



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why

Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES]

Viviane Robinson, Margie Hohepa, and Claire Lloyd
The University of Auckland

Forewords



ITERATIVE BEST EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS PROGRAMME
<http://educationcounts.govt.nz/goto/BES>
New Zealand

This report is one of a series of best evidence synthesis iterations (BESs) commissioned by the Ministry of Education. The Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis Programme is seeking to support collaborative knowledge building and use across policy, research, and practice in education. This series of syntheses draws together bodies of research evidence to explain what works and why to improve valued education outcomes and to make a bigger difference for the education of all our children and young people. Each synthesis celebrates the work of educators and the inquiry processes that enable educators and researchers to bring about sustainable improvements in education. Each is part of an iterative process that anticipates future research and development informing educational practice.

Earlier BESs have focused on effective teaching and professional learning in schools and on the impact of family and community influences on educational outcomes. This *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* will prove a crucial support for school leaders as they address our shared challenge of preparing all our children for the future.

The International Academy of Education has commissioned summaries of the recent BESs developed by the Ministry of Education. While the full reports provide the explanations and vignettes that are needed to support educational change, these short summaries will also be a convenient help for leaders. They will be available on the International Academy of Education website www.iaoed.org and on the UNESCO website <http://unesdoc.unesco.org>. The first of these summaries to be published is:

Timperley, H. (2008). *Teacher professional learning and development: Educational practices series 18*. International Academy of Education, International Bureau of Education & UNESCO. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001791/179161e.pdf>

Further information is available at www.educationcounts.govt.nz/goto/BES, and feedback is welcome at best.evidence@minedu.govt.nz

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While recognising that the development of a best evidence synthesis is a collaborative undertaking based on scoping and national guidelines developed by the New Zealand Ministry of Education and incorporating contributions from many others with relevant expertise, Viviane Robinson, Margie Hohepa, and Claire Lloyd assert their moral right to be recognised as the authors of this work

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We would also like to thank a number of others for their input at various stages in the iterative process by which this BES was developed:

Michael Mintrom assisted with initial scoping and with analysis of the New Zealand policy context. Professor John Hattie, Dr Ken Rowe, and Associate Professor Gavin Brown contributed extensively to the calculation and interpretation of effect sizes. Professor John Hattie and Professor Herb Walberg provided generous expert assistance with the meta-analysis and quality assurance for the content of Chapter 7. Dr Cathy Wylie made a crucial contribution to sections relating to the New Zealand educational context. By enhancing our understanding of sector-based issues, David Eddy helped us make the work accessible to practitioners. Retired Professor Patu Hohepa provided important feedback on our use of Māori terminology.

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Luke Williams made a substantial contribution to the organisation and preparation of the database of New Zealand theses. Cathie Benson and Beverley Thomson of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research created the national database of theses relevant to educational leadership.

The team at the Ministry of Education, led by Dr Adrienne Alton-Lee and supported by Darren Gammie, provided ongoing advice and, as the BES went through its many iterations, contributed significantly to its final shape. Dr Alton-Lee also extensively promoted this work among key stakeholders in New Zealand and members of the international educational research community.

An external management group, comprising representatives of numerous professional stakeholder groups and associations, provided oversight and timely feedback on key issues and sector-based concerns. We are particularly grateful to those members of this group who gave detailed feedback on drafts of the chapters.

Professor Ben Levin of the University of Toronto and Professor Michel Fullan acted as external quality assurors, bringing their considerable expertise and experience to this work. We have benefited greatly from their thoughtful feedback and critique. A number of other international experts, including Professor William Firestone of Rutgers University, Professor Kenneth Leithwood of the University of Toronto, Professor Karen Seashore Louis of the University of Minnesota, Professor Allan Luke of the University of Queensland, and Professor Doug Wilms of the Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy, offered advice and encouragement.

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Viviane Robinson
Margie Hohepa
Claire Lloyd

Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora te iwi.
Through each of our contributions the people will thrive.

Forewords

Te Akatea

Kua noho pārekereke mai a Te Akatea mō te kaupapa, He Manukura, He Hua Ākonga o Te Kete Raukura¹ (BES) mai i te tīmatanga, ā, mutu noa, i runga i te kaha ū, me te marama hoki ki te pānga nui o ngā tikanga manukura ki te whai mātauranga, otirā ki te whai oranga o ā tātou tamariki katoa.

Ka whāia haeretia te kaupapa nei, ā, ka turuki, he take; ka paneke he whārua, ka mutu ka whakatakotoria he kōrero hei āwhina. Mā te pēnei, kua whai kāinga tō tātou reo, tō tātou āhua o te noho ki roto i te tuhinga kua tāia nei.

Ko te hiahia kia mau ngā whakatau a Te Kete Raukura i ngā manukura katoa o te mātauranga, kua anake i ngā tumuaki. Kei roto nei ko ngā hua papai o te rangahau hei papa kōrero mō te hunga ngaio ana te hihiri o te mahara, inā hoki kia hurihia ai ngā take pītaritari hei hua angitū kē. He nui hoki ngā kōrero kei roto hei āwhina i ngā kaiārahi ki te whakawhanaunga ki ngā hoamahi, ki ngā ākonga, ki ngā mātua, ki ngā whānau anō hoki, kia pono tahi ai, kia mana tahi ai te noho.

Ahakoia kei whea tātou e noho ana i te paepae manukura o te mōhio, o te pūkenga rānei, tērā e tawhiti atu ai te pae o te wānanga. E mea ana mātou ko tā Te Kete Raukura nei he whakatakoto i ngā kōrero taunaki pai ake, kāore ko ngā mahi pai ake, i te mea, tērā tātou e pai ake ai i roto i ā tātou mahi.

Kei te aronui atu ki te ngako tonu o Te Kete Raukura. Inā hoki, me whai wāhi nui ngā manukura ki te tuitui i ngā whānau ki ngā rau whaihua o te mātauranga. Mā te noho tahi pēnei e tūturu ai te whai tahi i te mātauranga, te kura, te kāinga, te hapori.

Me whakamihi rā a Tākuta Adrienne Alton-Lee mōna i whakapau kaha ki tēnei kaupapa. Māia ana tērā te ū ki tēnei mahi e whai wāhi ai ngā manukura me ngā kaiako ki ngā kete taunaki o te mātauranga e marama pai ana ki a rātou. Ko tāna e whakapono nei, kia kai mai hoki te Māori i ngā hua o te mātauranga, ā, ko ia te tohu o te mahi tahi nā Te Tiriti o Waitangi i whakatau; he whiri tahi, he whaitahi i ngā huarahi ki te pae o te ora hei takahi mā te ākonga.

Ka mihi anō ki ngā kaituhi matua o Te Kete Raukura nei, arā, a Ahorangi Viviane Robinson rātou ko Tākuta Margie Hohepa, ko Tākuta Claire Lloyd. I mau anō i a rātou ngā tohu manukura o te rangatira, o te wānanga hoki hei raranga i ngā reo katoa i te kete nei, kia kotahi ai te ahu whakamua.

Te Akatea Maori Principals' Association has been involved in the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* from start to finish because we are committed to and understand that school leadership has such an impact on the educational achievement and life opportunities for all our young people.

As we have had input at various stages of the project, we have raised issues, noted gaps, and made valued suggestions. By doing so, we have been able to ensure that the published document contains our voice and speaks to our realities.

We want to see all educational leaders, not just principals, take the findings of this BES on board. It provides a rich source of research findings that can be used as a basis for productive professional conversations, particularly when it comes to shifting the focus from challenges to opportunities. It also contains much that can help leaders build trusting, respectful relationships with colleagues, students, parents, and whānau.

¹ Te kaupapa Whakairi i Ngā Kete Taunaki ki te Wharekōrero o Te Tāhuhu o Te Mātauranga

No matter where we are at on the leadership experience or skills continuum, we still have plenty to learn. We acknowledge and support that this BES is about best evidence, not best practice. We can always be more effective.

The central messages in this BES resonate with us. We note particularly the finding that leaders must play an important role in creating educationally productive connections with family and whānau. Positive collaborative relationships of this kind will make educational achievement a true partnership between schools, homes, and our communities.

We want to acknowledge the tremendous work of Dr Adrienne Alton-Lee. She has demonstrated incredible commitment to the task of giving leaders and teachers access to the fruit of current research in a form that they can relate to and use. Her passionate belief that Māori, too, must enjoy educational success, and her collaborative way of working, demonstrate the intent of the Treaty of Waitangi in action; providing a framework for collaborative pathways to make a better future for every student.

