



## **Review of national and international practice in voluntary certification for principals**

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## Executive summary

### Purpose

The purpose of the project was to undertake and report on a global scan of schemes for the voluntary certification of school leaders that have been established by professional associations and institutions. The focus was on the certification of principals or those aspiring to the principalship. The report is organised as follows:

- Part **1** Introduction including definitions, distinctions and relationship to the Australian Professional Standard for Principals
- Part **2** Description of six programs for voluntary principal certification
- Part **3** Summary of the critical issues in design and delivery
- Part **4** Illustrations of how such programs would work in Australia
- Part **5** Summary and recommendations

### Important distinction

A distinction was made between certification that is awarded by a government or government agency, and certification that is awarded by an independent professional body. Certification by a professional body is usually:

- available to all members of the profession
- based on assessment of performance (not an academic qualification, although such qualifications may have a valuable role in preparing for certification), and
- portable and belonging to the person (not a job or position or classification specific to a school or employing authority)

### Australian Professional Standard for Principals

The intention of Principals Australia Institute (PAI) is to link a scheme for voluntary certification to the Australian Principal Standard:

The Standard is a public statement which sets out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work. It is represented as an integrated model that recognises three leadership requirements that a principal draws upon within five areas of professional practice. (AITSL 2011: 1).

The three leadership requirements are:

- vision and values
- knowledge and understanding
- personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills

The five areas of professional practice are:

- leading teaching and learning
- developing self and others
- leading improvement, innovation and change
- leading the management of the school
- engaging and working with the community

The key words in the above 'public statement' are 'what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work'. It is not sufficient for principals to have knowledge and understanding. They must be able to 'do' and 'achieve', so approaches to certification must seek evidence of the performance of principals.

### Outcomes of the scan

Five national and one state (US) voluntary principal certification programs were identified in the scan:

- Principal Certification Program of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in the United States (<http://www.nbpts.org/principal-certification>)

- Michigan Association of School Administrators Voluntary Principals Certification Program (Courageous Journey) (<http://www.gomasa.org/administrator-certification>)
- National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) in England (<http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/npqh.htm>)
- Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) (<http://www.sqh.ed.ac.uk/>)
- Principals Qualification Program (PQP) of the Ontario Principals Council ([http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/aq/Principals\\_Qualifications\\_Program.html](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/aq/Principals_Qualifications_Program.html))
- Executive Leadership Program (ELP) of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) (<http://det.wa.edu.au/professionallearning/detcms/portal/>)

Five of the six voluntary certification programs have at their heart a program of national certificated professional learning aligned to a national standard for school leaders (the sixth in Michigan has a state focus). The following are major findings:

- The Principals Certification Program of the NBPTS meets all of the criteria for the voluntary certification of principals. While still in its pilot phase, it is especially rigorous in establishing the validity of the evidence included in participants' portfolios. The same degree of rigour is evident over more than two decades in establishing the NBPTS voluntary certification of teachers.
- While it has a state focus, the Courageous Journey initiative in Michigan warrants particular attention. It satisfies the criteria for voluntary certification and has a special feature, namely, it adds to the certificate of eligibility required of all who seek the principalship in Michigan.
- The National Professional Qualification for Headship in England attracted international attention because of its scale, but what was initially a compulsory scheme has become voluntary. While there was significant professional input in design and delivery and is largely in the hands of professional organisations and institutions, it is essentially a government-mandated scheme. There was excessive paperwork when the scheme was compulsory.
- The Scottish Qualification for Headship is noteworthy to the extent that it is standards-driven, with standards very similar to the Australian Principal Standard. It carries the imprimatur of the General Teaching Council, with delivery on a regional basis of consortia of universities and local authorities. It is in the early stages of implementation.
- The Principals Qualification Program in Ontario satisfies the criteria for voluntary certification. Its links to standards are not as explicit as those in other schemes identified in the scan. The focus is on professional learning with limited attention to evidence of a capacity to 'do' or 'achieve'. The program is delivered by OISE at the University of Toronto.
- There are several programs in Australia designed and delivered by professional associations that have the potential to be part of a scheme for voluntary certification if they are explicitly linked to the Australian Principal Standard and evidence of capacity to 'do' and 'achieve' is included in a portfolio.
- Most of the schemes summarised above are standards-driven, with standards generally consistent across these schemes. The Australian Principal Standard has particular merit because it is parsimonious, with relatively explicit statements on what principals should 'do' and 'achieve' in each of the five areas of action and, as such, is a valuable touchstone in the development of an Australian scheme for voluntary accreditation.

## Critical issues

Ten critical issues to be addressed in a scheme for voluntary certification were drawn from the findings of the scan.

Critical Issue 1: What level of acceptance by employers will a national certificate have?

Critical Issue 2: Who designs and certifies the program to support the national standard?

Critical Issue 3: How will principal ownership be achieved?

Critical Issue 4: What counts as evidence that a Standard has been achieved, especially in respect to evidence that the principal can 'do' and 'achieve'?

- Critical Issue 5: How can a relationship between what a principal 'knows' or can 'do' and student learning be demonstrated?
- Critical Issue 6: Who shall assess or verify the evidence?
- Critical Issue 7: How will the scheme accommodate 'continuous' professional learning around the 'evolution of (professional) practices and capabilities'?
- Critical Issue 8: What will be the content of professional learning?
- Critical Issue 9: Who will deliver the program?
- Critical Issue 10: Who pays?

### Illustrating the possibilities

The possibilities and complexities of a scheme for voluntary certification are illustrated in the findings of three projects undertaken by Educational Transformations. These are concerned with (1) competencies and capabilities for developing strategic partnerships (commissioned by Social Ventures Australia), (2) preparing and supporting principals of small schools / teaching principals (commissioned by AITSL), and (3) programs for high-performing principals (commissioned by AITSL). These illustrate how professional learning cuts across the different elements in the Australian Principal Standard and that tailored programs are required. Implications for voluntary certification are identified.

#### Implications for voluntary certification for development of strategic partnerships:

- 1 What leaders are able to 'do' and 'achieve' in respect to building and sustaining strategic partnerships span several areas in the Australian Principal Standard.
- 2 Professional learning or evidence of attainment in practice in one or even all of the pre-requisite capacities may be necessary but they are not sufficient.
- 3 Different levels of capacity are evident as far as professional learning is concerned and these may form part of a scheme for voluntary certification. For example, 'entry level' certification may involve professional learning and evidence of being able to 'do' and 'achieve' but these may be limited to the pre-requisites. Certification for early years in the principalship may involve these to the point that capacities and capabilities have been established. At the highest level, evidence of sustainability of strategic partnerships will be required.

#### Implications for voluntary certification of principals of small schools / teaching principals

- 1 Professional learning and evidence of capacity to 'do' and 'achieve' for principals of small schools / teaching principals span each of the five areas of practice in the Australian Principal Standard.
- 2 While a significant minority of principals fall into the category under consideration, there are relatively few programs of professional learning that explicitly address their needs. Induction programs are unlikely to be sufficient.
- 3 While some principals may choose to remain in small schools or as teaching principals, it is likely that most will hold these positions for a relatively short period. Certification at the 'entry level' or for success in the early years of principalship is indicated.

#### Implications for voluntary certification of high-performing principals

- 1 It is likely that certification for high-performing principals will be at the highest level of a scheme for voluntary certification.
- 2 There are few programs of professional learning that are explicitly designed for high-performing principals. Most programs of professional learning are for those preparing for the principalship or for the early years of their appointment. Programs of professional learning for high-performing principals should prepare them for system leadership, in the broad contemporary sense (principals are also system leaders) as well as in the narrow traditional sense (system leaders are employed at levels above the school).
- 3 Voluntary certification for high-performing principals is likely to draw mainly from evidence of an outstanding capacity to 'do' and 'achieve'.

## Part 1: Introduction

Principals Australia Institute (PAI) intends to establish a voluntary certification program for principals. As part of this effort PAI commissioned Educational Transformations ('the consultant') to undertake a global scan to locate existing schemes, describe the programs and the associated mechanisms for certification, and identify critical issues in design and delivery. This report provides:

- 1 Introduction including definitions, distinctions and relationship to the Australian Professional Standard for Principals (Part 1)
- 2 Description of six programs for voluntary principal certification (Part 2)
- 3 Summary of the critical issues in design and delivery (Part 3)
- 4 Illustrations of how such programs would work in Australia (Part 4)
- 5 Summary and recommendations (Part 5)

### Definitions

For the purpose of this scan a distinction is made between certification that is awarded by a government or government agency, and certification that is awarded by an independent professional body. PAI defines certification as:

The formal procedure by which the achievement of principals / school leaders is assessed, verified and recognised in writing by issuing a certificate as to the attributes, characteristics, quality, qualification or status of individuals in accordance with profession-developed requirements and the Australian Principal Standard.

In this report the term 'professional certification' refers to an endorsement that an independent professional body gives to a member who has attained a specified set of performance standards defined by the profession. Certification by a professional body is usually:

- available to all members of the profession
- based on assessment of performance (not an academic qualification, although such qualifications may have a valuable role in preparing for certification), and
- portable and belonging to the person (not a job or position or classification specific to a school or employing authority)

Typically, professional standards are determined by the profession itself. Most usually, the profession builds its own infrastructure for defining standards, promotes development over the long term toward those standards, and provides recognition to those who reach them. Systems for professional standards and certification aim to provide a valuable service to employing authorities as well as to members of the profession. Also, they are usually complementary to the professional learning that employers and / or others provide.

### Australian Professional Standard for Principals

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) published the Australian Professional Standard for Principals in 2011 after extensive consultation with stakeholders and subsequent endorsement by all ministers. It can make a sound claim of support from related research. Its scope is described in the following terms:

The Standard is a public statement which sets out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work. It is represented as an integrated model that recognises three leadership requirements that a principal draws upon within five areas of professional practice. (AITSL 2011: 1).

The three leadership requirements are:

- vision and values
- knowledge and understanding
- personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills

The five areas of professional practice are:

- leading teaching and learning
- developing self and others

- leading improvement, innovation and change
- leading the management of the school
- engaging and working with the community

The key words in the above 'public statement' are 'what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work'. It is not sufficient for principals to have knowledge and understanding. They must be able to 'do' and 'achieve', so approaches to certification must seek evidence of the performance of principals. In its present form the Standard does not specify mechanisms for assessing performance against the Standard.

The Standard acknowledges that it must be accompanied by an 'effective continuing (program of) professional learning' (AITSL 2011: 9). This suggests that certification will need to be more than a 'one-off' exercise for participants and will need to be multi-staged.

