, she undertook school-based and self-directed professional development, kept up with educational research and tried new strategies. She was clearly well suited to the profession and loved her work. She did not have commitments outside her school life, and commented that she realised family and other commitments made life difficult for many teachers. She appeared to be a positive and optimistic person. "I love the job. Different situations (e.g. different schools) have kept it alive."

Why do principals and teachers in general work as hard as they do? What other factors affect perception of workload? "It's what I'm good at [teaching]." "We believe in what we are doing for these children." When teachers were not under additional pressure because of issues such as possible closure and when there was shared and productive planning, perceptions of workload tended to be more positive:

> I work hard. I do a lot of work, but for the most part I get the rewards. It's full-on, but I do get satisfaction from providing new and creative activities.

One teacher commented that she relished the challenge, and felt valued by peers, senior management and parents. Some teachers stated that their personal and professional pride is what drives them to work harder and longer.

Whatever a teacher or principal's personal view of their workload, two major areas commonly arose during interviews as major contributors - "meetings" and "paperwork." Both could be seen as relating to government initiatives and requirements and, in particular, to pedagogical and curricular initiatives and

requirements.

Meetings

The frequency and effectiveness of meetings affected teachers' workload and their perceptions of workload.

Time spent at meetings varied considerably among schools (according to the school interviews, between 2 hours and 45 minutes and 7 hours and 15 minutes.) Some smaller schools had fewer formal meetings because they were able to have so much informal professional sharing and dialogue during the school day. One small rural school had few but very tightly structured formal meetings, with curriculum matters being largely discussed at lunchtimes and intervals. Staff felt that their small numbers and strong team spirit enabled them to reach consensus quickly.

Teachers at another school had only one meeting per week, for professional development. This was also a small school, with much informal professional dialogue. Teachers were very appreciative of the relatively low number of meetings per term. At one larger school, the major proportion of administrative and organisational communication was carried out through means other than meetings (electronically or weekly events diary.) Teachers at the school had a positive view of this arrangement.

Teachers varied in their responses to the effectiveness of meetings. When meetings were highly organised with a clear advance agenda and when they focussed for the most part on professional development and sharing of work and ideas, teachers were usually positive:

> "When we go to staff meetings, we're focussed, we know the week before what it's about, our meetings are worthwhile. [The principal] is very organised and we have very good procedures."

> "It's a structured program, some-one seeks out a reading and we go through it as a staff…you know exactly where you are and where you're going."

"Our meetings are useful, productive and focussed. A strength of the school is that we teach what kids need."

"Our meetings are very structured, with prepared notes.

If meetings were not productive, teachers felt their time was being wasted and sometimes they felt too tired to concentrate and/or wanted to be working in their classrooms:

It's not productive when nothing is accomplished and you could have spent time in the classroom. Issues are discussed, but there's no agreement.

Many teachers interviewed would prefer to have fewer meetings, particularly when they were held immediately before or after school. At one school teachers commented that when they met before school they could not focus on their students and their tasks for the day; they preferred to be in their classrooms when the children arrived to "forge links for the day." Meetings after school were also a problem for many teachers: "The staff meeting – seemed to go on for ages. I need to do some prep for tomorrow, but I will leave it as my brain is switching off!" (diary entry) One principal commented: "After [classes] teachers are tired, and you don't spend quality time looking at issues." One principal felt that the meeting syndrome had sprung up from changes to curriculum and trying to fit changes in, and insufficient government commitment to professional development.

There would seem to be value in a project that would provide guidelines for principals about ways to ensure meetings were efficient and effective, or how to manage with as few meetings as possible.

Particular workload issues for principals and managers

What tasks impact in particular on principal and management time? How related are they to teaching and learning? A major expenditure of principal and senior management time related to "paperwork", including paperwork that classroom

teachers could do, but which principals and/or senior managers did in order to reduce classroom teacher workload. Much of this paperwork was seen by both principals and Boards of Trustees as beneficial to the learning of students.

A principal and sole teacher found that the aspects of her job that caused her most stress were tasks related neither to her principal nor teacher role, such as placing orders or organising busses. Bus organisation was a major workload issue for this sole teacher/principal. Her major strategy in managing workload was to "do the classroom before I go into the office." She said she would welcome compliance requirements that were adapted to the limited management capacity of sole teacher schools." A further issue for sole teacher/principal schools is the apparent lack of time release for the teacher/principal; the Board of Trustees need to fund any such release out of the bulk grant.

A large expenditure of time by principals and senior staff was for staff appraisal . This expenditure of time was not so much the result of paperwork as of the need for observations and consequent discussions with teachers, and was generally seen as valuable.

How did teachers perceive major government initiatives and requirements and how significant are these initiatives and requirements as a workload factor?

When it came to government initiatives, teachers and principals had much to say, particularly about changed pedagogical approaches and related paperwork. They also had comments about initiatives such as the planned primary teacher time release and curriculum initiatives.

With regard to the changed pedagogy, one principal summed up what emerged as a widely held view: "what you [the Ministry] have developed is really important but we need time to consolidate and reflect."

Across all schools visited, the shift of pedagogical focus to child based inquiry learning was widely and enthusiastically supported. Teachers saw clear and

sustainable benefits for the children in their care:

> Inquiry based learning is not so teacher directed… [Students are] taking more ownership for goals and learning. It's a beneficial initiative – if they're interested, behaviour problems diminish, and there is more ownership as they move up the school.

Teachers felt that government initiatives were making schools better as environments for teaching and learning, which would lead to improved student outcomes. Many were concerned, however, about the pace and frequency of change. This was a major source of anxiety for a large number of teachers. Teachers wanted more time to consolidate change and to incorporate one change efficiently and effectively before another was introduced. Some comments included:

> "…..in my head I'm thinking "Oh my God! When will I fit it in? What will I drop?"

> "…too much in the curriculum for teachers to teach, too much to get through."

> "For the last two years we have spending all our time on new initiatives, we just get the hang of it and it's something new…We don't have time to consolidate and build in…there's always something that has to be put on the backburner."

> "The curriculum is getting broader rather than tightening up…I don't believe any school could be covering what we're supposed to cover in a year."

> "There are too many balls up in the air."

> "If we could focus on fewer things it would help…We need to choose areas, not attempt to do it all. There is a lot of pressure to cover everything. We're interested in achievement, not to cover so much but to

do it in depth."

One teacher suggested a concise summary of Ministry documentation would be very helpful. Like a number of other teachers interviewed, she questioned whether the Ministry was sufficiently aware of the demands placed on classroom teachers:

> All of these things are drawn up by people who live and breathe that particular issue…They all think theirs is the most important thing we have to do. They need to realise how much teachers have to do.

School leaders in particular commented that it would be much easier for them and their staff if there were more central development of suggestions, templates and systems:

> I know schools are supposed to create their own curriculum, but sometimes it would be so much easier to be given a list of suggestions rather than having to develop them ourselves. (rural school sole teacher/principal)

Senior management often cited an overloaded curriculum and increased paperwork as adding considerably to teacher workload, particularly if initiatives were not fully resourced when introduced. At several schools, representatives of the Board of Trustees also commented on the impact of government initiatives on teacher workload. One stated that she would like to see change managed better by minimising "process problems" and ensuring that change is "well-prepared, well introduced and well resourced." However Board of Trustees members, like teachers and principals, could also see the benefits of these initiatives: "We can physically see what's happening, what's working and what's not working…Are we dealing with these problems as a Board?"

Teachers and administrators found it frustrating when supporting documents did not come out at the same time that a new curriculum was introduced. A lot of unnecessary work was then created for teachers who, in the words of one principal, were all "re-

inventing the wheel." Another commented:

> If there is a change in thinking, bring out everything [including the support
> material] at the same time…sometimes it is put out after hours have been
> wasted by teachers [developing something similar.]…The Ministry should
> be telling us in advance and showing us ways to do things…Schools could
> still allow for individual situations.

The general feeling across schools and among both principals and teachers was that
the pace and frequency of change was placing great pressure on classroom teachers.
One strong comment from a principal was: "get off our backs while we consolidate
what we've learnt!"

In many schools, recording and data entry added to the workload of principals and
senior management. Information from interviews (and diaries) indicated that in many
cases, much of the analysis and recording of data for Board of Trustees and/or
Ministry requirements was being done by principals or other senior staff, thereby
reducing the burden for classroom teachers. Teachers of junior classes at one school
reported that almost all such paperwork was carried out by the principal. At another
school, all assessment data went through to the deputy principal, who organised the
required reporting. One deputy principal at another school collated all data so that
teachers did not "double handle" this aspect of their work. At this school, most
teachers still felt that there was too much paperwork. In some cases teachers did not
seem to be aware of this form of "hidden support."

At one school, the principal spent about fifteen hours per week on compliance data.
She felt that the amount of paperwork was "huge" and she had a policy of doing as
much as she could to save her teachers time. At another school staff estimated that
they were spending up to two hours weekly on paperwork, while the principal and
deputy principal at this school estimated that they were spending eight and six hours
respectively on paperwork. They had introduced procedures to take some of the
paperwork load away from teachers. Teachers who were syndicate leaders or had
other administrative responsibilities tended to spend more time than other teachers on

record keeping and data entry. In some schools, one person often had the major responsibility for this task.

The amount of time spent on paperwork varied at different times of the year.. One principal reported working fifteen hours a day rather than the usual eleven hours because of the paperwork required at that time of year.

Only a few teacher diaries mentioned compliance type recording and/or data entry. Some teachers with management type responsibilities mentioned these tasks, and usually carried them out in time blocks outside class hours. One diarist mentioned analysing and recording data three times, but she was able to do these tasks during quiet moments in class. Teachers seemed to view paperwork related directly to recording their individual students' progress as generally helpful, although one teacher, who estimated she was spending about 50% of her time outside class on paperwork, commented: "[Paperwork] is not making me a better teacher, I'd rather be preparing for the children."

