

***TOWARDS BEST PRACTICE***

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN  
NEW ZEALAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS.**

*A Research Project  
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## INTRODUCTION

Professional Development is now a requirement for all teachers. This study explores the professional development experiences of teachers within the New Zealand State Primary school context. It will explore professional development as it is described by participating teachers in interviews, observed in practice from field observations in a school setting, outlined in documentation and as discussed in a range of the relevant literature. This study arose from my experiences as a primary school teacher and from an interest in how professional development was occurring, in a New Zealand environment that increasingly sought accountability from its teachers, while placing them in a context of on-going change.

A number of focus questions guided the study, including: What is viewed as legitimate professional development? Who takes responsibility for this? Do teachers and management share similar perspectives on professional development? Is a link shown between professional development programmes and pupils' learning? What relationship exists between the Performance Management System in schools and professional development paths?

Furthermore, a study such as this would expect to encounter beliefs regarding what the core roles of a teacher are, what makes an effective teacher with regard to such roles, and any beliefs revealing an appreciation of how adults learn and models of professional development that reflect such beliefs. It would also expect to identify disagreement and conflict in the state of flux existing in New Zealand Education since 1990.

Key stakeholders in the Education sector espouse their views regarding professional development regularly, both in publications circulated to schools (e.g. the Ministry of Education's "Curriculum Update," the NZEI's "RouRou" and the Teacher Registration Board's "Te Rehita") and in the public media. The Minister of Education recently identified teachers as the key to better learning and stated that high-quality professional development for teachers was an essential part of the Government's vision, ("The Press" September 1 2000). The New Zealand Principals' Federation president was quoted in the media deploring the lack of professional development funding for principals and warning of the consequences for effective leadership, ("The Press" July 1 2000), while the

national secretary for the primary teachers' union (NZEI) outlined members' wishes for more quality professional development. She went on to note that professional development needed to be continuous throughout the year, in response to a call for it to be occurring in school holiday periods. She concluded that the current investment in quality teacher development was inadequate, ("The Press" March 13 2000).

The immediate context within which this study occurs is the period of change experienced by the Education sector since the late 1980's. The model of "Tomorrow's Schools" outlined self-managing school communities operating in partnership with the Government and its agencies. This model created change whose impact is still felt today.

This model required a group of mostly elected parents, acting in a part-time, voluntary capacity to govern their communities' primary schools. Working in tandem with the principal, whose role became increasingly crucial, these boards were responsible for everything that occurred at their school from property maintenance to staff development programmes.

As many lacked a background in the Education sector, or any experience as teachers within such school organisations, and compounded by the part-time nature of their positions, they have had to rely heavily on the principal as their CEO and key adviser to the board. Modifications have been made to this model over the past decade, however the core thrust of the reforms, self-managing school communities driving and shaping their institution on a daily basis, remains.

During the early 1990's a major review of the curriculum taught in New Zealand schools occurred. The resulting New Zealand Curriculum Framework, with its Essential Learning Areas and Essential Learning Skills, created a huge demand for the upskilling of staff in this new curriculum. Since 1992 most schools have undertaken a contract to introduce at least one of the new curricula into their school annually, with the process still underway in 2000. This has resulted in the domination of Staff Development programmes by curriculum development.

In addition to these core curriculum changes (e.g. English, Science, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education) there has been the introduction of a new curriculum area, Technology, and related developments in Assessment, Special Education and Information and Communication Technology. During 1999 a review of the National Administration Guidelines for schools has seen an emphasis placed on what has been termed "Numeracy and Literacy" and upon the achievement of Maori pupils.

Another key reform in the Education sector, that is directly relevant to the topic of professional development, is in the area of Performance Management Systems. A model was introduced during the 1990's that required appraisal systems to be established so as to ensure competent teaching was occurring. This process was linked to progress along the salary scales for teachers. In 1998 a set of Professional Standards were introduced to guide the direction of the appraisal processes and to assist in identifying professional development priorities. The Professional Standards are designed to indicate the key knowledge, skills and attitudes that all teachers are expected to demonstrate. These Professional Standards remain in an interim form, due to pending developments, with the intended establishment of a new professional body for the Education sector. This new body may play an important role in the on-going development of these standards.

This report defines "*Professional Development*" as any action which addresses the key tasks of the teacher's job description (which will now include reference to the interim professional standards), any action that assists the classroom teacher in delivering effective classroom programmes and any action which adds to their knowledge and skill base in education. "Staff Development" programmes are seen as being in the same areas but are the result of management (including government agencies) identifying an organisation need, as opposed to an individual teacher's specific professional development path.

Finally, the issue of professional development in primary schools continues to raise other questions such as: What makes an effective teacher? What is required to develop the skills of an effective teacher? Can these skills be developed in a systematic way over the length of a career? Should the approach to professional development be centrally controlled and structured or

more laissez faire? The responses of the teachers interviewed in this study in particular offer an insight into the grass roots experience of professional development in New Zealand primary schools.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

*"There can be no real development in schools unless teachers continually monitor and improve their classroom practice," (Jones, Clark et al 1989).*

A wide range of literature is pertinent to both the context and issues surrounding professional development in schools. The field has been extensively studied in a number of Western countries, including Australia, Canada, Great Britain and New Zealand (e.g. Bell and Gilbert 1996, Jones, Clark et al 1989 and Tripp 1993). These publications seek to outline the properties of effective professional development models and recommend changes to both process and practice within the Education sectors concerned.

In preparing this research study, two publications provided guidance in the methodology used. Patton (1982) offered insight into interviewing styles and gave thoughtful guidance regarding how to gain the most from the rich source of information available in an interview. Reed (1992) presented frameworks for the study of organisations and how to analyse their functioning (e.g. Social Systems and Negotiated Orders frameworks).

With reference to Reed's work, with regard to primary school organisations and their operation of professional development programmes, it is evident that these learning organisations fit comfortably within the Social Systems framework. They exist as goal directed units with clear relationships and roles that at times give rise to conflict and change. These organisations also reflect a Negotiated Order framework with relationships being continually worked at, adapted and made fluid with regard to elements of dominance or control. Yet, an ongoing structure remains within which change is tolerated.

The relationships that form the organisation, especially with respect to professional development goals and processes, are various and often competing.

These include employers' needs, represented at times by the Principal, the Board of Trustees and the Government, the community represented by parents, pupils and vested interest groups within it, and the wider community lobbies including employer groups (e.g. School Trustees Association), employee groups (e.g. NZEI and Principals' Federation) and others, (e.g. training provider groups, business interest groups). Such a range of relationships creates a complex framework within which professional development paths are formed.

Two other works contributed to the structure of this study. Brennan (1988), offered a valuable view on continuing professional education in a wide range of fields including education. He challenges current thinking about what might be classified as valid professional development, discussing issues of change and learning within an Australian context, challenging the narrowness of the view that continuing professional education is only what the existing programmes or traditions have provided. He argues for a greater "fit" between the individual and professional development paths. Moreover he recognises the value of learning from and through professional practice.

