School resources, culture and connections

NZCER National Survey Thematic Report

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Executive summary

The latest cycle of New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) national surveys took place in secondary schools in 2006 and primary schools in 2007. Questionnaires covering a wide range of topics were sent to all secondary schools, and a representative sample of 351 primary and intermediate schools. In a subsample of the schools, parents also were surveyed. Responses were generally representative of the national characteristics of schools. We analysed the responses by key factors such as location (urban/rural), school decile and size of school roll. They were compared with those obtained in the previous (2003) surveys, in order to assess change over time. The following are the key findings from the 2006–7 surveys in relation to school resources, cultures and connections beyond the school.

Resources

School funding

- Most principals and trustees from primary and secondary schools felt that government funding was insufficient for their school's needs.
- Few primary schools expected a surplus at the end of 2007; they were less confident about finances than in 2003. The picture from secondary schools was slightly more positive.
- Principals identified a range of areas where unexpected extra costs, or rapid increases in costs, had contributed to their financial difficulties. In order to balance their budgets, cuts might have to be made, and additional income raised.
- A quarter of secondary schools and fewer primary schools had increased the amount of parent donations requested, although a substantial number of parents did not pay. Income from international fee-paying students mainly benefited high-decile secondary schools.
- A substantial minority of trustees reported that their schools had faced financial management problems. Appropriate actions (mainly cutting costs) had been taken, and most said that the problems had been wholly or partly solved.

School staffing

- Compared with 2003, there was greater stability in staffing, reflected in the length of time that principals and teachers had been in post. Three-quarters of schools surveyed had had no more than two principals over the past 10 years.

- A quarter of primary principals did no teaching, but a quarter took full responsibility for a class, for at least part of the school day. One in five primary principals, and twice as many secondary principals, worked 66 or more hours per week.
- Two-thirds of primary principals (less than in 2003) and three-quarters of secondary principals, said that their morale was good or very good.
- About nine in 10 principals enjoyed their job, but a quarter could not manage their workload, and only about a quarter had a satisfactory work–life balance. Only one in five primary principals, and a smaller proportion of secondary principals, felt they had enough time for educational leadership.
- The main coping strategies employed by principals were delegation to senior colleagues and limiting the number of initiatives worked on at any one time. Principals would like more time for reflection and educational leadership, and less administration and paperwork.
- Primary teachers had an average of 2.3 hours noncontact time per week, and secondary teachers 7.5 hours. Teachers typically worked 11–20 hours per week outside school time. A large majority enjoyed their job, but around one in five had difficulties in managing their workload, and almost twice as many did not have a satisfactory work–life balance.
- Teacher morale had improved since 2003, particularly for secondary school teachers. Teachers most wanted a reduction in class size, less administration/paperwork, better pay and more time to work with individual students.
- Only about a quarter of principals thought that their staffing entitlement was sufficient for the school's needs. Although staff turnover was low, a majority of principals had difficulty in finding suitable teachers to fill vacancies.

School culture

- Primary principals gave a highly positive rating to school culture; primary teachers were also positive, but rather less so. A large majority of primary teachers rated the sharing of ideas and resources as good or very good, but a substantial minority said that teacher observation/feedback was poor, or did not happen. Secondary teachers' responses were generally similar, but less positive on some items.
- Relationships within the school were also rated very positively by primary principals, but primary teachers were not quite as positive, and secondary teachers even less so.
- Almost all schools had a process of self-review, which typically included an annual or more frequent review of literacy and numeracy results (primary) or curriculum areas (secondary). Policies were most commonly reviewed on a two- to three-year cycle.
- Appraisals were commonly used to identify professional development needs, improve performance and provide support and encouragement to teachers. Two-thirds of secondary teachers were satisfied with the way they were appraised, but a quarter were not, with most of these saying that they had no confidence in the process.

- In secondary schools, staff and students were surveyed annually, every two to three years, or as issues arose. The use of the Student Management System (SMS) was almost universal for recording students' personal details and the subjects they were taking.
- About three in 10 secondary teachers said they occasionally felt unsafe in the playground (about twice the proportion of primary teachers).
- Almost two-thirds of secondary school trustees, but only a quarter of primary school trustees, said they had faced industrial relations issues in the past three years; for secondary schools, this represents a large increase since 2003.

School governance

- Half of the primary parents surveyed had voted in the recent board of trustees (BOT) elections. The main reasons for voting preference were the candidate's commitment to the school, relevant skills and parents' personal knowledge of him or her.
- Trustees put themselves forward because they wanted to contribute to the community, and to help their child(ren). Nearly all gained satisfaction from making a contribution to the school, and increasing their knowledge of education and other areas. On average they spent about 3.5 hours per week on BOT work, with chairs devoting more time to the task than other trustees.
- The majority of trustees, teachers and secondary principals felt that the amount of responsibility given to BOTs was about right, but a sizeable minority (and a majority of primary principals) thought it was too much.
- About a quarter of the trustees said that their school had appointed a principal in the past three years. The mean number of applicants was 13.6 (primary) and 8.8 (secondary schools). During the appointment process, around 40 percent had taken advice from another principal and/or a human resources consultant. About half of trustees and secondary principals, and 80 percent of primary principals, felt that BOTs should not have responsibility for negotiating the principal's salary and employment conditions.
- Trustees were confident that they were on top of their task and making progress, but primary principals were rather less convinced. In most cases, trustees rated their own experience and skills somewhat higher than did principals. Principals were more likely to think that trustees needed more expertise, especially in education.
- A large majority of trustees had had some kind of formal training for their role, and most said that the training had met their needs. They received advice and support from a range of sources. Nevertheless, they would like more knowledge, training and support from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and from parents.

Relations with the BOT

- Trustees were very positive about their board's relationship with the school's principal, and about the level of trust in the relationship. The view that the BOT is merely a sounding-board

for the principal was held by a minority of primary school trustees, and a somewhat greater proportion of those in secondary schools. Two-thirds of the primary principals thought that their previous board had added real value to the school.

- Just under half of the principals had experienced problems in their relationships with BOT members, and about a third were experiencing problems (mainly minor) with their current board.

- A large majority of trustees said that the principals reported regularly to them on student achievement, progress on strategic plans and goals, property and finance. However, a quarter of the primary principals, and 16 percent of the secondary principals, said that it took too much time to assemble the information required by their board.

- Just over half of the teachers thought they had sufficient contact with their staff representative on the BOT. Most trustees had contact with teachers in a variety of settings, and were positive about their board's relationship with school staff in general.

- In 2007, most primary trustees had had several forms of contact with the school's parents; over the years these had generally become more formal. Just over half of the parents surveyed said that they had no contact with the BOT, and about a third said that they did not have enough contact.

- Issues raised with trustees by parents mainly related to behaviour/discipline, uniforms, fundraising and dissatisfaction with teachers. They were usually dealt with by discussion at BOT meetings, or by the principals talking to the parents concerned.

- Nearly all boards had consulted with their communities in the past 12 months, using mainly traditional methods. Issues covered centred around student achievement, curriculum options, reporting to parents and strategic planning. Rates of parental participation in consultations were not encouraging, particularly in secondary schools.

- A large majority of trustees were from schools with an identifiable Māori community. More than three-quarters of those trustees had consulted with them in the past 12 months, and most thought that these consultations had been successful.

Parents and their child's school

- A large majority of parents reported that their child was attending their first-choice school, although this was not always the closest school.

- Choice of primary school was based mainly on the experience of family members and acquaintances, but one-third of parents had visited the school and a quarter had looked at Education Review Office (ERO) reports. For secondary school choice, visits to the school were more common, but ERO reports were consulted by only 12 percent.

- Almost all of the parents reported contact with their child's teacher(s). A large majority attended parent/teacher interviews, but the proportion was lower in secondary schools. Three-quarters thought that the level of contact was sufficiently high.

- Around two-thirds of parents (rather less in secondary schools) rated the information they received about their child's progress and learning programme good or very good. Nevertheless, more than a third said that they would like more information.
- Four in five parents were generally happy with the quality of schooling, but around half would like to change one or more aspects of it. Most commonly parents wanted smaller classes, more communication about progress and more individual help for students.
- Around half of parents had at some stage raised an issue or concern with their child's school, and most felt the school had listened fairly to them; half of those raising concerns thought that the right action had followed.
- Three-quarters of primary parents, but less than half of secondary parents, said that they were involved in their child's school, with activities such as fundraising, school trips and sports. Support with sports had increased in primary schools since 2003.
- Primary schools kept most parents informed with weekly school newsletters, but less than a quarter of parents read their school's annual reports. Some parents said they were not consulted about new school directions, but there was little evidence of demand for further involvement.
- The annual costs of primary education had risen to a mean of $794, median $500. The figures for secondary education were $1,530 and $1,000 respectively.

Links with other schools

- A quarter of primary schools, and a third of secondary schools, were oversubscribed. Most had experienced roll changes since 2003, due to population/housing changes or student/parent preferences.
- Various forms of contact were common between primary schools, but rather less so between secondary schools, where there was double the amount of competition. However, a high proportion of principals (primary and secondary) said that they would be interested in new working relationships with other schools, in order to share professional development, support each other professionally and access new funding pools.
- Only 13 percent of secondary school principals said that they had no/limited contact with postsecondary education providers. Four in five said that they used them for Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resources (STAR) courses.

Relations with government and other agencies

- Two-thirds or more of responding principals felt that they could get timely and appropriate advice from the local MOE office, the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA), the schools support services and their union. However, half felt that it took too much time to adapt and assemble information required by the national MOE, ERO and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

- A majority of trustees' boards had had contact with their local MOE office, mainly on issues connected with funding, property and resources. Most principals and trustees would like (more) advice and support from the local MOE office on a range of issues, but no more than half of them wanted MOE involvement in relation to principal appointments.
- Three-quarters of primary principals said that their main gain from their most recent ERO report was that it affirmed the approach they were taking. A fifth specifically stated that they were happy with the current system of accountability, but others made various suggestions for improvement.

Issues facing schools

- For all stakeholder groups, in both primary and secondary schools, funding was identified as the major issue: it was mentioned by twice as many primary principals as any other issue, and in most other groups there was a big gap between funding and the next item.
- Property development was the second area of concern for primary trustees; for secondary trustees, student achievement ranked slightly higher.
- Property development and student achievement were also top concerns for principals, along with the new curriculum framework (primary principals) and assessment workload (secondary principals).
- Teachers' concerns were similar, but a high proportion of secondary teachers also mentioned student behaviour, National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) workload and assessment driving the curriculum. In general, teachers were less concerned than principals about student achievement, and more about student behaviour.
- For parents, funding was the chief concern, but in secondary schools it was followed closely by student achievement, student behaviour, the quality of the teaching staff and the quality of teaching. In primary schools, the other key issues for parents were keeping good teachers, parent/community support and student achievement, but these were of much less importance than funding.