When teachers were asked if it would help to have support staff doing recording and entering of individual student data, they usually stated that they preferred to do it themselves, as they were able to "keep on top" of each student's progress in this way. One commented that "it wouldn't be beneficial for some-one else to do it. You learn as you're entering data, the different nuances of what they're doing. You can compare kids as you're entering things."

Teachers generally saw paperwork that related to planning and preparation as being very useful, particularly when it was shared work. Teachers also saw the need for record keeping and reporting, but many felt that it was taking an excessive amount of time. The time spent in these tasks varied from week to week. At reporting times in particular, many hours were being spent on these tasks. A number of teachers also questioned whether school-wide assessments three times a year were necessary.

While many teachers were spending large chunks of time in a normal working week outside class hours performing these tasks, they were also spending time in the classroom carrying them out. Some teachers felt that the focus on assessing and

reporting was taking time away from actual teaching and effective learning Others felt that new workload demands such as increased paperwork impacted on the quality of their classroom teaching:

> the extra stuff can sometimes overwhelm you and the classroom work suffers…..I used to spend much more time making more interesting and imaginative displays…it was a valuable part of what I did – research for wider variety.

One teacher commented that she now spent much less time "trawling" for interesting and stimulating activities for her class because of assessing and reporting requirements. Similarly, one principal commented that the issue with assessment requirements was the time taken to meet them: "Teachers are tired and can't spend quality time [with students.]"

Many schools were attempting to streamline and/or reduce paperwork processes. Some, for instance, had effective intranet processes and developed more time-conserving reporting processes. They were aiming to reduce staff workload and to allow teachers to focus on other tasks related to effective teaching and learning, such as planning and preparation. One school had a definite policy of ensuring that data could be used for a number of purposes:

> We believe in reporting and planning because if focussed we're more likely to get there….Compliance issues are utilised within the current school context, not to make extra work…it's not an add-on.

In general, principals and teachers felt that the pace and frequency of change, together with paperwork requirements, was adding to workload. They felt that the changes in pedagogy and curriculum would lead to more effective learning but that the pressure to change too much too quickly greatly increased teacher workload and pressure:

> Inquiry learning will be the best thing that's ever happened to teaching and learning. [but] people are obsessed with objectives…slow down on the changes and paperwork. On the one hand it's prescriptive and on the other

hand we're expected to be producing thinkers.

Some stated that while paperwork might be making teachers more accountable, it did not necessarily make them teach better.

There would seem to be value in a project that would identify successful ways to minimise or streamline paperwork, without compromising the need for effective reporting and accountability.

Time release

Teachers welcomed this initiative and saw it as recognition of the demands placed on them, with the qualification that they did not want to see time release somehow "eaten up" by other demands. There were also some concerns about how the system would actually operate. In rural schools, for example, some teachers were worried about the availability of suitable relievers. One principal described this time as "a very good start to give recognition that teachers need time to plan, prepare and reflect." Sabbatical leave was also cited as an excellent initiative. Another principal commented: "It will be an opportunity for teachers to see other teachers in action and to have informal collegial networks."

Curriculum initiatives

Teachers were enthusiastic about particular initiatives when they could see direct improvements in their students' learning. At one school, the Numeracy Initiative was highly praised by teachers. They saw it as requiring more work but that the rewards were manifested in student advancement. At another school, a teacher described the Te Kite Ipurangi (TKI) site as an excellent initiative. His advice to the Ministry was to "just keep it going." A teacher at a small rural school found that while the Early Numeracy project involved extra paperwork, it was very helpful, especially the exemplars and writing samples that were provided – "the initiative directs teaching and learning – it's not a waste of time." Another generally very popular initiative was the ICT contract.

What has been the impact of ICT?

ICT has provided significant assistance to teachers in the way that they carry out their work. Teachers stated throughout the visits that ICT initiatives and the provision of laptops had enabled them to work more efficiently both at home and at school. They were able to plan more efficiently and to access more resources for their classes. They were in general also very enthusiastic about any ICT related professional development, with some teachers wanting more professional development in this area. At one school the comment was made that teachers who were able to touch-type were at a distinct advantage. The only down sides in ICT use were a need for more technical support to enable teachers to use ICT as effectively as possible, and a need for more computers in some schools.

Provision of technician assistance for ICT was raised several times, particularly in the rural schools. Many teachers stated that support in the form of an ICT technician or assistant would greatly reduce workload – "someone to assist in organising student files, someone to troubleshoot and to spend two or three hours a week in the classroom would be a great support…if access to a paid technician were available, it would save teachers hours."

Many teachers said that they would like to be able to use computers more in classrooms, particularly as not all children had a computer at home. An example of possible use if more computers were available would be rotation in Numeracy and Literacy activities.

Unreliability of connection had been particular frustrating for one small isolated rural school. At another school, teachers could not log on if anyone was on the phone, there was no computer networking and teachers did not have laptops. Most schools, however, were able to access quality ICT and were very appreciative of its impact on their teaching practice:

> "The computer is what saves me so much time, I can email it home and work on it there." Some teachers also expressed a wish for more ICT professional development: "[Teachers] are now pretty positive, although

some still have a fear of computers."

"The laptop has helped enormously, it's just fantastic."

"[despite occasional ICT problems]…in the long run it's helping teachers, giving teachers skills and upskilling children."

"Technology has made a great difference to the motivation of children and definitely [a great difference] to staff, with access to resources already done."

"It helps to identify needy kids, there's lots of positive feedback."

"[ICT] is one of the best contracts ever…People who were formerly scared of computers [are now using] Inquiry learning and changed pedagogy."

What administrative support is available to teachers and how important is this as a workload factor?

The role of teacher aides and similar support staff was significant across schools. Teacher aides were sometimes assigned to particular students and sometimes to assist in general classroom duties. Some aides were funded partly externally and partly by the Board of Trustees. When teacher aides were working effectively with classroom teachers, learning opportunities for students increased significantly and pressure on classroom teachers was reduced. One teacher comment was: "[My program] is manageable at the moment and I am achieving a heck of a lot more than I would on my own." At some schools the Board of Trustees saw the provision of teacher aides as very important and directed their funding accordingly. High decile schools felt that they were disadvantaged in terms of funding for teacher aides.

One aide who was working across her school at different levels saw her role as assisting the teachers so that they had more time for "doing what they're so good at: teaching… they could use [more] help with organising things… the more junior the

classroom, the more assistance is needed."

Teacher aides assisted classroom teachers in different ways at different schools. At one school each syndicate had a teacher aide for the morning session, and teachers varied in how they used this support. Some teachers asked for the aide to withdraw small groups under teacher guidance, some asked for assistance with record keeping and some asked for help in preparation and organisation.

Teachers felt that they could use more aide support for children with learning disabilities and/or special needs as well as for general assistance. They also thought that more clerical assistance would be helpful. At most schools office staff provided support to teachers in day to day administrative and other matters. When able to, they would usually assist with photocopying and clerical tasks. Several office staff stated that they would like to be able to do more for teaching staff and that more clerical staff would enable this.

Teachers at some schools mentioned duty sessions as a task that would allow them more time to concentrate on teaching and learning, but felt that adequate supervision at these times was very important. This may be one area where teacher aides could assist in lessening teacher workload, particularly at schools where extensive periods of bus or similar duty were necessary.

Many teachers mentioned that having someone to help with organising and putting away resources would be of assistance, particularly at the end of the day when teachers often need to attend meetings and/or to prepare classes for the next teaching day. The general and ongoing need for organisation of materials and resources involved in primary classroom teaching was frequently raised as an area where a teacher aide could provide valuable assistance.

Most teacher aides spoke with enthusiasm about their jobs and found their own workload manageable, although they were concerned about the high level of teacher workload they observed: "I support [the classroom teacher], if you see something needs doing you just do it. I love my job, I really do." At another school a teacher aide commented: "[Teachers] do a wonderful job with the workload they have to get

through."

Office staff and teacher aides generally described their workload as "manageable" most of the time, but they would like to be able to provide more assistance to their teaching colleagues.

What role do professional community and school leadership play?

A collective focus on student learning and welfare, collaboration, deprivatisation of practice and reflective dialogue are the marks of a professional community. The role of the school leadership and the presence of a genuine professional community in the schools visited were crucial factors in contributing to effective teaching and learning. They were also crucial factors affecting teachers' workloads and in their perceptions of their workloads.

Teachers appreciated having appropriate and timely professional development to support change, and having school leaders who were responsive to, and encouraging of, requests for professional development. At one rural school, the principal had taken on extra teaching responsibilities so that teachers could be released for this purpose. Much professional development was also being carried out within the schools themselves, usually at after school meetings.

Teachers also welcomed an open door policy and a consultative style of leadership, and appreciated it when senior management streamlined operations to save time.

Most schools were using some form of team or syndicate planning and found that while this could be time-consuming in the short term, it saved considerable time in the long term. Planning in teams also ensured consistency across syndicates. Teachers also usually enjoyed planning together and sharing ideas, templates and unit plans. Staff across schools saw the benefit of team work:

"We are a team, all focussed on the same thing."

"We work as a team largely but are allowed to pursue our individual

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goals."

"We plan and manage together, send for resources together. Syndicate meetings are driven by need…The syndicate definitely saves work."

"[We recognise] the need for a good collegial support system, where people jump on board to help…it reduces the workload if people share more, work as a team to develop units."

At one school, staff were very positive about the collegial activities that had been introduced and looked forward to these activities alleviating their workload and increasing professional learning.

Teachers at many other schools saw the connection between the school leadership and teaching and learning as contributing to their effectiveness and their sense of being part of a professional community:

"We're extremely lucky – we have a really on board principal. Professionally it's great and we feel supported."

"[Working as a team with the principal] makes the job easier, there's so much support, you can ask anyone at any time."

"[The principal] is very open to ideas and we get on board to support them. There is quality learning for all."