Cervero (1989) also outlines competing perspectives on continuing professional development, exploring a range of viewpoints which provide a context for thinking about the purposes of continuing professional education. He argues that it is important to consider the roles that professions have in society and how continuing professional development should relate back to these roles or functions. A final point that Cervero makes of relevance to the current field of teachers' professional development in New Zealand, relates to the providers of such programmes, and the increasingly fragmented nature of the market place which is developing. He asks whether the providers should be competing with each other, or whether collaboration is more desirable. Which approach will lead to a higher quality of learning for teachers and pupils?

The literature which focuses on professional development for teachers in schools raises a number of issues for consideration. How do adults learn? What rationale underpins professional development programmes? What model has the Ministry of Education used in designing its professional development programmes for schools? What is the role of social interaction in the learning of teachers in professional development programmes? Do professional



development programmes in their content recognise the various roles or functions of a teacher? What role does self-reflection play in professional development? How are programmes adapted to "best fit" individuals? How is ownership of professional development achieved? Are there critical moments in an individual's career that impact on their professional development? What is the impact of change on the success of professional development?

Bell and Gilbert (1996) report their research on teacher development in Science Education in New Zealand. Their resulting model for teacher development includes three components, social development, personal development and professional development. They also recognised a variety of knowledge bases from which teachers draw their knowledge for teaching, (e.g. curriculum knowledge, knowledge of the characteristics of the learner and general pedagogical knowledge). Bell and Gilbert noted that teachers developed their own agendas for professional development, which may be in addition to the agenda the government has for teacher development.

According to Bell and Gilbert's research, various challenges and perspectives surround teacher development programmes. Teachers sought to provide better learning for all in their classes, parents sought better prospects for their child in the future as adults and the government sought improved skill bases nationally and as a result better economic performance as a nation. Much government funding was perceived as being directed at meeting the aims of government policy in isolation from individual teacher's professional development needs. The main argument of Bell and Gilbert's work was that teaching is a social activity governed by rules and norms, and that teachers' professional development is also a social activity, where social interactions are a key part of the learning process. Finally, they argued that professional development must recognise and address the various roles of a teacher.

Jones, Clark et al (1989) identified self-evaluation as an integral part of the process of teacher development. They recognised education as an ongoing process and noted that primary teachers are involved in professional development from their first day of contact with a class. They saw a challenge to professional development being the ability of schools and individual teachers

to assimilate the changes imposed externally from government while maintaining the integrity of their own professional development paths.

Jones, Clark et al outlined the existing range of both formal and informal activities which constitute professional development for teachers in British primary schools, (e.g. discussions in the staffroom, advisers' visits, reading professional journals). They discussed a range of activities that contribute to teachers' development both on and off site (e.g. job shadowing, staff development interviews, using teachers as trainers in their schools) revealing the depth of options available.

One of their key contributions to this subject is in their recognition of self-evaluation, exploring how teachers could set about evaluating their practice. They emphasised the need to be habitually reflecting on teaching practice and considering the education experienced by the pupils under their care. Of relevance to success here was the issue of change. They argued that individuals cannot be made to change but must make the change willingly. For them, teachers can only develop and realise professional potential as a result of their personal understanding and acceptance of the relevance and importance of the change introduced. This change had to make sense to the individual in terms of their professional experience and thinking. Finally, they recognised the part that value judgements play in this field and the disagreement that exists regarding what is an effective teacher.

Tripp (1993) discusses the critical incident method for better understanding teacher development and experiences. His interest is in teachers' biographies and their ability to uncover professionally formative experiences, ones which play a significant part in constructing current strategies. Tripp argues that this approach acknowledges the past and its presence in one form or another in current practice and growth. The relevance of exploring critical incidents is not in their account of personal history but in their value to understanding improved teaching practice in the present. Tripp also warns of the need to recognise the social and material conditions of one's professional existence, or the total context within which a teacher operates, including values and traditions.

Gerald Grace (1995) writes about similar perspectives from his research in the United Kingdom. Grace refers to the political and relationship contexts within which educational management and leadership operates. He reviews change in school leadership and management arising out of reforms led by New Right ideologies in the 1980s and 1990s. His research highlights contradictions which arise between the establishment of local boards of governors, self-managing schools and expectations of accountability to local communities, and the demands of national curriculum, national assessment regimes and the use of hierarchical league tables of results to rank schools.

Grace considers the source and nature of education management to be linked to historical relationships and the immediate social and political context within which a school must exist. His research uncovers issues relating to the democratic culture of schooling. It highlights contradictions, arising from the U.K. reforms of the late Twentieth Century, between notions of professional school leadership and notions of democratic accountability. He argues that the outcome of these reforms, which view schools like commercial enterprises, with boards as directors, principals as chief executives and parents (or pupils) as consumers, is one of market accountability and not democratic accountability. The goal of a democratic community based on trust, shared values and citizenship is undermined by the more competitive market model. Such a view raises questions in the remarkably similar New Zealand context, for professional development decision-making. What rationale or driving force will underpin decision-making?

A final reference, which adds to the consideration of issues surrounding professional development for primary teachers, is from Church (1999), who writes that learning occurs in individuals. *"The changes that we refer to as learning are changes which are occurring at the level of the individual. Any procedure which we use to study learning must, therefore, be a procedure which is capable of tracking changes in the motivation, competency and attitudes of individual learners."* While this view may seem at odds with the perspectives of Bell and Gilbert, Tripp or Grace, it is of value because it reiterates the need to consider the learning path and goals of the individual within the organisation's setting. It may be assumed that a staff development programme has been successful in implementing new assessment procedures

across a school, but have individual teachers developed their knowledge, skills and performance in assessing students?

The relevance of Church's view is in comparing the focus of staff development programmes (driven largely by government policy changes in the 1990's) with the professional development needs of individual teachers. How have schools responded to the myriad of demands? How have we assured ourselves that individual needs are being met and that learning at the individual level is occurring? How can we better go down the professional development path for all teachers?

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## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted between February and October 2000 and involved staff from within the New Zealand State Primary school sector. I used the school that I was currently teaching at as a source for some documentation, for observations of Staff Development sessions and for the source of teachers to interview. Being a large primary school it offered a range of interactions and a depth to the functioning of its systems. Qualitative research methods were seen as most appropriate and were employed in the study. They were chosen to allow a closer drawing out of individuals' experiences within the context of New Zealand primary schools, and in so doing gain insight into the functioning of individual school organisations.

Qualitative methods enabled me to gain an empathetic feel for the experiences described by the participants. A series of interviews were held with teachers and management representatives, a variety of documents were searched from a range of sources (e.g. Ministry of Education, the Teacher Registration Board, individual school documentation such as Staff Development policy and Strategic Plan). Field notes were taken from a series of Staff Development sessions held on site in a primary school setting.

An open sharing of experiences and opinions in the interviews was encouraged by the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. Participation was voluntary and some benefit may have been perceived in participating, as the research

findings could provide a vehicle to improve any perceived shortcomings in the professional development experiences of the participants. Copies of the research report were to be made available to both individual participants and organisations, including government agencies such as the Teacher Registration Board.

