School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why

Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES]

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Chapter 3
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:


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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3. **The framework for analysis and synthesis**

A synthesis is not a neutral process of data collation—it is a sense making and interpretive exercise and as such the reader deserves a full account of the methodological decisions that have shaped it\(^\text{90}\).

The purpose of this chapter is to orient the reader to the broad conceptual and methodological frameworks that determined how we went about the task of describing and explaining the links between educational leadership and student outcomes. The strategies we used were shaped by an extensive set of guidelines that are applicable to all the syntheses commissioned as part of this Ministry of Education programme\(^\text{91}\). These generic guidelines were adapted to fit the body of evidence relevant to this BES.

In the following sections, we begin by defining the concept of leadership and, more particularly, educational leadership, from both Māori and non-Māori perspectives. These definitions did not drive our analysis, as our brief required us to be inclusive of the many different approaches to leadership found in the research. The definitions were important, however, in that they framed our thinking as we read and informed our critique of the contribution leadership research makes to improved educational outcomes.

The sections in this chapter explain:

- the importance of context and how we take it into account;
- the role of theory in this synthesis;
- what we mean by ‘a range of valued outcomes’;
- the analytic strategies used to make links between leadership and student outcomes;
- the role of academic and professional advisors.

### 3.1 **What is leadership?**

For methodological reasons, this BES requires a conception of leadership that is explicit but inclusive—one that delimits the field without privileging a theoretically or culturally specific view. We needed a concept of leadership that would act as our touchstone as we encountered the widely varying concepts implicit or explicit in the research.

The concept of leadership that has guided our analyses has three particularly important features:

- It includes both positional and distributed leadership.
- It views leadership as highly fluid.
- It sees leadership as embedded in specific tasks and situations.

An example may help clarify what we mean. This scenario is an entirely hypothetical but nevertheless fairly typical example of how staff go about accomplishing tasks together\(^\text{92}\):

Mere, the Head of Science, is chairing a meeting in which her staff are reviewing assessment results for the last unit of work. She circulated the results in advance, with notes about how to interpret them, and asked the team to think about their implications for the teaching of the unit next year. The team identifies common misunderstandings and agrees that they need to develop resources that will help students to overcome them. Julian, a second year teacher, was pretty unhappy with the assessment protocol used this


year and suggests revisions that he thinks will give more recognition to students who have made an extra effort. Most of his suggestions are adopted. Lee, who teaches information technology as well as science, shows the group how the results have been processed on the computer so that they can be combined with other assessments and used in reports to parents and the board. Several team members express nervousness about reporting to the board, so they decide to review a draft report at the next meeting.

In terms of some popular conceptions, this scenario has little to do with leadership. Mere is not in the driver’s seat articulating a vision, motivating the troops, or satisfying needs. But she is changing how the task is done by providing structure and resources, as are Julian and Lee with their ideas about how the assessment protocol and reporting processes can be improved.

Our scenario illustrates how leadership can be exercised by those without positional authority. Mere is the only member of the group with a formal leadership position, but two other participants also make leadership contributions. It is important that distributed as well as positional leadership is included within our overall definition, for while our primary focus is principals, we recognise that—especially in larger schools—formal leadership responsibilities are held by all those in senior and middle management roles. By including distributed leadership, we also recognise how leadership may be exercised by anyone whose ideas or actions are influential in the context of specific tasks and activities. For example, Māori parents, whānau, and other community members have typically played crucial leadership roles in the setting-up of Māori-medium educational institutions, such as kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori. In recognising both positional and distributed leadership, we in no way diminish the importance of the principal’s role, because one of the latter’s key tasks is to build and sustain the leadership of others. This is true also of principals in very small schools, where leadership functions may need to be distributed to a network of helpers, parents, and community leaders not actually employed by the school.

The scenario also illustrates the second distinguishing characteristic of our concept of leadership: it is highly fluid. The participants in the scenario move seamlessly between exercising influence over their colleagues and being influenced by them. Such fluidity is dependent on group members’ willingness to influence others and be influenced by them as they recognise their task-relevant contributions.

Further, the scenario illustrates the linkage between leadership and task-relevant expertise. Leadership is not a decontextualised influence process. The people in our scenario were influential because their ideas, actions, and tools were recognised by others as useful for progressing the goal of better science assessment and reporting. If the same three teachers were working on a different task, the distribution of influence might be quite different—the exercise of leadership shifts according to the expertise and skills required by the task at hand.