"We are a team, we look after each other and plan in syndicate groups. People are honest and good communicators. A lot comes from the leadership. He's a fantastic leader, there's good communication, everything is tightly held together. It's a big stress reducer."

The informal professional dialogue that occurred in most schools was also an important factor in their professional communities. A teacher who felt very much supported in her school both by peers and leadership commented:

People will come and ask for opinions in areas of strength…Here you're

one of the fold, it's such a nice environment to be in. We are very well supported here.

The benefits of informal professional dialogue are evident in one diary entry:

[After school] caught up with a beginning teacher in our school who needed some advice on keeping on top of things. I said to her I don't think you ever quite get there and gave her some ideas for managing things in her class. It is quite good because it makes you think about why you do the things you do in your class when someone asks you.

A teacher aide at another school made the following observation:

It's a fantastic team. There is terrific collegial and leadership support. When you're observing you can see they're there for each other. They're very flexible. They support each other with inevitable problems.

An additional long term time saver for classroom teachers was the preparation of particular work plans or units by senior or designated staff members. In some schools these senior or designated staff members were allocated regular time slots for these activities.

For small or sole teacher schools, however, shared planning could be difficult. One rural principal made a plea for more guidance and more use of templates for small schools. Appropriate professional development was also problematic because of issues of time and distance. At another small rural school, the principal wanted additional support for aspects of the role, such as performance management – an interested guide/mentor to provide collegial assistance. He commented that principals in New Zealand could become very isolated and that a "critical friend" could be of assistance.

Several teachers and administrators mentioned the concept of "fun" when discussing their perceptions of their work. At one school, the end of week meeting was described as "an opportunity for laughter….it's a really good buffer…we know each other very

well." Teachers at this school had very demanding workloads and many issues of pastoral care, yet were generally positive in their attitudes to their workload.

Support staff also commented on the need for teachers to have time to relax as a team. At one school, where teachers were working very long hours, support staff commented that they would like to "see [staff] have some stress relief and social time …and more administrative support for principals…they're here at weekends, planning."

One principal at a school where both forms of collegiality were present - genuinely joint work and social support - commented on the importance of staff as a group enjoying activities together and, indeed, sometimes having "fun." At another school a teacher commented: "Our meetings are really good, we have fun at them all." On the other hand, entrenched attitudes and/or personality issues could sometimes make forging a professional team an uphill task for a principal. This also impacted on staff use of time because it made genuinely collegial work and professional sharing rather difficult.

Researchers into collegiality and learning outcomes distinguish between social support and genuine deprivatisation of practice and professional dialogue. In schools where there is joint work, shared planning and reflective dialogue, the quality of teaching and learning will be improved. However, the role of what is often seen as a more superficial form of collegiality – informal dialogue and social support – was also an important factor in many of the schools visited. Where teachers were part of a strong and organised professional community, systems in place reduced their workload and enabled better teaching and learning. Where teachers were also part of a collegial community offering social and other informal forms of support, they recognised that they had heavy workloads but often found them less arduous. Genuinely collegial work and professional sharing are also more easily facilitated in such an environment.

When a school clearly had both forms of professional community – organised and systemic, and informal and social – teachers were usually very positive about their

working environment. One such school had a number of wider community difficulties, but a strong sense of collegiality and sharing of ideas in the interests of effective teaching and learning. At the end of a presentation of this school's particular difficulties, one teacher concluded: "I love teaching!"

Support of Board of Trustees and the community

In schools where there was a strong sense of community support, teachers had a more positive view of their workload. The community in rural schools was usually a more clearly defined entity than in urban schools. There was an unstated expectation that teachers would play a full part in community activities. Involvement with the local community at rural schools appeared to strengthen many aspects of the school's culture but placed additional demands on teachers' time and resources.

Many teachers at urban and regional schools were also involved in many community activities. At one regional school, teachers felt that extra-curricular and community involvement expectations were what threatened to push their workload over the edge. At another school, the principal in particular was putting in many hours into these activities, sometimes every evening in a week.

If teachers did not perceive the community and, in particular the Board of Trustees, as supportive they often found their workload more onerous.

Many Boards directed funding towards the provision of teacher aides or extra administrative support. This was particularly important in the sole teacher school, and assisted classroom teachers greatly in other schools.

Representatives of Boards commented on high teacher workloads and the pressures placed on teachers. They also commented on the importance of teachers feeling supported by their communities: "If teachers feel they are not appreciated, a resentment develops." This Board of Trustees chairperson was concerned about teacher workload "For some years, teachers perhaps didn't realise others have stressful jobs as well, but in the last five years, workload has increased enormously…I'm amazed at what they manage to achieve." Other representatives of

their Board were also concerned at the size of teacher workload and the difficulty in maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

At one rural school, the Chairperson and principal were proud of the working relationship between the Board and staff. The principal commented: "The Board are extremely supportive. A lot of schools have contentious issues between Boards and staff that would increase teachers' workload…if our Board didn't have the philosophy that we need all the teacher aides, teacher stress would be up horrendously."

Some reported successful strategies to manage workload and to assist teachers in their core tasks included:

- Establishing and keeping to a clear set of priorities

- Having good routines

- Working to clearly laid down guidelines

- Deciding as a school what the most important Achievement Objectives were

- Streamlined high quality and consistently referenced documentation

- "Filtering" of correspondence by the principal to ensure that teachers were protected from unnecessary communications that could result in more work

- Giving one staff member a whole day or other time allowance to "digest" information, prepare curriculum and assessment documents and plan professional development for staff, thereby reducing the number of hours teachers needed to spend on these tasks

- Assessing less but better

- Using a reporting system whereby teachers highlight rather than write benchmarks, then discuss progress with parents and students

- Replacing lengthy written reports with face to face parent teacher interviews

- Modifying assessments so that some first assessments are not reported (to the Board of Trustees)

- Use of electronic programs

- Conferencing students and marking books on a roster basis

- Marking each area of the curriculum every two days

- Marking student work as they rotate in small groups and simultaneously recording

- Writing comments about individual student progress on daily planners and transcribing later

- Providing a release day to write reports

- Allocating a senior staff member days each week to release staff for testing

- Team teaching at appropriate times

- A teacher aide in every classroom, working closely with teachers as a team

- Using software effectively to save time in recording and analysing

- Upskilling in ICT

- Planning jointly and sharing some aspects of delivery

- Having a school wide expectation that teachers will work in teams and share work

- Developing different aspects of a unit and teaching it to each class in turn

- Allocating senior staff a fortnightly release day for whole school curriculum development

- Occasional planning of a curriculum unit for a particular group by senior staff

- Having fewer meetings and focussing meetings on professional development

- Covering management issues electronically

- Publishing clear weekly and daily events schedules

- Having at least one week a term without meetings

- Keeping class sizes as low as possible

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- Ensuring that in particular the reception and next class remain at low numbers

- Accepting that the job will never be done to their complete satisfaction.

How important were resources and environment, including class and school size?

In some schools class size was an issue. This issue was raised particularly when classes had been rearranged for some reason, but more so when there were physical limitations in the room, or where there were several levels within one classroom. It was a significant issue for one New Entrants teacher, where the class had grown from fifteen to twenty-nine over the course of the year. Comments included: "It's absolutely easier if it's a smaller class…It's self-evident that lower numbers would help [in terms of teacher effectiveness.]" Teachers noted that classes could sometimes gradually increase to around thirty students, even when a school was trying to maintain ceilings on numbers. One school had decided to maintain a ceiling of fifteen students on its New Entrants class, creating another class if necessary.

Teachers and principals varied in their perception of school size as a factor in increasing or decreasing workload. One small rural school described size as a factor that increased workload, as there were a limited number of people to perform tasks that take the same amount of time as in a larger school – for instance a risk analysis for a trip and preparation of curriculum, especially when several levels are combined. A principal of one larger school also felt that their larger size was an advantage: "Spreading the extra curricular load and increasing collegial support gives a distinct probability of reducing individual workload."

When a small rural school was clearly operating successfully and with good collegiality, however, staff saw the small number of classes as a factor in reducing workload. In one such school teachers commented that they were spared lengthy meetings because they were able to accomplish so much together as a small group in informal settings. They also thought being small would also advantage them in terms of time release - "the more teachers you have, the more release time is needed for planning and consensus."

Most teachers were satisfied with their physical resources and their environment. There were occasional reports that classrooms were too small for the number of children or that offices, staffrooms and meeting spaces were inadequate or unsuitable. Insufficient resources and space were workload issues for these teachers: "I've got a small classroom, there's stuff everywhere. It adds to workload."

Teachers, principals and Board of Trustees members were concerned when large amounts of time needed to be devoted to fund-raising for resources, particularly when this need was partially a result of decile ranking.

Decile rankings and fund-raising

Schools with high decile rankings expressed concerns about the effects of decile ranking on their funding. This was particularly the case where a school had a recent raising of decile ranking because of demographic changes. At one school, this had resulted in a $150,000 cut to its allocation, with no lessening of community expectations. One principal noted that a nearby school was receiving $600,000 more per year in funding because of decile rankings.

Principals and teachers felt that the ranking did not necessarily relate to affluence, particularly in rural schools where many families might be itinerant workers, or where farming families might be "asset rich but income poor." "Decile ranking is a nonsense, but it affects funding" was a comment from one teacher. Lack of funding flexibility "compounds to make our lives more difficult" was the Board of Trustees chairperson's comment at this school. "Decile linked funding seriously disadvantages us…Our parents dip into their pockets in all sorts of different ways and they're sick of it." Decile ranking was described as "inequitable" by another principal.

There was considerable resentment of the fundraising that was necessary in some schools to provide for student needs. Funding of resources for high decile schools was described at one such school as "a real issue", impacting on availability of funds for relievers, repairs and other aspects of school life. A teacher at this school who had previously been at a low decile school commented that in the low decile school "it was productive because you could see changes, there was funding to do things….we

have all the [extra] requirements but no funding…there's no money for relievers and this puts stress on all systems."