1. Introduction

In 1989, NZCER conducted a national survey of primary and intermediate schools, designed to assess the impact of the recent education reforms. The survey has been repeated periodically since that date, and in 2003, secondary schools were included for the first time.[1] These wide-ranging surveys, in a nationally representative sample of schools, are actually four surveys in one because there are questionnaires for principals, teachers, school trustees, and parents.

The latest cycle of NZCER national surveys took place in secondary schools in mid-2006 and in primary schools in mid-2007. As before, the questionnaires were extensive, covering a wide range of topics. Findings from the secondary survey have already been used in a number of thematic NZCER publications, dealing with the NCEA (Hipkins, 2007), school governance (Wylie, 2007a) and planning and reporting (Hipkins, Joyce, & Wylie, 2007). A summary of key findings from the primary survey is available on the Internet (http://www.nzcer.org.nz/pdfs/15870.pdf).

Findings from both primary and secondary surveys are reported here, and in a parallel report which details responses relating to the curriculum, assessment and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (Schagen & Hipkins, 2008). This report focuses on resources (funding and staffing), school culture and relationships within the school and with relevant stakeholders (the BOT, parents, the community, other schools and government agencies). Comparisons are made, as appropriate, between the primary and secondary sectors, and between the four different groups surveyed; reference is also made to the 2003 findings, in order to identify changes which have taken place in the intervening three or four years.

1.1 The structure of the report

Chapter 2 outlines the methodology, and gives details of the samples surveyed. Chapter 3 discusses funding; Chapters 4 and 5 cover staffing in primary and secondary schools respectively. Chapter 6 examines school culture, including relationships within the school (between staff and students, for example). Chapter 7 examines school governance, and Chapter 8 looks at relationships between the BOT and school staff, parents and the community. Chapter 9 looks at parents' links with their child's school, and Chapter 10 at the school's links with other schools in the area. Chapter 11 explores relations with government and other external agencies. Finally, Chapter 12 provides a summary of the findings and stakeholders' views about the major issues confronting their schools.

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[1] A parallel series of national surveys was begun for early childhood education services in 2003, with the second survey in this series carried out in late 2007 (Mitchell, 2008).

2. Methodology

NZCER's national surveys are carried out at periodic intervals. There are four different surveys in any one set—for principals, teachers, trustees and parents. Each set of surveys is tailored to either early childhood, primary or secondary education. Use of at least some repeat questions allows changes over time to be identified. Similarly, where relevant, the same item may be used to compare responses at different stages of education, for example, primary compared to secondary.

In the 2006/7 surveys, principals (primary and secondary) answered a series of questions on the following themes (inter alia):

* resources and staffing
* school-wide learning and leadership
* relationships
* the BOT
* their own work as principal.

Similar questions were answered by teachers from their own perspective (some questions were organised under different headings on the primary teacher questionnaire). Responses to these questions, and related questions asked of trustees and parents, provide the main content for this report. Responses to questions from other themes are included as appropriate.

2.1 The national survey sample

Secondary schools

Principals of all state and state-integrated secondary schools were invited to participate in the 2006 national survey.[2] In all these schools, one in eight teachers were randomly invited to participate, with surveys distributed with the help of the Post-Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) representative and individually returned (or not) to preserve teacher anonymity. Responding principals were from schools broadly representative of secondary schools nationwide, while responses from very large main urban schools were somewhat over-represented in the teacher sample. (For a more detailed summary of demographic data, see Appendix A.) Response rates from the principals were particularly pleasing (62 percent of all state and state-integrated secondary principals, compared to 48 percent of a smaller sample in 2003). Forty percent of the

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[2] By contrast the NZCER 2003 Secondary National Survey was based on a random sample of 200 secondary schools, stratified by roll size and decile.

teacher sample responded compared to 48 percent in 2003—a small decrease, perhaps because we had no follow-up mechanism in 2006.

Every BOT chair was invited to respond, and to invite one other trustee to take part (someone who might be expected to have a differing viewpoint to their own). Again, each trustee returned their completed survey individually. The response rate was 44 percent (278 of 630 trustees).

Parents from a representative subsample of 27 schools were surveyed, and completed responses received from 708 (a response rate of 47 percent). More than four in five of the parents (82 percent) were female.

Primary schools

In June 2007, the primary national surveys went to a representative sample of 351 New Zealand full primary, contributing and intermediate schools. (Note that in this report the term *primary* is used to cover all of these school types, except where distinctions are explicitly made.) Response rates were 56 percent for principals, 48 percent for teachers and 47 percent for trustees and parents. The responses were generally representative of the national school characteristics, with some over-representation of decile 9–10 schools and intermediate schools. As for the secondary survey the year before, there was an over-representation of larger and urban schools among responding teachers (because the larger the school, the more teachers were sampled). A full demographic breakdown is provided in Appendix B.

Trustees and parents were surveyed in primary schools, using the same approach as in secondary schools (see above). Responses were received from 329 trustees (response rate 47 percent) and 754 parents from a representative subsample of 36 schools (response rate also 47 percent).

2.2   Analysis of data

Many of the survey questions were closed, either with boxes to tick or a Likert scale to complete. Frequency responses are reported for all these questions. Where closed questions were left blank, responses were recorded as "missing data". Where the frequencies of such responses were unusually high, this is reported.

All closed responses were crosstabulated with a set of school characteristics—size, location, socioeconomic decile rating and school authority type (state or state-integrated). It should be noted that some of these school characteristics overlap, particularly the characteristics of low-decile ranking and small size for schools. Crosstabulations were done using SAS, and results tested for significance using chi-square tests. Only differences significant at the $p < 0.05$ level are reported. At the $p < 0.05$ level, a one-in-20 chance exists that a difference or relationship as large as that observed could have arisen arbitrarily in random samples. Tests of significance do not imply causal relationships, simply statistical association.

Because some questions allowed multiple answers, or because figures have been rounded to whole numbers, totals in some tables (reported in percentages) may add up to more (or less) than 100 percent.

Although comparison of proportions alone can seem to show differences, these differences may not be statistically significant once the size of the group is taken into account. In the report, the term "trend" refers to differences that were just above the $p < 0.05$ level, where a larger sample might have revealed them to be significant.

2.3   Reporting to respondents

Each of the schools that participated in the survey was sent a thematic summary of the findings. In addition, the subset of schools that supplied a parent sample were sent a summary of parent responses, which compared the views of individual parents from their school with those of the total sample. It was not possible to provide tailor-made summaries of teacher and trustee views, as the numbers were too small to do this while preserving confidentiality.

3. Funding

School boards have had legal responsibility for creating their own budgets and managing their own finances since 1989, when educational administration was decentralised to the individual school level. Government resourcing that is allocated on an individual school basis (for schools to decide how to use) comes in two forms: staff and cash. Schools are allocated full-time equivalent staff numbers, with staff members paid centrally. The money for this staffing appears in school budgets, but is not seen by schools as part of their budget. Schools receive operational funding from the MOE; this includes a base grant up to certain roll sizes, and per capita student funding, with around 15 percent nationally based on the socioeconomic decile of a school.

Dissatisfaction with the amount received through operational funding has grown since 1989, with the NZCER and NZ Principals' Federation surveys showing that decreasing numbers of principals thought they had enough money to meet their school needs. The real government funding per student did decrease in the early 1990s, but has been increased since. However, expectations have also grown, as has the use of ICT and high associated depreciation costs. The difficulties experienced by schools and their increased reliance on funds they raise themselves led to a government review of operational funding in 2006, whose findings were consistent with NZCER's small-scale study of financial management in effective schools (Wylie & King, 2004, 2005), and ERO's evaluation of school use of operational funding (Education Review Office, 2006). However, sector expectations of improvements to government funding that would ease the pressures experienced, particularly around ICT and the employment of support staff, were unmet when we carried out these national surveys, and remain unmet.

In the most recent surveys, principals and trustees were asked a series of questions on funding. This chapter examines first the responses from primary schools, and then the responses from secondary schools. In both sections, differences between types of school are noted, together with any differences between the most recent surveys and those undertaken in 2003.

3.1 Funding in primary schools

Primary principals and trustees were asked first whether they considered this year's government funding to be sufficient to meet their school's needs. Nearly all principals (95 percent) and a large majority of trustees (81 percent) said no. This represents a growth in dissatisfaction among principals since the 2003 survey, when 76 percent gave a negative response to the same question. There was little change among trustees however (78 percent in 2003).

Trustees were also asked whether the basis of their school's government funding was clear to them. Sixty percent said it was, but 11 percent said no and 28 percent said that they were unsure, or were still learning about it. This suggests a need for further explanation or clarification, which has increased since 2003, when 70 percent said that the basis of funding was clear to them.

Principals only were asked what financial position the school was likely to be in at the end of the year (2007) and also at the end of 2008. Responses are summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 **Likely financial position in primary schools at the end of 2007 and 2008**

Financial position	2007 (*n*=196) %	2008 (*n*=196) %
Surplus	7	5
Break even	44	47
Deficit	46	37
Not sure	2	10
No response	1	1

About half of the principals thought they would break even (or possibly make a surplus) in each year. However, almost as many said that they would be in deficit in 2007. The percentage stating that they would be in deficit in 2008 was smaller, probably because one in 10 principals were not yet sure what the position would be by then.

Comparison with responses to an identical question asked in 2003 indicates that principals in the recent survey were less confident about their financial situation. In 2003 the proportion anticipating a deficit was lower for the current year (30 percent compared with 46 percent in 2007) and the following year (18 percent compared with 37 percent in 2007). In 2003 a higher proportion were anticipating a surplus, or unsure what the outcome would be.

Principals and trustees also were asked how the current year's financial situation compared with the previous year's. Responses are summarised in Table 3.2. There were differences in the response categories provided for principals and trustees, hence there are no values in some cells.