Because I was a colleague of the participants there may have been some effect upon the responses made. Firstly, this relationship may have encouraged trust and therefore a full sharing of information. On the other hand it may have presented a barrier for disclosure of negative experiences. Finally I had to be vigilant in analysing the data so that my own perspective on shared experiences with the participants did not interfere with what the data itself is saying. An awareness of such issues has provided a check in the analysis of the findings of this research.

Observations were made at six Staff Development sessions on site in a primary school setting. All observations lasted 60-90 minutes and occurred in the staffroom of the school between the hours of 3.15 and 5 pm. Four of the sessions were on the topic of Assessment in Schools, while the other two were focused on the Special Education 2000 government initiative

Both topics involved an outside "expert" (e.g. Advisory Service, Special Education Service) presenting information to the staff group, in co-operation with designated staff members who were to act as on-site facilitators for their respective Staff Development programme. These facilitators were teachers who had undergone some prior training (e.g. full-day seminar) and may have shown an interest in the area or were on a relevant in-school curriculum committee.

Interviews were conducted with ten classroom teachers, two non-teaching principals and two parent members of a Board of Trustees. The teacher interviews involved seventeen questions while the management interviews involved twelve. Some questions were identical in both sets of interviews however there were different questions for each group, reflecting their experiences and areas of concern (refer Appendices). Interviews occurred both on site outside of regular class hours and in the homes of the participants.

Documents were either available publicly to the writer (e.g. Ministry of Education publications) or copies were obtained from the organisation concerned and were reviewed off site (e.g. a school Staff Development policy). No confidential documents were used in this study.

The field observations were undertaken during February and March 2000 while the interview data was collected between April and August 2000. Documents were searched in an ongoing manner during this period. The information from these sources was analysed and reviewed during August to September 2000.

The research method used was chosen so as to provide a sensitive, accurate method for gathering information regarding the research questions, which in turn provided a valuable snapshot of the experiences of primary school teachers, within the recent Education environment in which professional development programmes have occurred in New Zealand.

Having myself held positions of leadership within primary schools for nearly eight years, and currently being in the role of Deputy Principal in a large primary school, the issues surrounding professional development have been directly experienced by me. In undertaking my own professional development, I have experienced as other teachers have, the demands, frustrations and successes that make up a development path.

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## **FINDINGS**

*"My colleagues have had the biggest impact on me."*

This section of the report is divided into the following parts:

1. Demographics
2. Document Search
3. Field Study
4. Interview data

## 1. Demographics of Participants

Teachers:	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Years Teaching</i>	<i>Ethnic Origin</i>	<i>Highest Qualification</i>
1	female	20 yrs+	Pakeha	M.A.
2	female	2-3 yrs	Pakeha	B.Ed. (part)
3	female	2-3 yrs	Pakeha	B.Ed.
4	female	20 yrs	Maori	H.Dip. Tchg
5	female	1 yr	Pakeha	Dip. Tchg
6	male	4 yrs	Pakeha	B.Ed., PGD
7	male	3-4 yrs	Pakeha	B.Ed.
8	female	10 yrs	Pakeha	B.Ed. (part)
9	female	9 yrs	Pakeha	M.Ed.
10	male	12 yrs	Pakeha	M.Ed.

This selection of participants reflects the primary teacher population in some key aspects. Firstly it is clearly female dominant, largely pakeha in ethnic origin (reflecting more the South Island population) and highly variable in the length of teaching service. Secondly, this information reveals levels of qualifications which exceed traditional perceptions of primary teachers as being non-degree holders (often in comparison to their secondary colleagues) and may reveal an expansion of the qualification base of the profession.

<i>Management Role</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Years Experience</i>	<i>Ethnic Origin</i>
BOT member	female	6 yrs	Pakeha
BOT member	female	5 yrs	Pakeha
Principal	female	9 yrs	Pakeha
Principal	female	4 yrs	Pakeha

Again, this group mirrors accurately many aspects of their cohort, being female and pakeha dominant. However, there is a significant proportion of males in management positions within the primary school sector, despite the fact that the teaching population is 80% female.

## 2. Document Search

*"I can't recall it, but I would've looked at it at some stage."*

In-school documentation provides the closest link to the decision-making process that occurs affecting teachers' professional development. A school's Development Plan, Staff Development Policy, Appraisal Policy and individual Job Descriptions all impact upon professional development for teachers. A clear, consistent path should exist across these documents, to signal the school's approach to professional development. Those examples searched for in this study (refer Appendices) did not show a consistent pathway in reference to professional development, how it would occur, how its success would be assessed, what criteria would be used and who would be responsible for ensuring that this occurred.

The example of an Appraisal Policy reviewed in this study acknowledged the role of high teaching performance in pupil achievement and the part that appraisal should play in supporting teachers. It noted that teachers would be appraised against the "Professional Standards". One of the goals of this policy was to provide training and support opportunities for staff. Details of how this would occur were not located in the policy.

The Ministry of Education provides direction to schools and teachers through the Education Gazette, the Curriculum Update publication and through specialised documents such as the Interim Professional Standards publication of 1998. The professional standards themselves (now closely linked to Job Descriptions and Performance Appraisal) direct teachers to "*demonstrate a commitment to their own on-going learning,*" and to "*continually evaluate and reflect on their teaching and act on areas where it can be improved.*"

The ministry is currently producing a new guide for schools entitled "Making Changes." It intends to assist schools in planning and setting up professional development programmes, helping to create cultures of professional development within a school. In partnership with this, the ministry signalled (Curriculum Update, November 1999) changes to professional development funding for schools. Their aim is to give teachers and schools greater control over selecting the kinds of professional development they need, highlighting the crucial role of government funding in professional development delivery. More funds for professional development will go directly to schools' operations grants, with resulting reductions in school support services and ministry



contracts. According to the ministry, *"Evidence from recent research shows that schools are more likely to develop a culture of professional development that leads to improved learning outcomes for students when they make their own decisions on professional development."* (Curriculum Update, November 1999).

The Teacher Registration Board, in its 1997 publication "A Satisfactory Teacher," outlined the requirement for teachers to be involved in professional development and drew attention to the link that should exist between the appraisal process and professional development needs. The board views individual professional development activities as *"those activities over and beyond professional practice that directly lead to improved learning for students or indirectly lead to improved learning by assisting other teachers."* ("A Satisfactory Teacher", p 15) The board is reviewing its guidelines on professional development and has signalled (in direct correspondence, July 2000) that the pending establishment of an Education Council may see this new body taking over a leadership role in professional development.

### **3. Field Study**

*"I don't learn that way."*

All sessions observed began with a lecture style component, where the majority of the staff group were passive participants. This involved the use of an overhead projector, whiteboard and handouts of information. This period lasted 10-30 minutes. A group co-operative task and an individual task would generally follow, with some sharing or feedback from groups (e.g. groups of three teachers define what they perceive as "special needs pupils" then the groups share their answers before comparing them with an official definition from a ministry document). Some comment or question time occurred towards the end of a session but it was less regular than the initial pattern of sessions.