At some schools, fund-raising had become an important part of ensuring adequate resources and at others teachers were using their own money to provide classroom resources. The issue of fund-raising could clearly cause resentment. One comment was: "People are sick to the back teeth of fund-raising." A teacher at a rural school commented: "We have resources not because of the government but because of [the principal's] hard work and commitment to fund-raising."

Some teachers felt that time spent in fund raising distracted them from their teaching tasks and took a lot of extra curricular time – "fund raising takes hours away from core business." One principal stated that "equitability of funding" would be the change he would most like to see implemented.

Changing enrolments

A major issue for at least one rural school was the changing of roll numbers and consequent re-organisation of classes during the year. "This is a disruptive and time-consuming process…It's so frustrating…six months planning work was wasted…A little more leeway is needed, a term's discretion here or there." This was described as a general issue for rural schools, when numbers can change in unpredictable ways at different times, particularly when share farmers and itinerant workers move around. A large extra workload is created for teachers because there is no leeway built in. "Enough is enough, we need to have a leeway of up to ten kids."

Teachers returning from extended leave

Teachers returning from extended periods of leave found big changes in teacher work demands. One commented: "When I left, it was just before the new curriculum documents, I've had to learn all new things, each year there's another thing…who's all the paperwork for in the end? Does it really benefit the children?"

At other schools too, teachers who had come back after extended leave were alarmed

and sometimes overwhelmed by the extent of the changes that had occurred in their absence. In some cases they had decided to take alternative employment such as teacher aide work.

The issue of teacher perfectionism

In many schools expectations of teachers by themselves and others, together with Ministry changes and requirements appeared to be producing a high level of anxiety in teachers. This anxiety impacted on workload as they attempted to meet the demands placed on them. Some felt that these demands could not be met however hard they tried and however long they worked. Comments included:

> "A lot of teachers have a personal ethos and philosophy where you like to have everything done and you just can't."

> "No matter how hard you try there's always something else to do."

> "There is an ongoing feeling of guilt where I know there are other things I should have done and just don't have the time or energy."

> "I'm never finished, never feel satisfied, I feel I'm underachieving all the time…no matter how hard you try there's always something else to do."

A teacher at one school described her workload as "depressing when I look at my vision and the reality" Other comments of this nature included: "not accomplishing things, never goes away." Another teacher described her workload as "heavy but of my own making…if you're [a good teacher] you're a perfectionist."

One teacher commented that the stipulation of forty hours per week or 'the time necessary to complete the job' had "made it difficult for people to stop…they need to be told it's eight to five."

Principals also recognised the stress caused by "teacher perfectionism." Comments included:

> "Motivated   dedicated   teachers   will   never   complete

work/marking/preparation in all curriculum areas to levels they would like"

"Teachers try to do too much."

"Teachers work hard by choice."

"Teachers work so hard because they are dedicated to improving the life chances of every child."

"The workload is excessive [but] a lot is self-imposed by the expectations they put on themselves…They do [extensive work for midyear reports for example] because they believe it is best for the children."

One principal described a "culture of dedication." At times there is too much to be done, yet teachers ask themselves: "Have I done enough?" Teachers at one school described all of their planning, assessing, marking and record-keeping as necessary and helpful, but felt that they did not have enough time to do it "properly."

The desire of so many New Zealand primary teachers to meet the needs of all children at all times and to satisfy every school, Board of Trustees and Ministry requirement to the highest possible level would seem to be commendable but unrealistic. It appears to be a recipe for burnout and an issue that needs to be addressed.

The issue of trust between Ministry and teachers

Some teachers and administrators objected to what was variously described as a "watchdog" or "low trust" approach on the part of the Education Review Office (ERO) and the Ministry.

Several teachers found the ERO to be "an ongoing problem." "Planning doesn't improve. In describing what's already happened, we're covering ourselves to show we've been doing our jobs." A desire for the Ministry and the ERO to be more "in sync" was also expressed. "There should be lists and documentation of exactly what is needed as a baseline in schools…the ERO shouldn't be asking for extra things." A

further recommendation was that the ERO perspective be national rather than provincial - "we should all be dancing to the same tune."

Teachers at one visited school referred to "an ERO paper trail." They felt pressure "not to let the school or the principal down" but thought the level of record keeping was probably not improving their teaching. Like most teachers interviewed, teachers at this school were nevertheless supportive of the Ministry's curriculum directions in recent years. A teacher at another school said that she "probably did more" with the ERO in mind because she did not want to "look silly" if documentation were requested. Some teachers stated that they wanted student outcome information, but not "accountability for its own sake."

One principal stated that he would like to see an increase in the "trust factor" between the Ministry and its teachers. He described the current model as a "low trust model. If schools had more leash, they could make significant improvements among themselves." This principal felt that there was too much assessment in the "low trust model." Another principal commented that the Ministry should stop "directing" schools and trust schools to do their job. Some teachers commented that the Ministry's attitude of "prove it" increased paperwork and took time away from teaching and learning.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

This section of the report describes findings taken from data collected using self-completed surveys mailed to a sample of schools and also draws on data and findings from the short reports, the case studies and the diaries. It is organised so that it addresses each of the research objectives described in the *Schedules of the Agreement* defining the project. It is broken into the following sections.

- The workload and related issues of teachers and principals

- The role of support staff

- The role of school organisation

- The use of ICT

- Working conditions

- The impact of recent government policies

In some sections of this chapter data from the surveys are presented that have not previously been presented in the report. Typically, these are summary statistics from individual items that have been used to construct scales or indices that are examined earlier in the report.

The workload of teachers and principals

Tasks, activities and roles

This section summarises the findings concerning the tasks teachers perform, how much time is spent on these tasks, how these vary according to: (a) the level of the teacher, whether the teacher is a beginning teacher or not, Maori or Pasifika teacher, and teachers who teach multiple levels (b) school context, including remote, size, decile, Kura Kaupapa Maori, composite and area schools, intermediate as well as primary schools.

Hours teachers work

This section summarises the findings concerning the hours worked by teachers during term and holidays.

The data from the short reports, diaries and case studies indicated that over a seven day week, primary teachers were working between 50 and 52 hours per week on average. During term breaks and the long vacation, they spend, on average, about 22 working days or about 176 hours in total, on school related activities.

The survey data suggested that full-time teachers worked an average of 49.9 hours (SD = 16.1) over the previous seven days. Some caution is recommended in using this figure. The survey data contained some extreme values, and it is possible that some teachers answered the question by counting the last seven working days, rather than the last seven calendar days. However, these results accord closely with the results from the short reports and the diaries.

Factors which contribute to workload

This section summarises the findings concerning those factors which contribute to heavy workload and uneven distribution of workload during the year, identifying practical and innovative methods used by schools to alleviate workloads

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that planning, preparation, assessment, reporting and record keeping were the biggest contributors to workload. At some schools, meetings were also a marked contributor. Workload was particularly heavy during reporting periods. The pace and frequency of change was a further major contributor to workload.

Factors that alleviated workload included the establishment of a strong professional community with associated effective teamwork; designated curriculum developers; the effective use of teacher aides and other support staff; highly organised and efficient meetings with a major professional focus; clear and effective organisational communication and documentation.

The survey data suggested that the months of February, June, and November was when teachers' workload was heaviest. Assessment and planning and preparation were the two activities which consistently imposed a heavy workload on teachers. These findings accord with those from the short reports, case studies and diaries.

Impact of workload on teaching students effectively

This section summarises the findings concerning whether the workload of teachers is of an extent that they are finding it difficult to perform their core work of teaching students effectively.

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that many teachers are finding it difficult to meet all professional demands to their satisfaction. This impacts both on their work/life balance and their ability to teach as effectively as they could. This is the case in particular during peak periods such as reporting times. Teachers feel that they are generally able to perform their core work but that time constraints make this difficult. Teacher "burnout" was a concern for some teachers and schools.

The survey data suggested that the extent to which teachers perceive they have autonomy and the effect of a range of stressors impacts on how effectively they work as teachers. (The measure included not just a direct effect on teaching, but more distant effects such as the provision of support to colleagues that more indirectly affect student learning). The greater the autonomy reported by teachers, the more effectively they tended to see themselves as working. The greater the stress reported, the less effective their work. Also influencing the impact of workload on effectiveness was the level of support from the school. This effect, however, was only half as strong as the autonomy and stress variables.

The nature and source of drivers of non-teaching workload

This section summarises the findings concerning the nature and source of drivers of non-teaching workload.

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that teachers are performing some tasks such as photocopying, filing (including ICT) and resource management that could be carried out by others. Supervisory tasks, both scheduled and *de facto,* are also drivers of non-teaching workload. The nature of primary teaching makes it difficult to reduce the *de facto* tasks involved in attending to the constant needs of primary schoolchildren.

Most of the variance in teacher perceptions of workload and manageability were found to be at the individual level, and not at the school level. The two factors which appeared to be especially important were a set of stressors and the extent to which teachers perceived they have autonomy in their work.

The nature and volume of interactions required of teachers

This section summarises the findings concerning the nature and volume of interactions required of teachers, and provides some information, not previously described, from the surveys.

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that the interactions required of teachers are extensive both in nature and volume on a daily basis. In addition to interacting with the students in their class, both inside and outside the classroom, teachers interact with support staff, student teachers, other colleagues, parents and outside persons.