### Certification not eligibility

For the purpose of the scan a distinction was made between certification awarded by a professional body and certification in the eligibility sense (Ingvarson et al 2006). In the United States, for instance, most state governments require aspiring school principals to gain a state licence or certificate to be eligible to apply for school principal positions. Much of the literature that was located in the scan was concerned with eligibility requirements along these lines. Details were obtained on two such programs and summaries can be made available on request.

Aspiring principals in Australia have to be eligible in the sense of being registered as teachers by the relevant statutory authority. However, the issue of eligibility as a criterion for appointing principals has been challenged (see for example Levine, 2005 and Davis et al, 2005 for the United States) primarily because it provides limited insight to aspirants' readiness or capacity for the role. A more comprehensive notion of certification is necessary to provide such insight.

PAI's conception of a certificate awarded by the profession that describes the fit between an individual and the endorsed Australian Principal Standard after their participation in a program of professional learning addresses not only issues about eligibility but also about readiness and capability. For readiness, PAI suggests three stages of certification: Stage 1: Aspiring to the principalship; Stage 2: Leading an / your organisation / within a context; and Stage 3: Leading the profession / beyond an / your organisation. For the latter, PAI lists first among the purposes of a scheme for voluntary certification: 'gain professional recognition for exemplary leadership practice'. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that this purpose is paramount; that is, the mechanism for certification must include the specification of what counts as evidence of 'exemplary leadership practice', how such evidence should be gathered, and who shall assess its worth.

## Part 2: Scan of national and international practice

The scan included a review of library data bases relevant to the field of education, especially leadership in education. It also involved an internet search of sources about voluntary principal certification. The scan was directed specifically at the requirements of the PAI brief: descriptions of voluntary principal certification schemes and their mechanisms for certification as well as identification of any critical issues in design and delivery.

The scan has identified five national and one state (US) voluntary principal certification programs:

- Principal Certification Program of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in the United States (<http://www.nbpts.org/principal-certification>)
- Michigan Association of School Administrators Voluntary Principals Certification Program (Courageous Journey) (<http://www.gomasa.org/administrator-certification>)
- National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) in England (<http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/npqh.htm>)
- Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) (<HTTP://www.sqh.ed.ac.uk/>)
- Principals Qualification Program (PQP) of the Ontario Principals Council ([http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/aq/Principals\\_Qualifications\\_Program.html](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/aq/Principals_Qualifications_Program.html))
- Executive Leadership Program (ELP) of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) (<http://det.wa.edu.au/professionallearning/detcms/portal/>)

Some of the material summarised in Part 2 is drawn verbatim from the online sources listed above.

The consultant was briefed by Professor Alma Harris on the NPQH in Wales, but it is compulsory rather than voluntary. Professor Harris is well-informed on the National Professional Qualification for Educational Leadership (NPQEL) in Malaysia through her work at the University of Malaya. She is best placed to provide detailed information on these programs. Attention was also given to programs in Singapore but these are either of the eligibility kind or are voluntary programs in professional learning offered by the Academy of Principals.

While there is no scheme of voluntary principal certification in New Zealand, the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand School Trustees Association invest heavily in principal development and appraisal. The Ministry of Education, through its Educational Leaders website, provides opportunities for principals to network with colleagues, interact with an array of material around school management, leading change, developing partnerships and other topics, all generally linked to the New Zealand Principals' Professional Standard (<http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz>).

## National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) (United States)

The NBPTS Principal Certification Program is a recent development in the United States. The NBPTS was established in the late 1980s for the purpose of certifying teachers against a national set of standards. In 2010, it ratified a set of core propositions and standards for accomplished educational leaders.

The NBPTS Accomplished Principal Standards breaks new ground in the US by creating national benchmarks for performance at the highest level for accomplished principals. First and foremost, the NBPTS standards seek to define and describe accomplished leadership for school principals. They may also be used by individuals to improve their practice, by organisations and institutions of higher education for principal preparation programs, and by school districts and states for professional development of current principals.

According to the NBPTS:

(T)he standards should be viewed as aspirational. To aspire is to be inspired, to stretch, and to dedicate oneself to reaching a distinguished goal. As the hallmark of accomplished principals across the country, these standards will elevate the work of all staff in the learning community and in the district and realise high performance for all students. (NBPTS 2013:1)

## Standards

### Standard I: Leadership for Results

Accomplished principals lead with a sense of urgency and achieve the highest results for all students and adults. They build organisational capacity by developing leadership in others. These dynamic, forward-thinking principals lead collaborative organisations that realise and sustain positive change that enhances teacher practice and improves student learning.

### Standard II: Vision and Mission

Accomplished principals lead and inspire the learning community to develop, articulate, and commit to a shared and compelling vision of the highest levels of student learning and adult instructional practice. These principals advance the mission through collaborative processes that focus and drive the organisation toward the vision.

### Standard III: Teaching and Learning

Accomplished principals ensure that teaching and learning are the primary focus of the organisation. As stewards of learning, these principals lead the implementation of a rigorous, relevant, and balanced curriculum. They work collaboratively to implement a common instructional framework that aligns curriculum with teaching, assessment, and learning, and provides a common language for instructional quality that guides teacher conversation, practice, observation, evaluation, and feedback. They know a full range of pedagogy and make certain that all adults have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to support student success.

### Standard IV: Knowledge of Students and Adults

Accomplished principals ensure that each student and adult in the learning community is known and valued. These principals develop systems so that individuals are supported socially, emotionally, and intellectually, in their development, learning, and achievement.

## **Standard V: Culture**

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture of high expectations, where actions support the common values and beliefs of the organisation. These principals build authentic, productive relationships that foster a collaborative spirit. They honour the culture of the students, adults, and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. They create and maintain a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective adult practice and student learning.

## **Standard VI: Strategic Management**

Accomplished principals skilfully lead the design, development, and implementation of strategic management systems and processes that actualise the vision and mission. These principals lead the monitoring and adaptation of systems and processes to ensure they are effective and efficient in support of a high-performing organisation focused on effective teaching and learning.

## **Standard VII: Advocacy**

Accomplished principals effectively advocate internally and externally to advance the organisation's vision and mission. These principals strategically seek, inform, and mobilise influential educational, political, and community leaders to advocate for all students and adults in the learning community.

## **Standard VIII: Ethics**

Accomplished principals are ethical. They consistently demonstrate a high degree of personal and professional ethics exemplified by integrity, justice, and equity. These principals establish a culture in which exemplary ethical behaviour is practised by all stakeholders.

## **Standard IX: Reflection and Growth**

Accomplished principals are humble lead learners who make their practice public and view their own learning as a foundational part of the work of school leadership. They are reflective practitioners who build on their strengths and identify areas for personal and professional growth. They adapt their paradigm and practice to result in improved student performance and enhanced teacher instruction through reflective practices.

## ***Developing a Certification Program***

Between 2010 and 2013 two cohorts of a total of 120 principals have been participating in field tests of the certification process. Over an eighteen-month period principals have kept a portfolio of evidence of their development against the Standards. In consultation with its research partner, the Southern Region Education Board, and an advisory group of exemplary principals, the NBPTS is currently finalising the details of what principals should keep in their portfolios.

As part of the NBPTS certification program participating principals are required to keep an assessment portfolio. The NBPTS Accomplished Principal assessment portfolio consists of five entries which are accumulated over the eighteen-month period.

Entry One Contextual Information and Strategic Plan: developing a strategic plan that inspires and nurtures a culture of high expectations where actions and results are aligned with vision and mission.

Entry Two Student Efficacy and Growth: promoting student growth and achievement through student connectivity and engagement, academic rigour, and student support systems.

Entry Three Teacher Efficacy and Practice: creating a culture of teacher support and efficacy that advances student growth and achievement.

Entry Four Parent and Community Engagement: engaging parents and community and building partnerships to support student growth and achievement.

Entry Five Principal's Leadership, Growth, and Reflection: reflecting for professional growth and effective leadership.

The form and content of the entries are decided by the principal. Data informing the entries are gleaned by the principals engaging in regular 360° reviews.

## 360° Review

The NBPTS 360° reviews are a professional feedback tool designed to help principals undertaking them develop and hone their professional skills. While a standard review is about the job someone is doing, an NBPTS 360° review is about the principals themselves making it both very personal and a very powerful formative assessment strategy.

In the NBPTS 360° review participating principals receive the combined perspective of students, teacher colleagues as well as parents and other community members about the fit between their practice and the above nine professional standards. Importantly, the reviews are conducted over a lengthy period and provide feedback through formative assessment, enabling the principal to review, refine and hone practice relevant to the standards. Entry Five comprises more of a summative perspective where the principal is able to provide data demonstrating an overall fit with the standards. Moreover, the review and the related NBPTS certification program is intended to combine the feedback the principals receive with their personal and professional goals to create a road map for professional learning and self-development.

## Assessment rubric

Data from each of the entries described above (except Entry 1) are being shaped into an assessment rubric that can ultimately be used to 'rate' principals' fit with the standard implied within the entry. Internal validity is being assured through consultations with both high-performing principals and academic experts. It is intended to develop a rating scale comprised of four levels for each entry which can be used psychometrically to establish the degree of fit.

## Cost

It is anticipated that the cost of voluntary certification will be about \$5,000.

## Michigan Association of School Administrators' Voluntary Principal Certification

While this report is concerned with national programs, one particular initiative at the state level in the United States attracted attention because it involved a professional association taking the initiative to develop a program that went beyond basic eligibility requirements. It was framed by standards developed by a licensing authority.

## ISSC Standards

Like most states Michigan has an eligibility requirement for appointment to the principalship which is addressed through completion of a university program that meets the needs of the six standards adopted by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLCC):

- Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
- Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
- Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organisation, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
- Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Currently, there are 20 approved courses, all university-based and conducted at master's level. The Office of Professional Preparation Services (OPPS) of the Michigan State Board of Education (MBE) has oversight of the approval process.

## Additional voluntary certification by a professional association

The Michigan Association of School Administrators' (MASA) Voluntary Principal Certification Program, entitled Courageous Journey, is the only state-approved voluntary principal and superintendent program in Michigan. It was developed by MASA in 2000 because it had reservations about the relevance of university programs, especially in terms of their capacity to develop practical leadership skills. Others have expressed similar reservations (see for example, Farkas et al. 2001.) .Since then it has been designed and operated by MASA to allow an opportunity for school administrators to achieve special endorsement on their basic state certificate.