Table 3.2 **Primary school finances, compared with previous year**

Financial position	Principals (*n*=196) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %
Better than last year because we cut spending	16	8
Better than last year because we increased locally raised funds	11	N/A
Better than last year because government funding increased	4	N/A
Better than last year because we increased income	N/A	8
Much the same as last year	40	39
Worse than last year because costs have risen	26	20
Worse than last year because less income than expected	24	15
We budgeted for a deficit	N/A	26
We budgeted for a surplus	N/A	10
We budgeted to break even	N/A	22
Don't know	N/A	5

N/A: This item was not included on the questionnaire.

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

The most common response from both principals and trustees was "much the same as last year". An almost equal number of principals overall (39 percent) thought it was worse (for one or more of the reasons stated), and a smaller number (26 percent of principals) thought it was better. Large schools (more than 300 students) were more likely than others to say the situation was the same as last year (51 percent, compared with 35 percent of small schools (roll up to 100) and 33 percent of medium-sized schools (roll 101–300)), and less likely to say it was worse (29 percent, compared with 43 and 45 percent respectively).

Rising costs appeared to affect rural schools more than urban schools: 40 percent of rural school principals said that finances were "worse than last year because costs have risen", compared with only 20 percent of urban school principals. (As well as distances contributing to increased costs, this probably relates to size, since rural schools are more likely to be small schools, and we saw above that small and medium-sized schools were more likely than large schools to report a worsening financial situation.) However, 31 percent of rural trustees said that they had budgeted to break even, compared with only 18 percent of urban trustees; the latter were more likely to have budgeted for a surplus (11 percent compared with 7 percent) or a deficit (28 percent compared with 21 percent).

What is causing the financial problems for primary schools? Principals' assessment of the main pressure points on spending is shown in Table 3.3. The overall picture shows that the drivers creating pressure for school funding that were identified in the MOE's review of operational funding (Ministry of Education, 2006) continue. Schools are most likely to be thinking of cutting their own planned initiatives in order to manage their budgets, or cutting back on the use of

relievers to cover for professional development (PD). Given the emphasis on PD as a key way to improve teaching practice, this is of some concern unless schools are finding other ways to create time to learn together.

Table 3.3 **Pressure points on primary schools' spending**

Pressure points	Unexpected extra cost %	Rapid increase in cost %	Large proportion of overall budget %	Issue at the margin—most likely to be cut %
ICT maintenance	26	32	21	6
Teacher aides	24	32	26	9
Student management system	24	20	5	5
ICT consumables	20	28	17	6
Property maintenance	20	26	18	8
Administrative support staff	19	28	29	6
Meeting health and safety regulations	19	19	4	6
Property development	12	22	14	11
ICT depreciation	11	22	18	12
Maintaining class sizes	11	13	23	9
Photocopying	9	27	10	6
Covering relievers for PD	8	21	21	13
Covering teachers' noncontact hours	8	18	9	5
Planned school initiative	8	12	9	15
Property depreciation	7	10	13	10
Other	3	0	0	0

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Sources of new or increased costs

Eighty percent of schools had encountered unexpected extra cost, and 85 percent a rapid increase in cost, in at least one area. Teacher aides and ICT maintenance rated highly on both counts.

Cost increases varied between rural and urban schools. Urban principals were more likely than rural principals to indicate cost increases for administrative support staff (32 percent compared with 17 percent); teacher aides (35 percent compared with 23 percent); property maintenance (28 percent compared with 19 percent); maintaining class sizes (17 percent compared with 4 percent); relievers to cover for PD (23 percent compared with 15 percent); and covering teachers' noncontact hours (20 percent compared with 14 percent). It will be noted that, with the exception of property maintenance, these are all staff-related issues. On the other hand, rural principals were more likely to cite ICT consumables (37 percent compared with 25 percent); ICT maintenance (37 percent compared with 30 percent); property development (27 percent compared with 20 percent); and meeting health and safety requirements (23 percent compared with 17 percent).

Rapid increases in the cost of admin support staff, teacher aides, relievers to cover for PD and photocopying had affected large schools much more than medium (101–300 students) or small (up to 100 students) schools.

The most telling findings relate perhaps to the final column, where principals indicated where cuts might have to be made. Fifteen percent said that planned school initiatives might have to be cut, and 13 percent said they would need to cut the budget for relievers to cover for PD—the implication being that opportunities for PD itself might be reduced. This is a concern, especially as (in response to a separate question) 60 percent of principals said that their school was already unable to afford the PD it needed.

It is not surprising that, faced with problems in balancing their budgets, principals might reduce the amount set aside for depreciation, rather then make cuts in current provision. Thus 12 percent said that they would make cuts in provision for ICT depreciation, and 10 percent in property depreciation. While these decisions are understandable, they could lead to greater problems in the future, when replacement or renovation becomes necessary.

Increasing local income

There are two possible ways of solving budgetary problems: reducing expenditure or increasing income. Sixteen percent of principals had increased the amount of parent donation requested over the past two years. The current amount requested by these schools ranged from under $25 to over $400, with a mean of $112, median $85. The amount previously requested was a mean of $86, median $60. Clearly a small number of schools were requesting a donation well in excess of the median. The increases reported were substantial; nevertheless, it should be noted that only a small minority of schools had made such increases. Almost two-thirds of principals (62 percent) said they had *not* increased the amount requested for parent donations, and a further 20 percent said they did not ask for them at all. Socioeconomic context was a factor here: in decile 9–10 schools, 29 percent had asked for an increase, and only 13 percent said they did not ask for a parent donation. By contrast, only 6 percent of decile 1–2 schools had asked for an increase, and 38 percent did not ask for a donation.

In this context, principals were asked what proportion of parents did *not* pay the school donation in the previous year. There was a broad spread of responses. Of primary schools that asked for a donation, 39 percent gave a figure below 20 percent, but one in 10 principals said that over 70 percent of parents had not paid. Five percent of principals did not answer the question, and a further 2 percent said they did not know.

There was a big difference here between urban and rural schools. The proportion of principals saying that less than 20 percent of parents had not paid the donation was 65 percent in rural schools, compared with 29 percent in urban schools. Parents were also more likely to pay in small schools (two-thirds of those that requested donations said less than 20 percent had not paid, compared with 40 percent of medium-sized schools and 23 percent of large schools). These two factors are related, as rural schools are likely to be smaller than urban schools.

As might be expected, there was also an association between school decile and payment of the school donation. Just over a third of low-decile schools that requested donations, compared with only 7 percent of high-decile schools, reported nonpayment rates above 70 percent. Conversely, 56 percent of high-decile schools, but only 15 percent of low-decile schools, reported nonpayment rates below 20 percent.

Principals were also asked if they had increased activity fees during the current school year. Only 7 percent had done so "across the board", and a further 9 percent "in some subjects". Large schools were more likely to have increased fees, at least in some subjects (22 percent, compared with 13 percent of medium-sized schools and 10 percent of small schools). More than a third (37 percent) said they had not increased fees, and nearly half said that they did not have activity fees.

Trustees' views

Trustees were asked whether their board had faced any financial management issues or problems in the last three years. More than a quarter (28 percent) said yes. These trustees were asked to describe what action had been taken, and the responses are summarised in Table 3.4. They reported both more fundraising and reduction of spending.

Table 3.4   **Actions taken by primary school trustees to address financial problems**

Actions taken	Trustees (*n*=92) %
Put more effort into local fundraising	52
Cut back spending in few areas only	50
Cut back spending in all areas	32
Reduced support staff hours	25
Got outside sponsorship	23
Got help/advice from MOE	23
Reduced teacher relief costs	17
Changed accounting system	14
Got help/advice from NZSTA	13
Changed people responsible for work	12

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Other action taken by less than 10 percent of trustees included:

- reduced support staff pay/conditions
- used temporary help from private firm
- increased number of international students
- got help/advice from the Audit Office, the regional STA or other schools.

Most of the trustees concerned said that the problem had been wholly (27 percent) or partially (47 percent) solved, although 16 percent said that it was too soon to tell, and 9 percent said that it was not solved, or was beyond the BOT's capacity to find a solution.

3.2   Funding in secondary schools

Principals and trustees from secondary schools were asked similar questions to their primary colleagues. Almost the same proportion of principals (94 percent) and a higher proportion of trustees (88 percent) said that they did not consider the current year's government funding sufficient to meet their school's needs. Secondary school principals and trustees gave a very similar response in 2003.

Two-thirds (68 percent) of trustees said the basis for government funding was clear to them; 14 percent said it was not; and 17 percent were unsure. Compared with 2003, the proportion saying that the basis for government funding was unclear was almost the same, but fewer were unsure, and the proportion saying that it was clear had risen from 61 percent.

Because the secondary survey was undertaken a year before the primary surveys, principals were asked what financial position their school was likely to be in at the end of 2006 and 2007. Responses are summarised in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5   **Likely financial position of secondary schools at the end of 2006 and 2007**

Financial position	**2006** **(*n*=194)** **%**	**2007** **(*n*=194)** **%**
Surplus	19	12
Break even	39	38
Deficit	40	41
Not sure	2	9

The picture was slightly more positive for secondary schools than primary schools, with more anticipating a surplus, though the numbers are not strictly comparable since they refer to different years. Very large schools (at least 1,500 students) had more positive expectations; only 14 percent anticipated a deficit at the end of 2007, although it should be noted that there were only 21 schools in this category.

Table 3.6 summarises principals' and trustees' views of secondary school finances, compared with the previous year. If finances had improved, it was more likely to be because spending had been cut rather than because income had increased.

Table 3.6   **Secondary school finances, compared with previous year**

Financial position	**Principals** **(*n*=194)** **%**	**Trustees** **(*n*=278)** **%**
Better than last year because we cut spending	20	20
Better than last year because we increased income	10	8
Much the same as last year	36	36
Worse than last year because costs have risen	25	24
Worse than last year because less income than expected	25	16
We budgeted for a deficit	N/A	26
We budgeted for a surplus	N/A	13
We budgeted to break even	N/A	26
Don't know	N/A	3

N/A: This item was not included on the principal questionnaire.

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Where they were asked the same items, principals and trustees expressed very similar views, except that fewer trustees attributed their worsened financial situation to gaining less income than expected. Rural schools were much more likely to say that the situation was worse than last year, but it should be noted that there were only 13 schools in this category (out of 194 in the secondary survey), and they might not have been representative.

Secondary school principals' assessment of the main pressure points on spending is shown in Table 3.7. ICT costs are a large proportion of the budget, but less likely to be cut to manage costs than funding for maintaining class sizes, or a planned school initiative.