Staff members questioned after each session commented on the repetitive nature of the sessions and a lack of ownership of the direction followed. Nearly all those questioned failed to identify immediate benefits to their classroom programmes although most acknowledged the likelihood of some future relevance. Some commented on their dissatisfaction with a style of presentation that had become all too familiar after seven to eight years of Curriculum

Development programmes. The information presented in lecture format could have been read later by individuals.

These staff development sessions raised questions regarding how learning in adults is perceived to occur and what method of learning or imparting information may be most appropriate, especially at the end of a teaching day. In an education environment that recognises different learning styles in its pupils it seemed to lack variety and creativity in its presentation to, and involvement of, staff. Finally, it was not made apparent how the effectiveness of this staff training programme would be measured (although an end product was targeted, such as a school statement on assessment or a series of Maths assessment tools) nor was it communicated to staff what would indicate successful participation by an individual.

#### **4. Interview Data**

*"Do we all need to be experts in everything?"*

*"It would be nice to be asked what we want."*

*"People need to get outside of their comfort zones."*

*"We could make much more use of the existing skills of staff"*

*"Most of them have something interesting. You take bits from it depending on where you're at, what class you teach."*

These teachers' comments highlight the diversity of responses gained in the interview setting.

Generally, when defining professional development, teachers referred to the development of existing skills and exposure to new ideas. Nearly all looked for personal development of some description from professional development opportunities. When asked to isolate the main aim of any professional activity, they reiterated their earlier definitions and went on to speak of *"providing realistic hands-on ideas," "expose teachers to new ideas and motivation," "meet the professional needs of the teacher," "have an individual focus, be needs based," "benefit classes," and "enlighten teachers, keep them on track."* A desire to be "current" was clearly expressed by all the classroom teachers and seemed to reflect a fear that either others were doing the job better or that there were better methods of teaching being developed.

The teachers interviewed felt the core aim of professional development activities should be realistic, relevant to classes, build skills in a manner that was focused upon the teacher's needs, enlighten and keep teachers on track. Above all else teachers wanted to be exposed to skills and practices that improved their functioning in the different roles that they performed.

The management views of professional development were different to those of classroom teachers in that they each defined professional development in a broader sense, as opposed to the more skill specific definitions of their staff. For example, principals and boards of trustee members referred to *"lifelong learning opportunities," "developing a balanced person," "shared experiences, a collegial aspect," "developing in a broad sense, not just in the curriculum," "need to be open-minded when considering activities" and "involve both what the individual does and what the school provides"*. For management, professional development should make changes, be a part of what creates an effective school, encourage individual reflection and bring about change.

Teachers' recent experiences of professional development were dominated by their school's staff development programme, largely in Curriculum Development. The more individualised experiences were usually initiated by teachers themselves, with some input from colleagues, referring a course to them. Teachers who were beginning their careers seemed to be directed by their senior staff towards courses more often than those who had more years of teaching service. Experiences quoted that were outside formal programmes, but still recognised as professional development, included contacts with people in organisations outside of education, visiting facilities that may be a resource for classroom programmes (e.g. a museum, nature reserve) ideas sharing with colleagues, visits to other schools, sport or cultural experiences outside the school setting (e.g. coaching a hockey team) and lastly experiences as a parent were mentioned by three teachers as being directly relevant to their work.

Often teachers did not feel consulted regarding professional development activities within their school, although some recognised that it would be difficult to please everyone and most acknowledged that channels of communication existed to express their views. Moreover they were aware of the drive for curriculum reform from Government, and its impact on school

decisions. Others felt they could initiate directions if they had strong enough views or motivation, *"I haven't put my hand up so I can't really criticise."* Overall seven of the ten teachers responded negatively to the degree of consultation, (*"especially on how the staff development sessions are done"*). On the other hand, management believed that the structures for consultation were in place (e.g. strategic planning process, syndicate meetings) and were not aware of widespread dissatisfaction. Again there was a realisation that not all needs would be satisfied. *"It's about striking a balance in decision-making."*

When asked to identify any "critical moment" in their teaching which may have impacted on their professional development or career path, a very wide variety of examples were recalled. Lots of *"little moments"* that were observed and combined into values or practice were evident. The role of influential colleagues, especially early in a career, was recognised (with ideas borrowed still being utilised many years later). Some formal experiences or courses fitted into this category, including particular university courses that opened up new appreciation of learning or learning problems for students. An experience with a high needs pupil in your class was quoted by two teachers as an experience which taught them a great deal about teaching and classroom management, put them into direct contact with support agencies for the first time and left them with skills that were transferable to future classroom learning situations.

Another example shared by three teachers was the experience of holding a specific role within their school for a period of time (e.g. leading an area of the curriculum, being a tutor teacher) where the challenges and responsibilities faced for the first time allowed them to develop new skills, especially with regard to the day to day functions of a teacher (methods of motivating students, managing behaviour, locating resources, assessing learning). Only a few had thought of these crucial experiences as professional development, yet on reflection all recognised the long term impact that such experiences had.

Management's views were generally positive. Principals felt that school-wide systems were in place for professional development and were functioning, noting that success required a degree of motivation from the individual. Board members also believed that systems were in place to facilitate individual and staff needs, and were unaware of any dissatisfaction. One felt unsure whether

this was a board issue and whether they would hear of individual dissatisfaction.

When considering whether professional development experiences had a positive impact on their teaching or upon pupils' learning, nearly all teachers had a positive perspective. Teachers felt that they took something from every experience and sought to bring that into the classroom. *"It helps me re-evaluate what I'm doing." "It depends on the relevance of it, Social Studies for my New Entrants wasn't, but ICT was." "Timing affects this. It varies from year to year too." "It's hard to be sure. I've tried things, but I'm not sure of the impact." "Yes. I always take something back to class."* Management had a more cautious response referring to some examples of success, but acknowledging that it depended upon individuals' skills and ability to adapt. Generally they believed that positive impact resulted.

Barriers identified preventing professional development included time, costs, the demands of the job and family life, the timing of courses or staff programmes, finding something of direct relevance to your current class, past experiences which impacted negatively on your desire to attend a certain institution (provider) or type of course. Repetition of the same style of learning activities in staff development sessions dulled the interest and attention levels in staff development programmes. As one teacher noted, *"We know so much about learning styles for kids and try to reflect this in our programmes, but we are treated as pretty much all the same in many training sessions."*

When asked to consider the long term impact of their pre-service training on their later teaching and approach to professional development, a wide range of views emerged. A sample of teachers' comments reflect their perspectives on professional development as a whole, *"I think people teach the way they were taught." "I think I learned most out on the job." "It helped shape my view of teaching, especially out in schools on section." "It was important, especially in what I see as the roles of a teacher." "My first two years of teaching were the most important." "Hands on experience is best." "My experiences as a parent have been invaluable." "College had an unrealistic view of the sort of school you may well end up in." "The impact of changing schools and levels has been the greatest."*

In commenting on areas of dissatisfaction with current programmes, teachers felt overloaded at times with too many staff development foci, particularly attempting to do more than one major focus in one year. Such actions may have served the organisation's need to cover certain issues, but may not be effective for individual development. A common complaint was the timing of sessions, particularly at staff meetings directly at the end of a teaching day, where new ideas may be introduced or input required from staff to formulate school-wide policies or programmes. The repetitive style of many curriculum development programmes was a source of dissatisfaction as was the dominance of government agendas over other needs.