### Program design

The Courageous Journey program is designed to extend the basic administrator certification obtained through the current 20 university masters programs approved for principal preparation and eligibility, and provides school leaders with an opportunity to distinguish themselves as exemplars of professional practice. It was conceived as a contribution to the ongoing professional development for the various levels of educational leadership in Michigan.

The program is aligned to the Inter-State School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards listed above. Participants are able to incorporate courseware from graduate programs and other professional development activities into their Courageous Journey plan and, in some cases, even use Courageous Journey experiences to meet requirements of advanced degree programs.

The purpose of the program is to provide principals and aspiring, new, and experienced superintendents with information, tools, strategies, and other resources to:

- Improve student outcomes;
- Work effectively with staff, school boards, and communities;
- Shape leading edge change; and
- Build highly adaptive learning organisations.

It organises best practice around what it describes as the 'seven points of learning':

- Leadership: Where it starts and how it grows
- Keeping it about Teaching and Learning
- Relationships and Communication: Connecting people, purpose and passion
- Manage to Lead: Systems stability
- Organisational Development: Forging a dynamic learning system
- Data Driven Planning and Decision Making: Why we do what we do
- Politics Everywhere: Influencing everything

These 'seven points of learning' are the key thematic organisers for the conduct of the program which is conducted over two years. In the first, participants are provided with a knowledge base through readings, case studies, DVD and other material related to the 'seven points of learning'. In the second year, participants develop seven 'personal growth plans', one for each 'point of learning', which are effectively action plans for improving leadership practice related to the 'point of learning'. These become the focus for collective interaction, refinement and improvement within teams of community learners.

The following are also features of the program:

- Joining cohorts of 12-20 colleagues
- Meeting 5 times per year for 1- or 2-day interactive sessions
- Engaging with one another and the Courageous Journey resource team and a group of three highly-experienced leaders who act as mentors
- Consulting individually with Courageous Journey faculty to identify and address personal leadership growth and systems change
- Interacting via secure website and blog around issues being addressed within the personal growth plans
- Applying transformational leadership theories and processes in school settings

In summary, participants work through the program as a community of learners who mentor and support one another. They share their personal expertise while learning from their colleagues and a wide range of resource people, learning experiences, and learning resources. In addition, Courageous Journey faculty offer individualised consultation and serve as facilitators to guide the assessment and action research processes through which participants will develop their individual plans.

The cohort meets four times per year. Two of these engagements are held in conjunction with MASA conferences. Additional sessions take place in the spring and summer. Between sessions, cohort members continue their learning using a secure on-line website and blog created specifically for this program and receive individualised support from Courageous Journey faculty.

Final assessment takes the form of an exit interview. The cost is \$1,400 per year for each of the two years. MASA covers the first \$600+ of program costs per person. It does this through the support of sponsors and grants along with an investment of staff time from the whole MASA team.

## National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) (England)

There are four national systems of education in the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales). The NPQH was developed for England and is described below. Information about the Scottish Qualification for Headship (NQH) follows. Each is voluntary as far as certification is concerned. As noted earlier, the NPQH is also offered in Wales where it is compulsory.

### National Standards

In England the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) has responsibility for leadership development and certification of middle-level leaders, aspiring and serving heads. In 2004 the NCSL revised the set of National Standards for Headteachers to focus on six key areas:

- Shaping the Future
- Leading Learning and Teaching
- Developing Self and Working with Others
- Managing the Organisation
- Securing Accountability
- Strengthening Community

Within each of these key areas, the knowledge requirements, professional qualities, or the skills, dispositions and personal capabilities headteachers bring to the role, and actions needed to achieve the core purpose are identified. While particular knowledge and professional qualities are assigned to one of the six key areas, nonetheless they are interdependent and many are applicable to all key areas. Typically, headteachers attach relative importance to the actions, and add others, as they define the strategic and operational priorities within their own diverse contexts.

However, notwithstanding the existence of the National Standards for Headteachers, the NPQH is not explicitly tied to them but rather is constructed around a NPQH Competency Framework. In the framework the competencies include a number of characteristics that relate to readiness for headship.

### The 'new' NPQH

The standards are being used by NCSL to guide leadership development, assessment and certification of aspiring headteachers through the NPQH. This now voluntary program takes between 6 and 18 months to complete. Prior to 2012 it had been a requirement for appointment as a principal. With it becoming increasingly difficult to attract people to headship positions, especially of remote schools, the qualification is now voluntary. Moreover, the burden of the associated 'paperwork' during that period added to its lack of appeal. In combination these factors have led to the qualification being offered in a revamped form – the 'new' NPQH.

Prospective applicants typically need to be sponsored by a supportive headteacher who can act as a mentor throughout the period of undertaking the qualification. The new NPQH now also comprises an admissions phase where applicants are scrutinised for suitability.

The National College, working with key stakeholders including existing headteachers, has revised the content of the new NPQH so that:

- All participants have to pass five modules of which three are compulsory and focus on leading pupil behaviour, developing leadership skills and managing teacher performance.
- Trainee headteachers are required to undertake a school-based and a placement-related assignment and spend more time on the placement, increasing from a minimum of five days to nine days.
- It places more emphasis on the role of an applicant's line manager in providing a reference and 'sponsoring' the applicant through the program on the assumption that the best way to spot future headteachers is to watch them working and handling a range of leadership issues.
- The new NPQH now links more closely to masters and other postgraduate qualifications and so allows trainee heads to move more seamlessly on to a higher degree if they wish.

The NPQH also has:

- An Induction Phase involving the planning of NPQH activities, selecting a placement school, engaging a coach, learning about the assessment program
- A Development Phase involving a number of integrated activities in a placement school and home school and the study of three compulsory modules and one elective module. Compulsory modules include Leading and Improving Teaching, Leading an Effective School, and Succeeding in Headship. Electives deal with issues such as Curriculum Development, Using Data to Improve Performance, and Developing Partnerships.

### Program Delivery

The delivery of the NPQH is outsourced to licensees who operate throughout England. Typically, they comprise partnership groups of excellent schools, sometimes strategically involved with local university education faculty. An example is the London Leadership Centre at the Institute of Education at the University of London, formerly led by Dame Patricia Collarbone, who was a consultant to AITSL in the preparation of the Australian Principal Standard in Australia.

Assessment procedures for the NPQH are a matter for the licensee offering the program. Licensees develop assessment procedures in line with the NPQH Competency Framework. A description of the approach in the Cabot Learning Federation (a licensee operating in the Bristol area) follows.

### Example: Final assessment process used by Cabot Learning Federation

Graduation from NPQH signifies a participant's ability to be an effective headteacher and a readiness to take up their first headship. The Cabot Learning Federation NPQH Final Assessment process has therefore been designed to provide opportunities for participants to demonstrate leadership in practice through the successful completion of school improvement work undertaken in their own and in other schools, as well as a capacity to perform well in presenting at interview and in making decisions in test environments.

The Final Assessment comprises three tasks:

- Task **1**: A task in the participant's school (or agreed school setting if not based in a school) in which one leads for an extended period on an actual school improvement priority.
- Task **2**: A task working in partnership with the participant's placement school in which one leads for a short period on an actual school improvement priority, working closely with placement school staff and school leaders. Participants also, over the whole period of the placement, have to develop a relationship with the placement school to enable them to extend their own learning about school leadership and to improve their leadership.
- Task **3**: This task comprises two elements in test environments. Firstly, participants undertake a case study assessment that covers leading school financial management and leading teacher appraisal. Participants need to demonstrate that they are able to manage these key aspects of a school that they may not have been able to take full leadership of while on NPQH and show that they are able to make appropriate decisions and justify their actions. Secondly, participants need to attend an interview and make a presentation to a panel and answer questions put by the panel on the content of the presentation and progress towards successful headship through NPQH. Participants need to be able to show that they have developed the competence to present in a credible way as a headteacher.

The school-based work undertaken in Tasks 1 and 2 needs to be achievable within a 12 month period, to relate to the schools' improvement priorities and must produce demonstrable positive impact and sustainable change.

For all aspects of the assessment, participants are expected to draw upon their practical experience, research and school evidence to inform their leadership decision-making. They are also expected to apply their learning from the essential and elective modules that they have completed and to draw upon knowledge and expertise in key national policy priorities, for example, leading and improving the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour, teacher appraisal and financial management.

### **NPQH competency framework**

NPQH is underpinned by a framework of 16 competencies. These competencies define the characteristics that are needed to be ready for headship. The competencies include characteristics that are considered necessary for headship, including knowledge, skills, motives and ability which are expressed in actions or behaviours:

- Knowledge is what a person knows about a particular area, for example, strategies for improving teaching and learning, ways of managing financial and human resources, and project management for planning and implementing change, performance management, and legal issues relating to employment or child protection.
- Skills are things a person knows how to do well to achieve a goal, for example, collecting and analysing data, monitoring progress, using new technologies, planning, communicating, getting community feedback and carrying out accurate self-assessment.
- Motives may be expressed in a person's values such as what he / she believes in or what he / she believes it is important to do (for example, commitment to the pursuit of excellence, working in a collaborative way, insisting on a safe and healthy working environment or through preferences (such as achievement or affiliation), for example, a person with a strong achievement motive will continuously want to achieve and make things better.
- Ability covers both a person's ability to think and act rationally and to use their emotional intelligence, for example, identifying trends in performance, using school self-review to make sound decisions, and the ability to build effective teams. Ability can be affected through the working of the emotions and changed through self-awareness and self-management of these.

The 16 competencies in the framework are grouped into three areas that reflect three key dimensions of highly effective leadership as listed in Table 1.

**Strategic leadership:** highly effective school leaders have a strong sense of direction: they have a vision for the school and a clear sense of how to achieve their vision. They can lead successfully in a highly autonomous and accountable system.

**Educational excellence:** highly effective school leaders have the leadership of teaching at the heart of their work: they can lead effectively in a self-improving system to deliver high-quality outcomes for all pupils and students.

**Operational management:** highly effective heads have very effective systems and processes that are consistently applied by all staff: they manage the school to ensure efficient and effective use of all resources and achieve a fit-for-purpose organisation.

### **Links between the modules, assessment and the competency framework**

Connections between the competency framework and the modules are self-evident. In the case of the Cabot Learning Federation assessment procedures, not all of the 16 competencies are directly tested in the final assessment process. There is, however, a focus on assessing the nine leadership competencies listed in Table 2.