Most conceptions of leadership view it as an influence process that causes others to think or act differently with respect to some task or situation (different, that is, from how they would have thought or acted in the absence of the influence). This is not a sufficient account, however, as there are many ways of exercising influence or power that we would not want to call leadership. In cases where leadership is exercised, others are influenced because they judge that the leaders “occupy a position which gives them the right to command a course of action, or that they possess the requisite personal characteristics of leaders, or that they

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seek an action that is correct or justifiable. These three reasons differentiate between the influence exercised by leadership and the influence wielded in other forms of power relations, such as force, coercion, and manipulation.

It needs to be noted that these three sources of leadership influence are very direct and person focused. While leadership of this kind is of crucial importance, educational leaders also contribute to teaching and learning in other, more indirect ways by creating the conditions that enable others to do things that they would not have otherwise had the resources or the will to do. Behind the scenario discussed above, we can imagine a principal and senior management team who worked with heads of department to establish the importance of analysing and using student data, changed the timetable so that staff could meet, and provided heads of departments with professional development in which they learned how to lead meetings in ways that were likely to impact positively on valued student outcomes. In a word, this type of leadership is empowerment. Given that leaders have an important indirect impact on student outcomes, we include empowerment in our concept of leadership.

Our conception of leadership highlights its role in bringing about change: leadership involves influencing people to think and act differently, either directly (through face-to-face encounters) or indirectly (by creating the relevant conditions). In addition to challenging others to change particular practices, a leader may need to challenge them to reconsider their views about what does and does not need changing. Based on this association between leadership and change, we can draw a distinction between leading and managing. Managing is about maintaining operations and routines; leadership is about garnering support for their reconsideration and possible change. This distinction should not be drawn too sharply, however, for managers need leadership skills (to be influential) and leaders need management skills (to understand how routines and systems inhibit or support possible change).

It is imperative that cultural and ethnic considerations are reflected in the leadership dimensions found to be effective in enhancing the outcomes for diverse students. The BES programme puts particular stress on the needs of Māori and Pasifika students. To this end, we have looked for and examined evidence of Māori and Pasifika educational leadership. Our aim has been to provide a conception of leadership that is inclusive of Māori and Pasifika, not to make Māori and Pasifika leadership fit a Pākehā/Palangi conception. We have, therefore, examined critically our account of leadership to discern whether it is inclusive of and resonates with Māori and Pasifika perspectives. This will be true if it embraces the sources of leadership influence and the leadership purposes that are important to these groups. We would argue that it does.

Our account is sufficiently inclusive to embrace, for example, the work of Sanga and Walker on leadership in the Solomon Islands. These two authors see leadership as primarily concerned with relationships of influence. In their view, leaders need to be skilled in the exercise of influence that is ethical. They emphasise leadership purposes that are grounded in particular challenges currently facing the Solomon Islands: political stability, conflict resolution, and community building. Commentary indicates that a significant challenge for Pasifika leaders is how to value traditions that provide a sense of security, identity, and well-being while recognising the changes taking place in Pasifika societies and in Pasifika communities in New Zealand.

97 This discussion of empowerment is based on a personal communication with Brian Fay (10 December, 2006). He sees empowerment as a positive way of exercising influence but does not include it as a form of leadership.
3.1.1 Māori leadership

It is imperative that our account resonate with Māori conceptions of leadership\textsuperscript{101}. Traditionally, the authority of Māori leaders was derived from their chiefly mana\textsuperscript{102}. As mana was linked to ancestry, a leader would generally inherit a relationship with their group: their role was to maintain that relationship and secure the identity of the group. But mana was also closely related to power, prestige, and achievement\textsuperscript{103}. As the achieving of group goals or aspirations depended heavily on the abilities of a leader, leadership responsibility could be acquired by exhibiting superior knowledge, skill, and courage. Mana could be taken away—or simply lost—as a consequence of poor leadership. For a person to retain a leadership position, success for the group, whether whānau, hapū, or iwi, was a requisite. So, in the first instance, the authority attached to a position depended on a leader’s mana being validated by the group. This authority could be maintained only as long as it was effectively used to achieve group objectives.