Table 3.7   **Pressure points on secondary schools' spending**

Pressure points	Unexpected extra cost %	Rapid increase in cost %	Large proportion of overall budget %	Issue at the margin—most likely to be cut %
Meeting health and safety regulations	22	19	4	6
Student management system	22	14	6	3
Property maintenance	21	26	27	6
Administrative support staff	20	27	40	5
ICT maintenance	13	35	26	3
Covering teachers' noncontact hours	13	35	16	6
Teacher aides	13	19	18	13
Photocopying	11	35	17	4
ICT consumables	10	35	22	4
NCEA compliance and moderation	10	22	10	3
Maintaining class sizes	10	19	13	16
Property development	8	24	17	11
Planned school initiative	8	11	6	12
ICT depreciation	3	19	33	6
Property depreciation	3	9	13	7
Other	0	2	1	1

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Sources of new or increased costs

Secondary schools had experienced unexpected extra cost, or rapid increase in cost, in a number of areas, particularly administrative support staff, ICT consumables and maintenance, property maintenance, meeting health and safety regulations, covering teachers' noncontact hours and photocopying.

In secondary schools, the areas where budget cuts were most likely to be made were maintaining class sizes, teacher aides, planned school initiatives and property development.

Increasing local income

Like primary school principals, those from secondary schools were asked about parent donations and activity fees. They were also asked how many international fee-paying students had attended their school in the current year and the previous year, and how many they expected in the following year.

International students

Eighteen percent of principals said they had no international students in the current year, and 24 percent did not expect any the following year. For those who did report international students, the means and medians are shown in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8   **Number of international students in secondary schools**

	Median	Mean
Previous year (2005)	20	27
Current year (2006)	17	25
Expected next year (2007)	18	25

As the figures in Table 3.8 indicate, the majority of schools with international students had numbers below the mean. For 2006, in addition to the 18 percent that had no international students, 45 percent had fewer than 20 international students. Only 15 percent of schools had 40 or more. There was a marked difference between high- and low-decile schools in this respect. More than half of decile 1–2 schools (but only 3 percent of decile 9–10 schools) had no international students; 19 percent (compared with 85 percent of high-decile schools) had 10 or more. International students were also likely to be concentrated in main urban areas.

Parent donations

One-quarter of secondary schools (24 percent) had increased the parent donation requested over the past two years. High-decile schools were more likely to have requested an increase (38 percent, compared with 8 percent of low-decile schools), presumably because they believed their

parents could afford it. State-integrated schools (41 percent) were more likely than state schools (19 percent) to have requested increased donations.

The mean amount requested (by schools that had increased the amount they requested for donations) had risen from $175 (median $103) to $217 (median $155). There was a wide range in the amount requested (from $25 to over $500) and in the size of the increase: in most schools, it was not more than 20 percent, but three schools had increased by more than 100 percent.

There was also a wide range in the proportion of parents who did not pay the school donation: 30 percent of principals reported that it was below 20 percent, while 8 percent said that over 70 percent had not paid. Again, there were marked differences by decile: principals reporting nonpayment rates of up to 20 percent included 23 percent of decile 1–2 schools, and 44 percent of decile 9–10; at the other end of the scale, 31 percent of decile 1–2 but only 3 percent of decile 9–10 said that over 70 percent had not paid. Parents of students in state-integrated schools were also more likely to pay: 56 percent of state-integrated school principals reported nonpayment rates of up to 20 percent, compared with 23 percent of state schools.

One-third of secondary schools had increased activity fees in 2006, either in some subjects (29 percent) or across the board (4 percent).

Trustees' views

Trustees were asked two further finance-related questions. First, whether they thought the school was spending more in the current year than in the previous year on compliance with legislation and meeting the requirements of government agencies and local government. More than half (57 percent) answered in the affirmative, and only 18 percent said no; 24 percent were not sure.

Like their primary school counterparts, trustees were also asked whether the board had faced any financial-management issues or problems in the last three years. In this case, 42 percent said yes (compared with 52 percent in 2003). Details of actions taken are provided in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 **Action taken by secondary school trustees to address financial problems**

Actions taken	Trustees (*n*=117) %
Cut back spending in all areas	39
Cut back spending in a few areas only	38
Changed accounting system	32
Got help/advice from MOE	29
Changed people responsible for work	26
Put more effort into local fundraising	18
Reduced support staff hours	15
Got outside sponsorship	12
Got help/advice from NZSTA	12
Increased number of foreign fee-paying students	12
Used temporary help from private firm	9
Reduced teacher relief costs	8

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Other actions (each mentioned by less than 8 percent of trustees) included:

- reduced support staff pay/conditions
- got help/advice from Audit Office, regional STA, other schools or PPTA/SPK/SPANZ.

In most cases the problem had been wholly (32 percent) or partly (45 percent) solved, although 15 percent said it was too soon to tell, and 5 percent admitted that they had not been successful, or that the problem was beyond their power to resolve.

3.3 Summary

A large majority of trustees and all but 5 to 6 percent of principals from primary and secondary schools felt that government funding was insufficient for their school's needs. Few primary schools expected a surplus at the end of 2007; others were equally divided between anticipating a deficit or thinking that they would break even. They were less confident about finances than in 2003. The picture from secondary schools was slightly more positive.

Principals identified a range of areas where unexpected extra costs, or rapid increases in costs, had contributed to their financial difficulties. Those most frequently cited included property, ICT, support staff, health and safety regulations, the new student-management system and covering the new noncontact hours for teachers. In order to balance their budgets, principals said that cuts might have to be made. Planned school initiatives and property development were mentioned by both primary and secondary principals. Primary principals also mentioned relief time to cover PD,

and property/ICT depreciation, and secondary principals, maintaining class sizes and teacher aides.

Schools were trying to raise additional income. A quarter of secondary schools and one in six primary schools had increased the amount of parent donations requested over the past two years, although principals reported that a substantial number of parents did not pay. Income from international fee-paying students was another source of income, which mainly benefited high-decile secondary schools.

Twenty-eight percent of primary school trustees, and 42 percent of secondary school trustees reported that their schools had faced financial-management problems in the last three years. Boards had taken a range of actions to deal with these problems, with cutting costs to the forefront, and three-quarters of responding trustees said that the problems had been wholly or partly solved.

4.   Staffing in primary schools

A school's most valuable resource is its staff; without a dedicated principal and teachers it could not effectively fulfil its core task of educating young people. This chapter and the next deal with staffing in primary schools and secondary schools respectively. In each of these chapters we report on:

- the principal's role (what they themselves said about topics including workload, job satisfaction, stress, morale, achievements and career plans)
- the teacher's role (covering similar ground)
- staffing issues (views of principals and trustees).

4.1   The primary principal's role

Principals were asked a number of questions designed to explore their career histories. One in five had been in their current post for no more than two years (see Table 4.1). At the other end of the scale, 14 percent had been in post more than 15 years. There was similar variation in the time that respondents had been principals.

Table 4.1   **Primary principals' career histories**

Number of years	As a principal (*n*=196) %	As a principal at the school (*n*=196) %
Less than 2	13	21
3–5	12	32
6–10	19	16
11–15	18	16
15+	36	14
No response	1	1

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Comparable figures from the 2003 and 1999 NZCER surveys indicate a greater degree of stability in 2007. In 2003, 36 percent of principals had been in their current post for no more than two years and only 4 percent more than 15 years (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2   **Primary principals' years at their school**

Number of years at the school at time of survey	1999 (*n*=262) %	2003 (*n* =254) %	2007 (*n*=196) %
Less than 2	26	36	21
3–5	29	20	32
6–10	31	22	16
11–15	11	17	16
15+	3	4	14

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Not surprisingly, principals of larger schools had been in that role for longer (46 percent for more than 15 years, compared with 36 percent of principals in medium-sized schools and 20 percent of principals in small schools). The same was true of older principals (55 percent of those over 60, compared with 45 percent of those aged 50–59 and 22 percent of those aged 40–49).

There was a big gender difference in the time that respondents had been principals. Forty-two percent of women, but only 16 percent of men, had been principals for up to five years. By contrast, 52 percent of men, but only 10 percent of women, had been principals for more than 15 years. This may reflect differing career patterns, and in particular the tendency of women to take career breaks which may mean that they come later to senior management posts.

More than a third (38 percent) had been principal at only one (their current) school, but 8 percent had been principal at five or more schools. Principals of small schools were more likely to be in their first post. So were principals of rural schools (which are likely to be small schools, so the two factors are related), younger principals and women.

Nearly half (47 percent) had been deputy principal before becoming a principal, and a further 8 percent had been assistant principal, but one-third had become principal from a Scale A teacher post (12 percent with management units, 21 percent without). Encouragingly, given the demands of the principal role, only 6 percent of those in post for less than five years came from a Scale A position with no management experience, compared with 35 percent of those who had been in post 11 years or more.

Principals of large schools were more likely to have been deputy principal before becoming principal, as were principals of urban schools (which are likely to be larger than rural schools). Women were more likely than men to have been assistant principal, but less likely to have been Scale A teachers without management units (suggesting that men are more likely to make rapid career progression).

Principals were asked whether they had ever taken another position between principalships. A large majority (71 percent) said no (see Table 4.3)—not surprising as 38 percent were in their first post as principal.

Table 4.3   **Primary principals' positions between principalships**

Positions between principalships	Principals (*n*=196) %
None	71
Management role in larger school	13
Adviser	6
Scale A teacher	2
ERO reviewer	2
MOE	2
Other	9

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Principal turnover

Principals were also asked how many principals (including themselves) the school had had in the last 10 years. Responses indicated a large measure of stability (see Table 4.4). Three-quarters of schools had had no more than two principals, which indicates greater stability compared with 2003 and 1999 (comparison figures also shown in Table 4.4).

Small schools were likely to see more frequent change (less than half had had just one or two principals, compared with over 80 percent of medium and large schools). Women (23 percent) were less likely than men (42 percent) to report that their school had had only one principal in 10 years—this probably links to the fact that women were more likely to be principals of smaller schools. Older principals were also more likely to say that their school had had only one principal—presumably because they had chosen to stay there rather than seek another post at that point of their career.

When we look at trends in the number of principals the schools have had in the previous 10 years, comparing 1999, 2003 and 2007 data, the picture of increased stability is confirmed.