Te Akatea also acknowledges the lead writers of this BES, Professor Viviane Robinson, Dr Margie Hohepa and Dr Claire Lloyd. The professional leadership and academic dedication from this distinguished team ensured that all sector voices were heard and represented in this synthesis, ensuring that we were all on the same waka and heading in the right direction.

Debbie Marshall-Lobb
Shane Ngatai
Para Meha
Current and past presidents, Te Akatea

International

The Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis Programme of the New Zealand Ministry of Education is an important contribution to education not only in New Zealand but also internationally. The reviews of research that are being produced through this programme, including the present volume on leadership, are of enormous potential value. In this brief foreword we want to outline why we think this work is important and how it could fulfil that potential.

One of the important changes in education in the last 20 years has been the increasing recognition of the contribution education research can make to policy and practice. Not only do we know much more about effective policy and practice than we did a generation ago, there is growing interest in using that evidence to guide what schools and school systems do. In this regard, education is similar to other fields such as health, where the concept of ‘evidence-based’ or ‘evidence-informed’ policy and practice has become widely accepted.

The BES reviews respond to that growing interest in an especially interesting way. They are, of course, careful reviews of the research. That is a requisite but not easy to do. When setting out to create a synthesis, there is inevitably disagreement on such matters as which studies to include and how to weigh evidence across studies that differ in sample size, measurements, length of intervention, and so on. The Best Evidence Synthesis Programme takes a very practical approach to these issues, using clearly articulated processes that aim to include all research of reasonable quality while giving particular attention to New Zealand studies. These syntheses are also particularly valuable in that they include many specific examples and pay careful attention to what the application of the findings would look like in reality. Thus the subtitle: Identifying what works and why. While this feature may seem unremarkable, many reports of research give all too little attention to what the results might actually mean for educators.

The evidence base for the synthesis is impressive. There are over 280 references listed, and some of these are themselves reviews of large numbers of studies. The report is a great

statement of current knowledge. Of course knowledge is always provisional, and as more studies are done, we will learn more and some of our ideas will shift. That is true in every area of human inquiry. While we look forward to the refinement and in some cases changing of what we currently believe to be true, we are also of the view that the results of this synthesis provide a sound basis for educators to work from and that we can all be confident that moving in the directions suggested in this review is the right thing to do.

The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* is a rich discussion of factors that school leaders can shape with the expectation that they will lead to better outcomes for students. It has long been thought that leadership is a critical determinant of school outcomes, and recent evidence, much of it reviewed in this report, has helped us understand how leadership works (or fails to work) to make schools better places for students. Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd work carefully through a large body of research to extract some clear and compelling findings and implications for school and system leaders. They weigh the evidence carefully in terms of both its methodology and its applicability to the New Zealand context. We were particularly impressed by the combination of what they call ‘forward mapping’ and ‘backward mapping’ strategies. Looking at research on improved outcomes and then extracting the leadership implications is an innovative and useful approach. The discussion of community and family influences is also important as a balance to the strong focus on in-school activity in many of the chapters.

What is most impressive is the specificity and precision of the key findings. This is not a descriptive document but rather one that gets inside complex issues and explains them insightfully and causally. For example, the authors show that ‘transformational leadership’ is not specific enough to make a difference. Rather, what is needed is focused ‘pedagogical leadership’, in which the principal participates directly with teachers as a learner, figuring out how to make progress in terms of students and their needs. School leaders need to be leaders of teacher learning rather than just facilitators of collegial discussion.

The authors do not stop with incisive analysis. They devote an entire chapter to the ‘knowledge, skills, and dispositions’ of effective leaders that arise from their findings. In other words, they focus also on the ‘hows’ of leadership.

We believe that any school leader, system leader, or person with an interest in educational improvement or leadership will find this report stimulating and valuable. Certainly both of us did.

Having such a high-quality review is an important accomplishment, but it is not enough. This is a long document—290 pages and more than 100,000 words. Although well-written and full of useful information, it is likely that relatively few practitioners or policy makers will read the report in its entirety or remember all of its key points. We know also that written documents, while important in generating knowledge from research, are insufficient to create changes in behaviour. The ‘mobilisation’ of this knowledge, and its transformation into changed and better schools, will require much effort beyond the publication of this important report.

The challenge for all partners in New Zealand (and beyond) will be to make sure that the lessons and implications of this synthesis leap off the pages and become part of the fabric of education. This means much more than creating some professional development events or new resources. It means considering how the findings herein can be reflected in school and national policy. (This is particularly important in a country like New Zealand, which has such a decentralised education system.) It means monitoring to see if practices seen as desirable are in fact in place in most schools or are being adopted by ever more schools. It means finding ways in which these ideas can be translated into ‘the way things are done around here’. This represents a huge implementation challenge.

This BES report on leadership will be for nought unless there is a concerted plan to develop the core capacities of effective leadership in all New Zealand schools. For us, this would need to mean more than simply deriving a plan from the findings. It would mean taking

a concrete problem (such as raising the bar and closing the gap in literacy in New Zealand schools) and incorporating the key leadership capacities into the implementation of that plan. It is always better to start with the concrete and then incorporate whatever is needed to bring about improvement.

All of this will take time and dedicated effort. It is, however, the only way that the promise of this report will be achieved. An important milestone has been reached with the publication of this BES, but its true value rests in the actions that all of you, individually and collectively, take to ensure that its learnings guide education in New Zealand in the future. Many useful education research reports have been produced over the years, but few have had the impact on practice that they might have had. We urge all readers to take active steps to ensure that the full value of this great report is realised.

Ben Levin, Professor and Canada Research Chair, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Michael Fullan, Professor Emeritus, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

New Zealand School Trustees Association

The contents of the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* build our knowledge and understanding of leadership. However, the final document reflects only a small proportion of the influence that this work has had for those of us who have been involved in its development. The process of developing the BES has triggered new learnings. It has built stronger links, within and across the sector, between academics and practitioners, and it has provided springboards for new initiatives in leadership.

Best of all, we found that “unpicking” each section, as we reviewed it, raised questions in our own minds and those of our colleagues and helped us to think in a more disciplined way about what matters: our students, and how leadership contributes to enhancing their achievements.

The researchers faced a particularly daunting path as they worked through the iterative processes and challenges. They were tested at times, but the final result is a robust resource that inquires, informs, and guides.

As representatives of boards of trustees, we acknowledge the quality and unique nature of the educational leaders in our schools. How we select, develop, and “grow” these leaders is of critical importance. High-quality leaders are essential to operating our successful model of schooling and contributing to the education system as a whole.

The leadership BES also poses a new challenge. We have to ensure that as we continue to build the capacity of one group of leaders—principals and school leaders—we do not forget to look at comparable capacity building for the other group—members of boards of trustees. Within our unique model of self-management, we must ensure that a balance exists and promote highly effective governance.

NZSTA commends the researchers on a job well done and applauds Adrienne Alton-Lee for getting us there.

Lorraine Kerr, President, New Zealand School Trustees Association

Elaine Hines, Manager Training and Development

Colin Davies, Manager Service Delivery

New Zealand Principals' Federation

The New Zealand Principals Federation (NZPF), as one of the instigators of the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES*, gave feedback to the writers during the creation of this work. NZPF representatives robustly challenged and scrutinised the work as it progressed, and we now welcome its completion and its affirmation of the importance of principals' leadership.

The strengths of this BES lie in its potential to be used by school leaders as a formative tool and in the recognition it gives to the rich complexity of New Zealand's current governance model. It also provides information that leaders can use to help them set priorities that reflect what is important for student learning.

With the change to Tomorrow's Schools in 1989, transformational leadership was necessary to introduce and embed self-management. Twenty years on, however, in today's more global society, school leadership needs to change the focus to reflect the need for a more pedagogical approach within our current self-managing context. We know that the closer leaders are to the learning, the more likely they are to have a positive impact on students' achievement.

If principals are to embrace the potential within this very useful document, it's important that the BES is not used to evaluate current leadership practice in a summative or prescriptive way. Using it in such a way could lead to unintended and undesirable outcomes. The findings have important implications for the policy makers who are charged with advancing professional leadership. It is vital that they understand both the spirit and the intent of the leadership BES so that they can build on its potential to exert a positive influence on leadership across New Zealand's schools.

The NZPF believes this document is a tool that will support, enhance, and challenge current leadership practices. We would be very disappointed if it was perceived as only setting out a model for compliance.

