

InSights

Pilot study to test the Exposure Draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals: Final report

Professor Stephen Dinham
July 2011

This report was commissioned by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School leadership (AITSL) as part of a pilot study project conducted nationally from January to May 2011 to test the exposure draft of the National Professional Standard for Principals.

The views, findings, conclusions and recommendations herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of AITSL or of the educational institutions of the authors.

Acknowledgments

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) would like to thank and acknowledge Professor Stephen Dinham from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education of the University of Melbourne for the creation of this report.

Citation:

Dinham, S 2011, *Pilot study to test the Exposure Draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals: Final report*, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, Melbourne.

Prepared in partnership with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education of the University of Melbourne.

ISBN 978-0-9872351-6-9

© 2011 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited (AITSL).

Reprinted 2014.

AITSL owns the copyright in this publication. This publication or any part of it may be used freely only for non-profit education purposes provided the source is clearly acknowledged. The publication may not be sold or used for any other commercial purpose.

Other than permitted above or by the Copyright ACT 1968 (Commonwealth), no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, published, performed, communicated or adapted, regardless of the form or means (electronic or otherwise), without prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Address inquiries regarding copyright to: AITSL, PO Box 299, Collins Street West, VIC 8007, Australia.

This project was funded by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited (AITSL). The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership was formed to provide national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership with funding provided by the Australian Government.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank AITSL for the opportunity to undertake the role of project coordinator for the pilot study to test the exposure draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals. I have been working in the area of professional standards for teachers and principals for over a decade at state and national level and it has been a pleasure to see this work coming to fruition under AITSL's stewardship.

Tony Mackay and Margery Evans, Chair and CEO respectively of AITSL, have been particularly helpful and supportive in the conduct of this project. Shelagh Whittleston and Bronwyn Burr from AITSL have provided exemplary assistance and guidance with the conduct and management of the individual pilot studies.

I would like to thank the team leaders and team members of the 10 pilot studies and their respective organisations and collaborative partners. This was a challenging undertaking within a limited time scale and the high quality of the final reports is indicative of the professionalism, pride and proficiency of those who conducted the studies.

Thanks also go to the many hundreds of principals, aspiring principals, stakeholders and students from across Australia who gave of their time to participate in the studies.

Finally and perhaps most importantly I would like to thank Dame Professor Pat Collarbone for her work in developing the Standard. Through her experience, intellect, insight, research, extensive collaboration and consultation she has exercised exemplary leadership capabilities in the development of the Standard. It has been a pleasure working with her and with AITSL on this roundbreaking work.

Professor Stephen Dinham

Chair of Teacher Education and Director of Learning and Teaching
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
University of Melbourne

Contents

Glossary	2
1. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership	3
2. Background to the Australian Professional Standard for Principals	4
3. The Standard	7
4. Operation, findings and recommendations of the pilot studies	12
Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL).....	12
Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).....	14
Charles Darwin University, Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development.....	16
New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (NSW DEC).....	18
Principals Australia.....	20
Rural Education Forum Australia (REFA).....	23
South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services.....	27
Tasmanian Department of Education.....	30
Western Australia Department of Education.....	34
5. Overall findings, issues and recommendations	37
References	45
Appendix: The project teams	47

Glossary

TACCI	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ACEL	Australian Council of Educational Leaders
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACSSO	Australian Council of State School Organisations
AEU	Australian Education Union
AHISA	Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
APPA	Australian Primary Principals Association
ASEPA	Australian Special Education Principals' Association
ASPA	Australian Secondary Principals' Association
BCA	Business Council of Australia
CaSPA	Catholic Secondary Principals Australia
CEO	Catholic Education Office
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DoHA	Department of Health and Ageing
DSP	Directors of School Performance
IEU	Independent Education Union
NSW DEC	New South Wales Department of Education and Communities [New South Wales Department of Education and Training/NSW DET at project commencement]
NT DET	Northern Territory Department of Education and Training
PA	Principals Australia
REFA	Rural Education Forum Australia
SA DECS	South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services
SAPPA	South Australian Primary Principals Association
SASPA	South Australian Secondary Principals' Association
SEND	Special educational needs and disability
SES	Socio-economic status
Tas DE	Tasmanian Department of Education
WA DE	Western Australia Department of Education

1. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) was established on 1 January 2010 to provide national leadership for the Commonwealth and state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership.

An important priority for the Institute is to empower school leaders with strategies that support excellence in teaching in their schools and to create a new generation of leaders that can manage and develop 21st-century schools. To contribute to this, AITSL has responsibility for developing and maintaining Australian professional standards for school leaders.

Three of the Institute's objectives are to:

- support and advance the quality of teaching in Australian schools and other educational settings
- support and advance the quality of leadership in Australian schools and other educational settings
- foster and drive high quality professional learning for teachers and school leaders.

AITSL commenced work on the development of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals¹ in early 2010 and is working collaboratively with the profession, education jurisdictions, education unions, professional bodies and other key stakeholders.

The process has been iterative and has involved research, drafting and critical review and feedback which has informed the development of an exposure draft of the Standard.

¹ Previously known as the Australian Professional Standard for Principals

2. Background to the Australian Professional Standard for Principals

"Leadership matters and is changing ... School leadership needs to be smart; it needs to be evidence-based and shared."

Mulford, 2008, p. 69

"Ask anyone who has had one or more years working in a school whether leadership has made a difference in their work and the answer will be an unhesitating 'Yes'. No matter who the respondent is ... they all seem to know good (and bad) leadership when they experience it."

Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008, p. 459

"I ... advance the following three arguments. First, leadership matters ... Second, leadership is inclusive ... Third, leadership practices can be taught and learned."

Reeves, 2008, p. 3

"The more leaders focus their influence, their learning, and their relationships with teachers on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes."

Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008, p. 636

"Today, the prime focus for any educational leader must be on the academic, personal and social advancement of his or her students. Everything done in a school should be geared to impact in some way on facilitating student achievement, the true core business of teachers and schools. This reality has been reflected in increased expectations and pressures placed on educational leaders to lift school, teacher and student performance, matters for which they are increasingly being held accountable."

Dinham, 2009, p. 395

School leadership is recognised as a vital factor in improving school effectiveness and student achievement. All teachers exercise leadership, although as teachers become more experienced and adept it is likely that their leadership involvement and influence will increase beyond the classroom, across the school and even beyond.

While all teachers exercise leadership, some teachers will seek appointment to formal positions of responsibility in schools. Standards such as those for Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers will and should contain leadership aspects. However there is also a need to consider standards for principals, who play vital roles in creating the conditions where teachers can teach and students can learn (Dinham, 2008). Increasingly, while principals continue to perform a variety of managerial roles, they are seen to be most effective where they place major emphasis on instructional leadership, i.e., teaching and learning:

"School leaders who focus on students' achievement and instructional strategies are the most effective ... It is leaders who place more attention on teaching and focused achievement domains ... who have the higher effects."

Hattie, 2009, p. 83

The crucial importance of the teacher to student learning has been confirmed. The challenge for any educational leader is to make things happen within individual classrooms. Wahlstrom and Louis have commented (2008, 459):

"In the current era of accountability, a principal's responsibility for the quality of teachers' work is simply a fact of life. How to achieve influence over work settings (classrooms) in which they rarely participate is a key dilemma."

Despite the small measured effects for school-based factors beyond the classroom (Hattie, 2009), research evidence has confirmed that 'school leaders can play major roles in creating the conditions in which teachers can teach effectively and students can learn' (Dinham, 2008, 15).

Some, however, have suggested that because of its 'messy', indirect influences, the effect of leadership on student achievement has actually been underestimated (see Dinham, 2007; Reeves, 2008).

Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004, p. 5), in reviewing the research literature on leadership and school achievement, found: '[t]he total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of total school effects', and that:

- Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.
- Leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most [i.e., in the most challenging schools and circumstances].

Today, leadership is seen as central and essential to delivering the changes, improvement and performance that society increasingly expects of all organisations, including schools. What has become clear is that leadership, including educational leadership, is a more contentious, complex, situated and dynamic phenomenon than previously thought.

It is for the reasons outlined above that professional standards for principals (and other leaders) are needed to articulate what it is that effective principals know, are like, and are able to do to facilitate teaching and learning and to meet the expectations society has of them.

Professional standards for school principals can play key roles in aiding reflection and self-development, formulating suitable professional learning experiences, attracting and selecting suitable candidates for positions of responsibility and assessing the effectiveness of school leaders. Standards also articulate the values, knowledge and practices of school leaders to the wider community.

One of the challenges in writing standards for principals is to capture the sheer diversity of the contexts in which Australian principals can operate – from teaching principals to those heading multi-campus schools, low to high SES, low to high NESB, urban to regional to isolated, struggling to successful schools, government to other systems to independent schools, and so forth.

Nevertheless, the above has not deterred Australia's developers of standards. Quite the reverse, in fact. When the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) conducted a mapping and consolidation of Australian leadership/principal standards for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) in 2009, it examined more than 60 extant standards and frameworks currently being used for a variety of purposes. Like others, ACER concluded that, given developments in Australia such as national testing and national curriculum, the time was ripe for a national standard for principals to accompany national standards for teachers at a number of key career stages and national accreditation of teacher education courses, developments advocated previously in a report for the Business Council of Australia (Dinham, Ingvarson & Kleinhenz, 2008).