Table 4.4   **Number of principals per primary school in the last 10 years**

Number of principals	Schools to 1999 (*n*=262) %	Schools to 2003 (*n*=254) %	Schools to 2007 (*n*=196) %
1	25	25	35
2	34	34	40
3	19	23	12
4+	22	17	12

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Teaching undertaken by primary principals

The extent of teaching undertaken by principals is shown in Table 4.5. One-quarter did no teaching at all,[3] but another quarter took full responsibility for a class for varying proportions of the school day. Nearly half of the principals took classes as and when necessary to cover for absent colleagues, and one in six said that they undertook model lessons for the benefit of teachers. Other types of teaching mentioned by principals included GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) and extension classes, small-group or reading-group work and teaching specific subjects or extracurricular activities.

Table 4.5 **Teaching undertaken by primary principals**

Teaching done	Principals (*n*=196) %
Relieving for absent teachers	45
Model lessons for teachers	17
Full responsibility for a class 1–2 hours each day	12
Full responsibility for a class 2–3.5 hours each day	8
Full responsibility for a class 3.5 hours or more each day	5
Other	27
None	26

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

As might be expected, principals of small schools had the heaviest teaching workload. Eighty percent had a regular teaching commitment, and only one principal had no teaching responsibilities at all, compared with 42 percent of principals in large schools. No doubt linked to this, principals of rural schools were much more likely to have a regular teaching load (62 percent) compared with urban schools (10 percent).

Women were more likely to have a regular teaching commitment than men, and they were also more likely to model lessons for teachers (30 percent compared with 9 percent) and relieve for absent teachers (58 percent compared with 38 percent). They were less likely than men to say they did no teaching at all (14 percent compared with 33 percent). These differences clearly relate to the fact that women were more likely to be principals of small schools.

Principals of low-decile schools were more likely to model lessons for teachers (31 percent, compared with 16 percent of mid-decile and 10 percent of high-decile schools) and relieve for absent teachers (53 percent, compared with 49 percent in mid-decile and 31 percent in high-decile schools).

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[3] More than half of the 2003 respondents said that they did not teach, but this was in response to a differently worded question.

Principals of state-integrated schools were more likely than teachers of state schools to say that they relieved for absent teachers (63 percent compared with 42 percent).

Support from the MOE

Principals were asked what MOE-funded support they received, and what further support they would like. In terms of current support, almost six in 10 (59 percent) mentioned Leadspace, three in 10 the first-time principals programme and a quarter the principals' development planning centre. However, one in five principals (21 percent) said that they had not received any MOE-funded support. Consistent with the findings reported above, women, younger principals and principals of rural schools were more likely to have used the first-time principals programme. Principals of full primary schools (which are likely to be small rural schools) were more likely to have used it than principals of contributing or intermediate schools.

In terms of additional support desired, the most frequent responses to an open-ended question referred to:

- increased support/mentoring (30 principals)
- increased financial support (22)
- focus groups/meetings/course/PD (22)
- reduced compliance (11)
- more admin support (11).

Within the first category were principals who wished for someone in the role of mentor or critical friend: "a regular mentor who will both challenge and support". One principal wrote, "The days when the schools had access to a 'principal's advisor' to visit and discuss problems faced and possible solutions was the most helpful use of personnel and time." Others referred more generally to the need for support (particularly for teaching principals) without specifying precisely what kind of support would be most beneficial.

Given that the question referred specifically to information sharing, PD and advice, it is noteworthy that 22 principals nevertheless took the opportunity to mention the need for additional or noncontestable funding: "I believe that we have too many 'discretionary' funding pools out there. I believe that schools should be directly funded, e.g. no RTLB [Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour], GSE [Group Special Education], etc.—give us the $ to manage these things ourselves—with support structures." Another principal pleaded: "Don't take our staffing (ORRS [Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes]) funding off us during the year if our roll goes down because we have budgeted/staffed for the year and it is a nightmare to re-juggle."

Eleven respondents referred to the MOE's approach to schools, rather than the support which they could possibly provide. They wanted the Ministry to be more consultative, to not appear to be giving orders, to work with schools rather than (in the words of one respondent) "constantly feeling they are against us". Another seven principals made critical comments about the MOE; on

the other hand, seven principals observed that they felt well supported and were not in need of further help.

Hours worked

Table 4.6 shows the number of hours that principals worked in a week. None worked less than 40 hours, and only 7 percent less than 50. One in five worked at least 66 hours per week. Similar responses were obtained in the 2003 survey. Work hours were unrelated to school characteristics.

Table 4.6   **Number of hours primary principals worked in a week**

Hours worked per week	Principals (*n*=196) %
41–50	7
51–55	22
56–60	34
61–65	14
66–70	15
71–80	5
No response	3

Morale and stress

Two-thirds of principals described their morale as good or very good (see Table 4.7). Only 6 percent rated it poor, and none very poor. Table 4.7 also shows comparable figures from 2003. It indicates that morale was better then—one-third of principals described it as very good, compared with less than a quarter in 2007.

Table 4.7   **Primary school principals' morale**

Morale	Principals 2003 (*n*=254) %	Principals 2007 (*n*=196) %
Very good	34	23
Good	41	44
Satisfactory	21	24
Poor	4	6
Very poor	0	0
No response	1	3

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Principals of intermediate schools tended to be more polarised in terms of their morale. More than a third (38 percent) rated it very good, compared with 29 percent of contributing schools and 14 percent of full primary schools. However, 14 percent of intermediate school principals said that their morale was poor, compared with 8 percent of full primary principals and only one principal from a contributing school.

Principals were also asked to describe their typical stress level to date within the current year. Responses are summarised in Table 4.8. Stress levels were high or very high for 42 percent of principals, and only one in 10 said that their stress levels were low or extremely low. As would be expected, there was a relationship between stress and morale. All principals with low or extremely low stress levels had good (40 percent) or very good (60 percent) morale. The majority of principals with high or extremely high stress levels also had good or very good morale, but 13 percent rated their morale poor/very poor, and 29 percent satisfactory.

Table 4.8   **Primary principals' typical stress level**

Stress levels	Principals (*n*=196) %
Extremely low	1
Low	9
About average	45
High	38
Extremely high	4
No response	2

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Morale and stress were associated with a number of other factors (see further below), but it should be noted that causality cannot be inferred. It could be, for example, that high levels of stress impact on other aspects of school life, or equally that stress levels are influenced by them. For the purpose of analysis, stress ratings of "high" and "very high" were combined, also "low" and "very low", so that all principals were included in three basic categories (high, average and low). There were only 20 principals in the low stress category, which makes it more difficult to identify significant differences between the groups. Similarly, morale ratings of "poor" and "very poor" were combined, so that all respondents were included in four basic categories (very good, good, satisfactory and poor); in this case there were only 11 principals in the poor category.

Workload and job satisfaction

Principals were asked to give a more detailed assessment of their workload and job satisfaction by indicating the extent of their agreement with several statements. Responses are summarised in Table 4.9. Principals overwhelmingly agreed that they enjoyed their job; a large majority were confident that they gave other principals good support and could make a useful contribution to

education beyond the school in which they were working. A similar number felt that they received good support from other principals, but a smaller proportion (although still a majority) felt that they gained the support needed from other sources, or were challenged appropriately by the chair of their BOT.

Table 4.9 **Primary principals' workload and job satisfaction**

Principals' views	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
I enjoy my job	45	46	6	2	0
I can retain good teachers in this school	26	54	12	5	1
I have good support from other principals	23	59	13	3	0
I can attract good teachers to this school	22	49	17	6	4
I can make a useful contribution to education beyond this school	21	58	16	2	0
I give other principals good support	21	58	15	3	0
I get the support I need to do my job effectively	12	48	17	17	2
I could move to the principalship of a larger school if I wanted to	10	38	31	12	6
The board chair challenges me in a useful way	7	49	31	9	2
My work and personal life are balanced	5	24	23	38	8
There is good career progression available for aspiring principals in NZ	3	23	31	34	6
I can manage my workload	3	45	25	22	3
I have enough time for the educational leadership part of my job	2	18	21	44	14

Although more than 90 percent of principals reported that they enjoyed their job, those from state schools were more likely to strongly agree with this statement (47 percent) than those from state-integrated schools (29 percent).

The pressures on principals were clearly revealed in the answers to some of the statements. Less than half felt that they could manage their workload; a quarter specifically said that they could

not. Only 29 percent felt that they had a satisfactory work–life balance (nearly half disagreed) and only one in five felt that they had enough time for educational leadership (this should surely be a key part of the principal's role, so it is of concern that well over half of the respondents said they did not have enough time for it).

Principals from state schools were more confident about attracting good teachers (74 percent agreed or strongly agreed) and retaining good teachers (83 percent), compared with those from state-integrated schools (54 percent and 63 percent respectively). Principals from high- and mid-decile schools (77 and 75 percent respectively) were more confident than those from low-decile schools (53 percent) about attracting good teachers.

Principals from large schools were less confident about retaining good teachers (70 percent agreed or strongly agreed) than those from medium-sized schools (87 percent) or small schools (83 percent). The same was true of principals from intermediate schools (62 percent, compared with 81 percent of those from full primary schools and 84 percent of those from contributing schools); and principals from low-decile schools (69 percent, compared with 81 percent from mid-decile and 85 percent from high-decile schools).

Only 21 percent of women felt that they had an appropriate work–life balance, compared with 34 percent of men; a majority of women (52 percent) disagreed with the statement, including 15 percent who strongly disagreed. Principals from contributing schools were the most positive on this issue: 40 percent agreed that they had an appropriate work–life balance, and 30 percent disagreed. By comparison, only 18 percent of full primary principals agreed, and three times as many (60 percent) disagreed.

Principals from contributing schools were also more sanguine about their ability to manage their workload (61 percent agreed or strongly agreed, compared with 43 percent of intermediate school principals and 36 percent of those from full primary schools) and having enough time for professional leadership (28 percent, compared with 19 percent of those from intermediate schools and 11 percent of those from full primary schools). Twenty-two percent of principals from state schools felt they had enough time for professional leadership, but none of the principals from state-integrated schools agreed with this statement.

Principals from small schools were least confident about managing their workload (35 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, compared with 25 percent from medium schools and 19 percent from large schools); this may reflect their heavier teaching commitments (see above). They were also least confident about the possibility of moving to a larger school (30 percent, compared with 46 percent from medium schools and 61 percent from large schools).

Responses to this item set differed by morale (see Table 4.10, which shows the proportions agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement). All principals with good/very good morale said they enjoyed their job, but only half of those with poor morale did (there were only 11 principals in this group, but the trend is clear from the table). Half of those with very good morale felt that they had an appropriate work–life balance, compared with only 9 percent (one of the 11

principals) with poor morale. This suggests that time is a crucial factor associated with morale, and this is confirmed by the responses to some of the other items. Principals with poor morale were less likely to have enough time for professional leadership, and to be able to manage their workloads. They were also less likely to get the support they needed, and to be able to attract and retain good teachers.