Finally, management's comments regarding modifications to the professional development process included, *"We're going to have to make better use of holiday breaks somehow."* *"There's a real need to make time to plan the professional development process more carefully."* *"The Government needs to fund more training for Board of Trustees on school needs."* *"We need to clarify the governance and management roles in this area."* Such comments offer an insight into where improvements in meeting individual needs may be found (e.g. more thorough, strategic planning, a more active role for Government and effective use of "down time" in a school's year).

The issues raised in the interviews are explored in the following two sections of this report.

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## DISCUSSION

What do teachers believe about professional development? What does this data tell us and what is missing? Perhaps one quote represents many others, *"I enjoy it most when I choose what I'm going to do, and how."*

Issues that arose from the interviews included:

- the differences that were perceived between professional development and staff development
- the impact of compulsion in comparison to choice

- whether a "one size fits all approach" is best
- whether differing generational perspectives were being recognised
- the common wants or needs of teachers
- the variety of experiences identified as professional development
- the impact of "broken service" on teaching skills
- how any link was perceived between pupils' learning and individual's professional development
- the nature of any gap existing between management's and teachers' views

Clearly a difference was perceived between what was viewed as professional development and what existed as staff development, with conflict arising at times between competing goals or limited resources, especially time and energy. Issues surrounding ownership and compulsion with regard to staff development programmes also arose. Comments reflected a view that individuals' needs were coming a poor second.

Differing views represented different experiences, partly linked to a "generation effect". A Beginning Teacher (in the first two years of teaching service) had a different outlook compared to an experienced teacher, in terms of their training background and personal development goals, alongside little experience from which to compare professional development programmes or decision-making processes. Teachers with broken service (e.g. for maternity leave, career change) presented yet another set of needs in terms of professional development, which could often place them "out of time" with their colleagues (e.g. with regard to Curriculum Development programmes in the 1990s). School size was also referred to as a factor in the range of opportunities available for professional development, in terms of access to positions of responsibility, funding for professional development and flexibility in staff development programmes. All these variations underline the view that a "one size fits all" approach ignores the diversity of the teaching population, even within one school.

The remainder of this section discusses the information presented in documentation reviews, field observations and interviews.

## DOCUMENTATION

A school's documentation may better succeed in communicating its intentions to teachers and others if it reshapes its Staff Development policy as a Professional Development policy, which includes a staff development component. A school will benefit from including a professional development section in the strategic planning format, which looks ahead over a period of years, outlining the direction of professional development within that period, ensuring that its budget process openly allocates an annual professional development amount and makes reference in all its relevant documentation to the external factors that direct its decisions (e.g. Ministry of Education and Teacher Registration Board policies). Changes signalled by the ministry in 1999, to its funding of professional development, will require schools to be more organised with forward planning, ensuring links with the appraisal process and individual teacher's goals. A clear path must exist for the professional development of teachers from policy to practice if best use is to be made of the opportunity for schools to direct professional development decisions more themselves.

## FIELD OBSERVATIONS

The sessions observed demonstrated two topics being undertaken concurrently, Assessment and Special Education. Staff responses to this were largely negative. Most stated a preference for one major focus, commenting that more than one main focus was increasing the chance for overload and decreasing the likelihood of effective development in those target areas, by individual staff.

The sessions observed followed a format well tried over the past decade and one that needs some modification if it is to hold teachers' attention. The staff development programme does not appear in this instance to recognise the adult as an independent learner bringing a variety of experience and knowledge to the task. The design of such programmes raises questions about how learning in the classroom is going to be positively affected by this form of professional development, and reminds us of the need to clarify how the effectiveness of training will be measured. Clearly the demand on management within schools, to maintain staff development programmes that meet a variety of external requirements, (e.g. from government in curriculum development and assessment systems), places huge practical loads on a staff development programme, which may be busy enough with meeting its local goals. The solution may lie in



doing less, but doing it thoroughly, over a longer period of time. The co-operation of government in this approach would be essential.

## INTERVIEWS

The responses of teachers revealed both what they were focused on, what they viewed as directly relevant to their core roles, particularly as classroom teachers, and the complexity of designing successful professional development programmes to meet a diverse range of needs.

Teachers spoke with the most enthusiasm and detail about those experiences which reflected and impacted upon their current classroom experiences. The day to day issues of learning programme functioning were seen as more important than some "bigger" issues. For instance, teachers had little knowledge of current or recent Government policy in the area of professional development. The Government's focus on issues such as curriculum change and assessment were noted by some, however, only two expressed an awareness of recent policy directions. Capturing and utilising a strong teacher interest in those areas that directly impact on their classroom experiences, must be a high priority for those who design and deliver professional development programmes.

Management had similar responses. Both principals seemed aware of a *"state of flux"* with a change of government in 1999, however Board of Trustee members were not aware of current directions, although they could refer to areas that they had worked on related to government requirements (such as EEO or Strategic Planning initiatives).

With regard to in-school policy and practice, all teachers knew that the relevant policies existed, recalled either going over them as a staff or knowing where a copy could be located (*"can't recall it, I know it's on file somewhere"*), but all were hazy on the content of policies, such as the Staff Development policy. When asked about the link between their school's performance management system and their professional development, eight of the ten teachers mostly felt that a weak link existed. Comments by teachers included, *"it happens in theory, but not in reality. The old system was better."* *"It needs to be more systematic, to recognise on-going needs, be better monitored."* *"No. The appraisal system seems separate to what goes on with*

*professional development.*" Those teachers who expressed a positive response noted, *"Yes. In discussions with the principal we look ahead to next year and any needs I might have."* *"In the past no, but I've seen some improvement recently."*

In rating a selection of professional development activities, teachers in the study revealed preferences for "In-service courses off site" and "informal opportunities, such as observing or talking with colleagues" over and above others, such as "professional reading" or "staff development programmes on site." However, first preferences were widespread, again revealing the importance of recognising individual needs when planning teacher's development and not only a "profession" or a "staff."

Grace (1995) proposes that "education management is about achieving organisational effectiveness, once the major purposes of the organisation have been agreed by its members." Such a proposal raises what may be at the core of any contradiction between individual's professional development needs and the staff development programme of a school. Meeting the challenge of both individual and the organisation's goals. Common needs will exist, but responses in this study show a perception that individual needs have come a distant second to the externally imposed agenda of whole-staff curriculum development programmes. Who should take responsibility for overcoming this is arguable.

The operational conditions of the school are clearly going to impact on the effectiveness of professional development. For example, a school needing to meet the timeline for introducing new Government policy will have little scope to fund individual's needs, or to easily accommodate them in the staff development process. This raises the question as to whether all staff need to go through all aspects of the staff development programme, or whether greater recognition of individual strengths and the use of specialisation on staff could be increased.