The NZPF supports the opportunity that this valuable document offers to principals to deepen and update their professional knowledge. In particular, we recommend that principals use this BES as a personal tool that gives them information to reflect on and use to enhance best practice in their diverse school contexts.

Ernie Buutveld
President, New Zealand Principals' Federation

New Zealand Pasifika Principals' Association

Pasifika principals congratulate the writers of the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES*. The findings of this BES identify leadership dimensions that impact positively on outcomes for students.

Knowledge of these leadership dimensions equips school leaders to focus on the core business of teaching and learning, which leads to improved student outcomes. Well-informed leadership is critical to improving outcomes for Pasifika students, whose academic success levels in New Zealand education remain low. The education system's failure to address the needs of Pasifika students continues to be a cause of national concern. For example, there is no clear policy direction to help schools build on the language diversity of children who move from Pacific Islands language nests into primary schools.

We acknowledge that there is a lack of research on leadership that relates directly to improving outcomes for Pasifika students in New Zealand. We also note that many initiatives to improve

student learning have so far failed to make a significant impact on the achievement of Pasifika students. Leaders need a vision that has Pasifika students achieving excellence in New Zealand schools. While some do achieve at a very high level, they are too few. Much more needs to be done and done quickly. Stand-down, suspension, exclusion, and expulsion rates for Pasifika students continue to be high relative to the total school population. This BES, like those before it, highlights a continuing dearth of research and development with a focus on improving provision for Pasifika students in New Zealand. We therefore strongly recommend caution so that this document is not regarded as a panacea that will address all leadership challenges, including the challenge of improving Pasifika students' levels of academic achievement. Historically, raising the academic achievement levels of these students has been challenging, and it continues to be so.

Pasifika people in New Zealand are truly diverse. There is diversity in their ethnicity, academic achievements, economic resources, languages, and family composition. About 60 percent of Pasifika students are New Zealand born. Some Pasifika families have been here for many generations, while others are recent arrivals. Pasifika students currently make up more than 9% of our student population. It is estimated that by 2021, 17% of New Zealand young people will be Pasifika.

The academic success rate across the group of Pasifika students remains low. Currently we do not have the critical mass of Pasifika people in school leadership to successfully implement the findings of this BES in a way that will significantly benefit Pasifika students. Growing, developing, and nurturing Pasifika leadership in New Zealand education must be considered a policy priority if we are to lift academic success for Pasifika.

Enosa Auva'a, Fa'atili Iosua Esera, Soana Pamaka, Sonia Davies, and Tali Tiatia
New Zealand Pasifika Principals' Association

New Zealand Association for Intermediate and Middle Schooling

The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* provides an engaging practical tool for school leaders responsible for the education of students in the middle years. Emerging adolescents are a unique group and require a specific style of teaching and therefore a specific style of leadership.

The primary focus of middle school leaders is to know what is happening with this age group and to have empathy with them. Emerging adolescents experience many changes in their lives; they are changing academically, emotionally, physically, and socially. This brings a unique dimension to the issues of leadership in intermediate and middle schools.

How we provide leadership is determined by the issues that we face in our daily lives. This BES acknowledges that during a leader's journey in a school, a variety of leadership strategies are required. The impressive depth of the research, both qualitative and quantitative, and the use of various research methodologies, including case studies, make this a most worthwhile document to inform leadership practice.

We recommend that middle school leaders reading through this BES allow themselves time to reflect on their own practice as leaders.

Dr Brian Hinchco, Wendy Esera, and Bill Noble
New Zealand Association for Intermediate and Middle Schooling

Secondary Principals’ Association of New Zealand

The Secondary Principals’ Association of New Zealand (SPANZ) welcomes this document and is confident that it will make an important contribution to the knowledge about how to be a highly effective leader. The big message from the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* is that the more leaders focus (in their relationships, their work, and their leadership) on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater will be their influence on student outcomes. This BES provides reviews of international and local research that will help current and aspiring principals to raise achievement and reduce disparity in our schools. It will improve outcomes for all students, including Māori and Pasifika students.

The leadership BES draws together relevant research findings from around the globe and then links these findings in a most exciting way. The authors have provided us with a carefully researched document about in-depth professional learning, and this provides a strong basis for the future of educational leadership in New Zealand schools. The leadership BES also makes a significant contribution to global knowledge about educational leadership. SPANZ is very proud that Professor Robinson has already received two international awards in recognition of the early work for this BES—the Hedley Beare Award and the Davis Award.

This BES clearly outlines the five leadership dimensions that have the most significant impact on student outcomes. It identifies what works and why. Of these dimensions, “promoting and participating in teacher learning and development” has the biggest effect—it is twice as effective as “establishing goals and expectations” or “planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum”.

The leadership BES has also successfully identified the leadership knowledge, skills, and dispositions that lead to positive outcomes in both Māori-medium and English-medium classrooms and schools. The information that building relational trust is critical to managing change will come as no surprise to educational leaders. However, the in-depth discussion in the BES will provide invaluable support to leaders as they focus on building this trust.

The careful analysis and synthesis of the research findings in this BES will not only help leaders in schools but will also guide government investment in school leadership. The leadership BES is a rich, deep, and easily accessible document. Its publication is a breakthrough in educational leadership research. SPANZ is delighted to have been involved with the leadership BES development process and congratulates the authors on this world-leading research synthesis.

Peter Gall
President
Secondary Principals’ Association of New Zealand

New Zealand Secondary Principals’ Council

It has been a professional privilege for the New Zealand Secondary Principals’ Council to be part of the external management group throughout the development of the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES*. We applaud the Ministry of Education’s vision in funding such a comprehensive, ground-breaking synthesis. In particular, we applaud Dr Adrienne Alton-Lee for her leadership of the project.

We know that school leadership makes a difference. We also know that the great bulk of the literature on school leadership does little to explain how leaders can generate significant changes in what teachers teach, how they teach, and how well students learn. The substantial achievement of this BES is that, for the first time, we have lucid, detailed, research-based

explanations of the links between the work of school leaders, the work of teachers, and student outcomes.

The report acknowledges that New Zealand principals, in our highly devolved education system, work very hard. In the Tomorrow's Schools environment, there is a risk that a disproportionate amount of principals' time may be taken up by financial, property-related, and administrative matters.

The research in the BES tells us, with greater clarity than ever before, that school leaders are most effective when they are at the centre of the teaching and learning in their school, that is, when they are pedagogical leaders. They are most effective when they set clear pedagogical goals, when they develop staff consensus around those goals, when they provide the tools for teachers to achieve the goals, when they immerse themselves, as leaders, in the professional development associated with those goals, and when they foster trustful relationships in their schools.

Given how busy principals are, becoming effective pedagogical leaders will be a challenge! It is, however, a challenge that the NZSPC completely endorses. We also endorse the idea of distributed leadership, which is embedded in this BES. Beneficial pedagogical changes in secondary schools can be made only when a wide variety of leadership roles in schools is affirmed and supported.

We applaud the intellectual virtuosity of the writers of this BES, and we hope that it will have a substantial influence on how secondary school principals go about their work.

Graeme Macann
Chairperson
New Zealand Secondary Principals' Council

Normal School Principals' Association

The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* underlines the need for school leaders to focus on pedagogical leadership. It identifies and describes aspects of leadership that result in improved student outcomes and, in doing so, provides a valuable tool for professional reflection, engagement, development, and action. While not exhaustive, this best evidence synthesis is extremely valuable and significantly progresses the literature on educational leadership in the New Zealand setting. We applaud a research base that is specific to educational leadership and its impact on student achievement. We have not previously had this clarity.

The leadership BES should inform the future direction for leadership in New Zealand schools. This will enable schools to build on the progress already made in terms of balancing the managerial and pedagogical leadership demands of a self-managing educational environment. As well as providing a sound basis to inform policy making, the BES will guide further research and development relating to the leadership dimensions that are needed to improve students' learning outcomes and to the interplay between these dimensions.

The key messages of the BES need to be made accessible to the educational leadership community throughout New Zealand. Understanding these messages will add depth to leaders' understanding and enable them to construct possible pathways forward that will engage professional educators at all levels and lead to improved student engagement and student achievement. Our hope is that leadership development programmes will take account of the findings of this research. School leaders, wherever they are located and whatever their position on the continuum of leadership, should be conversant with this BES in order to effectively lead and nurture leadership.