The survey data suggested that teachers spent an average of 3.7 hours (SD = 2.1) on meetings a week. They tended to *often* find them stressful (mean 3.08 on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 = *Never or rarely*, 2 = *Sometimes*, 3 = *Often*, and 4 = *Always*). They also found the behaviour of students, on average, to be stressful. Interestingly, the case study data showed that at most schools visited behaviour management was not seen as a major issue, although the behaviour of some students could be stressful, and teachers and principals were very concerned with the provision of adequate pastoral care. They found relations with other teachers to be stressful *Sometimes* (mean = 2.38, SD = .65) and with school management between *Sometimes* and *Often* stressful (mean = 2.56, SD = 79). Despite this, on average, teachers tended to *Agree* that they felt it

safe to openly discuss ideas and concerns at their school (mean = 2.65 SD = 7.44), and *Agreed* that support staff and teachers work well together (mean = 3.24 SD = .53). Further, on average, teachers indicated that to a *Moderate extent* they (1) engaged in sharing good teaching methods with other teachers (mean = 2.97 SD = .74), (2) worked with other teachers to prepare teaching materials (mean = 2.88 SD = .84), and, to a slightly lesser extent (3) examined student work with other teachers (mean = 2.55 SD = .79).

Table 3 Average number of hours spent by principals on various meetings over the previous seven days (weighted)

Number of hours spent over the last seven days ….	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Preparing for meetings	253	5.42	4.533
Meeting with staff	253	5.22	3.743
School governance meetings	253	1.79	2.367
BOT & sub committees	253	2.73	2.185
RTLB management meetings	253	.77	1.119
Other meetings	253	4.58	5.284
Liaising with Group Special Education	253	.94	1.302

Table 3 shows the average number of hours principals spent at different types of meetings over the previous seven days. When these averages are summed, they total 21.45 hours. Principals reported that they spent, on average, 58.5 hours on all job-related activities over the previous seven days. Thus, on average, 36.7 per cent of their working time was spent at meetings or preparing for meetings. They also spent around an hour a week at student assemblies, two hours on extra-curricular activities, an hour working with community organisations, and nearly three hours communicating with parents. (Some of this time may have been spent as time in meetings, so these times should not be added to the time spent at meetings.)

These findings accord with observations drawn from short reports, case studies and

diaries: teachers and principals are engaged with a wide range of persons, in various settings. Some interactions or engagements are associated with elevated stress, and many take up considerable amounts of time.

Tasks that could be carried out by non-teaching personnel

This section summarises the findings describing tasks that teachers routinely perform that do not require a teaching qualification and could be carried out by non-teaching personnel.

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that teacher aides and other support staff play a very important role in supporting teachers in classrooms. Learning opportunities for students increase significantly when a classroom teacher and teacher aide work together. Many tasks of a clerical nature could be carried out by non-teaching personnel. Examples would be organisation of excursions and trips, tasks such as health and safety overviews, photocopying (apart from "on the day" types of photocopying) and filing. Teacher aides can again provide invaluable assistance in many areas, including the preparation and management of classroom and other resources.

The data from the surveys points to a range of areas where teachers feel that tasks could be carried out by non-teaching personnel. Table 4 shows the mean number of hours provided and mean number of hours needed – as estimated by teachers – with various types of assistance that support staff might provide. It can be seen that teachers believe that the wide range of support that is currently being offered, is on average insufficient. For the assistance listed in Table 4, a total of 7.5 hours was offered but 18.6 hours were judged to be required. This is a difference of around 11.1 hours. However, some caution needs to be exercised with these results, because quite large proportions of teachers indicated that no assistance was required. These percentages can be seen in the Table 4. The difference calculated between these percentages indicates the proportion of teachers who indicated no assistance was provided but who reported that some was required. For example, 80.9 per cent of teachers indicated that no clerical assistance was provided and 36.6 per cent that no

clerical assistance was required. Consequently, there were 44.3 per cent of teachers who received no clerical assistance but who believed that it was required. In other words, the larger this number, the larger the gap between provision and need for assistance. The largest gap was in the provision of assistance for the preparation of materials and resources.

As there were many teachers who did not need assistance on some of these activities, another set of averages was calculated for only those teachers who indicated that they needed assistance. These can be seen in the three furthest right columns of Table 4. Table 5 provides a summary of the differences. It can be seen that for those teachers requiring assistance, on average 11.6 hours were provided and 28.5 hours were reported as being needed. This represents a gap of, on average, of 16.9 hours. The two largest contributions to this figure come from the gap between the hours provided and needed for general assistance with students in class (4.5 hours) and assistance with a student on a one-on-one basis (4.6 hours). Thus, around half of the time that appears to be required by teachers who require assistance relates to in-class support. In contrast, support for clerical activities, which the short reports, case studies and diaries seemed to indicate would sometimes be helpful, is on these numbers only a small contributor to the gap between what is required and what is provided.

Table 4 Mean number of hours provided and mean number of hours needed with various types of assistance that support staff might provide (weighted)

	All cases included			% indicating zero hours needed	Cases needing no help removed		
	N	Mean	SD		N	Mean	SD
Q16i Hours provided – clerical assistance	1415	0.6	3.2	80.9	676	1.1	4.6
Q16i Hours needed – clerical assistance	1154	1.9	4.0	36.6	731	2.9	4.6
Difference		-1.3		44.3		-1.8	
Q16ii Hours provided – general assistance with students in class	1604	2.7	5.0	50.4	940	3.4	5.4
Q16ii Hours needed – general assistance with students in class	1314	5.9	7.4	25.4	980	7.9	7.6
Difference		-3.2		25.0		-4.5	
Q16iii Hours provided – assistance with a student on a one-on-one basis	1557	2.9	5.8	53.4	895	4.0	6.5
Q16iii Hours needed – assistance with a student on a one-on-one basis	1284	6.3	8.2	27.1	936	8.6	8.5
Difference		-3.4		26.3		-4.6	
Q16iv Hours provided – preparation of materials and resources	1463	0.4	1.8	82.1	883	0.5	2.1
Q16iv Hours needed – preparation of materials and resources	1265	2.5	3.2	24.1	960	3.3	3.3
Difference		-2.1		58.0		-2.8	
Q16v Hours provided – specialist assistance	1436	0.6	2.0	66.0	635	0.9	2.3
Q16v Hours needed –specialist assistance	1136	1.2	2.2	42.0	659	2.1	2.5
Difference		-0.6		24.0		-1.2	
Q16vi Hours provided – other teacher assistants' tasks	1209	0.3	2.1	91.3	178	1.7	5.0
Q16vi Hours needed – other teacher assistants' tasks	875	0.8	2.5	78.7	187	3.7	4.1
Difference		-0.5		12.6		-2.0	

Table 5 Average total number of hours provided and needed for all teachers and for only those teachers reported assistance is needed

	All cases included	Cases needing no help removed
Average total hours provided	7.5	11.6
Average total hours needed	18.6	28.5
Difference	11.1	-16.9

The data from the case studies and the survey are broadly consistent, both pointing to many tasks which could be carried out by non-teaching personnel. Both data sources pointed to the importance of teacher aides in the provision of assistance in freeing teachers for their core work.

Management and curriculum leadership

This section examines how management and curriculum leadership roles are integrated into the work of teachers, how these roles impact on teachers' ability to perform their teaching role, and how these roles are recognised.

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that management and curriculum leadership are vitally important in assisting teachers to teach effectively. Teachers were very aware of the importance of leadership involvement in curriculum. Effective school based professional development, and in particular curriculum development, facilitated teachers' work. Many schools assigned particular staff to act as leaders and facilitators in curriculum, thereby reducing workload and encouraging effective teamwork.

The surveys did not provide data about how management and curriculum leadership roles are integrated into the work of teachers. The surveys did provide some

information about how the role of curriculum co-ordinator impacted on teachers' ability to perform their teaching role.

The analyses contrasting curriculum co-ordinators contrasted with all other teachers showed that teachers who were also curriculum co-ordinators worked on average an extra 8.3 hours over the previous seven days (roughly an extra hour a day). Despite these extra hours, there was no statistically significant difference between curriculum co-ordinators and other teachers in either the manageability or perceived amount of work. There was a statistically significant difference in the adverse effects on their work, with the curriculum co-ordinator group indicating a worse impact, but its effect size was small. Overall, therefore, it appeared that curriculum co-ordinators, while working longer hours, do not see themselves much differently from other teachers in terms of work volume and the manageability of the workload.

The surveys also provide some, limited, information about how these roles were recognised. Teachers were asked: to what extent they agreed with the statement that *I am recognised for a job well* (by the leadership in the school). On average they *agreed* (mean = 2.9, SD 0.71). There was, however, no statistically significant difference between curriculum coordinators and other teachers (mean for both groups was 2.89, SD .72 and .70 respectively).

Thus, the case studies provided some detailed examples of how curriculum leadership and management are integrated into school, the survey data were of limited value. The surveys did suggest that curriculum leaders were no less or more likely than other teachers to have their work recognised by the leadership in the school.

Teaching principals

This section examines the role of teaching principals, including the identification of the main issues in the professional lives of teaching principals and how each role affects the other, and the implications this has for their workload.

The data from the short reports and diaries case studies indicated that teaching principals were usually in smaller schools. The number of management tasks that still

needed to be completed placed additional time demands on them. Additional clerical assistance would alleviate workload for them. Principals sometimes had to choose between "the classroom and the office."

The data from the principal surveys on teaching principals is somewhat limited because of the small numbers of respondents who fitted this category. Of the 253 principals who responded, only 46 were not fully released, that is, had some classroom responsibility. On average, the proportion of their time spent in classroom was 0.33 (SD = 0.17). Table 6 shows some of the characteristics of these principals and those who did not have classroom responsibilities. It can be seen that non teaching principals tended to have more years experience in primary education and as a principal and they tended to be in larger schools. There was no statistically significant difference between the socio-economic status of the schools.

Table 6 Characteristics of fully released principals and their school contrasted with principals with classroom responsibilities and their schools

Characteristics	Mean for fully released	SD	Mean for teaching principals	SD	Level of statistical significance
Years in primary teaching in New Zealand	27.5	8.1	21.9	10.6	$P<0.001$
Years a principal	13.3	8.4	9.5	7.7	$P=0.005$
School size (roll)	388.7	197.6	102.6	68.36	$P<0.001$
Decile	5.7	3.0	5.7	3.1	$P=0.98$ [ns]

NS = the differences between the means are not statistically significant

Teaching principals worked on average 57.7 hours (SD = 10.5) compared with fully released principals who worked, on average 58.7 hours (SD 10.5). The difference between these means is not statistically significant.