To this end, AITSL commenced work on the development of the Australian Professional standard for Principals in early 2010. This work was led by Dame Professor Patricia Collarbone, an acknowledged expert in the field. AITSL established an external expert steering group to guide and support this work and there has been an intensive and extensive process of research, drafting, critical review and feedback from organisations and jurisdictions across Australia. A feature of this work to date has been the universal support for the initiative across all sectors.

3. The Standard²

Australian Professional Standard for Principals

AITSL has been working closely with key education stakeholders to develop the Australian Professional Standard for Principals during 2010 and 2011.

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

Pilot studies to test the exposure draft of the Standard were conducted across Australia from early February to late May 2011. The outcomes of the pilot studies will help to inform the finalisation of the Standard by mid 2011.

The Institute's responsibility to lead this work is outlined in its Letter of Expectation from the then Commonwealth Minister for Education, the Hon. Julia Gillard.

Why is the Standard being developed?

Standards are a means by which a profession defines itself. They have a unifying role and are a basis for public confidence and respect.

The national focus of the Standard provides an opportunity for members of the education profession — irrespective of sector, level of schooling, geographic, economic or social context or jurisdiction — to describe the professional practice of effective principals and to make it accessible and meaningful to others.

The Standard makes explicit that quality school leadership is important to student learning, the teaching profession and the broader community.

It will be the first nationally agreed standard for Australian principals.

² The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (December 2008)

How was the Standard developed?

AITSL has led the development of the Standard in collaboration with the profession, education jurisdictions, education unions, professional bodies and other key stakeholders.

The iterative process commenced in early 2010 and has involved research, drafting and critical review and feedback. More specifically the process has:

- recognised and drawn upon research and evidence, including existing national and international standards and capability frameworks
- involved school leadership experts representative of approximately 30 key stakeholder groups, including state and territory education jurisdictions, government and non-government sectors, education bodies and professional associations, education unions and school leadership experts as members of the expert steering group
- drawn upon international and national experts of AITSL's International Advisory Panel
- involved a recognised expert, Professor Dame Pat Collarbone, as chief writer
- engaged over 550 stakeholders in a process of targeted initial feedback from late October to mid November 2010, to inform the development of the exposure draft of the Standard.

How will the Standard be used?

The Standard can be used to build the quality and capacity of principals across Australia to lead learning by:

- providing a framework for professional learning
- providing a basis for attracting, preparing, developing and supporting principals for leading 21st century schools
- guiding self-reflection, self-assessment and development
- being a guide to inform the management of self and others.

The Standard may be used by potential, aspiring and current principals, professional education bodies and associations, employers, education unions and the wider community.

The Standard will be applicable in all Australian education contexts including different levels of schooling, sectors and geographic and socioeconomic settings.

The Standard will provide a basis for the broader Australian community to understand the scope and complexity of a principal's work and what Australians can expect of their school leaders.

The pilot studies: ‘road-testing’ the Standard

The Exposure Draft notes that:

The Australian Professional Standard for Principals (the Standard) sets out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve excellence in their work. It takes full account of the crucial contribution made by principals in:

- raising student achievement at all levels and all stages;
- promoting equity and excellence;
- creating and sustaining the conditions under which quality teaching and learning thrive;
- influencing, developing and delivering community expectations and government policy;
- contributing to the development of a 21st-century education system at local, national and international levels.³

It is important to note that the Standard is a content rather than a performance standard: i.e., the Standard is not intended to be used directly to select principals or appraise principal performance. If the Standard was intended to be used for performance purposes, it would need to be designed quite differently and validated psychometrically to ensure the Standard was fit for purpose.

Because of the above distinction, it was decided that rather than go through an additional lengthy process of validation, as has been the case with the professional standards for teachers, it would be more beneficial to engage the profession nationally in piloting or ‘road-testing’ the Standard in the ‘real world’.

It was thought essential that these pilots take place in a variety of contexts and that the exposure draft of the Standard be applied to a range of its intended purposes, the common feature of which was to be use of the Standard with principals, aspiring principals and other stakeholders.⁴

To the above end, tenders were called in late 2010, with projects to commence early in 2011. Pilot studies were intended to be completed by the end of May/early June 2011, with draft final reports due by 27 May and final reports due by 3 June. Presentation of pilot study reports occurred at the AITSL Leadership Symposium held in Melbourne on 8-9 June. Following the symposium, this report on the project was due to be completed by 20 June, following earlier reports on the pilots due on 27 April and 3 June⁵.

³ http://www.aitsl.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Professional_Standard_for_Principals_Exposure_Draft_file_2.pdf

⁴ One pilot project conducted by ACER was specifically designed to engage other stakeholders

⁵ Pilot Study to Test the Exposure Draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals: Summary of Key Issues Arising from Draft Final Reports (Dinham, 2011).

Nine organisations were selected to undertake ten pilot studies. While each project had a particular focus and context (see later), each was required to specifically address the following research questions:

1. Authenticity – Is the Standard authentic? To what extent does the Standard accurately define the leadership requirements and professional practice of effective principals? Does the Standard describe effective school leadership? Does the Standard provide a framework of the knowledge and skills of effective principals, regardless of context?

2. Usefulness – Is the Standard useable? How well does it provide an effective framework for professional learning? How useful would the Standard be for planning professional development and reflecting on practice? How effectively could it help to inform strategies to attract, prepare and develop effective principals for leading 21st-century schools? How useful is it as a guide to inform the management of self and others?

3. Value-add – Does the Standard value-add to the knowledge and skills of effective principals? Is the Standard fair and reasonable? Is it inspirational and aspirational? What evidence supports the Standard?

Suggested or possible approaches outlined in the tender document included but were not limited to:

- mapping existing professional learning approaches/programs for current and aspiring principals against the Standard
- developing a reflection tool/activity/program for individual self-reflection, self-assessment and development using the Standard
- developing and evaluating a new professional leadership activity/program based on the Standard
- integrating the Standard into existing or purpose-designed leadership development activities
- using the Standard to inform the development of mentoring, coaching program/course
- mapping the Standard against existing purpose-designed management policies and procedures and resources.

As noted, engaging aspiring and current principals along with key stakeholders was considered essential. Through completion of the pilot studies, the overall project findings were intended to inform further refinement and finalisation of the Standard.

The organisations leading the pilot studies included:

- Australian Council for Educational Leaders
- Australian Council for Educational Research
- Charles Darwin University, Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development
- New South Wales Department of Education and Communities⁶
- Principals Australia [conducting two pilots]
- Rural Education Forum of Australia
- South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services
- Tasmanian Department of Education and Training
- Western Australia Department of Education

Notes

Professor Stephen Dinham of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, had input to the design of the overall project, oversaw the pilot studies, maintained regular contact with the various project pilot team leaders and wrote the various reports.

It should be noted that not all pilot studies commenced at the same time, due to vagaries of time of signing of contracts, obtaining ethics clearances and so forth.

Some pilot studies are clearly more comprehensive in their scope than others and some projects form part of larger work being undertaken by the respective organisations.

It should also be acknowledged that there is a high degree of 'in-kind' support provided by some organisations which goes beyond the scope of the contracted budget/s.

Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that much of the text that follows has been taken directly from the respective interim reports prepared for AITSL.

⁶ New South Wales Department of Education and Training at time of project commencement.

4. Operation, findings and recommendations of the pilot studies

Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL)

Overview of the project

The ACEL contribution to the AITSL Pilot Study of the Exposure Draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals took four forms: a content analysis of the correlation of the Standard and the *ACEL Leadership Capability Framework*⁷; surveys of principals and aspiring principals to ascertain the adequacy of the Standard in enabling them to achieve their professional purposes; interviews with a small sample of principals to obtain detailed personalised insights regarding the relevance of the Standard in their work; and engagement with six cross-country focus groups in formal critique of the constructs of authenticity, usefulness and value-add of the Standard.

A total of 206 practising educational leaders contributed to the ACEL study. Approximately 69 per cent were principals and 31 per cent aspiring principals. A number of the aspiring principals had or were currently relieving in the principal's position in their school or another school.

The stated goals of the ACEL project were as follows:

To assess the **authenticity**, **usefulness** and **value-add** of the exposure draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals for its nominated purposes, audiences and contexts.

- To provide evidence of the degree to which the Standard:
 - illustrates what effective principals are expected to know, do and understand;
 - will be used by both principals and aspiring principals, and for what purposes;
 - adds value to the knowledge and skills of effective principals;
 - is viewed as a beneficial professional learning tool for both principals and aspiring principals.
- To assess the authenticity, usefulness and value-add of the Standard as:
 - a framework for professional learning;
 - a basis for the identification of strategies for attracting, preparing and developing principals for leading 21st century schools;
 - a guide to self-reflection, self-assessment and development;
 - a guide to inform the management of self and others.

⁷ Not reported here or in the final report on the pilot study.