It should be noted that this BES has a clear synergy with an earlier document, the *Teacher Professional Learning and Development BES*, and promotes the same “teaching as inquiry” model. The challenge for the profession is to use these two documents to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Irene Cooper, Diane Leggett, Jennie Stewart, John Faire, and John McKenzie
The Normal School Principals’ Association Executive

New Zealand Area Schools Association

The New Zealand Area Schools Association is very pleased to see this important piece of research on the connection between school leadership and student learning outcomes. There is no shortage of research and reports on leadership in education, but to have some that is New Zealand based is very rare. To have research carried out with the thoroughness of the BES team makes it even more valuable.

This research has the potential to lead to significant change in the leadership of New Zealand schools. It is currently recognised that New Zealand principals carry a greater load of administrative responsibility than anywhere else in the OECD. In area schools, this responsibility is especially heavy. These schools are all in rural areas, and the research shows that rural principals carry a greater administrative load than their urban counterparts. In providing an education for students ranging in age from 5 to 18 years, area school principals also have to oversee all the issues and challenges of both primary and secondary education.

As a result of the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES*, we now have proof that a focus by principals on promoting and participating in teachers’ professional learning and development is the single most significant factor in improving student outcomes.

The challenge now, for all associated with student learning, is to turn these findings into reality. Schools have to use data to guide them in their strategic planning, and with the publication of this BES, data is now available for the authorities to use to make decisive and effective changes in school leadership. To ignore this research would be to blight the chances of current and future generations of New Zealand students.

John Garner, for the New Zealand Area Schools Association

Deputy and Assistant Principals and Syndicate Leaders, Primary and Intermediate

In our everyday working lives as teachers with leadership responsibilities, we are bombarded with educational literature, some of which is relevant and some of which is not. We are grateful, therefore, to the authors of and contributors to the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* for making sense of research and providing us with a guide and a reference tool. It is reassuring that the tool so validates our roles within the school.

School leaders often have one foot in the principal’s office and one in the classroom. We are, therefore, uniquely placed to influence and model best practice for positive student outcomes. The leadership BES, while acknowledging that all schools are unique, places its priority on improving student outcomes. This BES is a tool that empowers us to make informed decisions based on evidence, case studies, and theory. It clarifies our thinking and helps us to prioritise.

The significant findings of the BES are outlined in the early chapters and these, we believe, are essential reading for all school leaders and teachers. We found that reading the early chapters triggered reflections on our own current practice and motivated us to read the later chapters and gain a deeper understanding. For example, evidence of how significant a role homework can have in supporting or undermining student achievement is mentioned early in the BES, and then Chapter 7 offers the reader related case studies and analysis. This provides insight to help guide each school in developing homework principles as a positive way of connecting home and school.

Leadership manifests itself in a variety of ways in the school setting. Whether school leaders are looking for guidance at a personal, team, school, or community level, we believe that this BES will be both affirming and supportive in helping us all to improve student outcomes in our diverse educational settings.

Adrienne Plowright, Assistant Principal, Farm Cove Intermediate School, Pakuranga
Sarah Pledger, Syndicate Leader, Balaclava School, Dunedin
Michael Gendall, Deputy Principal, Fergusson Intermediate, Trentham
Martin Hookham, Deputy Principal, Korokoro School, Lower Hutt
Richard Arthurs, Assistant Principal, Manurewa East School, Manukau
Denise Hancox, Deputy Principal, Ngaio School, Wellington

National Association of Secondary Deputy and Assistant Principals

Educational leaders have a responsibility to be aware that their leadership will have a significant impact on the outcomes for students in their school. This document is a synthesis of 134 studies, both local and international. The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* provides the reader with an insight into what the evidence suggests is best practice. It identifies the links (some of them complex) between leadership and student outcomes, and it enables the reader to begin to understand which leadership dimensions have the greatest impact on student outcomes.

This BES describes the specific leadership dimensions that are desirable to improve the outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students. By drawing on local initiatives, such as Te Kotahitanga, educational leaders can gain an insight into the diverse cultural challenges that exist for all school leaders.

The use of vignettes to illustrate a range of approaches makes the document both readable and engaging. The vignettes challenge the reader to reflect on current practice and illustrate some practical ideas for further development. The executive summary and the individual chapter summaries that are included in the document enable it to be used in a variety of ways. The diagrams that appear throughout the BES provide visual support for the text and summarise key messages.

What is most exciting about this synthesis is that it supports the idea that distributing leadership across the school is empowering. The closer that leaders get to the core business of teaching and learning, the more significant is their impact on student outcomes. It is therefore vital that schools recognise the importance of growing leadership capability within all areas of the school community. This document is a “must read” for all educational leaders.

Annette Taylor, Nelson College Assistant Principal, and NASDAP President
Joanna Leaman, until recently Tawa College Assistant Principal and Wellington DAPA Executive
Denise Johnson, Wellington High School Deputy Principal
Maree Flannery, Pakuranga College Deputy Principal

NZEI Te Riu Roa

NZEI welcomes the publication of the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* and recognises the size of the task and the work involved in bringing it to fruition. NZEI applauds the consultative process of this leadership BES. Many key groups have had the opportunity to be represented on the steering group, and a range of professionals have responded to the BES and given feedback. This BES has identified theories on which to base positive action and dimensions of leadership that lead to improvement in student outcomes. The BES is clearly focused on student achievement, high standards, and pedagogical leadership.

It was encouraging to see the links made to the OECD country reports and the attempts that have been made to weave through the report the responsibilities that are specific to New Zealand principals. NZEI supports the inclusion of Māori conceptions of leadership, which not only improve student outcomes but also have a positive impact on the school and the wider community.

The document includes information about areas of immediate interest to practitioners at different levels of leadership practice and presents these in such a way that readers can select sections of immediate interest or relevance. This will support research-informed practice and highlight the important part that relationships play in leadership in New Zealand schools. The vignettes bring life to the document and act as exemplars of effective practice. They illustrate diverse experiences in the New Zealand setting, which make this research more easily accessible to a wider audience.

The journey to successful leadership depends on efficiency and effectiveness across all the dimensions of leadership practice over time. The BES identifies the five dimensions of leadership that have the most impact on student learning, and the challenge for school leaders is to interpret this information in relation to their own context and their identified priorities at a given time. It takes time (and may involve career path changes) to move forward from novice to expert practitioner in leadership roles and to learn to be effective in different contexts. New leadership practices or dimensions come to the fore at different stages.

The BES strongly affirms the power of effective leadership to improve student outcomes. However, leaders' practice is influenced, over time, by a range of variables, which can interfere with a focus on pedagogical leadership, and a different focus may sometimes be valid in a specific context. A good leader ensures that other leaders are developed within the school and ensures that they have opportunities to use and develop strengths, with professional development tailored to individual needs.

The idea that schools will need external experts to help them effect change creates a challenge for rural schools, where there is not the breadth of leadership to support the principal's position. Providing such experts would require shifts in the policy and resourcing infrastructure. It is good to see many of the challenges of leadership acknowledged, and we note that the conclusions of the report included a request for further research. NZEI welcomes the idea of further research that will take into account the diverse range of leadership practice in New Zealand. Such research will be necessary to extend the reach of this BES so that it can meet its potential in terms of user uptake.

NZEI would like to see the evidence provided by this BES forming the basis of planning for leadership and sustainability for the schools of the future. The best evidence tells us that providing pedagogical leadership, at all levels throughout a school, is crucial for this sustainability.

We confirm the view of the researchers that this BES is a starting point for good practice and that, on a national basis, time and support need to be provided to enable groups of professionals to engage in informed and robust debate on effective leadership.

Frances Nelson
NZEI Te Riu Roa National President
Te Manukura

New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association

NZPPTA is a union that understands the importance of strong professional leadership and supports initiatives that provide high-quality, well-resourced support for secondary schools. This has guided our involvement in the development of this and previous best evidence syntheses, in our current provision of Curriculum Support Days, which help secondary teachers to grapple with the new curriculum, and in our provision of regular professional conferences that are open to everybody. To this end, NZPPTA endorses this very practical guide towards excellence in educational leadership.

The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* presents the research evidence that connects school leadership and student outcomes. It affirms that the most effective type of leadership in schools prioritises pedagogical leadership over those aspects of leadership that are more management-focused. The second part of its title—“Identifying What Works and Why”—speaks of the accessibility of this BES; in many ways it reads like a “go to ...” manual. School leaders can save themselves a great deal of uncertainty and time by reading this synthesis of the research into school leadership.