Today, authority to lead is still dependent on mana, which can be derived from either institutional position (power and prestige) or a track record of serving the Māori community (achievement). Māori leadership continues to have a focus on success for the group. According to Walker\textsuperscript{104}, the leadership purposes that are particularly important to Māori are those that serve emancipatory ends—that improve the status of Māori in New Zealand society. Strong Māori leadership implies a strong focus on Māori issues. This can be seen in the insistence of many Māori principals that they serve the wider Māori community, as well as the school and the school community. See also the section Māori educational leadership, page 70.

3.2 What is educational leadership?

One way of answering this question would be to say that leadership exercised by those in educational institutions is, by definition, educational leadership. We think this is unsatisfactory because it ignores the possibility that some leadership activities in schools may not be directed towards educational ends. Indeed, many New Zealand principals are concerned that too much of their work is, in their view, not educationally relevant\textsuperscript{105}.

A better approach to defining educational leadership involves starting with educational purpose because by doing this we come back to what it is that actually motivates leaders. We have already seen that the social, cultural, and economic advancement of Māori communities is a key purpose of Māori leadership. Another key purpose, across the education system, is improving valued social and educational outcomes for all students, with a particular emphasis on lifting the achievement of Māori and Pasifika students. It is these purposes that distinguish educational leadership from other sorts of leadership. Elmore\textsuperscript{106} puts this plainly when he defines educational leadership as the “guidance and direction of instructional improvement”. This definition sets an ambitious agenda for school leaders and for leadership training programmes. It declares that the purpose of educational leadership is not only (for example) to develop a cohesive culture, have good communication channels with staff and students, and monitor and evaluate instruction—it is to do all these things in a manner that improves teaching and learning.


\textsuperscript{104} Walker (2006), op. cit.


In summary, we argue that educational leadership is leadership that causes others to do things that can be expected to improve educational outcomes for students. Discovering what those things are is the work of this BES. Our aim is to arrive at a theory of educational leadership that identifies where leaders should direct their energies in order to gain the greatest leverage for enhancing student outcomes.

3.2.1 Māori educational leadership

We have already noted that today’s Māori educational leaders are often expected to work as change agents. This might mean challenging existing power structures in their organisations or advocating for Māori young people or organising the cultural and community aspects of their schools\(^\text{107}\). We are aware that many non-Māori leaders also take on such roles, but our point is that, given the push to revitalise Māori language and culture, the Māori community expects Māori leaders to do so. Their sphere, therefore, includes not only leadership within the classroom and the community but extends “into the wider corridors of Māori development”\(^\text{108}\). Māori educational leaders are expected to establish positive relationships with a variety of institutions, communities, sectors, and iwi and to move easily between past, present, and future systems of knowledge. Durie sees effective Māori leadership as that which is “expert in navigating within te ao Māori” “and exploring te ao whānui” (wider society)\(^\text{109}\). Māori educational leadership has a significant role to play both in ensuring that Māori students acquire universal knowledge and skills and in supporting them to realise the aspirations held by Māori. There is an opportunity cost in trying to meet such expectations and demands. Māori teachers find that the expectation that they participate in Māori cultural affairs in the school community as well as in the school inevitably increases their workload\(^\text{110}\). The workloads of Māori educational leaders are likely to be affected in the same way.

3.2.2 Māori-medium educational leadership

The parents of kōhanga reo students, whānau, Māori community members, kaumātua, and Māori educationalists have been instrumental in the establishment of kura kaupapa Māori\(^\text{111}\). Exercising political leadership, they lobbied the government for legislation that would recognise kura as a category of school\(^\text{112}\). During the developmental phase, they focused on setting up kura, developing curricula\(^\text{113}\), staffing programmes\(^\text{114}\), and supporting and strengthening whānau. Today, leadership is focused on improving teacher effectiveness and student achievement while remaining true to the kaupapa or vision.

Māori-medium communities see their tumuaki as a vehicle through which community aspirations can be met. Indeed, it could be argued that every principal is accountable to the school community for the educational well-being and achievement of its young people. In most cases, parents exercise influence primarily by electing the board of trustees and, via the board, selecting the principal. In Māori-medium schools, collective influence may be expressed through the kura whānau as well as through the board and may come with the expectation

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that the principal will take a collaborative approach to leadership. This can involve kaumātua and other members of the whānau being actively involved in decisions that relate to student learning and, more generally, in the running of the school.

Tumuaki of kura have additional duties and accountabilities that embrace the widest possible definition of student achievement and well-being. Whānau generally have aspirations for the development and well-being of the kura community, so the tumuaki may be expected to champion wider community interests in addition to the particular educational interests of the students currently enrolled. This means engaging with and responding to a wider range of stakeholders on a wider range of issues than is often the case for principals of English-medium schools.