Table 4.10 **Primary principals' workload and job satisfaction, by morale**

Principals' views	Morale			
	Very good (*n*=45) %	Good (*n*=87) %	Satisfactory (*n*=48) %	Poor (*n*=11) %
I enjoy my job	100	99	81	55
I give other principals good support	89	79	81	55
I have good support from other principals	87	86	77	64
I can retain good teachers in this school*	87	83	81	55
I can make a useful contribution to education beyond this school	84	84	75	64
I can attract good teachers to this school	82	77	65	45
I get the support I need to do my job effectively	78	66	48	18
I could move to the principalship of a larger school if I wanted to	76	40	46	27
I can manage my workload	71	52	33	9
The board chair challenges me in a useful way	67	60	44	45
My work and personal life are balanced	49	30	15	9
I have enough time for the educational leadership part of my job	36	22	6	0
There is good career progression available for aspiring principals in NZ	31	30	17	27

Responses to some of these items also differed by stress level (see Table 4.11, which shows the proportions agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement). The few principals who did not enjoy their job were among those with high stress levels. Almost two-thirds of those with low stress felt that they had an appropriate work–life balance, compared with only 19 percent of those with high stress.

Time (or the lack of it) was strongly associated with stress as well as morale. Finding enough time for professional leadership was not easy for principals generally, but it was more difficult for those with high stress, and they were much more likely to have problems in managing their workload. Two factors possibly contributing to this situation were lack of support and the inability to attract good teachers to the school.

Table 4.11 **Primary principals' workload and job satisfaction, by stress level**

Principals' views	Stress level		
	Extremely low/low (*n*=20) %	About average (*n*=89) %	Extremely high/high (*n*=83) %
I enjoy my job	100	97	86
I can attract good teachers to this school	90	78	65
I can manage my workload	85	56	31
I get the support I need to do my job effectively	80	67	51
My work and personal life are balanced	65	31	19
I have enough time for the educational leadership part of my job	50	21	11

Coping strategies

Given that some principals evidently find it difficult to manage their workload, what strategies do they employ to help them do this? Responses are summarised in Table 4.12. Delegation to management-team colleagues was the most common strategy. It is also arguably the most obvious, and it may seem surprising that one in five did not report doing this. Possibly some felt that their colleagues also had heavy workloads, and they did not wish to burden them further. Another explanation is that some principals might not have a management team; consistent with this is the fact that principals from small schools were much less likely to say that they delegated or had distributed leadership (58 percent, compared with 79 percent in medium-sized schools and 91 percent in large schools). Also less likely to delegate were principals from rural schools (probably for the same reason, since rural schools tend to be smaller), female principals, principals from full primary schools and those from state-integrated schools.

Table 4.12 **How primary principals manage their workload**

Workload	Principals (*n*=196) %
Delegate to management team/have distributed leadership	79
Limit number of initiatives school is working on at any one time	72
Try to reduce size of issues (e.g., student behaviour)	60
Hire extra administrative support	16
Limit time my door is open	13
Other	20

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Principals from contributing schools (81 percent) and full primary schools (73 percent) were more likely to limit the number of initiatives worked on than those from intermediate schools (38 percent).

Principals in large schools were also more likely to say that they hired extra administrative support (28 percent, compared with 12 percent in medium-sized schools and 8 percent in small schools). This was also true of urban schools (19 percent, compared with 8 percent of rural schools); the two findings are linked, as urban schools are likely to be larger than rural schools.

Desire for change

Principals were asked "*If you could change anything about your work as a principal, what would you change?*" Responses are summarised in Table 4.13. The most common wish, made by three-quarters of respondents, was for more time to reflect, read or be innovative. Consistent with the finding noted above, 60 percent also wanted more time for educational leadership. Time is evidently the main pressure on principals, and the lack of it means that some feel they are not able to properly fulfil all aspects of their role.

Table 4.13 **Desired changes to work as a primary principal**

Changes	Principals (*n*=196) %
More time to reflect/read/be innovative	75
Reduce administration/paperwork	66
More time to focus on educational leadership	60
Have a more balanced life	54
Have more support staff	53
Have more teaching staff I can delegate to	52
Reduce external agencies' demands/expectations	50
Reduce workload	44
Sabbatical leave	37
Higher salary	30
More contact with other schools/principals	26
Reduce board's demands on me	7
Increase ability of board to usefully challenge me	5
Other	4

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Principals from rural schools (65 percent) were more likely than those from urban schools (50 percent) to say that they wanted a more balanced lifestyle. Principals from full primary schools (64 percent) were more likely to say this than those from contributing (46 percent) or intermediate (48 percent) schools.

Older principals were more likely to wish for sabbatical leave: only a quarter of those under 50 (who might be relatively new to the job, and not wishing to take time away), but 42 percent of those aged 50–59, and 55 percent of those aged over 60. This may seem surprising, and in the light of responses to the following question, it may be that older principals were thinking in terms of what they would like to have been different about their jobs, rather than what they particularly wanted for the future.

Consistent with the finding noted above, two-thirds of those with high stress expressed a wish for a more balanced life, compared with only a quarter of those with low stress.

A similar question was asked of principals in 2003, but they were allowed to specify only three things that they would like to change. Percentages for each item were therefore lower and not strictly comparable. However, the ranking of items was similar, with the top two (time to reflect/read and less administration/paperwork) still the same.

Career plans

Principals were asked to describe their career plans for the next five years (Table 4.14). Almost 60 percent said they wanted to continue as principal at their current school, twice the number that wished to change to leading another school. Almost a quarter planned to retire, not surprisingly perhaps as 10 percent of respondents were aged over 60 and more than half were aged 50–59.[4] It is evident that some respondents ticked more than one category, and were therefore either considering different options, or planning two (or more) career stages within the next five years.

Table 4.14 **Primary principals' career plans for the next five years**

Career plans	Principals (*n*=196) %
Continue as principal at this school	59
Apply for a study award/sabbatical	30
Change to leading another school	30
Retire	23
Change to a different career	18
Change to a different role within education	14
Return to classroom teaching	5
Other	3
Not sure	11

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Consistent with the fact that they were at an earlier point in their career (see above), principals of small schools were more likely to say that they wished to change to leading another school (45 percent, compared with a quarter of those in medium-sized and large schools). Though the numbers were extremely small, they were also more likely to say that they would return to classroom teaching, which reflects the fact that their role (usually involving a regular teaching commitment—see above) is much closer than the role of principal in a large school to that of a classroom teacher. Similarly, 14 percent of rural school principals (compared with only 2 percent of urban school principals) were contemplating a return to classroom teaching, and 42 percent (compared with 25 percent of urban principals) were thinking of changing to lead another school.

There were obvious age-related effects in terms of plans for the next five years. Ninety percent of principals aged over 60 planned to retire, none wanted to move to another school and only one principal wished to apply for a sabbatical. Thirty percent of men planned to retire, but only 11 percent of women (women respondents were on average younger than men).

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[4] Of the total sample of primary principals, 9 percent were aged under 40; 25 percent 40–49; 56 percent 50–59; and 10 percent 60 or over.

There were some links between morale and career plans for the next five years. Good morale was associated with wanting to continue as principal of the same school, poor morale with wanting to change to a different career.

Recent achievements

Principals were confident that they had made improvements in all of the areas listed in Table 4.15. For each item, a large majority of principals said either that they had made improvements, or that they had sustained an already high level.

Those where the largest percentage (almost two-thirds) thought there had been improvements were the planning and reporting framework (as might be expected, given that it had been introduced only a few years before the survey took place) and meeting the needs of a particular group of students, with more use of assessment for learning. The proportion saying they had yet to achieve the desired level was highest for roll growth or stability, buildings and grounds, student achievement levels and the involvement of community, parents and board.

Table 4.15 **Main achievements as a primary principal in the last three years**

Main achievements	Have made improvements (*n*=196) %	Have sustained high level (*n*=196) %	Yet to achieve level I want (*n*=196) %
Planning and reporting framework	64	22	10
Meeting needs of a particular group of students	64	21	11
Student assessment for learning	60	22	13
Performance appraisal system	59	26	13
Innovation in implementing curriculum	56	29	12
Pedagogical leadership	56	27	12
Community/parents/board involvement in school	56	24	16
Student achievement levels	54	27	16
Quality learning resources	51	35	11
Student behaviour	48	41	7
Quality of staff	48	37	10
Professional development for staff	44	50	3
Building/grounds	44	37	17
Positive learning environment	39	54	4
Teachers working together	39	51	8
School reputation	38	53	5
Roll growth/stability	34	36	26

In terms of pedagogical leadership, and professional development for staff, principals of small schools were more likely to report improvement, while principals of larger schools were more likely to say that they had sustained an already high level. Again, this is consistent with the fact that principals of small schools tended to be at an earlier stage in their career as principal. In terms of student behaviour, the opposite was the case, possibly reflecting the fact that behaviour is more of an issue in larger schools, and therefore there is more perceived scope for improvement. Principals of small schools were less likely than others to say that they had sustained a high level in terms of roll growth or stability, probably because declining rolls are a greater issue for smaller schools.

In terms of innovation in implementing the curriculum, one-third of intermediate school principals thought that they had made improvements, while 57 percent said they had sustained a high level. For full primary and contributing schools, the figures were reversed: a much higher proportion (60 and 57 percent respectively) reported improvements, while only about a quarter said they had sustained a high level. This suggests that intermediate schools had begun work in this area earlier than the other school types.

On a wide range of items, decile 9–10 schools were the least likely to report improvements, while decile 1–2 schools were the least likely to say that they had sustained a high level.

Two-thirds (66 percent) of female principals reported an improvement in community/parental involvement, and 18 percent reported a sustained high level; the comparable figures for male principals were 50 percent and 29 percent respectively. Similarly, with reference to school reputation, female principals were more likely to report improvement (48 percent, compared with 33 percent), while male principals were more likely to report that a high level had been sustained (60 percent, compared with 42 percent of women).

Finally, there was a gender difference relating to the planning and reporting framework: men (71 percent) were more likely than women (52 percent) to report improvement, women more likely to report a sustained high level (29 percent compared with 19 percent) but also to say that they had yet to achieve what they wanted in this area (14 percent compared with 8 percent).