This BES affirms the importance of the relationship between researchers and schools, where the process of inquiry into what works and why is grounded in the real experiences of teachers, students, and school leaders.

The BES also recognises the importance of a school culture that values and supports staff professional learning and development. Teachers flourish in highly collaborative environments where there is a strong sense of collective responsibility for improving outcomes. The active involvement of all members in such a school culture is vital – it connects principals, senior and middle management, and classroom teachers. The leadership BES confirms the value of distributed leadership as an essential element in building a positive school culture. School leaders, from heads of department and faculty through to senior management and principals, will find this document an invaluable practical resource.

Leadership today is not what it was 20 years ago. The goalposts have changed. This BES challenges some beliefs about what is effective but encourages shifts towards interrogating leadership practice in very positive ways, which are supported by research evidence and data. Where there are resourcing implications for implementing the effective practices that are described in this BES, it is imperative that this is recognised in government policy for funding schools.

The need for funding raises significant challenges to governments that believe in the fundamental importance of quality public education. The New Zealand government has recognised the importance of pedagogical leadership in programmes such as the First-time Principals' programme, the Aspiring Principals pilot, and the new programme provided by School Support Services as part of the recently launched Professional Leadership Plan 2009–10. However, the real work of dismantling the administrative tasks that distract principals from focusing on pedagogical leadership has yet to be done.

Kate Gainsford
President
New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association

New Zealand Catholic Education Office

The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* will be warmly welcomed and applauded by the education community. It brings into sharp focus the philosophies and practices that

New Zealand principals and other school leaders can use to attain high achievement levels for all their students, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds.

The wealth of New Zealand is its people. High standards in education are the primary drivers both to lift economic performance and to strengthen the social mosaic of our diversity. This nation is inextricably linked to the Asia-Pacific region, where two-thirds of the world's population lives. Despite our small size we are a respected international player, and we can continue to be so if the educational outcomes of our young people are world-class—not only at the top end of the spectrum but across all our young people. We face challenges in achieving this goal!

Progress in educational achievement is incremental rather than resulting from a sudden revolution. Principals' leadership that is focused on pedagogical goals is crucial if schools are to succeed in making this progress. The other part of the recipe for success is learning leadership delivered by classroom teachers who work collaboratively with each other, and with their students and parents, to lift student achievement. The fact that growing numbers of New Zealand schools are demonstrating that it is possible to do what once seemed impossible proves that the approaches to leadership learning outlined in this BES actually work. "Yes we can!" is a chorus that we could all adopt.

As we focus on pedagogical leadership, we must not lose sight of the wide range of actions and attitudes that students instinctively respond to. Student achievement occurs when those who deliver their education show a professional love of their work and are dedicated to the welfare of their charges—when they actively engage their students and recognise that the students themselves have useful things to say about how they learn. At the same time, school leaders need to create a culture that respects the humanity and sacredness of individual students. The school should welcome students and make them feel that their school is their place. An effective school culture is also goal orientated and well organised. Excellent pedagogy, embedded in such a culture, will ultimately bring about the achievement we all desire.

The research-validated ideas and approaches to leadership that are analysed in this BES will contribute to the educational effectiveness of leaders, not only in New Zealand but also in the international community. The BES will also enhance the reputation of our educational researchers. Most important of all, it provides the tools that will enable our teachers to meet the challenge of ensuring that all our students can achieve to their potential, so that they will be better able to contribute to the well-being of our global community of nations.

The Ministry of Education and the authors are to be congratulated on this BES, which will be very helpful to the principals, teachers, and administrators who systematically study and analyse its findings. Kia kaha.

Pat Lynch
New Zealand Catholic Education Office

Independent Schools of New Zealand

The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* takes an in-depth look at pedagogical leadership. There is no doubt that the role of educational leader is becoming ever more complex, encompassing not only educational responsibilities, but areas from human relationships through to finance and marketing. While recognising the wide range of roles that principals are asked to take on, this BES focuses specifically on pedagogical leadership and how, by exercising this kind of leadership, principals can most effectively facilitate student learning.

Leadership is of crucial importance in any organisation and, in this respect, schools are no different. Anecdotally, we all know the impact that good leaders have on their schools. By

acting with integrity and treating others with respect, they build trusting relationships and create environments in which inquiry, risk taking, and collaborative effort are encouraged.

Despite the increasing demands on our time, we must not lose sight of the importance of the pedagogical leadership role and the positive effect that this type of leadership can have on teaching, learning, and—most fundamentally—student outcomes.

Julie Moor, Principal, Rangi Ruru Girls' School, Christchurch

Lynda Reid, Principal, St Cuthbert's College, Auckland

Graeme Yule, Headmaster, Scots College, Wellington

New Zealand Educational Administration and Leadership Society

The New Zealand Educational Administration and Leadership Society (NZEALS) applauds the authors of the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES*. Their focus on learning and teaching as being at the heart of New Zealand school leadership is a welcome emphasis. We recognise the challenges in New Zealand education and the need for leaders to reflect on evidence. This BES has the potential to have a significant impact on learning for students, teachers, leaders, and the community.

The BES document is a timely reminder that leaders need to focus on the core activities of teaching and learning. It encourages school leaders to review priorities, focusing on the learners, pedagogy, and the community. We strongly recommend that every educator read this document.

One of the major achievements of this BES is identifying the dimensions of school leadership that make a difference for students and describing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for effective leadership. This document will prompt leaders to review priorities and to use the best evidence to make informed decisions that will raise student achievement and well-being, thus beginning an iterative cycle of reflection and action.

NZEALS affirms the main message of the document: that school leaders can create the conditions for success. When leaders have a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning processes, they can lead and participate in discussions with teachers and other leaders, bring about necessary changes, and raise student outcomes.

NZEALS is comprised of early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary leaders. On behalf of the Council and our members, we endorse the message of this BES because we believe that student success is a necessity, not an option. We thank the Ministry of Education for its foresight in having such a valuable document created. The challenge for educational leaders now is to apply the evidence and transform their practice.

Dr D. Annie Henry, National President, New Zealand Educational Administration and Leadership Society

Peter Garelja, past National President and Principal of Tikipunga High School

John Taylor-Smith, National Vice-President and Principal of Miramar School

Dr Barry Brooker, Canterbury Branch President and Associate Dean of School of Education, University of Canterbury

Dr Paul Potaka, Council Member and Principal of Nelson Central School

Denis Slowley, Otago Branch President and Principal of Bayfield High School

Cheryl Stephens, Council Member and Academic Registrar at Te Whakahi Wananga o Awanuiarangi

Pip Wells, Nelson Branch President and Principal of Tasman School

National Education Monitoring Project

Given the unique organisational structure and leadership roles inherent in New Zealand schooling, it is surprising that anyone would agree to undertake an analysis of the relationship between that leadership and student learning outcomes. To have executed such an analysis with the insight, care, and thoroughness that Viviane Robinson, Margie Hohepa, and Claire Lloyd have is truly remarkable.

This *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* combines a thoughtful examination of the issues that shape the challenge of leadership in New Zealand's schools with a rigorous analysis of the multifaceted nature of the relationships that link leadership to learning. The authors take an inclusive view of seemingly disparate views of leadership, showing how these might be viewed as complementary rather than competitive. They blend quantitative and qualitative data intelligently and appropriately, drawing from each approach what might best be gleaned from it.

At the National Education Monitoring Project, we are always seeking ways to better understand how educational processes influence the bigger picture of progress at the national level that we see in our research. In this BES, Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd explore the critical linkages between leadership practices and student outcomes that are so essential to understanding this vital aspect of the educational enterprise. The leadership BES is an exemplary and accessible piece of scholarship, one that will benefit practitioners, policy analysts, and researchers, not only in New Zealand but around the world.

Professor Jeffrey Smith
Co-Director, National Education Monitoring Project
University of Otago

Education Review Office

The Education Review Office (ERO) welcomes the publication of this significant Best Evidence Synthesis and endorses the authors' focus on the influence that effective educational leadership has on improving student outcomes. ERO's whakataukī, *Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa*, recognises that the interests of the child must be at the heart of all educational discourse if we are to make a real difference to student achievement in New Zealand. The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* augments the series of best evidence syntheses by providing further insights into the complex relationships and practices that underpin an education system which seeks success for all New Zealand children.