How is success measured? When a staff development or individual professional development experience occurs what systems are required to measure success, what criteria are used and who takes responsibility to ensure evaluations take place? From the data collected in this study (where the vast majority of

respondents were unable to cite evidence of success being measured) there is little evidence that clear and consistent processes take place, or whether agencies such as the Ministry of Education have provided schools with sufficient guidance or models in this area.

With regard to the literature referred to previously in this report, two themes emerge which are born out in this research. Context and relationships. Several authors (e.g. Bell and Gilbert, Tripp) refer to the relationships that exist in and around schools, with particular reference to professional development. In the New Zealand primary school context, several key stakeholder groups are involved with professional development decisions and directions.

Teacher groups (e.g. NZEI, a school's staff group), principals and teachers individually, Boards of Trustees, communities, training providers, (e.g. Colleges of Education, Advisory Service), government agencies (e.g. Teacher Registration Board) and the political wing of government (Cabinet and Caucus), all seek to have input into the decision-making process, and seek from it the achievement of their goals. The interrelationship of these stakeholders needs to be recognised and understood if best practice is to occur in the area of teachers' professional development. Regular forums for the sharing of ideas and the seeking of compromise when goals conflict is essential. In addition, recognising the professional relationships between colleagues, (where a great deal of learning is cited) and knowing how to systematically utilise these for professional development benefits, will allow the education sector to make better use of what it already possesses.

The second theme that arises from previous research (e.g. Tripp, Grace), inter-linked with the theme of relationships, is that of context. The New Zealand context since the late 1980s has placed the primary education sector in a state of on-going change. Within this context, (as well as considering the changing technological and economic conditions of the society surrounding schools), professional development for teachers has met a number of challenges. Demands for greater accountability, job descriptions stipulating continued upskilling, the introduction of Information and Communication Technology into schools and new management systems have all impacted upon the professional development resources of schools and individuals.

A significant amount of change has taken place (e.g. curriculum development), but a great deal of catch-up may still need to be done, in terms of individuals adjusting to the impact of change in their teaching environment.

So, where to next for successful professional development in the primary school sector?

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## CONCLUSION

H. L. Mencken once noted that for every difficult question there is a simple answer, and it's wrong! The question implicit at the outset of this research was, what is the best way to approach professional development for primary school teachers? The answer is not a simple model or formula. It may require an acceptance that not all teachers or schools are created equal, and that their subsequent career and life paths take them along very diverse journeys, requiring a variety of responses from professional development programmes.

What is known and what is simply belief or perception? I am certain that much of what occurs in the name of professional development, while considered and well intended, is not "evidence-based practice" and may well be ineffective. Often it will conclude without sufficient monitoring or measurement of the learning that may have occurred by participants. If that is the case then whether the goals of professional development are consistently met comes into question, as does the benefit for the learning of pupils in classroom settings, that should be arising out of professional development.

One point that needs re-stating across the primary sector is that professional development is not catered for by staff development alone. The latter is one tool that the former can call upon in constructing a path for individual development. Interrelated to this is the issue surrounding who is responsible for effective professional development. The parties concerned include the individual teacher, school management, government and training providers. Clear guidelines for co-operating and sharing the load would be beneficial. Where does individual and collective responsibility part company?

At the centre of successful professional development should be, in my view, an agreed definition of the core roles of a teacher, and guidance in how to facilitate development towards effective performance in these areas. There needs to be much improved appreciation of adults as learners, what do they bring to the learning task, what are they seeking, and how do they learn? Moreover, greater discussion and exploration of how learning occurs for children in schools needs to happen, both within schools and in the education sector as a whole. Much of what occurs in the name of curriculum development, staff development and professional development seems to be adrift of knowledge regarding how learning occurs within the complexities of a classroom dynamic. This may arise from an assumption that teachers' pre-service training provides them with sufficient knowledge of learning theory and that through teaching practice the gap between theory and reality will be bridged.

In partnership with this is the gap that exists between research and practice. One key goal for all schools, that could produce significant benefits for the functioning of learning programmes, is to better access and utilise the research that is undertaken annually both in New Zealand and internationally regarding teaching and learning (e.g. NEMP project's findings). Such a goal should also recognise the quality of knowledge that accumulates through experience within schools. Each school or cluster of local schools should be encouraged to view this as valid research data and use it to pursue best practice in learning. This could occur on shared "In-service" days, or by an appointed staff member from one school facilitating the development of others in a local cluster, in an agreed area of interest or expertise (e.g. the experiences of a school's behaviour management process or assessment practices). A professional development programme with this at its core would be enriched.

Effective professional development requires each individual to reflect on their own needs and seek to actively pursue their professional development goals. Awaiting government leadership or impetus from a principal is unsatisfactory. However, each individual should be able to expect both government and school organisations to contribute to teacher professional development in a co-operative partnership manner, matching individual, local and nation-wide goals through a forward looking planning process. The benefits resulting will impact positively on all stakeholders' goals.

Barriers to co-operation such as feelings of resentment, (e.g. in using holiday time for professional development), feeling a lack of control or ownership of staff development paths, are likely to reduce when a more participatory professional development path is followed, where all parties share responsibilities and initiatives. Clearly this will require awareness of each others' needs and goals and a willingness to facilitate their success. Forums which bring together groups and individuals to communicate differing and common goals are essential, and may need to be initiated by Government or Education sector groups (e.g. NZEI, Principals' Federation).

The focus questions that directed this research have themselves raised further questions, (e.g. Is here an accepted model for professional development espoused and practised in New Zealand schools? Can you provide effective individual professional development in an environment overrun with institutional changes?). In addressing the core enquiry of this research, (What are the professional development experiences of primary teachers?), diversity and a sense of incomplete processes are the overwhelming impressions that remain. The best development paths are those that reflect the needs of the individual teacher. Responsibility for achieving this must be shared by the profession as a whole.

Understanding the issue of "change" as it relates to teachers, schools and professional development is a key to better delivery of professional development goals and needs. The impacts of change and the time needed to adjust to change seems to be overlooked. The rate of introduction of new ideas, technology or systems into the primary education sector has not allowed for the time needed by schools and teachers to settle with new ideas or directions. Each new idea (e.g. in curriculum design or assessment) needs time to be absorbed by both an organisation and its staff. As this occurs local input is added and the change is more likely to be adopted in a manner that best fits that setting.

One suggestion that may alleviate pressure is a "two year cycle" approach. Under this system professional development programmes for the whole staff in a school would begin with the introduction of a change in practice or theory in year one, which would then be followed by a "development year", where no

new change is brought in by the professional development programme, but rather the organisation and its staff explore and utilise that new element, allowing time for its best use for the benefit of pupils in that particular setting to occur. Should individual staff want or need to pursue additional professional development goals during this period, then that can occur, but the organisation's focus is on a two year cycle, under the umbrella of a more forward looking strategic plan.