The principal, parents, community, and staff of a Māori-medium school will most likely have expectations for student achievement and well-being that are driven by a passion for the regeneration of Māori language and culture. Because loss of language is loss of culture, Māori-medium teaching is vested with enormous cultural significance. Māori-medium leaders, therefore, can find themselves pursuing multiple agendas as:

• leaders of a kura responsible for raising the standard of teaching and learning;
• leaders of teaching and learning in te reo Māori, developing and using Māori pedagogical practices;
• leaders in the regeneration of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga.

Māori-medium principals pursue the second and third parts of this agenda as much because they feel a philosophical and moral imperative as for strategic reasons. These two agendas are also fundamental to the vision and expectations of all kura whānau.

3.3 Taking account of context

BES authors are expected to pay careful attention to the context of research. This includes clearly reporting the characteristics of those involved in any particular study. Was it conducted in New Zealand? Was it situated in a primary or secondary school? What were the age and ethnicity of the students? We provide such information wherever possible. There remains, however, a larger question, and that is how to make research findings relevant to leaders in their own specific contexts.

Some researchers try to address the issue of context by specifying all the conditions under which a generalisation should hold. Applying contingency theories of leadership, they attempt to specify how school characteristics such as type and size, staff characteristics such as age and experience, and task characteristics such as complexity moderate leader–outcome relationships. The generalisations that emerge from such studies provide complex prescriptions about what to do: in situation X do Y if conditions a, b, c, etc. obtain; do Z if conditions d, e, f, etc. obtain. But even if particular contingent relationships can be identified, no theory of leadership and no leadership generalisation can take into account the sheer number of contingencies at work in most leadership situations. “The more complete and complex a contingency model of leadership, the less conceptually elegant and practically useful it is.”

An alternative approach recognises that the exercise of leadership involves discerning and integrating the relevant factors in any problem situation—and that the relevant factors, taken together, constitute context. Context must, therefore, be discerned in situ rather than specified by means of a complex set of generalisations. This does not limit the value of research, because what is relevant in one situation will often overlap with what is relevant in another. Research findings are able to alert leaders to factors they may need to consider in their particular contexts and help them understand and integrate those factors in fruitful ways. What research findings

cannot do is provide situation-specific solutions for particular leadership problems, precisely because there will always be something unique about the contextual factors and their interplay. The context-specific nature of leadership means that there are no rules that guarantee positive impacts, even if faithfully followed. That is why there are no rules in this BES. What the reader will find instead are clear guidelines backed by sound theoretical explanations—guidelines concerning what leaders should try to influence and how to do this in ways that will increase the likelihood of success. The BES also details the skills involved in discerning and responding to the important contextual factors. (See Chapter 8, section 8.3.2 on problem solving.)

3.4 The role of leadership theory

The BES guidelines ask writers to create a synthesis that integrates theory across the various sources of evidence. Writers would normally do this by employing the theoretical resources used by the authors of the synthesised studies. This strategy was not going to prove a workable one for this BES. Educational leadership theories are, for the most part, concerned with the relationships between leaders and their staff rather than with the impact of leaders on students. They tend to be generic and adult-focused and they say surprisingly little about how to improve teaching and learning. Given this disconnection between leadership theory on the one hand and teaching and learning on the other, a synthesis based on educational leadership alone would not have provided sufficient guidance about how to make a difference to students.

For our synthesis to explain as well as identify the leadership dimensions that make a difference to students, we had to discover the particular qualities of each dimension that were responsible for the impact. To illustrate this point, we learned from the empirical leadership literature that high levels of leadership involvement in teacher professional learning were associated with moderate-to-strong impacts on student outcomes. What we did not learn from this literature were the particular qualities of teacher professional learning that were responsible for this difference. It is important to identify these qualities because the research evidence on teacher professional learning shows that only some kinds of professional learning benefit students. If leaders are to use our findings, we need to not only identify the importance of this leadership dimension but also to explain the qualities of professional learning that are responsible for these impacts. The evidence that helps us discriminate these qualities is found not in the educational leadership literature but in the literature on professional development116.

This foregoing point is applicable to all the leadership dimensions: we had to move beyond the evidence about leadership in order to identify the particular qualities that were responsible for the leadership impacts. Most often, the theoretical resources we used came from research on teaching and learning rather than research on leadership. Theoretical resources from organisational studies and social psychology were also used to help explain the leadership skills described in Chapter 8. This approach to identifying and explaining the dimensions of leadership results in a theory of educational leadership that is embedded in evidence about how to improve teaching and learning.