Table 1: Areas in the NPQH competency framework

Educational excellence	Operational management	Delivering continuous improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self- awareness and self-management</li> <li>• Personal drive and accountability</li> <li>• Resilience and emotional maturity</li> <li>• Conceptual thinking</li> <li>• Future focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering continuous improvement</li> <li>• Modelling excellence in teaching</li> <li>• Learning focus</li> <li>• Partnership and collaboration</li> <li>• Organisational and community understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficient and effective</li> <li>• Efficient and effective</li> <li>• Relationship management</li> <li>• Holding others to account</li> <li>• Developing others</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact and Influence</li> </ul>		

Table 2: Competencies tested at Cabot Learning Federation Final Assessment

Strategic leadership	Personal drive and accountability
Strategic leadership	Resilience and emotional maturity
Strategic leadership	Impact and Influence
Educational excellence	Delivering continuous improvement
Educational excellence	Modelling excellence in teaching
Educational excellence	Learning focus
Educational excellence	Partnership and collaboration
Operational management	Efficient and effective
Operational management	Holding others to account

### Costs

- Participants in an English state-maintained school with 101 or over on roll: Scholarship from National College £1,500 and a School / Participant payment, including assessment, £875
- Participants in an English state-maintained school with 100 or under on roll: Scholarship from National College £2,434
- All other participants on full program: School / Participant payment £2,375 plus £1,500 for assessment
- Additional or free standing elective modules fee of £350 for each additional or free standing module

### Acceptance by Employers

The scan uncovered no quantified material about employer acceptance. However, anecdotal reports from well-placed sources in England point out that the appointment of headteachers is the responsibility of school governors, who are typically very interested in the NPQH as evidence of suitability regardless of its voluntary status.

### Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) (Scotland)

Scotland has a voluntary certificate for principals called the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH). However it is not purposefully aligned with the National Standard for Headship in Scotland.

### Scottish Standard for Headship

In late 2012 the General Teaching Council (GTC) for Scotland ratified a 'new' standard for headship in Scotland. The Standard analyses the role of the head teacher in three 'essential elements' and five 'professional actions'. The essential elements are:

- Strategic vision, values and aims,
- Knowledge and understanding, and
- Personal qualities and interpersonal skills.

Although the professional actions and the essential elements are listed and detailed separately they are considered to be fully interdependent.

The five areas of professional action are:

- Lead and manage learning and teaching
- Lead and develop people
- Lead change and improvement
- Use resources effectively
- Build community

The essential elements in the Standard are expressed through effective professional action including:

**Strategic vision, values and aims:** This element is concerned with the headteacher's professional values and commitment to children and young people, to equality of opportunity, to ethical practice, democratic values and to lifelong learning. Headteachers exemplify in their personal and professional life, and in the way they lead the learning community, the vision and ethos they seek to develop throughout the school.

**Vision and standards:** Headteachers lead in the creation of a shared strategic vision and aim for the school, which inspire and motivate children and young people, staff and all members of the school community and its partners and sets high standards for every learner.

**Integrity and ethical practice:** Headteachers behave with integrity and articulate and exemplify an ethical perspective in relation to their own and the school's practice and organisation.

**Democratic values:** Headteachers work with children and young people, staff, parents and others to promote participative citizenship, inclusion, enterprise, democratic values and a culture of respect within the school community and beyond.

**Learning for life:** Headteachers model their commitment to learning for life as the school's 'leading learner'.

**Knowledge and understanding:** Headteachers have an understanding of contemporary developments in teaching and learning, education, schools, schooling and society which are required by successful headteachers.

**Learning and teaching:** Headteachers apply an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of research in learning and teaching and its implications for improving practice, and need to be aware of quality assurance strategies.

**Education policy, schools and schooling:** Headteachers apply knowledge and critical understanding of contemporary developments in education policy, schools and schooling, including the vision of what integrated children and young people's services should offer.

**Social and environmental trends and developments:** Headteachers apply a knowledge and understanding of contemporary developments in society (including trends and changes in family patterns, work patterns, the media, leisure and politics), in the environment and in the wider global community.

**Leadership and management:** Headteachers apply a knowledge and understanding of leadership concepts and practice, and of strategic and operational management.

**Personal qualities and interpersonal skills:** Headteachers draw upon a range of personal qualities and interpersonal skills in leading effectively.

**Demonstrating self-awareness and inspiring and motivating others:** Headteachers regularly review their practice and implement change in their leadership and management approaches.

**Judging wisely and deciding appropriately:** Headteachers define problems clearly and take a positive solution-focused approach to their resolution. They know how and when to make decisions and use evidence and information to support and inform their judgements.

**Communicating effectively:** Headteachers relate well to children and young people. They are effective communicators within the school and the wider community and build effective relationships. They listen well, give clear expression to their ideas and feelings in person, give feedback well and can shape effective organisational communication. They are comfortable using a variety of modern media.

Showing political insight: Headteachers have a good understanding of the relationship between schools and society. They understand and take account of the political and social context of educational policy.

While the basic requirement for appointments to headship is full registration with GTC, the Scottish Executive Education Department coordinates the work of three consortia offering a voluntary program designed 'to ensure competence in all aspects of the standard of headship. Those who gain the qualification will have demonstrated both through critical reflection and through actions taken in workplace settings, the full range of leadership and management competencies of the effective head-teacher' (<http://www.sqh.ed.ac.uk/about>).

### Course Delivery

The program is delivered by three consortia, one for each of northern, eastern and western Scotland. Each consortium is a partnership of a higher education institution and one or more local education authorities and, in some cases, the Council of Independent Schools. The northern consortium is coordinated by the University of Aberdeen, the eastern by Moray House at the University of Edinburgh, and the western by the universities of Glasgow, Strathclyde and Sterling. The course is formally tied to the Standard for Headship whereby parts of it not only explain the meaning of the Standard but also provide insight to the skills regarding its application. Moreover, the Scottish Executive Education Department has published guidelines for the Continuing Professional Development for Education Leaders. As with the Standard for Headship, this is a competence-based framework indicating professional progression through four broad levels: project leadership, team leadership, school leadership, and strategic leadership. These guidelines have also informed the revised SQH.

The SQH comprises five courses. The first four each involve 200 'taught hours', directed study, work-based learning, individual study and preparation time for assessment. The fifth is a double course comprising 400 hours of taught hours, directed study, work-based learning, individual study and preparation time for assessment.

Course 1 comprises a focus on critical self-evaluation against the Standard and the articulation of a program of personal learning. Course 2 focuses on an analysis of the school and its capacity for change and improvement. It concludes with the development of a school improvement plan. Course 3 involves the study of an aspect of leadership within the participants' own schools. Course 4 entails analysis and evaluation of critical features of the change process. Course 5 involves implementing, monitoring and evaluating a school improvement plan. These courses are taught by Moray House staff and a group of part-time tutors selected on the basis of their practical experience with school leadership.

### Principals Qualification Program (PQP) (Ontario)

The Principals Qualification Program (PQP) is conducted by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. It is delivered in two parts and participants are required to be registered with the Ontario College of Teachers and hold either a master's degree or a doctorate. They are also required to have had at least five years of successful teaching as certified by an appropriate Supervisory Officer. Total fees for the course are approximately \$2,000.

The PQP courses begin online and require approximately 20 online hours. They are followed by 10 days in-class usually conducted over five weekends. The program is staffed by exemplary principals with a wide range of experience. The program seeks to provide participants with a balance of technical and adaptive skill development. Furthermore, it seeks to focus on both the cognitive and intra / interpersonal domains of professional development.

Each course comprises 125 hours. Twenty of these are in an online environment in which OISE's Blackboard platform enables discussion between participants and course instructors around current, authentic case studies that enable participants to develop their reflective practice. Seventy-five hours involve in-class time consisting of plenary speakers, large-group learning activities focused on interpersonal / intrapersonal professional development, small group discussion around current authentic issues in schools and opportunities to read, discuss and apply current knowledge on school principalship. The modules that shape these activities are:

- Setting Directions
- Building Relationships and Developing People
- Developing the Organisation
- Leading the Instructional Program
- Securing Accountability

There is a 60-hour Practicum component of the PQP comprising a practical leadership project.

The Professional Standards set by the Ontario College of Teachers include:

- Commitment to Students and Student Learning
- Professional Knowledge
- Professional Practice
- Leadership and Learning Communities
- Ongoing Professional Learning

While the PQP is not directly linked to these Standards, nor is its form and content specifically determined by them, it is nonetheless easy to see how the two intersect.

### ACEL Executive Leadership Program (ELP) (Australia)

While the ELP of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) is primarily directed at leaders in the Western Australian education system it is nevertheless available to all Australian principals. It is aligned to the Australian Principal Standard. Participation is voluntary. Participants may self-select although it is more usual for them to be proposed by a mentor. The course costs \$3,200.

The program is built around challenges about and opportunities for:

- Understanding and managing self
- Valuing others and maximising team participation
- Building learning environments that are adaptive to change
- Reinventing the strategic positioning of the organisation
- Acknowledging world citizenry
- Sense making futures

ELP is a six-day program spaced over six months. The first two days are 'live-in'. Participants engage with a set of leadership principles and reflect on their relevance to their workplaces. Each day comprises an intensive workshop involving reading, reflection on practice through a reflective journal, mentoring and group discussion. The modules of the program are:

- Understanding Self
- Leading beyond Self
- Developing and Leading High Performance Teams
- Achieving Personal Excellence
- Strategic Planning

There are other organisations offering programs that primarily have a state focus. These programs have the potential for further development to meet some of the requirements for voluntary certification. They include, but are not limited to, the Association of Independent Schools in New South Wales that offers a Flagship Program through its AIS Leadership Centre; the Bastow Institute of School Leadership serving government schools in Victoria; the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia that offers an Experienced Principals Program; and the cross-sectoral Queensland Education Leadership Institute (QELI) that offers a suite of programs, including its middle years program presented in partnership with the National College for School Leadership in England. Requirements for voluntary certification could be met with an explicit connection to the Australian Principal Standard and mechanisms that enable participants or graduates to demonstrate that they can 'do' and 'achieve'.

## Part 3: Critical issues in design and delivery

The Australian Principal Standard sets the benchmarks and identifies the processes for the professional growth and development of Australian principals. As has been already noted, a statement about professional standards is only useful when it is accompanied by a set of strategies or techniques for identifying levels of personal capability, plotted against the standard, as well as enabling the individual to improve those levels of capability. As the Australian Principal Standard makes clear, its usefulness is contingent upon it being seen as a 'framework for professional learning' around the 'evolution of

(professional) practices and capabilities' supported by a relevant program of professional development. As far as the PAI scheme for voluntary certification is concerned, mechanisms for gathering evidence and assessing whether this evidence demonstrates that the principal can 'do' and 'achieve' are critically important.