There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups of principals for the amount of time they had spent over the previous seven days attending various meetings or preparing for meetings except that fully released

principals spent more time in meetings with staff (5.6 hours SD = 3.9) compared with teaching principals (4.3 hours SD 1.8). This difference was statistically significant (P=0.002)

Table 7 Statistically significant differences in mean time between fully released and teaching principals

Hours last 7 days:	Fully released?	Number	Mean	SD	
Q12b School playground duty	Yes	206	1.7	1.6	P=0.001
	No	46	2.7	2.0	
	Total	252	1.9	1.7	
Q12o Clerical activities	Yes	206	4.4	4.0	P<0.001
	No	46	7.3	6.7	
	Total	252	4.9	4.7	
Q12q Facilities management	Yes	206	2.7	2.5	P=0.007
	No	46	1.7	1.9	
	Total	252	2.5	2.5	
Q12s Organising school transport	Yes	206	0.3	0.9	P=0.001
	No	46	0.8	0.9	
	Total	252	0.4	0.9	

Table 7 shows that teaching principals spent, on average, more time on playground duty, clerical duties and organising school transport, while fully released principals spent more time on facilities management. Teaching principals also spent more time in classrooms and undertaking activities related to teaching.

There were no statistically significant differences between teaching and fully released principals on any of the stressors that were measured by the survey. Fully released principals were more likely to report that more special staff for pastoral care would help in making their workload as principal more manageable; otherwise the differences between the two groups were small. Nor were there any differences in how often their workload was perceived as manageable, or in its overall manageability.

On the data from the surveys, teaching principals typically do not appear to differ

from other principals in the amount of time spent working or in their perceptions of their workload or the stressors associated with this workload.

Principals' workload

This section summarises the findings describing the nature and source of drivers of principals' workload that are not considered to contribute to the learning of students in the school.

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that much principal workload revolves around the development of curriculum areas within the school. While this clearly contributes to the learning of students, some principals felt that more central assistance in the form of templates, for example, would assist them. The nature and pace of recent change has increased workload for principals as they guide staff, and some felt that the 'paper trail' necessitated by increased paperwork (and in some cases ERO) requirements added to everyone's workload, not always productively. For Principals (and senior staff), a large contributor to workload was often analysis and recording of compliance data. This reduced the paperwork load for staff but added to management workload. Principals could probably all use extra clerical and office assistance to free them from non-learning related distractions.

Multivariate analyses using linear regression were conducted to investigate the factors which contribute to the amount of time spent over the last seven days on all job related activities. Predictor variables were: years teaching as a principal, the school decile, the school size (roll), whether the respondent was fully released or not, and an index of stressors[1]. This analysis accounted for 8 per cent of the variance only. The strongest – indeed the only statistically significant effect under this model – was the set of negatively worded stressor items.

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[1] There were two indices of stress. Those based upon negatively worded items – Q13c, e, g, h, , and l – and those based upon positively worded items – Q13a, b, d, f, j and k.

Table 8 Results of linear regression with the number of hours worked the last seven days as the dependent variable

Independent variable	Standardised coefficient	Statistical significance
Q3: Years a principal	-.027	.707
Decile	-.040	.552
Roll	-.121	.132
Q8 Fully released? (Yes = 1, No = 2)	-.129	.096
Positively worded index of stressors	-.116	.153
Negatively worded index of stressors	**-.355**	**.000**

Two other dependent variables were investigated – one based upon answers to the question *How often is your work manageable over the whole school year?* The other based upon answers to the question T*aking account of its peaks and troughs, <u>overall</u>, how unmanageable or manageable is the amount of work you are required to do in this school?* For the first, using the same set of independent variables as listed in Table 8, the proportion of variation explained by the model was 43 per cent. Two variables were statistically significant (P<0.001) – the negatively worded stressors (standardised co=efficient of -0.235) and the positively worded stressors (standardised co=efficient of 0.500). For the second analysis the proportion of variance explained was 44 per cent. The only two statistically significant predictors were, again, the two stressor variables (standardised coefficients of -0.270 for the positively worded items, and 0.469 for the negatively worded items).

On these results the only factor identified as associated with actual hours worked and with perceived workload was the stressor measure. Its effect explains much more of the variance for perceived manageability of the workload than it does for the actual hours worked.

The short reports, case studies and diaries presented a much richer and diverse account of the nature and source of drivers of principals' workload than the data

derived from the surveys.

Support staff

This section summarises what support staff do that has the ability to impact on work of teachers.

The data from the case studies indicated that teacher aides and other support staff can have a significant impact on the work of teachers. Teacher aides who are assigned to a class or teacher, often Board of Trustees funded, allow for teachers to work more effectively in individual and class learning. Teacher aides assist with individual students and provide valuable help with administrative matters and resource management. At some schools office staff were also able to provide valuable administrative, clerical and other support to teachers.

The data from the surveys strongly supported a view that teachers see support staff as capable of and important for making significant contributions both within and outside of the classroom to the learning of students. Indeed, an examination of the correlations between levels of overall satisfaction and whether teachers needed zero or more than zero hours of support (coded 0 and 1 respectively) were all statistically significant. This can be seen in Table 9. The negative correlation coefficients indicate that teachers who needed support tended to be less satisfied than those who did not need support.

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Table 9 Correlations between whether hours of support of various kinds were needed or not and general satisfaction (weighted)

Q16i b) Hours needed - Clerical work	Pearson *r*	-.188
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1130
Q16ii b) Hours needed - General assistance with students in class	Pearson *r*	-.162
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1288
Q16iii b) Hours needed - Assistance with a student on a one-on-one basis	Pearson *r*	-.178
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1260
Q16iv b) Hours needed - Preparation of materials and resources	Pearson *r*	-.188
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1237
Q16v b) Hours provided - Specialist assistance	Pearson *r*	-.142
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1111

Table 10 shows the correlations between whether hours of support of various kinds were needed or not and the set of dependent variables used in the bivariate analyses earlier in the report. It can be seen that, once again, there are many statistically significant associations (P equal to or less than 0.001). These are marked in bold on the table. It is interesting to note how clerical support being needed affects a wide range of the independent variables. Also, all the support variables are associated with (a) the manageability of workload (b) adverse impact of work and (c) perceived amount of work.

These findings are consistent with those from the short reports, case studies and diaries, and point to the important role that support staff can have and the impact they have on the work of teachers.

Table 10 Correlations between whether hours of support of various kinds were needed or not and various outcome variables (weighted)

		Clerical work	General assistance with students in class	Assistance with a student on a one-on-one basis	Preparation of materials and resources	Specialist assistance
Q14: Hours on all activities over the last 7 days	r	**0.16**	0.05	0.02	**0.12**	0.08
	Sig. (2T)	**0.000**	0.088	0.467	**0.000**	0.009
Q15 Number of months when planning and preparation heavy	r	**0.13**	**0.09**	**0.10**	**0.11**	**0.12**
	Sig. (2T)	**0.000**	**0.001**	**0.001**	**0.000**	**0.000**
Q17 Total hours of formally scheduled activities last 7 days	r	**0.10**	0.05	0.04	0.00	0.05
	Sig. (2T)	**0.000**	0.046	0.143	0.861	0.110
Q18 Total hours of professional activities out of classroom last 7 days	r	**0.14**	0.08	0.07	**0.11**	**0.10**
	Sig. (2T)	**0.000**	0.003	0.008	**0.000**	**0.001**
Q19b,c Total hours filing & photocopying last 7 days	r	**0.10**	0.08	0.06	**0.10**	0.03
	Sig. (2T)	**0.001**	0.004	0.045	**0.001**	0.393
Q19e,f Total hours IT maintenance work last 7 days	r	**0.09**	0.05	0.03	**0.10**	**0.11**
	Sig. (2T)	**0.004**	0.073	0.362	**0.001**	**0.001**
Q19d,k Total hours teacher cover/relievers	r	**0.11**	-0.05	-0.02	0.04	-0.01
	Sig. (2T)	**0.001**	0.101	0.440	0.182	0.803
Q20a,b,e Total hours student attendance last 7 days	r	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.07	0.02
	Sig. (2T)	0.069	0.007	0.090	0.014	0.578
Q20c,d,f Total hours student reports last 7 days	r	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.07	0.08
	Sig. (2T)	0.106	0.197	0.103	0.023	0.012
Q21a,b,e,o,p: Manageability of workload	r	**-0.24**	**-0.16**	**-0.21**	**-0.27**	**-0.21**
	Sig. (2T)	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**
Q21c,g,i,k_rev,.L,m,n: Adverse impact of work	r	**0.29**	**0.24**	**0.23**	**0.29**	**0.23**
	Sig. (2T)	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**
Q21d,f,h,j: Perceived amount of work	r	**0.20**	**0.12**	**0.15**	**0.16**	**0.13**
	Sig. (2T)	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**

Bold font – correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

School organisation

Schools' management of their workforce

This section examines how schools manage their workforce, what measures they take to minimise pressure on staff and how these measures are resourced and achieved.

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that schools minimised pressure on staff by freeing senior and/or other staff to plan across the school, by senior staff and others providing release time for classroom teachers on occasion (such as at report writing time), and by providing extra support staff. These measures are resourced by extra funding for this purpose from the Board of Trustees, by principals or senior staff sometimes taking an extra load. Many methods of reducing pressure on teachers are cost free, such as ensuring meetings are focussed and productive and/or by reducing meetings during peak pressure periods.

The data from the surveys did not broach this issue in detail. What were available indicated that, on average, teachers tended to *agree* that their school was concerned to minimise pressure on staff. This can be seen in Table 11. Substantively a mean of 3.0 indicates that the respondents *Agree* with the statement. Below 3 and they are shading towards disagreeing with the statement.