4.2 The primary teacher's role

There was a wide spread of experience among primary teachers. Table 4.16 shows the length of time that they had been in teaching, and in their current post. As with principals, there seems to be greater stability than in 2003, when 30 percent of teachers had been less than two years in their current post.

Table 4.16 **Primary teachers' career histories**

Number of years	As a teacher (*n*=912) %	As a teacher at the school (*n*=912) %
Less than 2	8	25
2–5	17	30
6–10	21	23
11–15	12	12
16–20	12	6
21–25	10	2
26–30	10	1
31–40	10	<1
More than 40	1	0

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

A large majority of the respondents were female (88 percent), but on average, female teachers had less teaching experience than male teachers: 15 percent of women had been teaching for up to three years, compared with 8 percent of men.

Eighty-five percent of the teachers held a permanent position (78 percent of those under 40, 87 percent aged 40–49, 92 percent of those over 50). Fourteen percent had a fixed-term post (compared with 9 percent in 2003) and 1 percent were relieving.

Nearly half of the teachers (46 percent) received salary units; 28 percent had just one, the others had two or more. Thirty percent of teachers had salary units for a management role, 18 percent for curriculum leadership and just 4 percent for a pastoral support role. Twenty-nine percent of teachers reported that their salary units were permanent, 16 percent said they were not.

There was a wide spread of ages among respondents: 17 percent were aged under 30; 23 percent 30–39; 26 percent 40–49; 29 percent 50–59; and 4 percent over 60. Not surprisingly, there were differences by age. Older teachers were more likely to receive salary units, particularly for a management role (42 percent of those aged over 50, compared with 22 percent of those aged under 40). Forty-one percent of teachers over 50 reported that their salary units were permanent, compared with 17 percent of those under 40.

Teachers in small schools were much less likely to have salary units for management (15 percent, compared with 31 percent in other schools) and pastoral support (none) compared with large schools (5 percent) and medium-sized schools (2 percent). Men were more likely to have salary units for pastoral support (9 percent) than women (3 percent). (They were also more likely to have salary units for management, although this difference was small and not significant.) This may be related to the fact that women were more likely to teach in smaller schools.

Teachers taught the full primary/intermediate age range, from new entrants to Year 8. Women were more likely to teach the younger children (particularly new entrants, Years 1 and 2) and men the older children (Years 6, 7 and 8). Some teachers indicated more than one year group, meaning that they taught mixed-age classes. As would be expected, this was more common in small schools (where only 13 percent taught a single age group, compared with 42 percent of teachers in medium-sized schools and 61 percent of teachers in large schools). It was also more common in rural schools (which tend to be small schools); 20 percent of teachers in rural schools taught a single age group, compared with 55 percent of those in urban schools. In full primary schools, 40 percent taught a single age group, compared with 53 percent in contributing schools, and 74 percent in intermediate schools.

Six teachers said that their home class was full Māori immersion, and 13 that it was bilingual. Twelve of these 19 teachers were in decile 1–2 schools. As these numbers were so small, no further analysis was undertaken of this characteristic.

Classroom-release time

On average, teachers had 2.3 nonteaching classroom-release hours per week (only 1.7 hours in rural schools, compared with 2.4 in urban schools; 1.5 in small schools, compared with 2.5 in large schools). Teachers in low-decile schools had more nonteaching hours (mean 3.0 in decile 1–2, 2.2 in decile 3–8 and 2.1 in decile 9–10). So did teachers in intermediate schools (mean 2.7, compared with 2.3 in contributing schools and 2.1 in full primary schools).

As would be expected, the number of nonteaching hours varied according to role and level of responsibility. On average, deputy principals had 5.5 nonteaching hours, assistant principals 3.8 and senior teachers 2.3. For other teachers, the mean was less than two hours per week. Male teachers had more noncontact time (2.9 hours) than female teachers (2.2 hours).

A large majority (84 percent) said that they usually got the number of hours they were timetabled for; only 7 percent said that they did not (10 percent did not respond to the question). Teachers in medium-sized schools (88 percent) and large schools (82 percent) were more likely to get their nonteaching hours than those in small schools (71 percent), who had in any case fewer nonteaching hours (see above). Teachers in intermediate schools (75 percent) were less likely to get their timetabled nonteaching hours than those in contributing or full primary schools (both 85 percent).

Table 4.17 shows how teachers spent their nonteaching/classroom-release time. The most common tasks were assessment, lesson planning and preparation, marking students' work and administrative tasks. Teachers in state schools were more likely than those in state-integrated schools to spend time on observing other staff (40 percent compared with 22 percent), collaborating with other teachers (31 percent compared with 17 percent), discussing students' work with other staff (26 percent compared with 15 percent), appraising staff (19 percent compared with 10 percent) and covering other classes (13 percent compared with 3 percent); they were less likely to spend time assessing students (76 percent compared with 88 percent).

Table 4.17 **How primary teachers spend their nonteaching/classroom-release time**

Nonteaching/classroom-release time	Teachers (*n*=912) %
Assess students	77
Update student records	73
Plan lessons	65
Prepare assessments	64
Prepare/manage teaching resources	64
Administration	64
Observe other staff	38
Document my programme	35
Nonteaching duties	31
Collaborate/plan with other teachers	30
Own professional development	29
Moderate assessments	28
Talk to parents	27
Professional reading	26
Discuss student work with other staff	25
Appraise staff	18
Tutor-teacher responsibilities	17
Pastoral support for students	16
Attend management meetings	16
Develop/revise school policies	14
Release other teachers/cover other classes	12
Associate-teacher responsibilities	11
Have professional discussions with teachers from other schools	11
Train others	8
Maintain computers	7
Maintain/develop library	6
Other	8

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Teachers were asked approximately how much time they spent each week on their work, outside school hours. Just over half of the teachers said that they spent 11–20 hours, with approximately equal numbers indicating lesser or greater amounts. The approximate mean was 15.7 hours. It was higher for women (15.8 compared with 14.8 for men), older teachers (16.6 hours for those aged over 50, compared with 14.7 for those under 40), teachers in rural schools (16.8 hours, compared

with 15.5 in urban schools), teachers in small schools (16.7, compared with 14.9 in large schools) and teachers in high-decile schools (16.3 in decile 9–10, compared with 14.8 in decile 1–2). It was also higher for teachers in full primary schools (16.4 hours, compared with 15.3 in contributing schools and 14.7 in intermediate schools).

The number of extra hours worked by teachers also varied by role. Deputy principals worked the longest additional hours (18.1), followed by assistant principals (17.8) and tutor teachers (17.8). For those without a position of responsibility, and not in receipt of salary units, the mean was 14.2 hours per week.

Workload and job satisfaction

Teachers were asked to respond to an item set about workload and job satisfaction (this was similar to the one presented to principals, and some items were common). Responses are summarised in Table 4.18 below. Overall responses were positive, and (where relevant) similar to those given by principals. Only one-third of teachers had a good work–life balance, and enough time for the classroom part of their jobs. Only about 40 percent could manage their workload, thought it fair and considered their work-related stress manageable.

Table 4.18   **Primary school teachers' workload and job satisfaction**

Teachers' views	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
I enjoy my job	37	54	6	2	<1
My principal cares about me as a person	33	39	19	6	2
I have opportunities to learn and grow at this school	32	46	14	6	1
Staff are well treated in this school	30	44	16	7	1
I get the support I need to do my job effectively	13	50	23	12	2
My workload is fair	7	33	31	23	4
My work and personal life are balanced	6	25	25	31	12
I can manage my workload	5	36	35	20	2
I have enough time for the classroom part of my job	4	28	23	36	6
The level of work-related stress in my job is manageable	4	38	32	21	3

Teachers in rural schools, and those in small schools, gave particularly positive responses to two items: "Staff are well treated in this school" and "My principal cares about me as a person". This indicates that relationships can be closer (and better) in a small school environment. Teachers in full primary and contributing schools were more likely to agree with the former statement than those in intermediate schools. Teachers in state-integrated schools were even more likely to say that they enjoyed their job (97 percent) than those in other state schools (91 percent).

Deputy principals and assistant principals were less likely than other teachers to say that their work and personal life was balanced; assistant principals were the least likely to say that they had enough time for classroom work. Surprisingly, perhaps, deputy principals were the group most likely to agree that the level of work-related stress in their job was manageable.

Morale and stress

Teachers were asked to give an overall rating of their morale (see Table 4.19). Two-thirds rated it good or very good, and only one in 12 as poor or very poor. Comparable figures from the 2003 survey are also shown. Unlike principals, teachers' morale seems to have improved since 2003, as 68 percent rated it good or very good in 2007, compared with 58 percent in 2003; only 8 percent rated it poor or very poor, compared with 13 percent in 2003.

Table 4.19 **Morale as a primary school teacher**

Morale	Teachers 2003 (*n*=431) %	Teachers 2007 (*n*=912) %
Very good	21	22
Good	37	46
Satisfactory	27	24
Poor	10	7
Very poor	3	1
No response	2	1

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Teachers were not asked for their stress levels, but the final item in Table 4.18 provides an indication of this. Associations between morale and/or stress and other factors were examined, but again it is important to note that causality cannot be inferred.

As might be expected, morale and stress were strongly linked. Three-quarters of those with very good morale agreed (or strongly agreed) that their levels of work-related stress were manageable, compared with half of those with good morale, 13 percent of those with satisfactory morale and 5 percent of those with poor morale.

Time pressures are a key issue in relation to stress. Of those who strongly agreed that stress was manageable, 3 percent said they did not get the number of nonteaching release hours they were

timetabled for; of those who strongly disagreed, 22 percent said this. Of those who strongly agreed that stress was manageable, 13 percent spent more than 20 hours on school work; of those who strongly disagreed, 48 percent did so.

There was also a link between stress levels and seniority. Of those who strongly agreed that their work-related stress was manageable, 38 percent were in receipt of salary units; of those who strongly disagreed, 56 percent were.

There was no statistically significant difference between those who held and those who did not hold a position of responsibility. However, those who did not have but were interested in having a position of responsibility were more likely to say that their work-related stress was manageable (55 percent) than those who were not interested (38 percent).

Responses to several of the items about workload and job satisfaction differed by level of morale (see Table 4.20, which shows the proportions agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement). Nearly all teachers whose morale was satisfactory or better said that they enjoyed their job, but less than half of those whose morale was poor said so. A work–life balance was clearly difficult for teachers to achieve, but those with good morale were more likely to do so. They were also more likely to feel that they had enough time for their classroom work, and could manage their workload. For teachers, as for principals, time was clearly a key issue. Of those who strongly agreed that they could manage their workload, 90 percent had good or very good morale, compared with only 18 percent of those who strongly disagreed. Morale was also linked with receiving support, having opportunities to learn and grow at the school, being well/fairly treated and feeling that the principal cared for the respondent as a person.