Both in its school reviews and in its national education evaluations, ERO has found leadership to be one of the most frequently identified indicators of school effectiveness and student achievement. Whether investigating schools' relationships with parents and communities and how these enhance student achievement, assessing the impact of teachers' professional learning and development in terms of improved practice, or looking at how well schools respond to the diverse learning needs of groups of students, ERO consistently finds that the quality and nature of school leadership has a profound impact on positive student outcomes.

This BES emphasises that involvement in the core business of teaching and learning is essential for educational leaders if they are to achieve positive outcomes for their students. Leaders' promotion of and participation in professional learning and development is a key function of effective leadership. In recent studies, ERO found that where school leaders took an active role in leading and managing professional learning and development, this resulted in well-informed professional discussions based on shared understandings about new practice and

new knowledge. One of the most important determinants of schools' effectiveness in managing teaching and learning is the extent to which school leaders know that their investment in professional learning and development is necessary to change teacher practice and improve student outcomes.

The leadership BES recognises the challenges and competing demands for school leaders in a self-managing environment. For leaders in Māori education, these difficulties are often exacerbated by the roles that they are expected to take in the wider community and by expectations that may deflect them from their role as educational leaders. In our own work, ERO has found that effective educational leaders are those who are able to manage this complexity through being clear about their fundamental goals. These leaders make the necessary connections between school governance, management, and community while maintaining a strong focus on providing optimal conditions and support for their students. They have a single leadership purpose, which ensures that every student, no matter what their experiences outside the school gate, has opportunities to experience success while at school. Such leaders do not allow low expectations or organisational barriers to divert attention from reducing disparities and focusing on learning and achievement. They utilise their own knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work with and influence others, building educationally powerful connections inside and outside their school community. Effective and reflective leadership is present and is fostered, at all levels, in those schools that ERO recognises as performing well.

The leadership BES will be a valuable resource for all those who are working to lift the performance of our education system. It confirms that educational leadership matters, and it identifies many of the characteristics of leadership that support good outcomes for students. Nevertheless, New Zealand has not yet fully investigated the impact that high-quality educational leadership can have in reducing the recognised variance in national educational achievement and preparing all our children for the future.

This BES has implications for policy makers in relation to future leadership and professional development programmes, school improvement projects, and the development of approaches to assessment, national standards, and school reporting on student outcomes. For the wider education, evaluation, and research community, the BES provides an opportunity to reflect, not only upon the available evidence about the relationship between educational leadership and student outcomes, which Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd have set out for us, but also upon the BES team's identification of the paucity of evidence relevant to New Zealand educational settings. There are challenges and opportunities for all of us to build upon this valuable resource, through our own work, in order to extend the evidence base for future decision making.

Dr Graham Stoop
Chief Review Officer, Education Review Office

New Zealand Council for Educational Research

The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* is a very powerful piece of work that provides an essential platform—one that is unavoidable, in the best sense of the word—for the enrichment of leadership practices in schools.

As researchers, we admire the intelligent methodology of this work. Viviane Robinson and her team use an interplay of backward and forward mapping, drawing on quantitative and qualitative research, international research, and research that takes account of the New Zealand context. They use this interplay carefully and thoughtfully to build an understanding of the kind of leadership practices that have a positive influence on student learning.

In building a theory of educational leadership, the authors move beyond a model of the single knowledgeable leader to propose a model of leadership that requires a team approach—a mixture of expertise from within and beyond the school gates, as well as purposeful support from outside the school.

The conclusions of this work raise a considerable challenge to the New Zealand self-managing school system. If we are to take these findings seriously, we need to find ways for all schools to benefit from the mix of leadership expertise and relationships that we now know is essential to improving learning, and we need to find ways to give all school leaders ongoing professional support.

The significance of the findings of this BES has already resonated with policy makers, leading practitioners, and the research community, who have been working together on a range of initiatives designed to support and build the identified leadership capabilities. One example is the Ministry of Education’s *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* framework, which now underpins other policy work. Another example is the development of “smart tools” that can help school leaders in their quest to provide all students with the learning opportunities known to support achievement. With Ministry of Education funding, NZCER is working with Viviane Robinson on the development of a Leadership Practices tool. NZCER has also developed a student engagement scale in order to meet a rapidly growing demand from school leaders for meaningful ways to evaluate their programmes—and therefore the leadership practices behind those programmes.

The power of this BES, however, does not just lie in what it suggests for current practice. The authors are clear that the understanding they provide is built on existing research and that the research to come is likely to bring new insights. We heartily agree with them that a lack of cumulative knowledge-building is a problem in education. Future research will bring new insights by building from this well-formed platform.

We expect that many more positive influences on practice, support, and research will be linked to this Best Evidence Synthesis on educational leadership. In years to come, the leadership BES will be seen to have made a substantial contribution to the quality of education in New Zealand.

Robyn Baker, Director

Cathy Wylie, Chief Researcher, New Zealand Council for Educational Research

Leadership and Management Advisers

This important body of work underpins leadership at all levels of our education system and challenges leaders by presenting substantial amounts of authentic evidence. The leadership BES locates principals right at the centre of leading learning, and it strongly acknowledges the role of leaders in making a difference to student achievement outcomes. It identifies leadership dimensions, which reinforce the fact that the more leaders focus their influence, their learning, and their relationships with teachers on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater is their influence and impact in terms of improved student outcomes.

The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* adds weight to a number of other publications that inform leadership development in New Zealand. The leadership dimensions it identifies fit well with the areas of practice and key activities set out in the educational leadership model provided by *Kiwi Leadership for Principals*. The leadership BES provides compelling research and theory to support these areas of practice.

The leadership practices required to successfully implement *The New Zealand Curriculum* are clearly evident within the dimensions, which provide powerful messages to leaders about the importance of their role. School leaders have the responsibility to lead, evaluate, and participate in professional learning and to use resources strategically in order to achieve the important goal of developing and sustaining their school's curriculum. Connections can also be made between this BES and *Ka Hikitia*. The findings in Chapter 7 (Creating educationally powerful connections with family, whānau, and communities) have clear links to the fourth focus area in *Ka Hikitia* (Increasing whānau and iwi authority and involvement in education).

The leadership dimensions identified in the BES emerged from the forward and backward mapping of a considerable number of international and national research studies. The dimensions will provide a focus for the work of leadership and management advisers working with leaders in the education sector. The case studies provide strong links between research and theory and leadership practice. "Leading teacher appraisal", for example, challenges leaders to align teacher appraisal with improved student achievement through inquiry, using a data-based approach. This case study identifies three leadership dimensions that are associated with the use of appraisal to improve teaching and learning: planning, co-ordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; establishing goals and expectations; and selecting, developing, and using smart tools.

On behalf of all leadership and management advisers and all those involved with attracting, developing, and retaining leaders for New Zealand schools, we applaud this comprehensive, coherent, and easy-to-read BES. It will provide valuable material for leading discussion in professional learning groups and will inform the work we do with all school leaders.

Leadership and Management Advisers National Committee:

Beth Dungey, School Support Services, School of Education, The University of Waikato

Neil Couch, School Support Services, School of Education, The University of Waikato

Stephanie Geddes, Centre for Educational Development, Massey University College of Education

Colleen Douglas, Centre for Educational Development, Massey University College of Education

Peter King, Education Support Services, University of Otago College of Education

Ian Stevens, Education Support Services, University of Otago College of Education

Neil Withington, School Support Services, Victoria Link Ltd, Victoria University of Wellington

Gayle Britten, Team Solutions, The University of Auckland

Martin Turner, Team Solutions, The University of Auckland

Craig McDowell, Education Plus, University of Canterbury.

Universities and Tertiary Institutes

*Ahakoā he iti, he pounamu*²

As national tertiary providers of educational leadership and management postgraduate programmes, we share a commitment to promoting leadership within the teaching profession across diverse contexts. We celebrate the grounding of this *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* in Aotearoa New Zealand and its respect for our unique bicultural heritage. We congratulate the writers for their significant achievement in synthesising, from the limited international literature, eight coherent leadership dimensions. The BES explains the power of these dimensions and identifies some of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for effective school leadership.

² Though small, it is significant.

This BES has brought a number of aspects into sharper focus. The document invites school leaders to a fresh engagement with the leadership literature, builds links with previous BES iterations, and recognises the dialectic between theory and practice. The BES conceptualises educational leadership as practices to improve student outcomes. It recognises that leadership is positional and dispersed, highly fluid, and contextual. It takes an integrative approach to understanding the transformational and pedagogical dimensions of educational leadership and highlights the significance of pedagogical leadership. In each of these areas, the leadership BES provides practitioners with material for critical self-reflection and inquiry into leadership practices.