3.5 Valued student outcomes

The BES guidelines make it clear that writers are to have a broad view of what counts as valued student outcomes. We have taken The New Zealand Curriculum and Ka Hikitia (the Māori Education Strategy) as our primary guides to educational outcomes that have widespread and strong support from the community. We recognise that after year 10, secondary students are able to specialise in particular learning areas or take courses across or outside these areas117. In The New Zealand Curriculum, the desired outcomes include selected values, key

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competencies, and achievement objectives in the eight learning areas. In Ka Hikitia, Māori enjoying education success as Māori is the overarching strategic outcome. This means Māori learners working with others to determine successful educational pathways, realising their cultural distinctiveness and potential, successfully participating in and contributing to te ao Māori, and successfully participating in and contributing to Aotearoa New Zealand and the world. Fortunately, given the prolific and contested nature of the educational leadership literature, the focus of this BES on student outcomes allows us to bypass the debates about the relative merits of different theories of leadership that often contain little reference to evidence about their consequences for students.

### 3.6 Analytic strategies for connecting leadership and outcomes

Unless they are teaching principals, there is likely to be a long causal chain between the actions of principals and student outcomes. By and large, they impact indirectly on student outcomes by creating conditions under which teachers—who have a much more direct influence—are able to be effective. For example, if principals develop a budget which includes the purchase of reading materials that they believe will help year 9 boys enjoy reading, they create a condition—better resources—that may indirectly impact on student learning. The larger the school, the more indirect the influence of top leadership is likely to be. This indirectness makes it very difficult to trace causal connections between leadership and student outcomes.

When people ask about the relationship between leadership and student outcomes, they assume that the direction of any influence is from leadership to outcomes. It is likely, however, that the influence goes both ways. For example, a school with a high-achieving culture tends to attract quality teachers—and if there is quality teaching, leaders can focus on pedagogy in a way that is often not possible in a school where there is a culture of low achievement. So the students shape the leadership and the leaders shape the students by the ways that they respond to low achievement. In short, the influence is reciprocal. This means that in a school with a weak academic culture, the job of leaders is to resist that culture and reshape it so that it supports serious intellectual activity. The weaker the academic culture, the more difficult this task. We need studies of leadership that trace these reciprocal processes.

The following quote captures the dynamic interaction between leadership, school conditions, and student outcomes. It comes from a discussion of the causal models used in leadership research.

By way of illustration a principal might enter a low performing school that has severe problems of discipline and order. In response, the principal might take highly directive measures to establish control. Once the school has achieved a level of stability, the principal may adopt a quite different way of thinking about both goals and actions for school development. To the extent that leadership is viewed as an adaptive process rather than as a unitary independent force, the reciprocal-effects perspective takes on increased salience. When employing this type of model, the researcher further entertains the possibility that causal relationships may be multi-directional, change over time, and even be nonlinear.

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118 ibid.
121 ibid., p. 168.
Unfortunately, the quantitative research that gives us the clearest evidence about the links between leadership and outcomes does not capture these dynamic and reciprocal qualities. They are more often found in the qualitative research used in Chapter 6 and the case studies.

Another major challenge faced by the writers was the scarcity of evidence directly addressing the links between leadership and student outcomes. This was equally true of the New Zealand research and the international research. The authors overcame this limitation by using the two strategies outlined in Figure 11.

![Figure 11. The two main strategies for detecting the impact of leadership on student outcomes](image)

### 3.6.1 Forward mapping strategy

Where evidence was available about the impact of leadership on student outcomes, we used the forward mapping strategy depicted in the upper portion of Figure 11. There was only one New Zealand study in this category. To carry out a study of this kind, researchers need to be able to link measures of school leadership with student outcomes that are identifiable by school.

The strategy is called forward mapping because it involves starting with a measure of leadership and then tracing its links to student outcomes. Researchers often try to trace these links by measuring the relationships between leadership and selected school conditions (such as professional community or organisational learning) and the subsequent impact of these conditions on student outcomes. In addition to measures of leadership, school conditions, and student outcomes, these studies often include student and community background variables. This makes it possible to separate the effects of leadership on student outcomes from the effects of between-school differences that stem from the students’ backgrounds.