Outcomes of the pilot study

The outcomes of the ACEL project are strongly supportive of the intent of the AITSL initiative and moderately supportive of the progress of the initiative to date. Particular insights of broad significance to emerge from the ACEL study are as follows:

- The Standard is perceived as achievable through a wide range of professional learning strategies. Its comprehensiveness and balance as a professional learning mechanism are notable.
- The Standard is particularly useful for experienced principals involved in mentoring, coaching or training aspirants to the principal position. It is perceived as less useful for highly experienced principals and also for aspirants undertaking individual professional growth.
- The Standard is perceived predominantly as strategic in its philosophical orientation. While the importance of strategic leadership (Caldwell and Spinks; Dinham) was widely endorsed by the subjects in the ACEL study, it appears that other approaches to school leadership are, at this time, underdone in the Standard. This is particularly the case with advocacy/educative approaches (Bates; Sachs; Pearson) but is also the case with organisation-wide approaches (Mulford, Crowther) and transformational approaches (Beare; Duignan; Sarra). Perhaps for this reason, the Standard was very widely interpreted as 'safe' but not 'exciting'.
- The Standard appears to be easily linked to other prominent national leadership frameworks, including the *ACEL Leadership Capability Framework*, opening the door to a range of productive national and international alliances.

The three major recommendations to emerge from the ACEL study are as follows:

1. That the general intent and progress of the Standard be endorsed
2. That the current document be expanded into two separate documents, or components of a single document, one for experienced principals and one for aspiring principals
3. That the philosophical base of the current document be broadened to include a balance of strategic/transformational/educative/organisation-wide leadership approaches, thus ensuring its greater relevance in sensitive educational contexts and opening the door to a wider range of developmental experiences for individual principals.

Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)

Overview of the project

The ACER project specifically sought to engage key stakeholders other than principals with the Standard. As seen below, the audiences included students, parent and community groups, parent representatives of various sectors and systems, and education unions. In the case of students, an inductive approach was utilised whereby students were asked to reflect on the desirable attributes of principals. Findings were then related to the Standard.

A total of nine groups were selected to be consulted (listed below).

The organisations selected were contacted via letter and telephone to inform them of the purposes of the research and to invite their contribution. When consent to participation was obtained, a time was arranged for an interview or teleconference.

Representative Groups Consulted

Business

- Business Council of Australia
- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Parent and community groups

- Public schools: Australian Council of State School Organisations
- Independent schools: Australian Parents Council

Teachers

- State schools: Australian Education Union
- Catholic and Independent schools: Independent Education Union of Australia

Senior secondary students

- Catholic senior students
- Independent senior school students
- Government senior school students

Outcomes of the pilot study

The stakeholder representatives welcomed the developmental process that had been employed by AITSL and the opportunity for further input.

The draft Standard is viewed as a positive initiative by the representatives of the business, parent and teacher groups that were consulted. The document is seen to provide an opportunity for clarity in a potentially confusing area. One common conclusion across the business, parent and teacher groups was that the Standard's potential for guiding principals' reflection and professional learning was its most valuable attribute.

However, there are a number of differences among the business, parent and teacher groups in how they view particular details in the draft Standard, and somewhat different expectations about what the overall purpose is intended to be.

The major conclusion is that there is still work to be done in clarifying the purposes of the Standard and the role it is expected to play in Australian schools. In part, this is about clarifying what the Standard is not trying to do. Some stakeholders were critical because it did not set out standards in the sense of specifying performance levels and indicators for appraising principals' work. They clearly expected that this would be done, and the document does not articulate why it has its current focus.

The consultations raised a number of points for consideration in revising the document:

1. Start the document with a new section titled 'Purpose of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals' which includes the following points:
 - The focus is on the 'content standards' of principals' work rather than 'performance standards' and the reasons why
 - The distinction between the terms 'standard' and 'standards' and the rationale for using the former
 - How the Standard is intended to relate to the standards developed by employers and professional associations and the contexts within which the Standard is expected to be used
 - Any possible future developments in the Standard if these are envisaged at this stage.
2. Make the role of parents more explicit in regard to the terminology used in the Standard and the area of partnerships with schools.
3. Elaborate the concept of partnerships in regard to what is required to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between schools, parents and carers, and the wider community.

4. Signal that that students' views have played a role in shaping the Standard. For example, this could be done in the section 'Personal qualities and interpersonal skills' by including a statement such as the following after the first paragraph:

'Students value principals who:

 - consult with and respect students
 - understand and empathise with students
 - are highly visible
 - are good communicators
 - are energetic and constantly seeking to improve the school
 - model fair and reasonable behaviour
 - follow through on their statements.
5. Include a new final section entitled 'Implementation and resourcing'.

Charles Darwin University, Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development

Overview of the project

This project was undertaken by the Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development at Charles Darwin University in nine weeks between April and May 2011. The project investigated the authenticity, use and value-add of the Exposure Draft of the Australian Professional Standard for School Principals (the Standard) for school principals in regional and remote communities in the Northern Territory. The project was funded with a small grant from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), with the support from the government, Catholic and Independent schools sectors. The aggregated findings of the study have been collated into this report.

The views presented in this report were drawn from government, Catholic and Independent school principals and school leaders (e.g., regional Directors of School Performance and schools' assistant principals), who are located in regional and remote locations across the Northern Territory.

A total of 45 school principals, five assistant principals, three Directors of School Performance and five parents took part. Views of the participants were collected through discussion in small groups and through individual discussions. The study has found considerable commonality in the views of the school principals, school leaders, parents and community members about how they conceptualise 'excellent school principals'.

Outcomes of the pilot study

The findings from this study suggest that for school principals the Standard has authenticity, use and value-adds to their understanding of their own professional learning. The authenticity and use of the Standard by parents and school communities was seen to be less obviously of benefit to them. The practices promoted in the Standard, however, if enacted in regional and remote communities, were considered to be of value.

There was general consensus that the Standard encapsulated the primary roles of school principals. Many of the school principals could see value in having The Standard, as they could see that it would help them to move through the 'why' more quickly. Some argued, however, that the nuances associated with the work of school principals in different contexts, the challenges for 'developing self and others' in 'regional and remote' locations, was not sufficiently acknowledged or discussed in the Standard.

This study set out to test the authenticity, use and value-add of the Exposure Draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals. The study has found considerable commonality in the views expressed by the school principals, school leaders, parents and community members about how they conceptualise 'excellent school principals'. The goal of improving students' learning in the Standard was well received.

Authenticity

Generally the Standard was considered to be credible and to reflect the work of school principals in regional and remote locations. It was considered to be sufficiently broad to take account of all the different types of responsibilities with which they deal. Some participants did query whether their communities would understand the concepts of 'standards' and 'professional learning'.

A limitation on this project, however, has been that it was conducted within nine weeks. This limited timeframe made it very difficult to approach, negotiate and discuss the nature and implications of the Standard with communities in the Northern Territory, particularly indigenous community leaders. As a result there has been limited input into the findings of this report directly from Indigenous educators, parents or community leaders. The inability to credibly engage with Indigenous communities for the purposes of this project does leave unknown the Standard's authenticity, use and value-add for Indigenous communities.

Uses

While there was general agreement that the document would be useful within schools, it was hard for many of the participants in this study to know what parents should do with it in relation to a school principal's professional learning. There were also some concerns expressed about the language of the document being difficult for 'non-educators' to understand, and some wondered whether it would be translated into the common community languages in the Northern Territory. Others thought that its implementation may be tricky with some school councils. There was also concern expressed by some principals that a 'heavy-handed' implementation of the Standard could undermine the notion of a 'profession' for school principals, by it appearing somewhat prescriptive.

Value

Most groups of school principals who participated in this study thought the document would be of value to them and their staff, however most found it difficult to see how it was a 'professional learning' document. Some principals indicated that they did not think their community would fully understand the Standard without 'unpacking'. Some expressed concern that it was difficult to make the distinction between a 'performance standard' and 'professional learning' standard.

Advice

The participants in this study made the following suggestion:

6. The implementation of the Standard should be accompanied by templates, examples of professional learning that match the Standard, and translations of the information so that schools can provide information about the Standard to parents and communities in their own languages.

New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (NSW DEC)⁸

Overview of the project

The New South Wales Department of Education and Communities' Professional Learning and Leadership Development pilot study team used a multi-method research design to test the Exposure Draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals (the Standard).

The 14 guiding questions in the pilot study were tested as statements and grouped according to authenticity, usefulness and value-add of the Standard. Each of the statements was examined using a five-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The Standard's professional practices were also examined using the pilot study's five key concepts concerning importance, enablers, barriers, challenge to learn and challenge to implement or practise.

The data collection process included: (1) a focus group of 34 current principals in K-12 government schools in New South Wales; (2) an online survey of 193 current and relieving principals in K-12 government schools in New South Wales; (3) an online survey of 13 current and relieving principals in K-12 government schools in Western Australia; and (4) follow-up telephone interviews with a sample of eight principals in K-12 government schools in New South Wales.

Outcomes of the pilot study

There was significant evidence from principals in the pilot study that *The Standard accurately defined the leadership requirements and professional practices of effective principals and that The Standard described effective leadership.*

8 Formerly NSW Department of Education and Training (NSW DET) at the commencement of the pilot.

While the majority of principals either agreed or strongly agreed that *The Standard is fair* and reasonable and that *The Standard reflects the nature of leadership in Australian schools*, the evidence suggests that approximately a quarter of principals were undecided.

There was concern from principals about the Standard's applicability regardless of context, with a high number of principals commenting about the importance of school context in the Standard.

"Context is everything! To strengthen [the Standard] one needs to have the nature of the school and its community taken into account."

Principals in the pilot study agreed that *The Standard is useful* and that *The Standard is a guide to inform the management of self and others*.

Male metropolitan secondary principal in a NSW government school.

There was also support from principals in the New South Wales government school focus group for the Standard's use of the model of *plan and act, review and respond* for each of the five professional practices.