Five of the six voluntary certification programs described in Part 2 have at their heart a program of national certificated professional learning aligned to a national standard for school leaders (the sixth in Michigan has a state focus). Together they are helpful in suggesting ways of addressing critical issues about design and delivery of a national certification program to accompany the Australian Principal Standard. Part 3 provides a summary of these critical issues.

### Critical Issue 1: What level of acceptance by employers will a national certificate have?

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards reports that 69 percent of district leaders support national certification (NBPTS 2010). The NPQH was initially a requirement in England but is now voluntary. Completion is no longer required by employing authorities. It is not a requirement in Australia (ELP), Ontario or Scotland.

### Critical Issue 2: Who designs and certifies the program to support the national standard?

Typically, the identification and certification of professional standards is the responsibility of the profession itself. This is the case with NBPTS which is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organisation with a board of directors all of whom are teachers or teacher representatives. The profession's involvement in the design and delivery varies in the other five programs identified in the scan. In Ontario the program is designed and delivered in consultation with the College of Teachers. In England a government agency (NCSL) has overall responsibility although there is outsourcing in delivery. In Scotland it is a university qualification. For Australia, however, the Australian Principal Standard has been developed by a publicly-funded, publicly-owned company, the AITSL. There are no practising teachers on its board.

The Australian Principal Standard is still in the early stages of implementation. Apart from the Standard referring to 'an implementation strategy' it is as yet unclear about the extent of the profession's involvement in implementation. Implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers has in effect been delegated to the institutes of teaching in each of the states and territories. There are no such organisations specifically for principals. PAI wishes to take on this responsibility.

### Critical Issue 3: How will principal ownership be achieved?

Ownership of the Standard is a complex issue. As the Productivity Commission has noted: 'the extent to which the standard generates benefits will depend on its application (and this will) in part be driven by how well it is accepted by education authorities, school boards and councils and principals themselves' (Productivity Commission 2012: 225).

Ownership also needs to be considered from another perspective. The research literature is persuasive about professional learning needing to be 'owned' by participants if it is to be effective (see for example Brady 1995, Mathews et al 2008). Thus not only is principal ownership of the Standard itself vital but also is ownership of any accompanying certification program.

In some, but not all, of the national certification programs identified in the scan, principal ownership is primarily addressed within the professional learning program itself. The NBPTS program enables participants to tailor their portfolios to suit their own contexts and needs. The Scottish qualification contains a block of workplace learning that enables participants to personalise part of the program.

### Critical Issue 4: What counts as evidence that a Standard has been achieved, especially in respect to evidence that the principal can 'do' and 'achieve'?

In other places, Standards for the professional practice of principals have come in for criticism for not being 'anchored in a rigorous research or knowledge base, that they unduly reinforce the status quo, and that they lack sufficient specificity or operational guidance to help school leaders figure out what to do' (Achilles and Price 2001). To some extent, this applies in the Australian context. The Australian Principal Standard is not altogether clear about what a principal should know or do to meet the standard. It comprises more of a framework for knowledge development and for approaches to daily practice and thus provides limited 'specificity and operational guidance'. Arguably the Australian Standard resembles Hale and Moorman's (2003) conception of a Standard whereby 'the standards were never intended to be all-inclusive. Rather, they were intended as indicators of knowledge, dispositions and performances important to effective school leadership. They established a new vision for thinking in terms of standards-based policy and practice and made a new dimension of accountability possible. The standards confirmed the centrality of the principal's role in ensuring student achievement through an unwavering emphasis on leadership for student learning'.

This begs several questions: what does the principal, in a practical sense, need to 'know' and 'do' to meet the Standard? How does one know when some aspect of the Standard has been accomplished? What constitutes the evidence that it has been accomplished? How can any accomplishment, once demonstrated, then be linked to student learning outcomes?

Various schemes have been devised to address these issues. The National Association of Elementary School Principals, for instance, has developed Standards for what principals should 'know' and 'be able to do' including:

- Lead schools in a way that places student and adult learning at the centre.
- Set high expectations for the performance of all students and adults.
- Demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement of agreed upon academic standards.
- Create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals.
- Use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement.
- Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.

Furthermore, it goes on to provide a set of 'strategies for achieving' each standard. For example, the strategies for achieving standard one are:

- Create and foster a community of learners;
- Embody learner-centred leadership;
- Seek leadership contributions from multiple sources;
- Tie the daily operations of the schoolhouse to school and student learning goals.

Moreover, with Standards having been agreed upon, in the policy sense at least, further efforts have then been made to take the next step and delineate them and describe how to put them into action. Such efforts seek not only to describe what precisely a principal needs to know and do to satisfy the Standard but also to yield criteria for measuring levels of accomplishment. One tool for taking that next step is WestEd's (2003) 'Moving Leadership Standards into Everyday Work: Descriptions of Practice.' The guide lists ISLLC standards, defines them further, breaks them into component parts and describes practices that are directed toward, approach, meet, or exemplify each standard. For example, the second ISLLC Standard (Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional growth) is summarised and sectioned into four parts:

- 2.1 Develop School Culture and Ensure Equity;
- 2.2 Guide the Instruction Program;
- 2.3 Guide Professional Growth of Staff; and
- 2.4 Create and Utilise Accountability Systems.

Part 2.2 (as with the other three parts) is then given a full-page description and practices at each 'level' of mastery are described. For instance, practice that 'approaches the standard' includes an administrator who 'engages faculty in dialogue around the instructional program, with a focus on standards and on site data' and more, while practice that 'exemplifies the standard' is characterised by a school leader who 'uses her or his deep understanding of standards-based teaching and learning to provide ongoing, coherent guidance for implementation and continuous improvement of the school's instructional system' and so on.

In another example, the Educational Testing Services Framework for School Leaders: Linking the ISLLC Standards to Practice (Hessel and Holloway 2002) is designed:

- To serve as a foundation and to provide a common language for redefining and refocusing the role of the school leader as defined by the ISLLC Standards
- To articulate the role of the school leader as defined by the ISLLC Standards
- To serve as a standards-based approach to describe various school leaders' levels of performance.

Much like the WestEd guide, this framework goes about 'distilling the essential features of each Standard into four concise 'phrases' or 'components' and then describes four levels of performance: 'Rudimentary, Developing, Proficient, and Accomplished' for each component.

Several of the schemes considered thus far refer to a 'portfolio', the contents of which shall constitute the 'evidence'. It is apparent that developments are still rudimentary, as illustrated in the work of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. While the Australian Principal Standard is relatively parsimonious compared to international counterparts, the portfolio may become excessively large, involving far more time and energy of the principal than may be required. The consultant is mindful of the mountain of paperwork that was required for the NPQH, making the whole process virtually unmanageable for principals (headteachers) and assessors. It is not surprising that the scheme is no longer a requirement for appointment. It may be necessary to establish a set of 'core' components for the portfolio.

### Critical Issue 5: How can a relationship between what a principal 'knows' or can 'do' and student learning be demonstrated?

The strong positive correlation between quality leadership and improved student learning dates back at least 25 years (see for example Hallinger and Heck 1996). More recently, it has contributed to the formation of an educational policy about the need for professional standards for school principals (see for example Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom 2004). However, there are other such positive correlations such as the use of intervention strategies to teach students how to manage their own learning (Hattie, Biggs and Purdie 1996), the quality of the interpersonal relationships in the school (Lovat and Toomey 2009), cooperative learning practices (Slavin 1983) and many others. Indeed, as the school effectiveness literature demonstrates, there are a great number of good teaching and leadership practices that correlate positively with improvements in student learning. It would be counter-intuitive to think that good leadership plays an inordinately influential role. More likely, as Leithwood et al imply, it plays more of an enabling role and facilitates many factors to play a role in helping student learning to flourish:

Successful educational leaders develop their districts and schools as effective organisations that support and sustain the performance of administrators and teachers, as well as students. Specific practices typically associated with this set of basics include strengthening district and school cultures, modifying organisational structures and building collaborative processes. Such practices assume that the purpose behind the redesign of organisational cultures and structures is to facilitate the work of organisational members and that the malleability of structures should match the changing nature of the school's improvement agenda. (Leithwood et al 2004:9)

The task of certificating a principal's capacity to meet an articulated standard for leadership, therefore, involves less about demonstrating a causal link between leadership practice and more about ensuring that improved learning is actually occurring in the relevant principal's school regardless of the causes because:

The Standard has been developed to define the role of the principal and unify the profession nationally, to describe the professional practice of principals in a common language and to make explicit the role of quality school leadership in improving learning outcomes (AITSL 2011:1).

Thus, it is arguable that, whatever procedures PAI eventually adopts for certifying principals' capacity to meet the Australian Principal Standard, they do not need to establish links between what principals 'know' or 'do' and student learning. Rather they simply need to authenticate in some way that the over-riding purpose for all school and leadership activity is to enhance student learning, and that this has been achieved.

### Critical Issue 6: Who shall assess or verify the evidence?

A credible approach demands that there be independent assessment of evidence contained in portfolios. While panels of outstanding principals will be required, it is important that assessment for a particular principal must be independent to the extent that there is no prior association or conflict of interest. Expert panels may also be assembled from universities and other public or private providers. It may be that these people will only be expected to assess or verify a sample of the evidence contained in portfolios.

### Critical Issue 7: How will the scheme accommodate 'continuous' professional learning around the 'evolution of (professional) practices and capabilities'?

The Standard itself infers that addressing the integrated standards established for principals will require more or less 'continuous' professional learning for large numbers of principals. Assuming the principal certification program of the NBPTS goes in the same direction as its program for teachers, it is the sole case of the six identified in the scan to offer continuous learning to maintain ongoing certification.

## Critical Issue 8: What will be the content of professional learning?

A 2007 report by Linda Darling-Hammond and colleagues at Stanford University found that exemplary professional learning programs for principals have many common components, including 'a comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned to state and professional standards, in particular the NCATE / Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards'. In the Australian context, aligning professional learning offerings for principals with the Australian Principal Standard would be a very demanding exercise.

The content of programs in the six cases identified in the scan varies considerably. In the case of SQH the content is explicitly linked to the Scottish Standard. The NPQH's content is largely typical of academic leadership courses but also contains a mentoring program. The PQP has both cognitive and inter / intrapersonal professional development components.