The government has a leadership role to play in some key areas that impact upon professional development policy and practice. Firstly consulting with schools and staff in setting timelines for change when new curriculum or practice are introduced. Secondly by encouraging policy development by schools that will allow for flexibility in meeting new requirements set by government, as well as meeting local and individual goals. Thirdly, closer scrutiny of the quality of providers of teachers' professional development is a vital area for government. Accessing direct feedback from schools and the teachers involved, (e.g. through a MOE professional development monitoring group undertaking an annual review of a sample of schools, staff, board of trustee members), will facilitate this. Fourth, the content of pre-service teacher training is another area that may need review in the light of experiences of teachers' professional development paths. How could trainee teachers be given a better start to enable them to function more successfully as both classroom practitioners and professional colleagues? Are standards being set high enough early in a career to ensure the maintenance of a profession at the cutting edge of education?

Finally, for Government, greater consideration of the diverse nature of the teaching population will directly benefit outcomes for schools as organisations, teachers and children. In designing policy and practice the government and its agencies must get to know the teaching and school populations in greater depth, appreciate their differences and diversities and so enable professional development programmes to occur which better meet these diversities.

In this study there are some things left unsaid by the data. For example, "personal reflection" was a term that was seldom referred to and yet is seen as a core skill that teachers both need and practice each day (as they consider issues arising from their class's day). Concepts such as "mentoring" seem to

occur in ad hoc ways, but do not appear to have a systematic role outside structures of team leadership or tutor teacher roles for Beginning Teachers. The value of mentoring relationships for all seems undervalued. "Shadowing" as a method for learning from the work of others could have a greater profile and more systematic approach. There is evidence of it occurring, again in somewhat ad hoc ways (e.g. visiting someone else's class or another school for the day). Clearly change it is at the heart of professional and staff development programmes over the past decade. The impacts of change and how to constructively manage these were not directly referred to in the data collected. Exploring how the process of change occurs within a school setting may well be a useful practice for school organisations and their staff.

In concluding this report I would like to highlight some factors regarding the nature of "best practice" for teachers' professional development. Firstly, nothing should be undervalued. The everyday experiences, challenges and successes of teachers combine into the working knowledge of organisations and the profession as a whole. Recognition of this as a valid component of professional development needs to be more widespread. Utilising the professional relationships between colleagues, in a more systematic manner, for the benefit of individual professional development, will enhance outcomes for all. Professional development paths can be flexible, but they must be well planned and purposeful. Responsibility for monitoring progress and the criteria for measuring success must be clearly stated. Reaching out to a wide range of sources of knowledge should be encouraged, within the framework of agreed goals. Reviewing our approaches to professional development needs to be thorough, creative and inclusive of a range of perspectives.

*A model for structuring "best practice" could resemble the following:*

1. Recognise the various roles or functions of a teacher within the school setting. Consider the needs of the adult as a learner.
2. Identify a goal that fits both the individual's goals or needs and reflects the functions of the teacher.
3. Design the process that will address the goal (e.g. tertiary course, professional reading, mentoring system) including a time frame and criteria for assessment.
4. Evaluate the success of that professional development action.
5. Provide regular monitoring of the development path.



6. Incorporate that individual's outcome into the professional development pathway of the organisation as a whole.
7. Set the organisation's path on a 4-6 year period, utilising a "two year cycle".

In closing, it is worth emphasising that the core guiding force for professional development should be the needs and goals of individual teachers. Programmes that can deliver in this way will be the most successful.

### ***Further Research.***

Beyond the limits of this study, a number of issues remain that are related to this topic and worthy of greater consideration than is possible here, including:

1. Gender issues and their impact upon professional development.
2. The different needs of different "generations" of teachers (e.g. Beginning Teachers in comparison to someone with twenty years experience).
3. A comparison of teacher's appraisal reports and their subsequent annual professional development actions.
4. The impact of colleagues on each other's skill and knowledge base (professional development).
5. Developing criteria for assessing professional development practices in schools. How best to measure impact upon pupils' learning?
6. Defining the core roles of a teacher. What makes an effective teacher in the New Zealand primary school setting?
7. The role of the Principal, Senior Staff and Boards of Trustees in professional development for teachers.
8. Exploring closer links between research and classroom practice (e.g. the impact of the NEMP initiative on classroom practice and learning ), especially in regard to how pupils learn and its impact on professional development paths.

Only through continued exploration of these and other issues will best practice in professional development become less of a mystery and more a certainty.

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**APPENDICES:**

1. Information to Participants.
2. Interview Questions for Teachers and Management.
3. Staff Development Policy from sample school.
4. Appraisal Policy from sample school.
5. Education Plan from sample school.
6. Strategic Plan from sample school.

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experiences, description of any conflict between management and staff views, and between policy and practise, and discussion of the data in the light of previous research and literature, completing the report with any conclusions and recommendations which I may make. A copy of the report will be available to participants.

Participation is voluntary. All participants will be protected by anonymity and information collected will be treated in confidence and not made available directly to others. The written report will identify common perceptions, experiences and differences and where individual experiences are referred to anonymity will be protected. Data collected will be destroyed at the end of the project.

The Board of Trustees in a participating school will have given its consent.

If you have any questions regarding the project or your part in it you can contact me on either PH. 332 9647 or

Thank you

**Gerard Direen.**

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### **CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS.**

I have read the attached description of the research project into the Professional Development experiences of Primary School Teachers and agree to being involved in this project.

I understand that participation is voluntary and that all information will be treated in confidence and be protected by anonymity.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## RESEARCH INTO TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Gerard Direen

March 2000

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS.

1. What does the term *Professional Development* mean to you in the context of primary school teaching?
2. Is it the same as *Staff Development*?
3. What do you believe the main aim of any Professional Development (P.D.) activity should be?
4. Describe some areas of P.D. that you have been involved in the past 2-3 years?
5. Who initiated these?
6. Can you describe any examples of P.D. outside formal programmes / courses?
7. Can you identify any crucial or critical moments in your teaching career that have significantly impacted on your development or performance as a teacher? Do you see these as P.D.?
8. To what extent are you aware of current government policy directions in P.D.?
9. Do you feel that you have been adequately consulted regarding P.D. activities initiated by your school's management? Explain.
10. To what extent are you aware of the school's P.D. or Staff Development (S.D.) policies / procedures? Is it successful in its implementation?
11. Do you believe the school's Performance Management System ( including the Appraisal process) is successfully linked to the P.D. process? Why or why not?
12. Can you rank these P.D. activities from most to least preferred?
  - In-service courses off school site.
  - Reading Professional Journals, articles, books.
  - Informal P.D. such as observing/talking with colleagues etc...
  - Undertaking tertiary courses towards a qualification.
  - Staff Development programme on site at school.
  - Other (please give example)
13. Do you believe there is immediate impact on your teaching or pupil learning from P.D. experiences? Explain / offer examples.
14. What barriers do you believe prevent your P.D.?

15. What comments can you make about the current P.D. /S.D. programme / activities in the school?

16. Do you believe that your pre-service teacher training and initial teaching experiences have assisted your latter P.D. or worked against them? Explain.

17. Any other comment regarding this subject as a whole?

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#### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT.

1. What does the term *Professional Development* mean to you in the context of primary school teaching?

2. Is it the same as *Staff Development*?

3. What do you believe the main aim of any Professional Development (P.D.) activity should be?

4. To what extent are you aware of current government policy directions in P.D.?

5. Do you believe that staff are adequately informed and involved in P.D. or S.D. decisions in the school?

6. Do you believe the school's Performance Management System ( including the Appraisal process) is successfully linked to the P.D. process? Why or why not?