In relation to the use of the Standard as a framework for professional learning, there was substantial evidence from principals in the New South Wales government school survey and focus group that *The Standard provides a framework for planning professional learning and reflecting on practice* and that *The Standard provides a framework for professional learning*. Approximately 70 per cent of principals either agreed or strongly agreed with these two statements. However, there was also evidence that a group of New South Wales government school principals (28 per cent) in the survey sample was undecided that *The Standard provides a framework for planning professional learning and reflecting on practice*.

There was a significant difference in principals' responses between the challenge to learn the professional practices in the Standard and the challenge to implement or practise those same professional practices. Principals in New South Wales government schools consistently rated all of the 53 statements in each professional practice as more challenging to implement or practise than to learn. This finding requires further investigation of the most effective professional learning strategies and programs used to develop the capacity of current and future principals.

Principals were significantly less supportive of the Standard's potential to add value than of its authenticity and uses. The most consistent response for the four statements about value-add was '*undecided*'. The two statements concerning value-add for which there was limited support from principals were '*The Standard adds value to the knowledge and skills of effective principals*' and '*The Standard informs strategies to attract, prepare and develop principals for 21st-century schools*'.

There was no significant support from New South Wales government school principals for the other two statements concerning value-add, suggesting doubt about the value of the Standard to be inspirational and aspirational and to be future-focused.

The following suggestions could support the Standard:

1. To strengthen the authenticity of the Standard, supplementary communication strategies could be implemented. This could be in the form of additional materials to provide greater clarity of what the Standard looks like in practice. These materials could be incorporated in the Standard or in support materials such as:
 - podcasts
 - interactive web-based presentations.
2. To extend the Standard's use as a framework for professional learning, strategies and programs could be developed to both contextualise and embed role-specific, practice-based professional learning for current and future principals.
3. To strengthen the value-add of the Standard, further materials could be incorporated in the Standard or in a support document. This could be provided in the form of:
 - case studies
 - scenarios
 - descriptors of best practice
 - visioning exercises.
4. To strengthen the future focus of the Standard, further emphasis could be made of the needs of 21st-century learners and the strategic role of leaders in innovation.
5. To strengthen the Standard, both aspiration and inspiration could be explored in the context of excellent practice in leadership.
6. To ensure ownership by the profession of the Standard, principals need to be effectively engaged in substantive dialogue and discussion about the Standard and its applicability to particular school contexts.

Principals Australia [conducted two pilot studies]

Overview of the project

Principals Australia is a partnership involving:

- Association of Heads of Independent Schools Australia Limited (AHISA)
- Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA)
- Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA)
- Catholic Secondary Principals Australia (CaSPA)

and with the involvement of the

- Australian Special Education Principals Association (ASEPA)

Two pilot studies for the trialling of the Standard for Principals were undertaken by Principals Australia.

- Testing the authenticity, value-adding and usefulness of the exposure Standard applied to a representative sample of current profession-led professional learning and development programs for principals: KidsMatter Primary – a mental health initiative for primary schools in partnership with beyondblue and the Australian Psychological Society — and *MindMatters* – a national health initiative aimed at improving mental health outcomes in secondary schools in partnership with headspace (from 2011).
- Investigating and mapping the core capabilities (knowledge and practices) required of Principals to cater for students at risk, including those with special educational needs and disability ('SEND') to inform the authenticity, value-adding and usefulness of the Standard to these contexts.

Outcomes of the pilot study

Participants in both pilot studies agreed that the Standard:

- provided a general, relatively jargon-free overview of the professional practices of principals but its structure and language did not fully capture the important personal qualities and complexity of the role of a principal
- included words and/or terms that lacked clarity and required greater explanation or articulation — for example the implementation of vision and values
- did not adequately describe the social and emotional health and wellbeing skills and knowledge required to effectively lead and manage a school community or the level of, and quality of engagement with, students
- understated the emotional intelligence skills required of the principal
- could be used to assess the relevance of professional development offerings and any future professional learning, but was not seen as having a prime role in structuring professional development programs
- could inform professional performance and development discussions, but participants were unsure of the value of the Standard as a performance assessment tool
- understated the importance and nature of the collaboration and partnerships required with all staff members and the community
- did not capture the inclusive nature of education and the need to differentiate in response to local context and circumstances
- did not connect, because it was presented as a two-dimensional model, the information on the crucial role of the principal (the context) with the two key diagrams missing the consideration of the importance of the dynamic interaction between the professional practices, leadership requirements and the principal's role and context
- must be supported by professional learning materials and activities as well as a clearly articulated body of theory and research that can be accessed by all users of the Standard

- assumes that inclusive leadership is implicit within the Standard, however pilot study two participants commented on the importance of inclusive leadership and that research into inclusive leadership is sparse.

There is essential work to be done, based on the draft Standard, to ensure it is comprehensive and authentic for all principals. There were a number of issues raised in relation to the area of professional practice that were seen as not to be adequately addressed or identified within the Standard. This work must be profession-led and engage a wide range and number of practising principals in partnership with relevant academics and researchers. Unless the profession is actively engaged, the uptake and impact of the Standard and the opportunity the Standard provides to support and drive improved performance will be minimal. Significant investment in implementation needs to be made to make the Standard owned and used by the profession.

Recommendations

The following summary recommendations are proposed for the improvement of the content of the Standard and, importantly, its successful implementation and acceptance by the profession.

The model

1. The presentation and communication of the model should be reviewed from a user perspective to ensure it is more easily understood by the target audience.

Authenticity

2. The Standard should be contextualised in terms of where the Standard fits in the policy agenda and why it is important.
3. AITSL needs to settle the fundamental issue of whether or not the Standard should capture and define what every principal must know, do and understand in Australia in the 21st century in the context of the *Melbourne Declaration* and the national education reform agenda.
4. AITSL should consider whether or not the Standard should capture and define the principal's responsibility for developing and nurturing particular personal qualities, such as emotional intelligence and attention to own health and wellbeing.
5. The Standard should make explicit what it is exactly that all principals must know, do and understand about the interface between education and social and emotional health and wellbeing because it will lead to improved outcomes for their school communities. It should make explicit the evidence base for principals developing and maintaining capabilities in this complex area.
6. The Standard should make explicit what it is that principals must know, do and understand to ensure the 'voice of the student' is articulated and considered in the life of the school community.

Usefulness

7. The Standard should be accompanied by underpinning documents that enhance uptake by principals. These are detailed in the Principals Australia report.
8. AITSL should invite the profession to take a leadership role in exploring how the proposed national Standard might inform professional learning and leadership development programs at every level, from national to local and personal.

Value-add

9. The next step in developing the Standard should be profession-led and driven by a strong user perspective.
10. The next step in developing the Standard should be open and transparent, and engage parents, students and the general public as 'consumers'. This will contribute to raising the status of the principalship as a high-standing profession in Australian society, and ensure greater public understanding of the link between quality school leadership and improved student outcomes.

Defining and positioning the Standard

11. AITSL should engage with the profession's leaders on how the profession itself intends to relate to the proposed AITSL Standard.

Implementing the Standard

12. The implementation of the Standard must be accompanied by an effective marketing and communications strategy resourced by AITSL.
13. The implementation of the Standard must be accompanied by an effective professional education and training strategy with the aim of ensuring that all principals have a deep understanding and awareness of the Standard.

Rural Education Forum Australia [REFA]

Overview of the project

The Rural Education Forum Australia (REFA) is a collective of national organisations which represent the consumers and/or providers of education services in rural and remote Australia. REFA's work recognises the importance and value of people in rural and remote areas being able to realise their full potential in their environment, and the fundamental importance of education in enabling them to do this.

Many rural and remote schools are currently struggling to attract and retain quality leaders. The REFA report focuses on the Standard's rigour and relevance to professional learning, self-development and management and that of others. This report places particular emphasis on the Standard's effectiveness in promoting 21st-century life-long integrated learning in clearly defined rural and remote communities.

REFA formed a working party and reference group. These groups met via teleconference and face-to-face meetings in Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane. They completed the survey, which was also sent to an additional 60 principals in rural and remote locations or with backgrounds in rural and remote education, from the government and Catholic sectors. At the time of writing of the final report 35 principals had returned the survey.

The reference group discussed issues as they arose on the REFA site through a secure discussion group. Its members posted a video, telling personal stories pertinent to the Standard. It is a diverse group which had a very positive response to the process of giving advice. Often convenience and expedience excludes these principals from the opportunity to provide feedback. The group consisted of 18 invited principals.

On 21 April a symposium was held via teleconference co-hosted by REFA and the Sidney Myer chair of Rural Education and Communities, which linked academics and national organisations with an interest in rural educational leadership.

Outcomes of the pilot study

From discussions with our reference group, survey participants, academics closely involved in rural and remote learning and our member organisations, it is clear that:

- There is a need for an Australian professional standard for principals and that the current work is timely.
- It is seen as a model that can provide a framework for professional learning and development.
- The majority of principals surveyed see the Standard as a help in understanding the essential elements of leadership. The academics participating in the symposium were more critical of this aspect of the Standard.
- The Standard makes sense, its language is seen to be clear and succinctly expressed and devoid of contradictions.
- There is clear support for one Standard. There should not be a separate standard for rural and remote principals. However, we found in our meetings that principals believed that a deeper recognition of the professional differences faced in rural and remote settings would enhance the authenticity and usefulness of the Standard. Responses to the survey question regarding appropriateness to diverse educational and community contexts reflect this view.