The forward mapping strategy was used to address the first question in Table 1. It involved two different meta-analyses of the evidence in order to identify the relative impact of different types of leadership on student outcomes. The findings relevant to this first question are found in chapters 4 and 5.
Table 1. Strategies used to address the major research questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is the impact of type of leadership on student outcomes?</td>
<td>Forward mapping including two meta-analyses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• type as theory;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• type as leadership dimension.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the role of leadership in interventions that improve student learning in New Zealand contexts?</td>
<td>Backward mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• teacher professional learning;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• interventions in Māori-medium settings;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• educational partnerships with parents and whānau.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is the role of leadership in creating educationally powerful connections between families, whānau, and communities?</td>
<td>Backward mapping analysis of New Zealand research, supplemented by a meta-analysis of the impact of various types of school–home connections on student outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What knowledge, skills, and dispositions (KSDs) are needed to engage in the practices identified in questions 1 and 2?</td>
<td>Analysis of research that links KSDs to leadership dimensions and/or student outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.2 Backward mapping strategy

Since there was no direct New Zealand evidence about the impact of leadership on student outcomes, further strategies had to be employed to answer the second and third research questions in Table 1. An indirect, backward mapping strategy\(^\text{122}\) was adopted to identify the role of leadership in improving the academic and social learning of students through teacher professional learning and in Māori-medium contexts. The strategy is called backward mapping because its starting point was evidence about student outcomes, from which implications for school leadership were derived or inferred.

In the case of teacher professional learning, the majority of studies used in this backward mapping analysis had been included in the recently published *Teacher Professional Learning and Development BES*\(^\text{123}\). This meant that claims made for the impact of interventions on students had already been subject to rigorous scrutiny. This prior analysis gave us confidence that the studies selected for this synthesis had made a positive difference for students. Inferences were then drawn from the descriptive evidence about the role played by leaders in creating the conditions that produced those positive student outcomes\(^\text{124}\). It should be noted that, in many of these studies, leadership was widely distributed, both within and beyond the school. We also included studies of interventions in kura to ensure that our leadership dimensions were equally relevant to both Māori- and English-medium schools.

Given the inferential nature of the backward mapping strategy, it was important that we cross-check our findings carefully. We did this by comparing the dimensions derived from the backward mapping analysis of the New Zealand research with the dimensions derived from the forward mapping analysis of the international research. There was considerable similarity in the results. See Chapter 5 for the international research and Chapter 6 for the New Zealand research.

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\(^{123}\) Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung (2007), op. cit.

3.6.3 The meta-analysis of school–home connections

The research into leadership effects on student outcomes has rarely paid attention to parent involvement or other school–home factors. As a result, this dimension of leadership practice did not feature in the forward mapping analyses in Chapter 5. The failure to include this aspect of influence in most studies of leadership reflects a weakness in the literature rather than the unimportance of the issue. Indeed, leadership practices in school–home and school–whānau connections can be instrumental in addressing achievement disparities and ensuring effective educational provision for diverse students. The importance of this aspect of leadership was also suggested by the backward mapping analysis of the New Zealand evidence used to answer question 2 in Table 1.

Given the scarcity of leadership research literature on the impact of school–home connections, we turned to the broader literature to generate the meta-analysis that informs Chapter 7, building on the work of the Community and Family Influences BES\textsuperscript{125}. The purpose of this meta-analysis is to provide leaders with an indicative guide as to where effort invested in school–home connections will be more (or less) productive. A qualitative analysis of the key source studies in the meta-analysis focuses on the ways in which leaders facilitated powerful connections. Further information about the methodology and source studies is provided in Chapter 7 and Appendices 7.1 and 7.2.

3.6.4 Strategies to identify leadership capabilities.

There is very little research evidence that directly explores the relationship between educational leaders’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions (KSDs) and student outcomes. Nevertheless, once we had identified the impact of various leadership dimensions on student outcomes using the forward mapping strategy, we were able to locate studies that linked those leadership dimensions to specific skills and knowledge. Through this two-step process, we established indirect connections between four KSDs and student outcomes. These findings are reported in Chapter 8.

3.6.5 Supplementary strategies

Once the leadership dimensions were derived, additional strategies were used to more fully describe them and more strongly connect them to the New Zealand context. Over 200 New Zealand theses related to policy, leadership, and administration were reviewed in a search for illustrations of the dimensions in action.\textsuperscript{126}

3.7 Quality assurance and collaboration with professional groups

An advisory group comprising a diverse range of school leaders and academics provided methodological and theoretical advice to the writers. These New Zealand advisors were supplemented by international advisors who commented on and contributed to specific pieces of work and who quality assured the final draft of the synthesis.