## Critical Issue 9: Who will deliver the program?

In the Australian context, this is likely to be a contentious issue. Most jurisdictions have invested heavily in principal development. In New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania there are professional development initiatives that include programs for principals. In Victoria the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership offers more than 40 leadership modules. In Western Australia there is the Institute of Professional Learning which among other purposes caters specifically for principals. In Queensland there is the Queensland Education Leaders Institute (QELI). In the Northern Territory there is the Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development. Given that certification is, potentially at least, to be a national program, and given Australia's 'tyranny of distance', it most likely would be offered locally under licence in the same way that the NPQH is, with an online component.

## Critical Issue 10: Who pays?

Typically programs identified in the scan are offered on a user pays basis. However there are scholarship schemes in two of them: NBPTS and NPQH. With the former the scholarships are provided by NBPTS associated sponsors. With the latter they are government funded.

## Part 4: Illustrating the possibilities

Part 4 describes three domains for professional learning drawing on reports that Educational Transformations was commissioned to prepare. These are concerned with (1) competencies and capabilities for developing strategic partnerships (commissioned by Social Ventures Australia), (2) preparing and supporting principals of small schools / teaching principals (commissioned by AITSL), and (3) programs for high-performing principals (commissioned by AITSL). These illustrate how professional learning cuts across the different elements in the Australian Principal Standard and that tailored programs are required. Implications for voluntary certification are identified.

### Illustration 1: Competencies and capabilities for developing strategic partnerships

Educational Transformations was commissioned by Social Ventures Australia (SVA) to map the competencies and capabilities of school leaders in developing strategic partnerships. This project was concluded at about the same time as PAI commissioned Educational Transformations to undertake the scan of voluntary certification programs. The SVA project also included a scan of national and international programs. In both instances an important touchstone was the Australian Principal Standard. The findings in the SVA project (Educational Transformations 2013a) are pertinent to the current report and a summary is provided here with the approval of SVA. The mapping of competencies and capabilities is particularly helpful in addressing issues related to voluntary certification.

The SVA project was framed by three questions:

- 1 What is the documented evidence about the impact of these partnerships on student learning and participation in school?
- 2 What are the core competencies and capabilities of school leaders who develop strategic school partnerships?
- 3 What are the identified best practices that enable school leaders to develop these competencies?

Particular attention is given to the second of these questions.

## Related elements in the Australian Principal Standard

One of the five areas in the Standard is 'Engaging and working with the community'. To the extent that such practice may involve 'strategic school partnerships', the Standard provides a partial response to the second of the key questions guiding the project: 'What are the core competencies and capabilities of school leaders who develop strategic school partnerships?'

The Standard specified five areas of Professional Practice: (1) Leading teaching and learning; (2) Developing self and others; (3) Leading improvement, innovation and change; (4) Leading the management of the school; and (5) Engaging and working with the community. It is the fifth that is relevant:

Principals embrace inclusion and help build a culture of high expectations that takes account of the richness and diversity of the school's wider community and the education systems and sectors. They develop and maintain positive partnerships with students, families and carers, and all those associated with the school's broader community. They create an ethos of respect, taking account of the intellectual, spiritual, cultural, moral, social, health and wellbeing of students. They promote sound life-long learning from pre-school through to adult life. They recognise the multicultural nature of Australian people. They foster understanding and reconciliation with Indigenous cultures. They recognise and use the rich and diverse linguistic and cultural resources in the school community. They recognise and support the needs of students, families and carers from communities facing complex challenges. (AITSL 2011: 11)

The Standard adopted a template in which Professional Practice was specified in three domains designated as Plan and Act, Review and Respond. For the area of Engaging and Working with the Community these specifications were:

- Develop strategies to ensure educational opportunity including countering discrimination and the impact of disadvantage. Engage with families and carers, and partner, where appropriate, with community groups, agencies and individuals, businesses or other organisations to enhance and enrich the school and its value to the wider community. (Plan and Act)
- Develop and maintain structures for effective liaison and consultation. Make sure learning experiences for students are linked to the wider community and invite and facilitate the community's participation in student learning. Actively seek feedback from families and carers and the wider community about the quality of learning and their ambition for education. (Review)
- Create and maintain an effective partnership with families and carers to support and improve students' achievement and personal development. Contribute to the development of the education system by sharing effective practice, working in partnership with schools and others to develop integrated provision. Co-operate and work with relevant agencies to protect and support children and young people. (Respond) (Adapted with change of format only from AITSL 2011: 11)

It is striking that in every instance the Standard specifies actions and achievements. Each requires an underpinning body of knowledge and understanding but the focus is on what principals can do. The implication for a certification program is the need for a process in which those seeking certification can provide evidence that these actions have been undertaken and have proved effective.

The Standard described three Leadership Requirements that are intended to apply across each of the five areas of Professional Practice, namely, vision and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills. Each has particular meaning as far as the creation and maintenance of partnerships are concerned. For example, the principal must have a vision as to what form such partnerships should take and should place a high value on their formation. They must have knowledge and understanding of what such partnerships entail. The Standard is particularly explicit in connecting personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills to professional practice in engaging and working with the community, as set out below:

This requirement recognises the importance of emotional intelligence, empathy, resilience and personal wellbeing in the leadership and management of the school and its community. Principals regularly review their practice and implement change in their leadership and management approaches to suit the situation. They manage themselves well and use ethical practices and social skills to deal with conflict effectively. They are able to build trust across the school community and to create a positive learning atmosphere for students and staff and within the community in which they work.

- Principals are able to define challenges clearly and seek positive solutions, often in collaboration with others. They know when decisions are required and are able to use the available evidence and information to support, inform and communicate their decisions.

- Principals can communicate, negotiate, collaborate and advocate effectively and relate well to all in the school's community. They are good listeners and coaches, clear in responding and able to give and receive feedback.
- Principals take account of the social, political and local circumstances within which they work. They continuously improve their networking and influencing skills. (AITSL 2011: 7)

Judgements about the personal qualities will be highly subjective while those that call for the documentation of strategies will be less so, especially for those in the three bullet points.

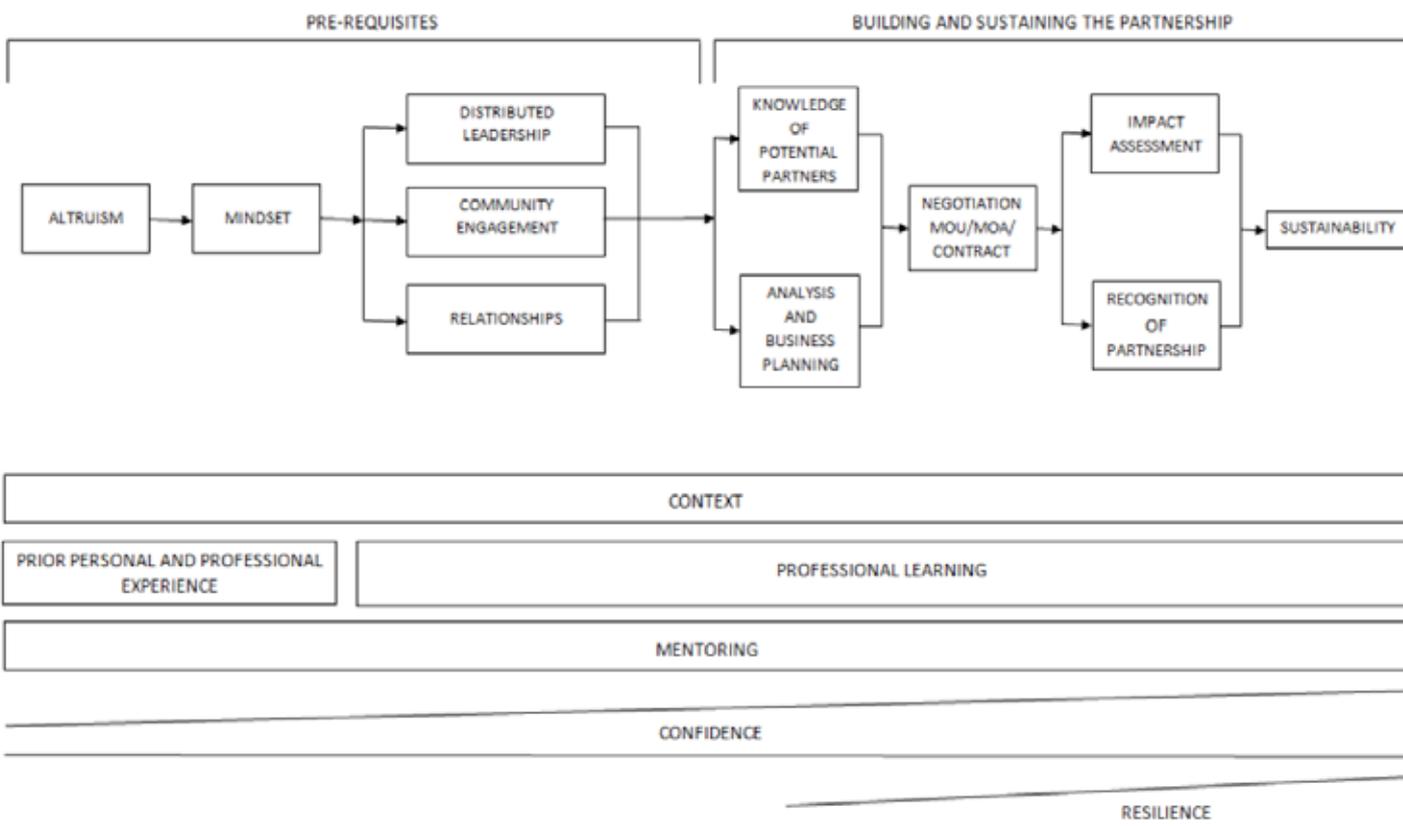
### Core competencies and capabilities

A mapping of core competencies and capabilities was derived from several sources: the Australian Principal Standard, a comprehensive national and international review of related policy and practice, and a synthesis of findings from interviews with school leaders who excel in creating and sustaining school partnerships or have deep knowledge of the work of such people. The mapping is contained in Figure 1 which should be read in the following manner, reading from the top.

There are certain pre-requisites. One is altruism, marked by a sense of care and compassion for all students and that the school has a special mission to ensure that all students in all settings can experience success. The second is a mindset that recognises that the school must be outward-facing and cannot meet the needs of all students in all settings, especially disadvantaged settings, by acting alone. The whole community should be involved, but this involvement will be focused on the next set of pre-requisites that should provide a foundation for creating and sustaining strategic partnerships.

Relationship-building, community engagement and distributed leadership are important in their own right but should be considered as pre-requisites for strategic partnerships. Some programs for partnerships limit their attention to community engagement, especially parent engagement. These are important and may be worthwhile ends in themselves, but they do not in and of themselves constitute partnerships except in the most general rather than strategic sense.