Survey comments: 'doesn't deeply recognise the differences that geographic location brings.'; 'does not capture the complexity of the role of the principal in service deprived rural contexts.'

Over the period of our consultation much has been discussed about the importance of networking, collegiality and collaboration between schools in rural and remote communities. The survey results are significant regarding this matter. The majority of principals do not believe that the Standard will promote collaboration between schools. REFA believes it should.

When looking at the comments made by principals there is a definite minority who suggest that the Standard should include different stages of principalship. REFA does not support the view that there should be a graded Standard for emerging, beginning and experienced principals. If you are beginning in a leadership role you must measure your performance against what is an accepted standard.

The principals surveyed accept that the Standard reflects the role of the principal in the 21st-century learning context, which clearly involves leading innovation and change. However, in our discussions and from written responses, there is a sense that the process of implementing change is not adequately addressed. We believe this is a more complex task in rural and remote communities.

"Rural and remote education is constantly changing as the community context for each school changes and other industries become the main source of revenue for community members. Having principals that are adaptable and flexible is essential and I am not sure that this adaptability and flexibility is clearly articulated in the Standard as it currently reads."

Survey participant

Stakeholder engagement is essential to this task. We recommend the inclusion of transitional management, as discussed later in our response.

In conclusion, we applaud the work of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership in developing the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

We acknowledge the strength of the Standard is the practice that principals should develop a culture of fairness, equity, respect and wellbeing – the human side of principalship. Our main concern is that in an attempt to be a framework relevant to all sectors, systems and locations, the content has been sanitised to avoid the difficult issue of context, and in the context of rural and remote communities the building of relationships is central to effective leadership.

Case studies highlighting contextual professional judgements is worthy of consideration.

It is disappointing to read ... 'to improve the quality of education for all students and to provide value for money'. This economic rationalist statement appears out of step with the rest of the Standard, it seems just to 'pop-up'. We would recommend its deletion.

Further recommendations concerning changes to wording in the professional requirements and practices are outlined below.

We acknowledge and applaud the work of the many people responsible for the drafting of the Standard. We believe it to be timely and an appropriate framework for professional learning and development. The acceptance of the Standard, in our view, will be enhanced in all jurisdictions in the following ways:

- The making of professional judgments in context
- The building of relationships, networks and collaborative practices
- Including the transition phase in the change-management process
- Enhancing the role of the principal in building community confidence in the school
- Enhancing the role of the principal in embedding Indigenous history and culture
- The proactive role the principal should play in community sustainability
- Reordering the steps in the model of professional practice listed in each practice.

We do not believe that this requires a sub-set of standards, but rather deepening the contextual nature of the existing work.

Further recommendations

1. Appendix One [REFA Report] contains many suggestions of word changes that we feel deepens the context of rural and remote learning communities in the Standard. For example, throughout the document we recommend changing the reference to 'the community' to 'its community'. The word 'its' defines belonging.
2. In leading teaching and learning professional practice, include in the opening paragraph words that encourage principal leadership out of the school and/or their sector to promote, for example, sound learning practices in years 0-5, and within the general community.
3. Assuming the Standard will be a dynamic document, we recommend deleting the last sentence in professional practice four (dot point three) with a view to adding it if circumstances change.
4. A strengthening of the principal's capability to embed cultural appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures in their school.
5. The strengthening of a collaborative model. More must be said about the centrality of mutually enabling relationships in creating and sustaining vibrant learning communities.
6. In each professional practice the dot points should be in the order:
 - Review
 - Plan and act
 - Respond
7. That *making judgements* be considered as an additional practice or, at the very least, its inclusion in Professional Practice 4.

South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services

Overview of the project

This pilot study invited 135 school principals at different stages of principalship and from a range of educational, demographic and socio-economic contexts to test the usefulness of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

Aspiring, new, current and retired school principals from all 12 state education regions across South Australia formed 16 focus groups to trial the Standard. The focus groups responded to reality-based scenarios to assist them to judge the usefulness of the Standard as a tool for individual principal self-reflection, self-assessment and further professional development.

With the active support of the state's peak principal associations, SAPPA and SASPA, this trial enabled the profession to develop a sense of ownership of and commitment to the Standard. Further, it contributes to the national consensus about the Standard as a public statement about what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work.

The questions guiding this research pilot are

1. To what extent does the Standard assist principals to reflect on aspects of their work?
2. What can principals learn about themselves by using the Standard to reflect on their work?
3. What implications does using the Standard as a reflective tool have for enabling principals' ongoing development?

It was decided to adopt focus group interviews because this strategy would enable the collection and documentation of participant perceptions with increased depth and breadth in a time-effective, cost-effective manner.

Four categories of state school principals were invited to participate in the pilot. They included:

1. Aspiring principals from each of the following groups:
 - Those in the current QSchool for school leaders program who have been nominated as potential school principals by regional directors from all 12 SA Education regions (n=20).
 - The QSchool program for those currently working in non-school leadership positions from all 12 regions across the state and who have been identified by their line managers in regional or corporate offices as having the potential to take up the role of school principal (n=15).
 - Those from a small non-metropolitan region's talent pool who have been identified by the Regional Director of Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island as the pool from which to draw future school principals (n=17).
 - Those from a large metropolitan region's talent pool who were selected to participate in the Northern Adelaide Region's Time to Lead Program. The participants in these focus groups all work in low SES schools (n=21).
2. New principals who are in their first year as school principals (n=21).
3. Current principals who were invited by SAPPA and SASPA (n=19). Current principals who responded to the invitation to participate in the pilot of the exposure draft of the Standard (n=15).
4. Retired principals who have expressed interest in mentoring or coaching new school leaders (n=17).

The engagement/response from participants in each focus group was stimulated through activities that invited participants to respond to a series of reality-based scenarios.

The moderator/facilitator invited focus group participants to consider the range of scenarios, to reach consensus on one to discuss as a group, and then to provide practical suggestions for the principal to take in response to the selected scenario.

The moderator/facilitator then invited the focus group to use the matrix to record their practical suggestions. This matrix corresponds to the leadership requirements and professional practices identified by the Standard.

Outcomes of the pilot study

Focus groups identified the following strengths of the exposure draft of the National Standard for Principals:

- The Standard adequately describes the role of principal.
- The Standard is a useful guide/reference, especially for aspiring and new leaders.
- The Standard could be used widely with the school community, governing council, staff or leadership teams.
- The Standard is clearly written in accessible language.
- The Standard enables principals to reflect on their practice in specific circumstances and over time.
- The Standard promotes a holistic approach to self-reflection, encouraging principals to consider the interaction between leadership requirements and professional practices.
- The Standard provides a guide for principal self-assessment and planning of further professional learning.

Focus groups identified a range of isolated concerns about the usefulness of the Standard. The most commonly cited criticism made by half the focus groups is that

- The Standard is difficult to use as a reflection tool because it lacks indicators to enable self-assessment.

Based on the feedback from the aspiring, new, current and retired principal groups in this pilot project, the following recommendations are made:

1. A National Launch heralds the release of the Standard to highlight the importance of the work of school leaders, rather than a gradual leaking of the document as an optional framework.
2. Attention be focussed on the implementation of the Standard by principals. This could be in the form of support for jurisdictions in trialling and documenting implementation processes to be shared with a national audience. Principals in the focus groups believed that the process used in this pilot study, i.e. principal discussion groups using the matrix, would be one way of encouraging implementation of the Standard.
3. Support/supplementary documents be produced to enable principals to use this as a reflection tool. These would include more detailed explanations of the leadership requirements and their interaction with the professional practices. Jurisdictions could be supported in developing appropriate resources to be shared with a national audience.

Tasmanian Department of Education

Overview of the project

Tasmania's AITSL pilot was part of the development of an overall plan for teacher leadership, aspirant principal leadership and principal leadership across the State.

The purpose of the AITSL pilot was to critically examine the Australian Professional Standard for Principals in the light of a paired shared learning experience that was embedded in the daily work lives of principals. Specifically the pilot aimed to shed light on the following research questions:

1. How good is the Standard as a guide to professional reflective conversations?
2. How good is the Standard as a tool to guide professional action research?
3. How good is the Standard as a means increasing participants understanding of the nature of the principalship?
4. How useful is the paired shared learning model to improved principal understanding, knowledge and performance?

Principals in the North West Learning Service (n=65) were offered the opportunity to participate in the Pilot. They knew they would be randomly paired with another principal and have time to visit each other in the workplace as well as being able to focus on an area of need or development they identified for themselves. They also understood that the National Standard would be used to provide a framework for the learning they undertook.

Twelve principals nominated for the Pilot and they represented the widest variety of schools from small rural schools of 40 students, to special schools, to large urban high schools. Only two criteria were applied to selection, in that principals who already had a strong professional relationship with another participant were not paired and where possible principals of similar sized schools were paired.

Outcomes of the pilot study

How good is the Standard as a guide to professional reflective conversations?

There is strong evidence from conversations with principals and survey responses that the Standard enhances the quality of conversations. Principals have used it as a 'table guide' during their conversations to provide focus and direction. The narrative under the Standard opens up other thinking about approaches and practices and allows principals to reflect on their personal repertoire of leadership skills and professional practices. All shared a view that the quality of conversation improved when it was contextualised and steeped in principals' everyday work and experience and these observations are supported by a range of professional learning research over several decades. The Standard is nothing without a context was an oft repeated phrase during the life of the Project. One pair did use the Standard as a starting point but they were already clear about their mutual focus. Most pairs came to the Standard only after they had become familiar with each other and with their workplaces. It is also clear that when the Standard is used by people who have had training

in artful mediation, especially coaching and mentoring, then the quality of conversation and the depth of thinking show a corresponding increase. The lesson here seems to be that effective professional learning is enhanced by the simultaneous application of a standards framework and high level interpersonal skills especially meditational questioning

How good is the Standard as a tool to guide professional action research?