The BES signals important directions for educational leadership research. The authors highlight the value of the evidence emerging from qualitative studies. It is imperative that the frequency and quality of such research be increased. Further insight into the connections between leadership and student outcomes requires collaborative research partnerships and research that focuses on reducing disparities in student learning outcomes. The BES constitutes a valuable leadership development resource that is likely to excite both existing and potential school leaders. In the field of leadership education, it offers a useful platform for leadership learning. However, we suggest that more generous research and development funding is needed to support professional leadership and learning initiatives that have been shown to improve academic and social outcomes for students, particularly those with a history of systemic underachievement. Two examples are programmes that enable school leaders and teachers to gather, interpret, and use both quantitative and qualitative data for improving teaching and learning practices; and programmes that develop leadership knowledge, skills, and dispositions for building inclusive learning communities that are founded on respect and care for others.

Furthermore, we recommend that this document be made readily available to postgraduate students with an interest in school leadership. This is a unique opportunity for New Zealand to greatly increase school leaders' engagement in leadership education and research.

Above all, we vigorously endorse the call for a focus on sustained pedagogical leadership and the system support needed to enable this. It is critical that New Zealand education policy aligns with this aspiration.

Carol Cardno (Unitec Institute of Technology), Marian Court (Massey University), Jeremy Kedian (The University of Waikato), Darrell Latham (University of Otago), Susan Lovett (University of Canterbury), Michele Morrison (The University of Waikato), and Hine Waitere (Massey University)

Australian Council for Educational Leaders

Achieving a world-class education system requires new conceptualisations of school leadership. School leaders need to engage in discourse about purpose, structures, and priorities. They also need to understand that the idea of school leadership as an organisational quality is a recent idea, implying a view of leadership very different from that which prevailed in educational thinking during most of the twentieth century. Firstly, this fresh view centres attention on the core, moral purpose of school leadership—that is, to improve student outcomes—and secondly, it implies the existence of shared and collaborative leadership and positive and proactive relationships within the school. This view is consistent with the work of school leaders as schools enter a knowledge society in which the processes of learning are of paramount importance.

The Best Evidence Synthesis *School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why* provides an evidence base for this discourse and emphasises the significant role of school leadership in achieving quality education.

This body of research evidence has been applauded internationally, and the Australian Council of Educational Leaders (ACEL) has, on behalf of its members, warmly invited Professor Viviane Robinson and her team to report regularly on the evidence as it has become available. ACEL was honoured that Professor Robinson was able to present interim findings when she gave the William Walker Oration in 2007 at the ACEL International Conference. Such is the status of this body of work that ACEL was also proud to award Viviane the Hedley Beare Award for Scholarly Writing, in the same year.

The importance of leadership cannot be overstated. Leadership is receiving more and more attention, in many countries and in various international organisations. The time is right for a best evidence synthesis iteration that provides the knowledge base on which to build a successful learning organisation.

ACEL continues to promote and report this seminal work, recognising the impact it will have on current and future research into “improving valued education outcomes ... that make a bigger difference for the education of all our children and young people”.

Jenny Lewis

Chief Executive Officer, Australian Council for Educational Leaders

Chief Education Advisor, BES

He aha te mea nui o tenei ao

Māku e kī atu

He tamariki, he tamariki, he rangatahi

The Ministry’s overall mission is to raise educational achievement and reduce disparity. Our goal is to build a world-leading education system that equips all New Zealanders with the knowledge, skill, and values to be successful citizens in the twenty-first century.

The Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) Programme is an innovative and collaborative strategy for building and using knowledge. This work focuses on what makes a bigger difference to advancing valued outcomes for diverse learners in education.

It has been demonstrated across the BES iterations that education shapes our cultural identities, our communities, and our societies³. What happens in education matters for the well-being and success of our children and our society, and it can strengthen or undermine citizenship and social cohesion⁴.

In the 2008 Distinguished Lecture of the American Educational Research Association⁵, Professor Henry Levin revealed how improving educational justice improves other valued outcomes such as health and lower criminal activity, providing returns to taxpayers that exceed the costs.

³ Desjardine, R., & Schuller, T. (2007). *Understanding the social outcomes of learning*. Paris: Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, OECD. See also www.oecd.org/edu/socialoutcomes/symposium

⁴ Aitken, G., & Sinnema, C. (2008). *Effective pedagogy in social sciences / tikanga ā iwi: Best evidence synthesis iteration*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. www.educationcounts.govt.nz/goto/BES

⁵ Levin, H. (2008). The economic payoff to investing in educational justice. 2008 AERA Distinguished Lecture. *Educational Researcher*, 38(1), pp. 5–20.

As the world grapples with economic recession, it is timely to highlight the evidence that what happens in education can have powerful effects on economic growth⁶. A recent analysis of the economic cost of wide disparities in educational outcomes pointed out that such disparities impose an economic cost that is like a permanent national recession⁷. We urgently need to break the pattern of wide disparities in New Zealand’s literacy outcomes and lift our performance in order to strengthen valued outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students in New Zealand schools.

Given the importance of these outcomes, it is surprising that relatively little of the large body of educational research from around the world has focused on the systematic study of educational influences on outcomes. Across the OECD, it has been noted that research in education has not been afforded the priority of research in other areas, such as medicine⁸. As examples across the BESs reveal, cycles of research and development that are focused on student learning and well-being can make a major, sustainable difference in education.

The BES approach is to search out research studies that focus on influences on student outcomes and to bring these together in a way that selectively transforms previous investment in research into a valuable resource for educational development. The leadership BES is not a synthesis of research that is alien to the work of leaders. Rather, it celebrates effective and often inspiring educational leadership that has impacted positively on student outcomes in diverse settings across schooling.

Within the Ministry of Education, we were initially concerned that creating an educational leadership BES would involve overcoming almost insuperable methodological difficulties. We nevertheless made it a priority—because it was so urgently needed. We are indebted to North American colleagues in the National Academy of Education Committee on Teacher Education for the inspiration to include backward mapping in our *Guidelines for Generating a Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration*. The backward mapping has enabled us to learn from New Zealand research even when it has not directly addressed the relationship between leadership and student outcomes.

To address the dearth of research, we commissioned a study of outstanding leadership in the context of a cost-effective school–home partnership. (This was the first time that we had done this as part of a BES development.) We chose this study because evidence suggests that, in the absence of such leadership, ‘business as usual’ can inadvertently do harm in education. Underpinning the Iterative BES Programme is the belief that in education, as in health, we need to follow the principle ‘first do no harm’.

International comparisons reveal that, in our self-managing school system, New Zealand principals on average spend more time on administration than most of their overseas colleagues. This affects their ability to provide professional leadership of the kind that can make a much bigger difference in advancing valued student outcomes. The administrative demands of self-management are also likely to be felt by deputy and assistant principals and others with leadership roles in schools, but there are gaps in our knowledge here. During consultation for this BES development, a frequently expressed concern of school leaders has been the opportunity cost (in terms of professional leadership) of the time taken up in managing property.

⁶ Hanushek, E., & Woessman, L. (2008). The role of cognitive skills in economic development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 46(3), pp. 607–668.

⁷ McKinsey & Company (April, 2009). *The economic impact of the achievement gap in America’s schools: Summary of findings*. www.mckinsey.com/clientservice/socialsector/achievement_gap_report.pdf

⁸ OECD (2003). *Knowledge management: New challenges for educational research*. Paris: OECD.
“At the same time New Zealand invests far less in research and development of any kind than other developed countries, and has far lower R & D personnel per million population than Australia or Western European countries ... New Zealand is successful educationally, but is, by R & D standards, not becoming a knowledge economy.” p. 89, OECD, *ibid*.

While the goal of BES is to advance knowledge about what makes a bigger difference for students, there is evidence from across the BESs that suggests leaders may find the information contained in this synthesis not only makes their work more effective, but also less onerous and more satisfying. In the early days of this BES development, stakeholders expressed the concern that a BES could not get to grips with the real-life problems faced every day by school leaders. So, partly in response to this concern and working in collaboration with the New Zealand School Trustees Association and the University of Auckland's Faculty of Law, we commissioned an analysis of New Zealand court cases involving schools. That analysis highlights the critical importance of leaders' skills in managing constructive problem talk, building relational trust, and ensuring that pedagogical purposes are integrated into administrative processes.