The Ministry of Education, in managing this project, collaborated with the various associations of educational leaders. A BES management group comprising approximately 25 members drawn from principal groups, unions, boards of trustees, and regulatory bodies together with Ministry representatives selected the authors and oversaw progress. This group provided feedback on draft chapters and presentations and suggested how the document could be


\textsuperscript{126} New Zealand Education Theses Database. www.educationcounts.govt.nz/goto/BES
made more useful for school leaders in both English- and Māori-medium settings. Many other educational leaders also contributed to the development of this BES through the discussions that followed numerous presentations to professional associations and conferences.

The above advisory processes increased the accuracy, accessibility, and potential usefulness of the final document.

3.8 Summary

In this chapter, we have outlined the purpose of this BES and the approach we took to its development. We have introduced a concept of leadership that is cognisant of the bicultural nature of our schools, our location in the Pacific region, and the fact that we are home to some of the largest populations of Pasifika peoples found anywhere. Our concept is inclusive of both positional and distributed leadership. It views leadership as highly fluid and deeply embedded in educational tasks and knowledge.

Several different analytic strategies were used to identify and explain a number of key dimensions of leadership that are linked to improved student outcomes. A forward mapping strategy was used to analyse studies that quantified the relationship between measures of leadership and student outcomes. These studies were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively, with the latter involving two detailed meta-analyses. For the studies that did not provide direct measures of leadership, a backward mapping strategy was used. This involved analysing evaluations of (i) New Zealand interventions that had demonstrated positive effects on a range of student outcomes and (ii) New Zealand studies of effective educational engagement with communities. The purpose of the analysis was to identify the leadership practices that may have contributed to the success or otherwise of these interventions. The backward mapping strategy included studies from both English- and Māori-medium contexts. A further meta-analysis was conducted on studies of school–home connections in order to supplement our findings about the role of leaders in promoting connections that are educationally powerful.

The methodology also involved a collaborative process of checking and revision with national and international quality assurers and professional representatives. Further details of the methods used are found in the relevant chapters and appendices.
References

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


Robinson, V. M. J. (2008). Forging the links between distributed leadership and student outcomes.


**Glossary of Māori terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Māori term</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ako</td>
<td>Teaching and learning, understood as a single, reciprocal process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hapū</td>
<td>Sub-tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hui</td>
<td>Meeting, gathering, usually with a specific kaupapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iwi</td>
<td>People, nation, tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaikako</td>
<td>Teacher, instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanohi ki te kanohi</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaumātua</td>
<td>Elder, old man or woman, adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaupapa</td>
<td>Purpose, agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koro</td>
<td>Male elder, old man, grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuia</td>
<td>Female elder, old woman, grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kura</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kura kaupapa Māori</td>
<td>Māori-medium school with an identifiable philosophical base (e.g., Te Aho Matua)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kura whānau</td>
<td>The support network of families and extended families associated with a school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngāti</td>
<td>Prefix denoting tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pākehā</td>
<td>New Zealand-born non-Māori, especially those of European descent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pāngarau</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pānui</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pōwhiri</td>
<td>Formal welcome or opening ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taonga</td>
<td>Prized possession, treasure, inheritance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Aho Matua</td>
<td>Literally, the central thread; the philosophical statement that guides the operations of many kura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te reo Māori</td>
<td>The Māori language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te reo Māori me ōna tikanga</td>
<td>Māori language and customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tikanga</td>
<td>The usual and accepted procedure or way of doing things; protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuhituhi</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumuaki</td>
<td>Principal, head teacher, leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakapapa</td>
<td>Ancestry, genealogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whānau</td>
<td>Family, to be understood in a much more encompassing sense than the nuclear family; network of mutual supports and obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whanaungatanga</td>
<td>Sense of kinship, family, belonging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mo ngā tamariki, kia rua ngā reo. Ko te reo o ngā mātua tipuna tuatahi, ko te reo o tauiwai tuarua. Kia ʻōrte te pakari o ia reo, kia tu tangata ai ngā tamariki i roto i te ao Māori, i roto hoki i te ao o tauiwi. 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. Ta 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 Heiākōkō Mataira