It is apparent that principals thought deeply about their skill and values repertoire in response to discussing the Standard with three participants specifically identifying professional practice areas that they will seek to develop over coming months. This came about through making judgements about what they bring to a particular issue, school development task or problem. Principals have natural and more instinctive professional practice and leadership strengths so being able to identify areas that they don't instinctively turn to can increase the rigour and meaningfulness of an enquiry. Having a set of narratives associated with each element that further push thinking and open up conversations is one of the strengths of the Standard. There was an opinion expressed that further elaboration of the Standard would be useful and might include contextualised stories, support research and materials and examples of actions and behaviours. There was a further opinion expressed that these materials are available under other principal professional frameworks and that as long as there was the option of marrying the Standard to professional conversations then the underpinning examples would be teased out anyway.

How good is the Standard as a means to increasing participants understanding of the nature of the principalship?

Principals critically examined their understanding of the principalship in response to their conversations based on the Standard and their line of inquiry. There was strong evidence that using the Standard broadened and deepened their understanding especially when they reflected on it in conversation. Some high school principals felt that the Standard did not capture that turmoil of their day and the myriad of challenges that confront principals of large urban high schools where the demands of adolescents and their families often place the principal in the role of guidance or welfare officer. They felt that this area often dominated their thinking and time and is unavoidable if the supportive culture of the school is to be built. Participants spent some time examining this proposition and it seemed less an issue in other school contexts and sectors. What did emerge was a consensus that these day-to-day challenges had to be confronted in ways that their resolution supported the overall vision and ethos of the school and was consistent with the espoused values.

How useful is the paired shared learning model to improved principal understanding, knowledge and performance?

Participants were unanimous in their view that the paired relationship was an effective professional learning model. As the pairs were randomly selected there is considerable support for the argument that it is the nature of the principal's role supported by the Standard and mediation skills, rather than any previous familiarity with the paired colleague, that provides the impetus for learning. There was also a demonstrated willingness for the participants to risk-take in terms of what they were prepared to share with their colleague and that confidences were fully respected and confidentiality guaranteed. In some ways familiarity and friendship may well be a barrier to full and frank disclosure and may serve to close down rather than open up thinking. In the

same vein the presence of a trained coach as researcher, who is unconnected to the education department, may provide principals with a further avenue of professional support.

Participants were also unanimous in their view that shadowing a colleague is an effective learning tool in itself. Shadowing also seems to be an important precursor to developing trust and taking the step into examining a problem or challenge. The paired model also provided for a range of supports to the participants. This included phone calls, emails, availability of third person coaching, reflective conversations with the researcher and funds for principal release. More importantly, according to participants, they had 'permission' to look after their own learning as assiduously as they look after the learning of others. The Standard gives full support to this idea through the 'Developing Self and Others' strand further affirming participants' positive views that the time was well spent. It may be that spending time in such learning will save time down the track as principals will be more effective practitioners.

Another seemingly minor aspect of the beginning of the program is worth mentioning. Participants were asked to discourse in writing on their own vision of their principalship and then share that with their pair. In hindsight this initial willingness to be vulnerable may have contributed significantly to the trust that each pair developed.

This project focussed on the use of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals as a professional learning tool and it is clear that the Standard has met our expectations of what a good framework could do for principals' thinking, knowledge and understanding. Given the relatively low base of familiarity with the Standard and with using frameworks generally the quality of the Standard is affirmed.

At the same time the project has sought to examine the circumstances by which professional learning ceases to be something that is attended, inconsistently enacted or rarely becomes an integral part of a principals' practice repertoire. What are the conditions under which principals attend to their own learning, develop and participate in collegial learning and seek external expertise to support their Pilot study to test the exposure draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals 27 continued development as a practitioner? Within such a short time frame it is difficult to address this fundamental question about professional learning but there appear to be some markers worth putting forward:

- If the learning is invitational rather than prescribed then there is personal motivation to fully engage. Having permission to take the time and not be conflicted about one's absence from the workplace seems to be linked to the invitation to participate.
- Having a reflective conversation skill repertoire deepens the learning experience and may be an essential element of any effective professional learning that involves collegial sharing.
- A Standards framework provides focus and direction as well as affirming principals gut instincts on what is important and what is not.
- Shadowing in the workplace seems to be an essential element to effective learning.

- Having a real workplace focus, issue or plan gives authenticity to the relationship as does the relative equality of participants.
- Having resource support so that the school is not disadvantaged by the principal's absence and having external expertise available seems to support better learning.

Our view would be that this has been a small but important step towards being able to support principals and integrate a professional Standard into their personal and professional learning growth.

Recommendations

1. Give some thought to the proposition that the intensity and importance of the day-to-day interpersonal challenges that principals face, especially those which are concerned with student, family and staff welfare, are not well represented in the Standard as it stands.
2. Examine the processes through which the Standard is disseminated to principals. There is good early evidence in this pilot that using it in collegial enquiry focussed on authentic issues in principals' lives gives deep engagement with the Standard.
3. From this pilot reflective conversations seem to be an important determinant to principals' effective engagement with the Standard. Examine the possibility of accompanying dissemination of the Standard with suggestions of how principals might engage with it in meaningful ways. Some examples that have come from the pilot include using the Standard to:
 - focus conversations between principals and aspirant/senior leaders
 - unpack particular school issues using a different frame of reference
 - provide a starting point to collegial professional learning
 - identify leadership areas where principals are not as instinctively strong and examine ways for improving these areas of practice
 - affirm the priorities principals are setting on their time
4. During the pilot there was considerable discussion on how the Standard might be used with beginning and aspirant principals. There were many stories on how confronting the first months and years of principalship are while one's own personal framework is established. Some thought might be given in the rollout of the Standard to suggestions on how the Standard might be used to help establish a deeper understanding of the principal's role with beginning and aspirant principals.

Western Australia Department of Education

Overview of the project

The purpose of this pilot study was to examine the usefulness of the Standard in informing the development and delivery of professional learning for aspirant school leaders and business managers, through the Licence to Leadership Program. This is an innovative and research-based program, embedded in adult learning principles and aligned to a model of professional learning which advocates knowledge, modelling, practise and peer coaching. The course has been developed with a reliance on the Standard as both an organisational framework, and as the source of the course content.

The objective of the pilot study was to examine the usefulness of the Standard in informing the development and delivery of professional learning for school leaders. The pilot study tested the authenticity, usefulness and value-add of the draft Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

Authenticity

- To what extent does the Standard reflect the leadership requirements and leadership practices of principals?
- To what extent does the Standard assist aspirant school leaders to understand the complexity and level of leadership skills and professional practices required of an effective principal?
- To what extent does the Licence to Leadership program align to the Standard and meet the diverse context of the Western Australian public education system?

Usefulness

- How useful is the Standard in establishing priorities and planning for the professional development of principals and aspirant school leaders?
- To what extent is the Standard useful in assisting both aspirant and existing school leaders to reflect upon their practice?

Value-Add

- Does the Standard value-add to the knowledge, skills or attributes of school leaders?
- Is the Standard an inspirational target for aspirant school leaders with varying levels of experience and from diverse school contexts?

The Licence to Leadership program consists of six workshops and five web conferences, the content of which is taken directly from the Standard. The teams have received a broad range of information about their virtual school and their task is to develop evidence-based improvement strategies and strategic directions for their school. To maximise the value of this professional learning, teams are confronted with a full range of experiences that are encountered in the everyday operation of schools.

Skilled experts will facilitate, support and debrief teams as they work through scenarios that will deepen participants' understanding of the Leadership practices, whilst provoking an introspective application of the leadership requirements.

Outcomes of the pilot study

The Standard has been received positively by the participants of this pilot study. The authenticity of the Standard was positively attested to in all areas, with over 80 per cent of responses indicating the opinion that accurate interpretation of the Standard encourages innovation and provides the system with a direction for the development of capable leaders. The Standard was considered a valuable tool for the design of professional learning and as a tool for self-reflection. There was also overwhelmingly positive feedback in terms of the value-add capacity of the Standard in the form of adding to the skills and knowledge of existing leaders and as an inspirational target for aspirants.

There was some constructive feedback. However, these responses were of two kinds: personalised responses and cautionary responses. The personalised responses came from inexperienced leaders in the form of comments such as 'I don't understand'. The more cautionary responses emanated from senior leaders who understood and applauded the Standard themselves. Their responses were reflections on how emerging leaders might read and understand the Standard.

The personalised comments were consistently made by classroom teachers and the more cautionary responses from existing principals and deputy principals.

There is a clear career progression of teachers who have aspirations to school leadership and this is personified in the connection between the teacher Standards and the principal Standard. Many leadership concepts are contained in the teacher Standards at the Lead Teacher level. It is therefore logical that professional learning pitched at Lead Teachers would include concepts and explicit links to the principal Standard. If professional learning at the Lead Teacher level included the principal Standard, this would arguably negate personalised negative responses and ensure a higher level of readiness and entry-level understandings for leadership programs such as Licence to Leadership.