7. Do you believe there is immediate impact on teaching or pupil learning from P.D. experiences? Explain / offer examples.

8. How does the school monitor the success of its P.D. / S.D. programmes ?

9. Do you believe there is any conflict between the school's S.D. programme and staff's P.D. needs? Explain.

10. What barriers do you believe prevent successful P.D.?

11. What recommendations or modifications would you make to the P.D. process in your school and in general?

12. Any other comment regarding this subject as a whole?

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<b>POLICY - STAFF DEVELOPMENT</b>
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**DOCUMENT CODE:** POLSTAFFDEV – I.M.

**DOCUMENT OWNER:**

**VERSION:** 1.0

**APPROVED POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE:**

**APPROVED STAFF:**

**APPROVED BOARD:** 9<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1995

**NEXT REVIEW DATE:** 2000

## **RATIONALE**

To ensure that the professional development of our staff is current and ongoing.

## **GOALS**

Our school will:

- Provide the funding for any staff development as found in the Education Plan – both current and future.
- Provide the funding for any staff development for any individual as identified as an outcome of Appraisal.
- Provide the funding to keep staff updated with the relevant health practices to ensure the wellbeing of our pupils.
- Provide the funding for Support Staff/Teacher Assistants to maintain and extend their skills directly related to their job.

## **GUIDELINES**

To help achieve these goals our school will:

- Give opportunities for staff to attend courses directly related to the focus of the Education Plan.
- Give opportunities to all permanent teachers to submit their names to the Curriculum Committee to take part in any Curriculum Contract with the understanding they will share the knowledge gained with the whole staff.
- Address the needs of a staff member identified in Appraisal through the Education Plan/Relevant Experts/In-service Courses/Peer Observation and consultation both in school and at/with other schools.
- Ensure the Curriculum Manager files a copy of any relevant handouts and keeps an on-going file to track course attendance.
- Consult experts on pupil health e.g. for C.P.R., giving of injections, asthma.

- Will support opportunities for all Support Staff and Teacher Assistants to maintain and update their skills.

**CONCLUSION**

The Board of Trustees and the School Management Team are committed to maintaining the professional development of staff members in this school

Date Approved: 9<sup>TH</sup> February 1995

Signed: (Chairperson)



**POLICY - APPRAISAL**

DOCUMENT CODE: POLICYAPPRAISAL - I.M.  
DOCUMENT OWNER:  
VERSION: 3.0  
APPROVED STAFF:  
APPROVED POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE:  
APPROVED BOARD: 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 1998  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2001

**RATIONALE**

Appraisal is an integral school process which monitors teacher competence and programmes. This school acknowledges that high teaching performance and high teacher expectation equates to high pupil achievement as desired in the Charter.

Appraisal is viewed as a positive task of teacher support, and seeks the outcome that it will be a win-win situation.

**GOALS**

The Appraisal System will:

- Annually assess teachers against all of the Primary Teacher Professional Standards.
- Link school, team, and individual goals.
- Provide staff training and support opportunities.
- Maintain confidentiality.

**GUIDELINES**

1. Every member of staff will have a Job Description which forms the basis of appraisal.
2. Performance is appraised against school, team and individual key tasks developed in consultation
3. Teachers will be appraised against the Professional Standards, School Plan, Team and individual objectives annually.
4. Key Tasks will be recorded on the Appraisal tracking sheet by 1 April.
5. Within the limits of the budget, every staff member is entitled to the professional development and time required to meet objectives.
6. Responsibility for appraisal is delegated from Board of Trustees to Principal to Senior Management staff and this process is outlined in the Performance Management Systems under "Management Process"
7. Responsibility to appraise the Principal lies with the Board of Trustees, who may consult with staff.

8. Appraisal interviews, documentation and written summaries are annual. They are to be completed by the end of Term 3. In the case of either teachers not meeting targets or teaching training needs not being met, a further plan, time span and interview is put in place.
9. Dispute procedures are between the parties concerned and the Principal for follow up and plan of action. The appraisee has the right to involve another party for support. The Performance Management System written summary also has provision for a written "disagreement" statement to be included if the appraisee wishes to so.
10. The Board of Trustees ensures that the policy is carried out as defined, that there is a training budget line, that the Government requirement measuring teachers against the Professional Standards is met, and that the Performance Management System is regularly involved.
11. Each person has the right to confidentiality in the appraisal process. Documentation and issues associated are confidential to the Appraiser, Appraisee and the Principal. The documentation will be housed in a locked file, by the Principal. (The Principal may not delegate this duty).
12. Information which is no longer relevant to appraisal will be destroyed by the Principal.

DATE APPROVED:

3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 1998

SIGNED: (CHAIRPERSON)

**\*\* REFER TO PERFORMANCE (GREEN) MANAGEMENT FOLDER HELD IN EACH CLASSROOM FOR FULL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.**

# EDUCATION PLAN 2000

## SCHOOL

Activities	When	Staffing Requirements	Resources	Monitoring	Evaluating	Reports	Deleg:
Develop Special Education contract	March- July	Staff meetings  Training of 2 staff Adviser on Special Needs	Teacher release days	Special needs team	Classroom teachers	To Principal BOT	RW GF
Implement Assessment Contract	Jan- Oct	Staff meetings Training of 3 staff Assessment contract Adviser.	2 TOD days teacher release	Assessment team	Classroom teachers Assessment team	To Principal BOT	SL JW
Introduce Health/P.E curriculum	Oct-Dec	Staff meetings Training of 2 staff-1999	Curriculum committee	Resource person Curr. Manager	Classroom teachers	Curricul um Manager BOT	resource person
REVIEW English Reading	term 3	Staff meeting/team meetings Resource person	Curriculum committee	Resource person Curr. M	Classroom teachers	Curric. Manager BOT	resource person
Mathematics	term 4	Staffmeeting/team Resource person	Curriculum committee	Resouce person Curr. M	Classroom teachers	Curric Manager BOT	resource person

NAG 1

**CURRICULUM FOCUS**  
 Major Special Education  
 Assessment  
 Minor PE/Health  
 Review  
 English Reading  
 Mathematics

NAG 2

**REVIEW**  
 School Charter  
 Strategic plan

NAG 3

**FINANCE**  
 Develop budgeting guidelines  
 Review FFO funding

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**  
 Develop student newsletter  
 Develop School Web page

**SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT  
 PLAN  
 2000**

NAG 3

**PROPERTY**  
 Develop 10 year Property plan  
 Implement school network system  
 Replace paving  
 Develop landscaping plan  
 Install security system

NAG 6

**LEGISLATION**  
 Review smoking policy  
 Review EEO policy  
 Review Charter

NAG 5

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**  
 Develop civil defence/emergency  
 procedures  
 Implement sun shade policy

NAG 4

**PERSONNEL**  
 Develop new job descriptions  
 for teaching staff  
 Review performance management  
 system  
 Develop appraisal system for support staff