Table 11 Mean scores of teachers on various items related to school organisation and the workforce (weighted)

	Mean	SD
Q33e The school seeks to make staff workload more manageable,	2.62	.689
Q33f The school is concerned to ensure a good balance between work and family life for staff	2.60	.730
Q33h The effects of decisions made in the school are monitored.	2.68	.652
Q33j The school has good systems in place to manage student behaviour	3.03	.691
Q33k I fell supported by the school leadership when I am dealing with difficult students	3.08	.710
Q36a The principal deals effectively with pressures from outside the school that might interfere with my teaching.	2.98	.660
Q36b The principal sets priorities, makes plans and sees that they are carried out.	3.08	.646
Q36d I am involved in making decisions that affect me.	2.88	.715
Q36e The principal has a vision for learning that is shared across the school.	3.05	.729
Q36f The school management's behaviour toward the staff is supportive and encouraging.	3.04	.701
Q36g The principal lets staff know what is expected of them.	3.16	.640

Innovative policies and practices for work management

This section describes innovative policies and practices for work management

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that many policies and practices of this nature were in the planning, assessment, reporting and recording areas. They included the use of electronic systems and home/school card systems. Some policies were particular to the needs of the particular school, such as abolishing homework that required direct parental supervision. Many practices described in the short reports, case studies and diaries were not necessarily innovative but were very effective – for example, restricting the number of meetings and ensuring that they had for the most part a direct professional focus.

Again, the surveys did not tackle this issue in detail. One item asked to what extent

did the teachers agree that the principal was interested in innovation and new ideas (Q32b). On average, they agreed (mean 3.21, SD .69) with this statement.

Use of funding

This section describes how schools prioritise their use of entitlement staffing, and operational and other funding including how schools allocate middle management release time.

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that schools generally tried to use some entitlement staffing in the area of curriculum development. This time was often allotted to middle management. Some schools attempted to keep class sizes lower, in one case setting a maximum of 15 for a New Entrants class. Extra funding for staffing from the Board of Trustees was very important in some schools, as in the provision of extra staff or teacher aides. Teachers, principals and members of Boards of Trustees were often not impressed with the degree of fund-raising necessary to maintain their programs, and in some cases teachers were using their own money for classroom needs.

The survey did not collect data concerning the use of funding from principals or from teachers.

Use of ICT

This section describes how ICT impacts on teacher work, including examination of the effects on work of different levels of availability of technology and access to training and supports and the uses of ICT as an administrative tool to support classroom delivery.

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that increased access to ICT has been a significant positive factor for teachers in carrying out their core work. Teachers have greatly appreciated the provision of laptops for individual teachers and appropriate and concurrent professional development. This finding is consistent with results from the surveys. Better access to IT was, on average, rated

the lowest of all items asked of teachers about factors which would assist in making the amount of work they do more manageable. This item had a mean of 2.24 (SD .989), compared with the highest mean of 3.56 (SD .763) for the item asking about increased amounts of guaranteed release time for planning and preparation. Better access to IT was also among the lowest average scores when principals were asked about making their work and the work of their teachers more manageable.

Working conditions

The impact of working conditions on teachers' work

This section describes how working conditions impact on teachers' work.

The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated that issues such as appropriately resourced classrooms, staffrooms and offices impact directly and positively on teachers' work. Smaller class sizes also have an effect because of the increased amount of time teachers can spend with individual students. The large numbers of hours that need to be worked during term times, particularly at peak pressure times, is a working condition that makes effective teaching more difficult for teachers. At rural schools, changing enrolments during the year and the necessary consequent re-arrangement of classes can have a major negative impact on working conditions.

The survey data pointed strongly to a range of factors in the work environment impacting on teachers' work, listed below. Note that these factors are not listed in order of significance, and reflect both teacher and principal input.

1. Class size.

2. The amount of preparation required for teaching and the amount of guaranteed classroom release time provided for planning and preparation.

3. The number of staff available to support teachers both inside and outside the classroom.

4. The extent to which teachers exercised autonomy in their work.

5. The extent to which they were stressed by various factors in the school environment.

6. The level of school support provided to the teachers.

7. The complexity of compliance requirements (for principals).

Factors 5 to 7 above were especially important for their contribution to the adverse impact of workload on student learning. Factor 1 (class size) was not often raised as an issue by teachers during interviews. When it was discussed, the question of the desirability of smaller classes was taken as a "given" – "it goes without saying".

Other conditions of employment

This section describes what other conditions of employment may not directly impact on workload, but may have an effect on morale and teacher's ability to manage their work.

The data from the case studies indicated that the support of the Board of Trustees for teachers and their work is an important factor in teacher morale. Supportive and knowledgeable school leadership that encourages staff in all areas, including professional development, is also clearly very important.

Primary teachers are *de facto* on duty from arrival at school until some time after school hours. A major working condition that impacts negatively on primary teacher work is the large number of hours that are worked on a daily basis without 'down time' and without a genuine break. This situation is particularly clear in the diaries.

Survey data were not amenable to addressing this question directly, but the multi-level analyses do indicate that, especially for the number of hours spent on all job related activities, the variables used in this study are only accounting for a small proportion of the variance. At this time, it is impossible to know if the failure to account for substantial proportions of variance is due to the study failing to identify more salient conditions of employment, or whether it relates to factors associated with individuals which were beyond the scope of the study (for example, personality type).

The impact of government policies

This section describes whether and how recent government policies have impacted on the nature of teachers' work.

The data from the case studies indicated that primary teachers in general are very supportive of new curriculum and pedagogical policies but are often wearied and discouraged by the pace and frequency of change. This appears to be placing considerable pressure on primary teachers and their work. The amount and frequency of paperwork in assessment and reporting in particular also impacts on teacher work, with many teachers feeling that less assessment and reporting would be equally effective; they would prefer to spend more time in planning and preparation. They appreciate centrally provided curriculum and other materials and would like to see more of them.

The case studies also suggested that teacher "perfectionism" – the unrealistic desire of many teachers to meet all professional expectations and demands absolutely and perfectly at all times – impacts on teacher work and is probably a contributing factor in teacher burnout.

It was clear from the short reports, case studies and diaries that teachers appreciate and are very supportive of ICT initiatives and the planned time release for primary teachers.

The surveys did not explicitly address the issue of the impact of specific government policies. However a number of items were used which provided some information about the possible impact of some policies. These are summarised in Table 12. On the scale used for the items in this table, a score of 2 substantively means *Sometimes*, and a score of 3 means *Often*. It can be seen that on average activities that might be seen as closely associated with the implementation of aspects of some government policies cause stress to teachers *Sometimes*, with a few (for example, accountability reviews) shading towards *Often*.

Table 12 Average frequency of stress reported by teachers associated with tasks that may directly relate to government policies (weighted)

	N	Mean	SD
Q31b Stressed by - Amount of paper work generated from sources external to the school	1807	2.13	0.86
Q31c Stressed by - Types of paper work required	1791	2.34	0.85
Q31e Stressed by - Accountability reviews (e.g. ERO visits)	1767	2.53	1.01
Q31f Stressed by - Developing new assessment procedures to meet Ministry requirements	1701	2.37	0.88
Q31g Stressed by - Implementing Ministry curriculum policy	1795	2.17	0.84
Q31i Stressed by - Collation and processing of assessment data for external purposes	1698	2.20	0.86
Q31k Stressed by - Performance appraisal	1854	1.98	0.88
Q31m Stressed by - Level of resourcing available to you	1846	2.14	0.90
Q31r Stressed by - The ways in which change is implemented in the school	1859	2.02	0.85

The factor which Principals indicated would most assist in making their workloads more manageable in schools was simplified compliance. This was strongly endorsed by the principals.

The data from the surveys point to a fairly low level of concern about the impact of government policies on their workload among teachers. For principals, the workload compliance procedures are an issue that appears to need addressing. The data from the short reports, case studies and diaries indicated while some government policies and initiatives, such as ICT provision, are much appreciated, teachers often feel overwhelmed by the pace and frequency of change.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUPPORTING TEACHERS AT WORK - AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION.

Both the quantitative and qualitative data indicated areas where changes might lead to better support for teachers, principals and school communities. The identified areas for possible change or improvement that follow are targeted at increasing the ability of primary teachers and principals to carry out their core tasks effectively. These areas include the pace of change, teacher workload at different times of the year, teacher breaks during the day, class sizes, meetings and professional development, and possible extra support for teachers and principals. Issues particularly relevant to rural schools such as changing enrolments are identified. Teacher "perfectionism" and dealings between the schools and the Ministry are also issues to be considered.

A comment on the primary school professional communities concludes this section. This is an area that is clearly already very strong. The continuation of these communities, and enabling individual schools to further strengthen them if necessary, is vital.

Areas to consider for possible change or improvement:

1. The pace of change.

Evidence from the case study data suggests that while teachers overwhelmingly support pedagogical and other changes that benefit the children in their care, it is important to allow teachers time to consolidate change and to provide appropriate support. This may require slowing down the pace of change. Allied to this is the need to ensure that supporting documentation and materials are available at the appropriate times.

Consideration could be given to identifying areas of change where expectations for implementation may be slowed, and to reviewing the pace and frequency of change in general.

2. Teacher workload during the especially heavy months of February, June and November.

Data from the surveys and the case studies indicated that there are peaks in teacher workload during February, June and November. Suggestions from interviewees, and data from the survey suggest that reducing and shortening formal meeting requirements and the provision of extra allocation of teacher aide or other support may assist with this problem, especially during these busy months. The surveys indicated that assessment is unusually heavy for five months of the year and preparation for six months. Again, targeted support such as extra teacher aide time was regarded by teachers as likely to be of assistance.

The introduction of methods to reduce and/or streamline reporting and recording requirements during the especially heavy months of February, June and November would lessen teacher workload in this area and allow teachers more time to concentrate on other aspects of their core work.