**Figure 1: Mapping of core competencies and capabilities for developing strategic partnerships**



*Relationships* are positioned at the base of this set of three because a capacity to establish strong relationships with many stakeholders is the lifeblood of partnership.

*Community engagement* is concerned with the way the school interacts with others in the community, both locally and more broadly across society. It is out of such engagement that partnerships can be forged. *Distributed leadership* across the school is important for many reasons but it is vital if school leaders are to act strategically. They will wish to maintain their roles as instructional leaders but considerable time and effort are required to establish partnerships, and there will be many leaders in the school whose roles in instructional leadership will be more substantial than those who are primarily concerned with forging strategic partnerships.

Moving further to the right across Figure 1 are the competencies and capabilities that must then be evident if strategic partnerships are to be created and sustained. These are built on or extend the pre-requisites. There must be a capacity for analysis of data to establish the needs and priorities of the school, providing the starting point for *business planning* that will help identify what the school can do by itself and what is required in partnership with others.

School leaders must have a *knowledge of potential partners* in different sectors (corporate, not-for-profit and philanthropic) who can be matched to the needs and priorities of the school that cannot be addressed internally. Business planning continues once potential partners have been identified and engagement commences.

School leaders are successful negotiators and a capacity for negotiation is required if the potential match is to be brought to fruition through an *MOU*, *MOA* or a *contract*. Once established there must be ongoing recognition of the partnership on the part of school leaders. Also ongoing is *impact assessment*, and the manner in which this will be conducted is normally included in the contract.

If all of these pre-requisites, competencies and capabilities are strong and aligned, there is a high probability of *sustainability* of the partnership.

The lower part of Figure 1 contains some important capacities that are fundamental to success. *Context* is important. The particular skill sets and strategies that shall be employed will vary from setting to setting, and school leaders must be adept at choosing those that will be most effective. The balance may change over time as well as from setting to setting. The box below Context deals with the development of the school leader. It is acknowledged that *personal and professional experience* is an important pre-requisite, especially in the development of a sense of altruism and the mindset. Personal experience may include life experience that may start in the early years, shaped by family and social circumstance. *Professional learning*, which may overlap personal and professional experience, includes learning about creating and sustaining strategic partnerships.

The last three elements at the bottom of Figure 1 may be considered together. There is evidence that more-or-less continuous *mentoring* is important, not only in developing the pre-requisites but especially in the creation of strategic partnerships. School leaders may lack *confidence* in the early years of their leadership experience or in the principalship and having a mentor who is skilled and successful is likely to have a major impact. The paucity of related professional learning means that mentoring is important. As conveyed in the configuration of this element, confidence is likely to grow with experience and the support that may accrue through professional learning and mentoring. The same configuration is shown for *resilience* that is shown in Figure 1 as being especially important as efforts are made to establish partnerships, with some of these efforts proving unsuccessful. Resilience is likely to grow stronger as successful experience is gained.

### **Best practice in building capacity**

An internet search suggests that there are relatively few programs of professional learning that go beyond the pre-requisites. This search included a scan of programs offered by the National College for School Leadership in England, a country where virtually all secondary schools have formed partnerships with not-for-profits or philanthropies over the last two decades.

Two examples of promising programs may be found in Australia. Tender Bridge (ACER), Schools Connect and ACER are working in partnership to present 'Building a Culture of Partnering Program', a two-day program offered over six weeks that deals with topics such as benefits of partnering, overcoming barriers, developing partnerships, evaluating partnerships, and resources. The program was offered for the first time in 2013.

The Bastow Institute for School Leadership offers programs in professional development for current and aspiring principals and other school leaders. It serves the government sector only. Programs relevant to this project are titled Leading Communities (60 hours of professional learning in reading, workshops, virtual seminars, and school-based project work);

Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities (over four months including pre- and post-course data collection, four face-to-face workshops, a small work-based project, and ongoing support from course facilitators as well as peer learning in an online discussion facility), and Leading and Sustaining Change in Your School (a more general program).

### Implications for voluntary certification

- 1 What leaders are able to 'do' and 'achieve' in respect to building and sustaining strategic partnerships span several areas in the Australian Principal Standard.
- 2 Professional learning or evidence of attainment in practice in one or even all of the pre-requisites illustrated in Figure 1 may be necessary but they are not sufficient.
- 3 Different levels of capacity are evident as far as professional learning is concerned and these may form part of a scheme for voluntary certification. For example, 'entry level' certification may involve professional learning and evidence of being able to 'do' and 'achieve' but these may be limited to the pre-requisites. Certification for early years in the principalship may involve these to the point that capacities and capabilities have been established. At the highest level, evidence of sustainability of strategic partnerships will be required.

### Illustration 2: Professional learning for leaders of small schools / teaching principals

Educational Transformations was commissioned by the AITSL to conduct a review of literature and environmental scan of programs for professional of leaders in small schools, with a particular focus on teaching principals (Educational Transformation 2013b). These leaders are found in significant numbers across the country. Especially noteworthy is the number of schools with 100 students or less: 1,683 of 5,351 (31.4 percent) in the government sector and 419 of 2,267 (18.5 percent) in the non-government sector. It may not be widely known that approximately one-third of government schools in Australia are small schools according to this indicator. Indeed the modal range is 36-100 students (928 schools). The differences between government and non-government sectors are also noteworthy, being 31.4 percent and 18.5 percent, respectively, with the modal range for non-government schools being 101-200 (23.3 percent). Self-evidently, larger numbers of small government schools are more likely to be found in remote and very remote settings where non-government schools may not be financially viable. A readily available account of the needs of principals in small schools, including case studies, is contained in Anderson, Davis, Douglas, Lloyd, Niven and Thiele (2010).

## Mapping the capacities of teaching principals against Australian Principal Standard

An outcome of the project was a mapping of the capacities demonstrated or required by teaching principals against the five areas in the Australian Principal Standard (AITSL 2011). A summary is contained in Table 1.

Table 1: Findings organised according to components of the Australian Principal Standard (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2011)

Professional Practice component of the Australian Standard	Ways in which Teaching Principals may be able to respond to the needs, requirements and developmental opportunities afforded by the Australian Principal Standard	Issues that impact Teaching Principals' capacities to respond to the needs, requirements and developmental opportunities afforded by the Australian Principal Standard
<p><b>1</b> Leading Teaching and Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching Principals generally have more direct influence on student learning.</li> <li>• Teaching Principals in small schools are more likely to have deep knowledge of individual learners and learners' families and be able to respond to individual and community learning needs in diverse and engaging ways.</li> <li>• Teaching Principals have strong connections with colleagues which can be valuable in developing a culture of collaboration to enhance student achievements.</li> <li>• Many Teaching Principals are participating in collaborative opportunities through networks of schools and school leaders which focus on Leading Teaching and Learning.</li> <li>• Teaching Principals in small communities are often influential and can therefore engage the broader school community in teaching and learning improvement initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching Principals have less time and resources to engage with colleagues to develop a learning-focused, feedback culture through practices such as peer observations. This is particularly the case in remote and very remote schools where opportunities to collaborate with others are hampered by distance.</li> <li>• Teaching Principals are often relatively new to leadership positions and therefore likely be devoting more time to administration and management tasks than more experienced Teaching Principals.</li> <li>• Teaching Principals need to give significant time and attention to relationships with the community. This is more significant when, as is often the case, teaching principals are new to their communities and school success depends on the way they are able to respond to the unique context of their school community.</li> </ul>

## 2 Developing Self and Others

- Teaching Principals, particularly those early in their careers, have significant opportunities to develop competency in a broad range of educational leadership areas. They are closely involved in every aspect of school operation, management and improvement.
- Teaching Principals have close working relationships with all staff in their schools and are well positioned to influence the development of their colleagues.
- Teaching Principals and the staff in their schools are often in isolated contexts which hamper opportunities to participate in professional learning, including mentoring and networking activities.
- Teaching Principals and the staff in their schools are often working in complex communities and it may be challenging to find and access external professional learning opportunities that meet their unique needs.
- Teaching Principals and the staff in their schools have unique roles, particularly in regard to relationships with the community. Their personal and professional lives are closely linked as they are embedded in small and often isolated communities. Greater consideration of personal and professional well-being and health are often necessary.

## 3 Leading improvement, innovation and change

- Teaching Principals have strong relationships with school communities which affords them opportunity to engage all stakeholders in strategies for improvement, innovation and change.
- Teaching Principals are closely connected to all aspects of school operation and student learning so are well positioned to develop effective strategies for school improvement, innovation and change and to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives.
- The dual responsibilities of Teaching Principals impacts on the amount of time and attention they are able to give to leading school-wide improvement, innovation and change.
- Being most common in small schools with few staff, Teaching Principals have limited human resources to support the implementation of initiatives.
- Teaching Principals are often new to leadership roles and therefore their understanding of school effectiveness research, change management literature and possible innovative opportunities that could be pursued may be limited.

4 Leading the management of the school

- Teaching Principals are usually involved with all school operations and management processes and are well positioned to plan, act, review, and respond in order to provide effective and safe learning environments whilst managing resources appropriately.
- Teaching Principals have close working relationships with the school community and therefore have opportunity to collaborate with stakeholders to support effective school management.

- Teaching Principals have limited time and attention to devote to leading the management of the school.
- Teaching Principals in small communities may find that significant amounts of community input are required in leading the management of the school, and therefore processes of consultation and collaboration will consume considerable time and attention.
- Teaching Principals have fewer options for delegation of management responsibilities and often are personally responsible for a very broad range of daily management tasks (for example, answering phones and unlocking toilets) as well as accountability, resource and learning management tasks.

5 Engaging and working with the community

- Teaching Principals are closely connected with their communities and have unique opportunities to understand diversity, foster positive partnerships with all stakeholders, influence the broader community and build a culture of high expectations.

- Teaching Principals are often new to their roles and to the school communities. Developing an understanding of the unique context and developing effective relationships in the community are time-consuming and often challenging.
- Teaching Principals have relatively high turn-over rates which limits the strength and sustainability of relationships they can establish with communities.
- Teaching Principals are often embedded professionally and personally within their communities and the way they professionally engage and work with their communities may impact broadly on their personal lives.