One additional aspect of the constructive feedback that AITSL might consider is that 80% of all negative or constructive feedback came from aspirants and school leaders in education support settings. Whilst the concepts in the principal Standard are generic across leadership, there is an indication that the reaction of Education Support leaders and their sense of connection to the Standard, is in need of further investigation.

Explicit recommendations to AITSL based on the findings of this report are as follows:

1. Provide elaborations of the practices and leadership requirements in the Standard to allow emerging leaders to understand concepts
2. Provide examples of 'best practice' to enable a collective understanding of the expectations contained in the Standard
3. Provide support materials to support existing leaders to mentor, coach and support emerging leaders in their understanding of the Standard
4. Introduce leadership concepts and the Standard in professional learning programs either before or during the Lead Teacher stage of the teacher Standards
5. Recommend that states and territories introduce the Standard in professional learning targeted at Lead Teachers
6. Further investigate the reaction to the Standard of leaders and emerging leaders in education support settings.

5. Overall findings, issues and recommendations

The major research questions

- 1. Authenticity** – Is the Standard authentic? To what extent does the Standard accurately define the leadership requirements and professional practice of effective principals? Does the Standard describe effective school leadership? Does the Standard provide a framework of the knowledge and skills of effective principals, regardless of context?
- 2. Usefulness** – Is the Standard useable? How well does it provide an effective framework for professional learning? How useful would the Standard be for planning professional development and reflecting on practice? How effectively could it help to inform strategies to attract, prepare and develop effective principals for leading 21st-century schools? How useful is it as a guide to inform the management of self and others?
- 3. Value-add** – Does the Standard value-add to the knowledge and skills of effective principals? Is the Standard fair and reasonable? Is it inspirational and aspirational? What evidence supports the Standard?

The draft National Standard for Principals (the Standard) has been tested for authenticity, usefulness and value-adding in a wide variety of Australian contexts, involving hundreds of principals, aspiring principals, other educators and stakeholders from every state and territory engaging with and reflecting on the Standard. What follows are some consensus findings drawn from across the 10 pilot studies.

Broad findings

Principals, other educators and stakeholders overwhelmingly welcomed the development of the AITSL Australian Professional Standard for Principals, which was seen as overdue and meeting a need:

"We applaud the work of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership in developing the Australian Professional Standard for Principals"

REFA

"The draft Standard is viewed as a positive initiative by the representatives of the business, parent and teacher groups that were consulted. The AITSL document provided an opportunity for clarity and authority in a potentially confusing area."

ACER

"There was significant evidence from principals in the pilot study that the Standard accurately defined the leadership requirements and professional practices of effective principals and that the Standard described effective leadership."

NSW DEC

"This project focused on the use of the Standard as a professional learning tool and it is clear that the Standard has met our expectations of what a good framework could do for principals' thinking, knowledge and understanding."

Tas DE

There was general agreement as to the appropriateness of the content of the Standard in capturing what principals need to be able to know, understand and do. It was found that the correct balance has been struck between prescription/detail and generality within the Standard.

The potential role of the Standard in promoting reflection and informing professional learning was one of the most common strengths identified in the pilot studies.

In terms of the central study questions of **authenticity, utility** and **value-add**, once again the views of practising and aspiring principals as well as stakeholders were positive, although some areas for caution and further consideration were noted:

"The Standard is perceived as achievable through a wide range of professional learning strategies. Its comprehensiveness and balance as a professional learning mechanism are notable ... The Standard is particularly useful for experienced principals involved in mentoring, coaching or training aspirants to the principal position. [ACEL] Pilot study to test the exposure draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals 31 The Standard has been received positively by the participants of this pilot study. The authenticity of the Standard was positively attested to in all areas, with over 80 per cent of responses indicating the opinion that accurate interpretation of the Standard encourages innovation and provides the system with a direction for the development of capable leaders. The Standard was considered a valuable tool for the design of professional learning and as a tool for self-reflection. There was also overwhelmingly positive feedback in terms of the value-add capacity of the Standard in the form of adding to the skills and knowledge of existing leaders and as an inspirational target for aspirants."

WA DE

"The Standard enables principals to reflect on their practice in specific circumstances and over time. ... The Standard promotes a holistic approach to self-reflection, encouraging principals to consider the interaction between leadership requirements and professional practices. ... The Standard provides a guide for principal self-assessment and planning of further professional learning. ... The Standard adequately describes the role of principal. ... The Standard is a useful guide/reference, especially for aspiring and new leaders. The Standard could be used widely with the school community, governing council, staff and leadership teams. ... The Standard is clearly written in accessible language."

SA DECS

Generally the Standard was considered to be credible and to reflect the work of school principals in regional and remote locations. It was considered to be sufficiently broad to take account of all the different types of responsibilities with which they deal.

Charles Darwin University

In relation to the use of the Standard as a framework for professional learning, there was substantial evidence from principals in the New South Wales government school survey and focus group that the Standard provides a framework for planning professional learning and reflecting on practice and that the Standard provides a framework for professional learning.

NSW DEC

Some stakeholders however, more so than principals, clearly have a perception that the Standard will, should or could be used to judge principals' performance. However, as far as principals were concerned, there was a clear preference for the Standard to be used for developmental and not judgemental or performance-measurement purposes. Thus there exists some confusion over the purpose(s) of the Standard. (The above lay behind the view expressed by some that the Standard needs indicators of performance if it was to be successfully applied for the purpose of judging performance but, as noted, this runs counter to the stated purpose and uses of the Standard.)

Most groups of school principals who participated in this study thought the document would be of value to them and their staff, however most found it difficult to see how it was a 'professional learning' document. ... Some expressed concern that it was difficult to make the distinction between a 'performance standard' and 'professional learning' standard.

Charles Darwin University

[The Standard] Could inform professional performance and development discussions, but participants were unsure of the value of the Standard as a performance assessment tool.

PA

Generally, practising principals were more likely to identify with and understand the Standard than aspiring principals. This is hardly surprising and points to an important aspect of the Standard – articulating the role of the principal to those not in the position. Research has shown that many principals do not fully appreciate the complexity and demands of the role until the responsibility is placed upon their shoulders (Dinham, 2008):

"There was some constructive feedback. However, these responses were of two kinds: personalised responses and cautionary responses. The personalised responses came from inexperienced leaders in the form of comments such as 'I don't understand'. The more cautionary responses emanated from senior leaders who understood and applauded the Standard themselves. Their responses were reflections on how emerging leaders might read and understand the Standard."

WA DE

While the potential value of the Standard to aspiring and practising principals was uniformly recognised, there was a view that the Standard was of lesser value to other stakeholders in communicating and engendering understanding the role and work of the principal.

"The authenticity and use of The Standard by parents and school communities was seen to be less obviously of benefit to them."

Charles Darwin University

A challenge for the Standard is of capturing and accommodating the myriad contexts in which Australian principals operate. This was a recurring theme in the various reports, most of which were supportive of the degree to which the Standard does in fact allow for context.

"Our main concern is that in an attempt to be a framework relevant to all sectors, systems and locations, the content has been sanitised to avoid the difficult issue of context, and in the context of rural and remote communities the building of relationships is central to effective leadership."

REFA

"There was concern from principals about the Standard's applicability regardless of context, with a high number of principals commenting about the importance of school context in the Standard. 'Context is everything! To strengthen [the Standard] one needs to have the nature of the school and its community taken into account.' (Male metropolitan secondary principal in a NSW government school)."

NSW DEC

A matter raised in a number of reports was what comes next. The need for an adequate communication strategy, a 'launch', means to engage the profession and professional development opportunities were all advocated:

"A National Launch [is needed that] heralds the release of the Standard to highlight the importance of the work of school leaders, rather than a gradual leaking of the document as an optional framework. ... Attention [is] focussed on the implementation of the Standard by principals. This could be in the form of support for jurisdictions in trialling and documenting implementation processes to be shared with a national audience. ... Support/supplementary documents [are] produced to enable principals to use this as a reflection tool. These would include more detailed explanations of the leadership requirements and their interaction with the professional practices. Jurisdictions could be supported in developing appropriate resources to be shared with a national audience."

SA DECS

"The next step in developing the Standard should be profession-led and driven by a strong user perspective. ... The next step in developing the Standard should be open and transparent, and engage parents, students and the general public as 'consumers'. This will contribute to raising the status of the principalship as a high-standing profession in Australian society, and ensure greater public understanding of the link between quality school leadership and improved student outcomes. ... AITSL should engage with the profession's leaders on how the profession itself intends to relate to the proposed AITSL Standard. ... The implementation of the Standard must be accompanied by an effective marketing and communications strategy resourced by AITSL. ... The implementation of the Standard must be accompanied by an effective professional education and training strategy with the aim of ensuring that all principals have a deep understanding and awareness of the Standard."