3. Suitably spaced genuine breaks for teachers during the day.

The case studies and in particular the diaries suggested that the nature of primary teachers' work means that ensuring proper breaks is difficult. The normal primary teacher routine seems to be "going non-stop" from about 8 am until 3 pm without a break (and often continuing immediately to meetings). Working in this manner increases fatigue in individuals and could have a deleterious effect on health. It could also impact negatively on individual and organisational efficiency.

The case studies suggested that many teachers were looking forward to planned time release as an opportunity to increase collegial activities such as observing one another's classes or undertaking professional development. This will be an excellent opportunity to further develop professional skills among teachers but will not be a "break" as such.

Consideration should be given to providing primary teachers with suitable, spaced, defined breaks during their working day. Methods may need to be developed to

ensure that this occurs.

4. The amount of required "paperwork".

Data from the case studies and the surveys suggest that the amount of paperwork required is onerous. If this problem could be alleviated, it would be a major time saver for teachers and principals. Reduction and streamlining of this work could occur either at school level (for example by ensuring all data is used for more than one purpose, or by using time-saving templates) or at Ministry level (with, for example, fewer accountability and recording requirements). The survey data suggested that it was within school paper work that was the more onerous.

It may be useful to undertake an audit of the reporting requirements of teachers and principals to identify where efficiencies can be achieved. An investigation could also be undertaken to identify ways to reduce duplication and other unnecessary data recording by teachers and principals.

5. Class sizes.

Survey responses indicated that teachers saw class size as an important factor in teaching effectively. Keeping class sizes as small as possible is an important issue for many teachers and one that they see as having a positive impact on the effective performance of their core tasks.

6. The frequency and length of meetings

The case studies suggested that it is important to give most meetings a curriculum and professional development focus. From this it follows that methods other than formal meetings should, where possible, be used for "house-keeping" matters in schools. Since the surveys revealed that teacher workload is cyclical, it seems advisable to restrict the number of meetings during high pressure periods. The case studies also indicated that it may be advisable to investigate alternatives to after-school meetings in providing professional development in order to reduce pressure on teachers' planning and preparation time. This might be achieved in part by ensuring that

meetings have a curriculum or professional development focus and occur at times most likely to maximise efficiency. These times could be negotiated at school level.

It may be helpful for schools to review the number and timing of meetings with a view to reducing the number to limit what one principal described as "the meeting syndrome."

7. The provision and timing of professional development

While research indicates that professional development at a whole school level is more effective than single or isolated activities, some of the current whole school professional development occurring on regular school days could possibly be more effective if scheduled differently. In the school visits, teachers indicated that even when professional development was high quality, they were sometimes too tired to concentrate or were pre-occupied with classroom matters. Even at schools where after school meetings with a professional development focus were regarded as very productive and worthwhile, teachers often said they were too tired to concentrate appropriately. This suggests that teachers would sometimes prefer a time block for meetings away from the beginning or end of the school day. Some professional development could be offered (as an option) during term breaks, when teachers could have longer time blocks and would not be distracted by day-to-day classroom concerns. At many schools visited as part of the study, teachers were already at school for part of this time. One of the schools was providing voluntary professional development days during term breaks; these sessions were well attended. Schools may find it appropriate to consider the provision of professional development activities during term breaks and to reduce the time spent on professional development and on professional development meetings during the school week.

Professional development activities that address issues related to finding a satisfactory work-life balance and that focus on the maintenance of this balance *may need to be* considered. Interviewed teachers showed very high levels of personal commitment to their work. However, in some cases this level of commitment appeared to be affecting their work-life balance. It is of concern that many interviewed teachers felt that they

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did not have an appropriate or sustainable work-life balance. There was also evidence of this problem from the surveys.

The provision of appropriate and timely re-entry professional development for teachers returning to the profession after an extended period of time is also important. It was evident in the case studies that some teachers returning from extended leave found a large degree of educational change. It may be worth investigating how returning teachers adapt to the changed requirements, how many returning teachers remain in the profession and what steps could be taken to encourage them to do so. Preliminary evidence from the case studies suggests that some returning teachers face a range of problems adjusting to the new educational environment.

8. Support for teachers and principals: teaching support, administrative and clerical support and ICT technical support

Additional support for teachers and principals in the form of more teacher aides, more access to ICT technical assistance and more administrative and clerical assistance is likely to reduce pressure and to increase effectiveness. The School Workforce Remodelling (2003) in the United Kingdom supports the growing importance of support staff roles in schools.[2] This document describes various roles for English support staff, such as learning support staff, pupil support, specialist and technical staff. Many of these tasks are already being carried out by teacher aides and other support staff in New Zealand. Increased support in these areas would free teachers and principals to spend more time on their core tasks.

Teachers found the provision of teacher aides to be a very positive factor in increasing effectiveness of their teaching, and also for freeing them to concentrate on their core work. Teacher aides were described at one school as "para-professionals". They assisted particular children, worked under teacher supervision with small groups and supervised and integrated children in the playground.

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[2] For more information on this initiative refer to www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/remodelling

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Diarists who mentioned having an aide in class were more able to attend more to the individual needs of their students and to work in a less pressured way. Most teachers seemed to prefer having the aide work directly with individual students or small groups, rather than on "housekeeping tasks" – such as organising resources. Nevertheless, these tasks also needed to be completed. Some tasks that diarists mentioned could be carried out by teacher aides, thereby freeing teacher time. Examples would include tidying up at the end of the day, putting away resources, preparing materials, filing documents. At the beginning of the day, teachers were often enmeshed in the "daily run"; at the end of the teaching day, there always seemed to be many small matters that needed attention. This might be a time when organised aide time could relieve teachers, allowing them to devote time to professional tasks such as assessment, preparation and planning. Provision of extra teacher aide time, including time outside classroom teaching hours would enhance teaching effectiveness.

Provision of extra access to ICT technician assistance would be very helpful in many schools. While ICT provision and support have in general greatly assisted teachers in carrying out their tasks, the case studies suggested that ICT support was an instance where an appropriately skilled person could relieve teachers of some tasks, and enable increased access to and use of ICT in a timely and cost effective manner.

It could also be helpful to offer typing tuition to teachers or administrators who do not have this skill. The ability to touch type is a major time and energy saver for anybody using a computer, whether for word processing or data entry. Given the large periods of time that managers in particular were spending in these tasks, touch-typing ability would increase efficiency.

Data from the case studies and the surveys suggests that extra clerical support and assistance to principals will help to give them more time for providing educational leadership in their schools. Related to this was a need, also identified by the study, to provide sufficient clerical support for teaching principals to ensure they do not have to choose on a regular basis "between the classroom and the office.

Extra clerical support and assistance for principals would assist them to carry out their work effectively and would free them to give increased time to the educational leadership of their schools.

9. Support for teaching principals of small rural or isolated schools

The case studies suggested that teaching principals of small or isolated schools are often spending time on clerical or similar tasks that detract from the quality of their teaching, which could be carried out by support staff in a few extra hours. Given the many demands made on Board of Trustee funds, one possible solution could be to provide this extra time centrally. A further suggestion to consider from one principal was the provision of a "critical friend" to provide, if requested, collegial assistance for isolated rural principals.

10. Changing enrolment numbers at rural schools.

At the beginning of the year, a school may be a few students short of the numbers needed to create an extra class. In rural areas, there may be considerable movement of families at different times of the year, often as a result of the itinerant nature of part of the workforce. This movement cannot always be predicted. When enrolment numbers increase during the year, with consequent re-arrangement of students and classes if another classroom needs to be opened, months of prior planning of particular programs and for particular classes may be wasted. This creates considerable extra workload for principals and teachers and is unsettling for students. If the Ministry were to allow more leeway in the area of possible increased enrolments during the year, it would make it easier for these schools to function effectively. Principals and teachers would not need to abandon months of prior planning, and student learning would not be disrupted by changes of class or teacher.

11. Teacher "perfectionism", stress and pressure on teachers.

The case studies make it clear that there is a very highly developed sense of vocation among primary teachers. This may, at times, lead them to try being everything to all children all the time. This in turn leads them to set very high standards when assessing

their effectiveness as teachers – in other words, to place "perfectionist" demands on themselves. A comment from one principal was that "teachers need to compromise in order to have a life." This suggests that the art of compromise needs to be developed in these primary teachers in order to reduce the huge demands that they often impose on themselves. Perhaps there needs to be recognition that the word "compromise" is not necessarily pejorative.

Efforts to address the issue of teacher perfectionism in order to reduce stress and pressure on teachers (and to maximise the likelihood of their remaining in the profession) may be beneficial both at the individual and the organisational level.

12. Dealings between the Ministry of Education and its schools

Data from the interviews and case studies suggested that at times there was a lack of trust between schools and the Ministry of Education. Principals and teachers felt that, while accountability is important, the default position ought to be one where they are trusted to carry out their core tasks in the interests of their students. Some school staff suggested that the length of the required ERO and Ministry "paper trail" might be shortened.

An assumption of trust in dealings between the Ministry of Education and its schools may assist in maximising beneficial outcomes. Schools need to feel that they have the confidence of the Ministry and that they can be trusted to carry out their tasks without constantly providing evidence of this.

13. Professional Communities

Professional communities focus on student learning and welfare, collaboration, deprivatisation of practice and reflective dialogue. Given the standard and level of professional communities in schools visited across New Zealand, this cannot be listed as an area for change as such. However, any steps that would enable individual schools to strengthen or further develop their professional communities could only be beneficial for teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

It was clear from the school visits that organised professional communities are a strength of the primary system. These communities were led by the principal, with shared planning and development and with genuine collegial activities. Strong informal social support was also clearly part of the professional communities in many schools. These professional communities play a major part in enabling teachers and principals to work effectively. Continuing and, where necessary, supporting the establishment of strong professional communities is crucial for full teaching effectiveness.