The writers of this BES have created a taonga for education in New Zealand and the wider world. Professor Viviane Robinson is a consummate scholar whose vision, clarity, intellectual and professional leadership, and deep personal commitment to making a bigger difference in education have turned an impossible task into a coup. Dr Margie Hohepa's intellectual leadership in New Zealand education has long been an influence on my own thinking, and we have been privileged to have her scholarship in the service of this BES. We are indebted to Dr Hohepa for her systematic approach to developing the synthesis in ways that enable leaders to learn from effective Māori leadership. Her own experience as a school trustee was invaluable in bridging the worlds of research and practice in BES development. And without Dr Claire Lloyd's systematic, careful work, the early stages of this BES development would have foundered.

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research's librarians, Beverley Thomson and Cathie Benson, have worked tirelessly to create a national database⁹ with electronic access to New Zealand theses, to enable the wider profession to benefit from this knowledge. We are working towards a vision that, in the future, leaders and teachers in New Zealand schools will be able to access the source studies relating to the research in the BES electronically and come to understand in detail the lessons to be learned from the work of colleagues.

Thank you to the stakeholders across policy, research, and practice communities who have worked so hard as part of the Ministry of Education's BES Management Group: Alison Adlam, Judie Alison, Elizabeth Brady, Janice Campbell, Dr Carol Cardno, Dr Graham Collins, Joanna Curzon, Colin Davies, Alison Dow, Marion Fitchett, Brendon Henderson, Joanna Leaman, Mahinarangi Maika, Ati Mamoe, Liz Millar, Shane Ngatai, Stephanie Nichols, Bill Noble, Adrienne Plowright, Lesieli Tongati'o, Colin Tarr, Keriana Tawhiwhirangi, Leilani Unasa, Jenny Whatman, Graham Young, and Sarah Young. You have profoundly shaped the final synthesis. Particular thanks to the New Zealand Teachers' Council, and its representatives on this BES development, Director Dr Peter Lind, Cynthia Shaw, and Nola Hambleton, for helping us to fund the iterative process that made possible Chapter 8: The knowledge, skills and dispositions involved in effective leadership.

Dr Cathy Wylie brought her profound knowledge of school leadership in New Zealand when she assisted with critical aspects of the collaborative writing task, and Associate Professor Gavin Brown made Chapter 7 possible. Thanks to all the regional and national principals' organisations and others who facilitated the 'BES as a tool for leaders' workshops and discussions across the country. Thanks to the hundreds of stakeholders who assisted with the formative quality assurance. Within the Ministry of Education, special thanks go to Darren Gammie, Cathy Diggins, and Libby Drummond who made this work possible. Thanks are also due to Megan Chamberlain for valued quality assurance on Chapter 2. The commitment, capability, and profound understanding that Learning Media editor Ian Reid brings to the programme has also been essential to the quality of the production of this BES.

⁹ New Zealand Education Theses Database: www.educationcounts.govt.nz/goto/BES

We have been fortunate and honoured to have the formative quality assurance and support for this work provided by Professors Ben Levin and Michael Fullan. The ongoing acknowledgment of the value of this BES development by the Australian Council for Educational Leaders, as well as their contribution to our work, has been significant in supporting this BES development. When Australians give an Australian award to a New Zealander, people who are neither Australians nor New Zealanders may not be aware of the significance of such an accolade! We are very proud that Viviane Robinson was awarded the Hedley Beare Award, “most recently for her tireless research and writings in regards to the *Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis on Educational Leadership*”.

So many have contributed their time and expertise to support this BES development that it is not possible to do justice to each in the acknowledgments. Professor John Hattie has given considerable time (in his weekends) to provide technical expertise on meta-analyses and has offered invaluable advice throughout when we were finding the task too daunting. Dr Ken Rowe, formerly of the Australian Council for Educational Research, travelled across the Tasman repeatedly at short notice to provide expertise and unflagging enthusiastic support for this endeavour. With Viviane Robinson, he co-authored the first article on the impact of leadership on outcomes, which won the Davis Award for the best article in the *Education Administration Quarterly* in 2008. His tragic death in the Marysville bushfire in 2009 has left us with an irreparable sense of loss, but also with profound gratitude for his unwavering commitment to improving educational practice.

The BES approach is iterative. It recognises that knowledge is always changing but is also iterative in terms of the involvement of policy workers, researchers and practitioners (in this case educational leaders) in each stage of the BES development. The iterative process is extraordinarily challenging, but the scope, relevance, and quality of a BES is greatly enhanced by stakeholder involvement in its development. The available evidence¹⁰ suggests that this kind of process is a prerequisite for real change.

In their forewords, leaders across New Zealand schooling have eloquently highlighted the important findings of this BES. From a policy perspective, it is vital that we attend to the new evidence about how much more difference the leadership of professional learning can make to the impact and success of schooling.

In a self-managing school system, this BES will only be useful if it is first and foremost a resource that is valued and owned by school and system leadership. The forewords are testimony to such ownership, and this provides a foundation for the work needed as we collaborate across policy, research, and practice to meet our shared challenge—to celebrate the diversity of our students and prepare *all* of our children for the future.

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¹⁰ Moore, P. (2006). *Evidence based policy report. Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis Programme*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. www.educationcounts.govt.nz/goto/BES
Alton-Lee, A. (2007). The Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis Programme: Collaborative knowledge building and use across research, policy and practice in education. In *CERI Evidence in education: Linking research and policy*. Paris: OECD. <http://213.253.134.43/oecd/pdfs/browseit/9607081E.PDF>

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Note: All Best Evidence Synthesis Programme publications can be accessed at www.educationcounts.govt.nz/goto/BES

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Glossary of Māori terms

Ako	Teaching and learning, understood as a single, reciprocal process
Hapū	Sub-tribe
Hui	Meeting, gathering, usually with a specific kaupapa
Iwi	People, nation, tribe
Kaiako	Teacher, instructor
Kanohi ki te kanohi	Face to face
Kaumātua	Elder, old man or woman, adult
Kaupapa	Purpose, agenda
Koro	Male elder, old man, grandfather
Kuia	Female elder, old woman, grandmother
Kura	School
Kura kaupapa Māori	Māori-medium school with an identifiable philosophical base (e.g., Te Aho Matua)
Kura whānau	The support network of families and extended families associated with a school
Ngāti	Prefix denoting tribe
Pākehā	New Zealand-born non-Māori, especially those of European descent
Pāngarau	Mathematics
Pānui	Reading
Pōwhiri	Formal welcome or opening ceremony
Taonga	Prized possession, treasure, inheritance
Te Aho Matua	Literally, the central thread; the philosophical statement that guides the operations of many kura
Te Kotahitanga	A professional development intervention for non-Māori teachers of Māori in English-medium schools. For a description of this intervention, see Case 7 (Establishing a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations) in Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar, H., & Fung, I. (2007), <i>Teacher Professional Learning and Development Best Evidence Synthesis</i> . See also the Te Kotahitanga website: http://edlinked.soe.waikato.ac.nz/departments/index.php?dept_id=20
Te reo Māori	The Māori language
Te reo Māori me ōna tikanga	Māori language and customs
Tikanga	The usual and accepted procedure or way of doing things; protocol
Tuhituhi	Writing
Tumuaki	Principal, head teacher, leader
Whakapapa	Ancestry, genealogy
Whānau	Family, to be understood in a much more encompassing sense than the nuclear family; network of mutual supports and obligations
Whanaungatanga	Sense of kinship, family, belonging

Mo ngā tamariki, kia rua ngā reo. Ko te reo o ngā mātua tipuna tuatahi, ko te reo o tauwi tuarua. Kia ōrite te pakari o ia reo, kia tu tangata ai ngā tamariki i roto i te ao Māori, i roto hoki i te ao o tauwi.

I runga i tēnei whakaaro, kia tere pakari ai te reo o ngā tamariki, me whakahaere ngā mahi katoa o te kura i roto i te reo Māori. Tae atu ki te hunga kuhu mai ki roto i te kura, me kōrero Māori katoa, i ngā wā katoa.

Kura kaupapa Māori, therefore:

- respect all languages;
- expect full competency in Māori and English for the children of the kura;
- affirm that total immersion most rapidly develops language competence and assert that the language of the kura be, for the most part, exclusively Māori.

Te Aho Matua o ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori.
English interpretation by Dr Kāterina Te Heikōkō Mataira