PA

Other issues, concerns and questions

Other issues, concerns and questions expressed about the Standard included the following. It should be noted that each of these was raised in only one or at most two pilot studies but they are offered for consideration nonetheless:

- *Whether the Standard can be equally applicable and valuable to aspirant, practising and highly experienced principals – is there is a need for a second or multiple standards?*
- *Whether the Standard adequately addresses the advocacy aspects of the principal's role.*
- *Whether the Standard has sufficiently recognised organisation-wide leadership beyond the school.*
- *How non-English-speaking background stakeholders (including Indigenous community members) and communities generally might better engage with the Standard and whether the Standard should be translated into common languages.*
- *The extent to which the Standard is truly aspirational, future-focused and encourages innovation.*
- *Whether the issues of staff (and principal) social and emotional health and wellbeing and 'emotional intelligence' have been sufficiently addressed in the Standard.*
- *Whether the inclusive, collaborative aspects of leadership have been sufficiently addressed within the Standard.*
- *Whether the role of principals beyond their school i.e., in the broader community and profession, have been sufficiently acknowledged in the Standard.*
- *Whether the roles of parents and community members as partners have been sufficiently addressed with the Standard.*
- *Whether the 'voice' and role of students in school leadership have been given sufficient attention within the Standard.*
- *Concern over the use of the term community/communities.*

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been derived from the pilot study reports. These were presented in draft form in an earlier report dated 2 June (Dinham, 2011) and have been augmented and modified as a result of the two-day Leadership Symposium held by AITSL on the 8-9 June 2011.

In developing these recommendations, a content analysis was undertaken of the findings and recommendations arising from the pilot study reports in order to assess the degree to which the individual pilot findings and their recommendations have been more or less universal across the pilots as a whole.

Caution needs to be exercised in extrapolating and generalising from individual pilots and the study as a whole. Due to the nature and scope of each project there was an almost inevitable bias in the sample of participants, i.e., they could not be said to be representative of the various populations of aspirant principals, principals, other stakeholders and students.

Overall however, there was strong and universal agreement as to the timeliness, quality and worth of the Standard as expressed in the integrated model on page 5 of the Exposure Draft and that the Standard should be endorsed. Where suggestions and recommendations were made these were more in the areas of emphasis within the supporting text contained within the Exposure Draft and in regard to the 'next steps' in the implementation and application of the Standard.

In making these recommendations it is acknowledged that modifications to the Standard have been occurring on an ongoing, iterative basis and that some of the matters raised below have already been addressed in the light of continued consultation, findings from the pilot studies and the Leadership Symposium.

Recommendations to AITSL in respect of the National Standard for Principals arising from the Pilot Study of the Exposure Draft of the Standard

1. That the Exposure Draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals be endorsed by AITSL, following consideration of the matters raised during this series of pilot studies.

(Areas where attention to emphasis and wording within the Standard are recommended include:

- Recognition of Indigenous students, communities and culture;
- The varied contexts of schooling and the principalship within Australia;
- The purpose of the Standard: what it is, what it is not, and why;
- The affective domain of leadership, including relationships with others and the social and emotional well-being of self and others.)

2. That a national communication, marketing and implementation strategy for the Standard be formulated and enacted by AITSL in collaboration with key authorities and stakeholders.

Particular emphasis should be given to explaining the intended use and purpose of the Standard as noted above.

3. That the development of supporting documentation, professional learning programs and resources for use of the Standard be encouraged, facilitated and, where appropriate, supported by ASITSL. These may include videos of effective practice, AITSL flagship professional development programs, relevant readings and research, case studies, pod/vod casts, scenarios, templates for self-reflection and examples of suitable approaches and strategies to achieve the Standard across a variety of contexts.

4. That AITSL act as a clearing house to map and integrate resources available to support use of the Standard. An interactive website with external links hosted by AITSL based on the Standard is suggested as one way to achieve this.

5. That a plan for ongoing evaluation of the Standard's relevance, implementation, uses, effectiveness and impact be formulated and enacted by AITSL.

6. That AITSL consider means to align the Standard with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, especially at the Lead Teacher level, to provide more of a continuum or 'pathway' of leadership development.

7. That the reports of the individual pilot studies be made available by AITSL to the wider educational community for further use.

References

- Bates, R. (1992). 'Leadership and school culture', paper presented to the interuniversity congress on the organisation of teaching faculty of philosophy and science. Seville.
- Beare, H. (2006). *How we envisage schooling in the 21st century: applying the new 'imaginary'*. Sydney: ACEL
- Caldwell, B and Spinks, J. (1998). *Beyond the self-managing school*. London: Falmer.
- Crowther, F. (2011). *From school improvement to sustained capacity: the parallel leadership pathway*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
- Dinham, S. (2011). *Pilot study to test the exposure draft of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals: Summary of key issues and recommendations arising from draft final reports*. Melbourne: AITSL.
- Dinham, S. (2008). *How to get your School Moving and Improving: an evidence-based approach*. Melbourne: ACER Press.
- Dinham, S. (2007). 'How schools get moving and keep improving: Leadership for teacher learning, student success and school renewal', *Australian Journal of Education*, 51(3), 263–275.
- Dinham, S. 'Leadership for Student Achievement', in Cranston, N. & Erlich, L. (2009). *Australian school leadership today: Issues and trends*. Bowen Hills, Queensland: Australian Academic Press.
- Dinham, S., Ingvarson, L. & Kleinhenz, E. (2008). Investing in Teacher Quality: Doing What Matters Most, in *Teaching Talent: The Best Teachers for Australia's Classrooms*. Melbourne: Business Council of Australia.
- Duignan, P. (2010). *Dancing on a shifting carpet. Reinventing traditional schools for the 21st century*. Sydney: ACEL.
- Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible Learning - A Synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London: Routledge.
- Leithwood, K.; Louis, K.; Anderson, S. & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *Review of Research - How Leadership Influences Student Learning*. New York: The Wallace Foundation.
- Mulford, B. (2008). The Leadership Challenge: Improving Learning in Schools, *Australian Education Review*, 53, 1-80.
- Mulford, B. (2004). 'Congruence between the democratic processes of schools and school principal training in Australia', *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42 (6), 625-639.
- Pearson, N. (2011). 'Education and aspiration are key', *The Weekend Australian*, May 18. Reeves, D. (2008). Leadership and Learning, ACEL Monograph Series, 43, 3-21.
- Robinson, V., Lloyd, c., & Rowe, K. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5), 635-674.
- Sachs, J. (2003). *The activist teaching profession*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Sarra, C. (2011). *Dare to Lead*. Canberra: Principals Australia.

Wahlstrom, K.L. (2008). Leadership and Learning: What these articles tell us, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(4), 593-597.

Appendix

The Project Teams

Organisation	Team leader	Other key members
Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL)	Ms Jenny Lewis Chief Executive Officer, Australian Council for Educational Leaders	Emeritus Professor Frank Crowther Patron, Australian Council for Educational Leaders and Senior Consultant Leadership Research Institute University of Southern Queensland Jenny Hill Leadership Academy Manager, Australian Council for Educational Leaders
Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)	Mr Phillip McKenzie Research Director, Teaching, Learning and Transitions, Australian Council for Educational Research	Dr Catherine Scott Australian Council for Educational Research
Charles Darwin University, Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development	Prof Kathryn Moyle Executive Director, Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development	Susan Bowden Director, Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development
NSW Department of Education and Communities (previously NSW Department of Education and Training)	Ann McIntyre Director, Professional Learning and Development (PLLD), NSW Department of Education and Communities	NSW Department of Education and Communities: Gai McMurtrie Manager, Leadership Learning (PLLD) Brad Russell Regional Facilitator Geoffrey O'Brien Professional Learning Systems and Evaluation (PLLD) Debbie Sutton Manager, Professional Learning Quality Assurance (PLLD) University of Western Sydney: Geoff Scott Pro-Vice Chancellor (Quality)

Organisation	Team leader	Other key members
Principals Australia	Ms Liz Furler Chief Executive Officer, Principals Australia	Pilot study 1: Jo Mason National Professional Product Development Manager Sue Northmore Project Manager Pilot study 2: Sheree Vertigan President, Australian Secondary Principals' Association Fiona Forbes President, Australian Special Education Principals' Association John See Project Officer
Rural Education Reform Australia (REFA)	Mr Howard Kelly Chair, REFA	Mr Gary Allen Executive Officer, REFA Alan McLaren Principal Paige Bouson Queensland Teachers' Union

Organisation	Team leader	Other key members
SA Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS)	Dr Kaye Johnson Manager of Quality Leadership, Human Resources and Workforce Development, SA Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS)	Jim Davies President, SA Secondary Principals Association Steve Portlock President, SA Primary Principals Association Glyn O'Brien Past President, SA Primary Principals Association Margot Foster Program Manager, Teaching for Effective Learning, DECS Curriculum Directorate Stu Sellar Regional Leadership Consultant, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island Chris Dolan Assistant Regional Director, Northern Adelaide Daniel Balacco Leadership Consultant, DECS HR and WD Kel Grear Leadership Consultant, DECS HR and WD Jude Hines Leadership Consultant, DECS HR and WD Sue de Boer Program Coordinator Quality Leadership DECS HR and WD
Tasmanian Department of Education	Dr John Ewington Program Manager, School Leadership, Tasmanian Department of Education	Mike Brakey Adjunct Professor, Education Consultant, Tasmanian Department of Education Jodee Wilson Manager Learning Services NW, Tasmanian Department of Education
WA Department of Education	Mr Lindsay Hale Managing Director Professional Learning, WA Department of Education	Doug Booth Principal Consultant, WA Department of Education Nancy McNally Manager Professional Learning, WA Department of Education Marie Beardsell Project Manager Professional Learning, WA Department of Education

 aitsl.edu.au

 facebook.com/aitsl

 twitter.com/aitsl

 youtube.com/aitsleduau

aitsl
Australian Institute
for Teaching and
School Leadership
Limited