## Critical issues

The review of literature considered research, policy and practice in Australia, with national developments (small schools, Indigenous communities) as well as in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and Northern Territory. International developments in Scotland, England, Ireland, Finland, New Zealand, United States and Canada were also reviewed. Four critical issues were identified:

- 1 The findings in national and international research on teaching principals are consistent on a number of matters including the so-called dual load, early career appointments for many, the challenges of working in rural or remote settings and so on. On the other hand, there is evidence that it is as much a dual opportunity as it is a dual load because of the way the teaching principal is embedded in the processes of learning and can directly influence the direction of the school to a greater extent than in much larger schools in more challenging urban settings.
- 2 Despite the claim that is sometimes made that small schools perform at least as well if not better than larger schools, the fact remains that teaching principals are mostly found in rural, remote or very remote settings, and there is consistent evidence that students in these settings perform on average at a lower level than their counterparts in urban areas.
- 3 These disparities may be more a function of rurality and remoteness than they are of size and the fact that many principals also teach. It is striking that research in Canada and the United States focuses on these functions (rurality and remoteness) and ways in which associated issues should be addressed.
- 4 The dysfunctions of the role may be addressed as much by a policy response as by different approaches to preparation and ongoing professional learning. Without minimising the importance of these professional issues, a high priority should be given to networking arrangements for the support of the teaching principal in routine but necessary management tasks.

## Programs for the professional learning of teaching principals

An aim of the project was to identify materials to support teaching principals and this was done mainly through a scan of programs of preparation and professional learning for teaching principals in Australia. There are relatively few programs of this kind, with most appointees or potential appointees expected to participate in generic programs for all principals or aspiring principals. Noteworthy developments in relation to teaching principals, or with implications for teaching principals, were summarised. Three critical issues were identified:

- 1 Induction programs are a necessary feature of preparation programs for those seeking or have been appointed to schools where the principal is required to teach. Currently they are relatively short, typically one to three days, and those for teaching principals are often embedded in programs for all principals. Many induction programs are characterised by a preoccupation with routine matters of policy and procedure, sometimes complemented by a written manual or guide. These matters should be addressed in any preparation program; the key issue is the extent to which current induction prepares participants for settings of rurality and remoteness and whether in situ programs prior to or after appointment through coaching and / or mentoring are as substantial as the evidence suggests they should be.
- 2 The search for materials related to preparation and ongoing professional learning for teaching principals was guided in part by a review of award and non-award programs offered by universities, the various jurisdictions and professional associations. The scene is characterised by relatively few offerings and most have been delivered for a short period of time only, depending on funding. Materials come mainly in the form of packages of readings and, to a lesser extent, online resources, which have a limited lifespan and limited accessibility. The issues are how these can be made available to a wider clientele and whether a sharper focus on the role of the teaching principal is possible. For the nation as a whole, existing programs tend to assume that leadership is generic, and that tailoring assignments or projects to the particular needs of the teaching principal is an individual matter. Long-standing or emerging programs for those leading schools where most students are Indigenous have high potential for the development of resources.
- 3 While there are some promising developments in respect to online delivery, most programs are conducted along traditional face-to-face lines that tend to be relatively expensive and typically of short duration. They certainly reach only a small minority of teaching principals. The issue is the extent to which scarce resources should be allocated to the development of sophisticated state-of-the-art digital /online materials. Many universities around the world are now reaching hundreds of thousands of students in this mode and, while some resources are of the standard 'talking head' variety, there is scope in supporting teaching principals to do much better, perhaps in partnership with some of the leading global providers.

## Exemplar

Short programs of preparation and for professional learning for principals of small, rural and remote government schools have been offered in Queensland for several years under the title 'Take the Lead'. Noteworthy are the recent programs that were delivered by the Queensland Education Leadership Institute (QELI).

The 2011 program was evaluated by the Tender Bridge team at the Australian Council for Educational Research (Michelle Anderson and Emma Curtin) (Tender Bridge 2011) and it is clear that it was highly successful. Pre- and post-online surveys were conducted, with response rates of 99 percent and 96 percent, respectively. The following are illustrative of the positive responses:

- All participants indicated a level of satisfaction with the overall coherence of the residential curriculum (76 percent very satisfied; 24 percent satisfied).
- 95 percent were either very satisfied or satisfied (82 percent and 13 percent respectively) with the relevance of the program to leading a small school.
- All participants were very satisfied or satisfied (89 percent and 11 percent respectively) with the inclusion of 'special' visiting presenters.
- 99 percent were very satisfied or satisfied (80 percent and 19 percent respectively) with the quality of the facilitation.

There were several components in the program. Participants were invited to rate the helpfulness of each on a four-point scale and the percentages of Cohort 3 giving a 'major helpfulness' rating are indicated in parentheses: residential (two days) (73 percent), follow-up online discussions (24 percent), one-on-one support by a mentor (22 percent), onsite visit(s) to a small rural and / or remote school (78 percent), principals of small, rural or remote schools sharing their experiences (89 percent). Program handouts / readings were given a 'major helpfulness rating' by 56 percent of Cohort 3 participants (a relevant number given the interest of the current project in materials related to the work of teaching principals).

It is noteworthy that about 75 percent of participants in the 2011 program received subsequent appointments to the principalship.

As indicated above, participants found the two-day residential and opportunities to visit schools or hear from principals of small schools to be particularly helpful. Mentoring is normally considered an important strategy and the relatively low level of helpfulness of mentor support was the subject of deeper consideration and separate interviews.

## Implications for voluntary certification

- 1 Professional learning and evidence of capacity to 'do' and 'achieve' for principals of small schools / teaching principals span each of the five areas of practice in the Australian Principal Standard.
- 2 While a significant minority of principals fall in the category under consideration, there are relatively few programs of professional learning that explicitly address their needs. Induction programs are unlikely to be sufficient.
- 3 While some principals may choose to remain in small schools or as teaching principals, it is likely that most will hold these positions for a relatively short period. Certification at the 'entry level' or for success in the early years of principalship is indicated.

## Illustration 3: Professional learning for high-performing principals

Educational Transformations was commissioned by AITSL in 2011 to report on the need, structure and content of a national flagship professional learning program for high-performing principals (Educational Transformations 2011). The report included a mapping of the Australian Principal Standard against the content of the *Leading Australia's Schools* program that concluded in 2011 (this mapping is not pertinent to the current project for PAI).

A review of research and related programs for high-performing principals in different countries found that relatively few were exclusively and explicitly for high-performing principals. Evaluations were mostly opinion surveys of participants, including independent reviews by external agencies.

A total of 54 interviews were conducted to form a view on the need for, structure and content of a national program. Of these 33 were conducted with those associated with AITSL (4), authorities in the public sector (8), professional associations (5), non-government sector (5), leadership institutes (3), *Leading Australia's Schools* (6 including director, facilitator and four past participants), and other (2). Interviewees were invited to nominate high-performing principals whose views could be sought,

especially in respect to professional learning programs they would value personally. A further 21 interviews were conducted with these nominees. All states and territories and all sectors and levels of education were represented in these interviews.

## Findings and recommendations

An objective of the project was to determine the need for a national flagship professional learning program for high performing principals through consultation with relevant stakeholders. A total of 33 interviews were conducted (the first set described above) and the question of need was posed in 28 of these. An unambiguously affirmative response was given in 19 of 28 (68%). A qualified affirmative response was given by 6 (21%) giving a generally affirming response by 89% of those to whom the question was posed. An unambiguously negative response was given by 3 of 28 (11%). There were no differences apparent in the views of interviewees from different sectors.

High-performing principals identified by stakeholders (the second set described above) were invited to express a view on the matter and 20 of 21 were in favour (95%). They referred to the need for continuous learning in a time of rapid change and the importance of a national perspective. They noted the need for such a program to be flexible to meet different needs and acknowledged that determining the criteria for being a high performing principal was an issue.

The following recommendations were made in the report of the project:

- 1 A national professional learning program should be offered in a manner that does not replicate or compete with other programs and which focuses on building a capacity for system leadership in the contemporary use of this term.
- 2 A national professional learning program should draw on the expertise and accomplishments of high-performing principals to address particular issues of national significance.
- 3 A national professional learning program should include partnerships between providers of existing programs where a national benefit is evident.
- 4 A national professional learning program will include approaches that should be a feature of all programs of professional learning for principals including 360° feedback, coaching and mentoring. Such a program should map well against theories of adult learning and leadership development.
- 5 As far as possible a national professional learning program should be cross-sectoral and provide opportunities for participants to engage with high-performing leaders in fields other than education.
- 6 While the concept of an ongoing national professional learning program should apply, there should be different projects reflecting the features described in other recommendations, with some of short duration and others longer.
- 7 There is a role for AITSL in delivering a national professional learning program.
- 8 There should be a research and evaluation component in each of the programs and projects arising from these recommendations.

## Implications for voluntary certification

- 1 It is likely that certification for high-performing principals will be at the highest level of a scheme for voluntary certification.
- 2 There are few programs of professional learning that are explicitly designed for high-performing principals. Most programs of professional learning are for those preparing for the principalship or for the early years of their appointment. Programs of professional learning for high-performing principals should prepare them for system leadership, in the narrow traditional and broader contemporary senses.
- 3 Voluntary certification for high-performing principals is likely to draw mainly from evidence of an outstanding capacity to 'do' and 'achieve'.

## Part 5: Recommendations

- 1 The Australian Principal Standard stands up to critical scrutiny in international comparisons and should be used as the touchstone for the development of a voluntary accreditation scheme.
- 2 The Principals Certification Program of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards that replicates approaches to development and validation adopted over the years for teacher certification should be recognised by PAI as a model for development of an Australian scheme.
- 3 Evidence of capacity to 'do' and 'achieve' should be an essential element of a voluntary certification scheme.
- 4 There are several programs of professional learning offered by associations and institutions in Australia that have potential for inclusion in a scheme for voluntary certification, and these organisations should be encouraged to tailor them to specifications in the Australian Principal Standard and develop approaches to portfolios that contain evidence of a capacity to 'do' and 'achieve'.
- 5 Reflecting experience in the NPQH in England, excessive paperwork and complex portfolios should be avoided in favour of a 'decathlon' approach illustrated in the paper prepared by Dr Lawrence Ingvarson. The aim is to provide a valid sample of evidence that demonstrates capacity to 'do' and 'achieve' rather than require demonstration of capacity for every element in the Australian Principal Standard.
- 6 Analysis of requirements for leadership suggests that different levels of voluntary certification are desirable and feasible, and PAI should lead the design and delivery of a multi-level scheme.
- 7 Contexts vary for principals and aspiring principals, as illustrated in expectations for principals of small schools / teaching principals. Context should be taken into account in assembling a portfolio but this should not detract from the primacy of the Australian Principal Standard.

## Acknowledgements

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Educational Transformations welcomed the commission from PAI to conduct the project.

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