Table 4.20 **Workload and job satisfaction, by morale**

Teachers' views	Morale			
	Very good **(n=199)** **%**	**Good** **(n=418)** **%**	**Satisfactory** **(n=215)** **%**	**Poor/very poor** **(n=74)** **%**
I enjoy my job	97	99	89	45
I have opportunities to learn and grow at this school	92	84	64	51
Staff are well treated in this school	90	84	54	34
My principal cares about me as a person	90	78	56	41
I get the support I need to do my job effectively	85	71	43	18
The level of work-related stress in my job is manageable	75	50	13	5
I can manage my workload	70	45	16	14
My workload is fair	67	44	17	9
I have enough time for the classroom part of my job	55	32	14	12
My work and personal life are balanced	45	31	23	12

Responses to several of these items also differed by stress level (see Table 4.21, which shows the proportions agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement). In this the teacher responses echoed those of principals (see above), but the differences were in some cases even greater. All of those who strongly agreed that stress was manageable enjoyed their jobs, but only just over half of those who disagreed. Similarly, three-quarters of those who strongly agreed that stress was manageable felt that they had an appropriate work–life balance, eight out of 10 felt they had enough time for classroom work and nine out of 10 felt that their workload was manageable—all in sharp contrast to those who strongly disagreed. Time (or the lack of it) is therefore crucial, but being in a supportive environment and feeling well and fairly treated are also important.

Table 4.21 **Workload and job satisfaction, by manageable work-related stress**

Teachers' views	Work-related stress is manageable				
	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
I enjoy my job	100	99	92	82	56
I have opportunities to learn and grow at this school	100	87	75	67	56
Staff are well treated in this school	97	87	72	58	26
I get the support I need to do my job effectively	97	79	58	43	11
My principal cares about me as a person	95	84	67	60	30
I can manage my workload	90	68	27	9	15
My workload is fair	87	64	26	14	0
I have enough time for the classroom part of my job	79	46	23	10	11
My work and personal life are balanced	74	46	21	11	7

Desire for change

Teachers were asked to identify the main things that they would like to change about their work (see Table 4.22). The most common wishes—expressed by more than three-quarters of respondents—were for a reduction in class sizes, and in administration/paperwork. Almost two-thirds wanted more time to work with individual students, and the same proportion wanted better pay.

Table 4.22 **Desired changes to work as a primary teacher**

Changes	Teachers (*n*=912) %
Reduce administration/paperwork	78
Reduce class sizes	77
More time to work with individual students	64
Better pay	64
Reduce curriculum coverage/size	53
Time to reflect/plan/share ideas	52
More funding/resources for classroom	52
Reduce number of initiatives at any one time	52
More support for children with behaviour problems	50
More support staff	49
Reduce assessment workload	48
Better provisions for special needs	48
More noncontact time for preparation etc.	47
Reduce assessment requirements	44
Fewer nonteaching duties	43
More positive appreciation of teachers	43
More sharing of knowledge/ideas with teachers from other schools	41
Better resources for my students to use	34
Improve student behaviour	33
Reduce pace of change	30
More advice available when assessment results show gap in student learning	25
More professional development	21
Better support and mentoring when I started teaching	17
More stability in moderation of assessments	12
Other	2

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

In 2003, teachers were asked a similar question but only allowed up to three responses. Percentages for each item are therefore lower and not strictly comparable. However, the two most common wishes were the same as in 2007: a reduction in administration/paperwork, and in class sizes. After these came (jointly) a reduced workload (not on the 2007 list) and more noncontact time.

There were different emphases according to gender and age. Women were more likely to say that they wanted more support staff, fewer nonteaching duties and more advice when assessment

results show a gap in student learning; men were more likely to request better pay, and a reduction in the number of initiatives.

Older teachers were more likely to want more support staff, time to reflect/plan/share ideas, a reduction in the number of initiatives and more sharing of knowledge and ideas with teachers from other schools. In particular (compared with younger teachers) they wanted a reduction in the pace of change (43 percent of those over 50, compared with 16 percent of those under 40). By contrast, younger teachers were more likely to say they wanted a reduction in administration/paperwork, better support and mentoring and better pay.

There were also differences between urban and rural schools. Teachers from urban schools were more likely to say they wanted a reduction in class sizes and an improvement in student behaviour. Rural teachers were more likely to wish for better support and mentoring, and more advice when assessment results show a gap in student learning (this was the greatest difference—43 percent rural, 22 percent urban).

Similarly, teachers from large schools were more likely than those in small schools to say they would like a reduction in class size and fewer nonteaching duties. Teachers from small schools were more likely than those in large schools to say that they would like better support and mentoring and more advice when assessment results show a gap in student learning.

Teachers in contributing and full primary schools were more likely than those in intermediate schools to say that they would like more support staff and better provision for special needs. On the other hand, teachers in intermediate schools were more likely to wish for improvement in student behaviour.

Teachers in state schools (as opposed to those in state-integrated schools) were more likely to say that they would like fewer nonteaching duties, better pay, a reduction in the pace of change and in the number of initiatives and more support for students with behaviour problems. They were less likely to say that they wanted better resources for students to use.

There were also differences by decile in terms of student behaviour. Teachers in low-decile schools were more likely to wish for an improvement in student behaviour (42 percent of decile 1–2 teachers, compared with 23 percent of decile 9–10) and more support for students with behaviour problems (62 percent decile 1–2, 38 percent decile 9–10). They were also more likely to wish for better resources for their students to use, and more support staff, but they were less likely to wish for a reduction in the pace of change.

Recent achievements

Teachers were asked what they felt were their main achievements over the past three years (Table 4.23). Five out of six believed that they had increased their own knowledge and skills (women were more likely to say this than men). A majority had seen improvements in their learning environment, their teaching programme, student assessment for learning and student achievement. Encouragingly, very few said that nothing had really changed.

Table 4.23 **Main achievements as a primary teacher in the last three years**

Main achievements	Teachers (*n*=912) %
Increase in my own knowledge/skills	83
Positive/improved learning environment	68
Improved teaching programme	65
Improved student assessment for learning	61
Improvements in student achievement	60
Better meeting needs of a particular group of students	50
Implementation of an innovative programme	46
Improvement of student behaviour	40
Involvement of parents with students' learning	28
Nothing has really changed	2
Other	1

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

A similar question in the 2003 survey asked teachers to identify their three main achievements during the past three years. The responses to each item were therefore lower and not strictly comparable. However, the items most frequently cited were the same as those listed above, with the exception of student assessment for learning (this was not listed specifically in 2003, and the general "student assessment" was cited by only 21 percent of respondents).

In 2007, older teachers were more likely to cite improvements in learning environment, teaching programme and student behaviour; younger teachers were more likely to report improvement in parental involvement. Teachers from rural schools were more likely than those in urban schools to report an improved teaching programme and assessment for learning. (Similarly, teachers from small schools were more likely than those in larger schools to report an improvement in assessment for learning.) Women were more likely than men to mention improved assessment for learning and better meeting the needs of a particular group of students.

Teachers from intermediate schools were more likely than those from contributing and full primary schools to say that they had implemented an innovative programme, but less likely to mention the involvement of parents in students' learning. Teachers in state schools were more likely to report improved student behaviour (41 percent) than those in state-integrated schools (30 percent); it may be that state-integrated schools saw less need for such improvement.

There was a correlation between school decile and perceived improvement in student behaviour. Over half of decile 1–2 schools (52 percent) reported improvement, compared with 40 percent of decile 3–8 schools and 34 percent of decile 9–10 schools. Again, there was probably less perceived scope for improvement in the higher decile schools. There was a similar but smaller difference in terms of better meeting the needs of a particular group of students (56 percent of

low-decile schools reported improvement, 52 percent of mid-decile and 44 percent of high-decile).

Professional development

Teachers were asked about the benefits they had derived from the professional learning they had done through the school over the past two to three years (Table 4.24). In each of the ways shown, at least two-thirds (usually more) agreed that it had helped them; few disagreed, although up to a quarter were neutral.

Table 4.24 **Professional learning by primary teachers over the last two to three years**

Professional learning	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
Helped me to actively reflect on my practice	29	57	11	1	<1
Given me new ways to engage students in learning	25	59	12	1	<1
Given me opportunities to test new teaching practices	24	61	11	2	<1
Identified specific areas of my practice I wanted to develop	22	59	14	2	<1
Given me new ways to use student achievement data to plan teaching	17	51	24	5	<1
Challenged some of my assumptions or beliefs	17	51	23	6	1
Given me new ways to use student achievement data to give feedback to students	16	53	24	4	<1

Nearly all said that their recent PD had resulted in their trying new strategies in their teaching (38 percent "most of it" and 59 percent "some of it"). More than three-quarters said that they had been able to share the knowledge they had gained with other staff (48 percent because it was expected of them, 31 percent because they actively sought the opportunity). Teachers in small schools were more likely to say it was expected of them (60 percent, compared with 52 percent from medium-sized schools and 45 percent from large schools). So were teachers in contributing (50 percent) and full primary schools (51 percent) compared with those in intermediate schools (33 percent). As might be expected, deputy principals (66 percent), assistant principals (60 percent) and senior teachers (61 percent) were also more likely to report this than other teachers.

Career plans

More than half of the teachers (58 percent) already held a position of responsibility (see Table 4.25). A further 17 percent said they would be interested in holding one in future, but 14 percent were not interested and 10 percent not sure.

As would be expected, there were age differences here. Almost two-thirds of teachers over 40 (64 percent over 50, 62 percent aged 40–49) held positions of responsibility, compared with only half (51 percent) of those under 40. Older teachers were more likely to be deputy principals, assistant principals and senior teachers. But older teachers who did not already hold positions of responsibility were less likely to be interested in holding one in future (only 7 percent of those aged over 50, compared with 12 percent of those aged 40–49 and 27 percent of those under 40).

Men were more likely than women to be deputy principals, and women more likely than men to be tutor teachers. Teachers in intermediate schools were more likely to be senior teachers. Teachers in low-decile schools were twice as likely to be tutor teachers (24 percent in decile 1–2, compared with 12 percent in decile 9–10).

Table 4.25 **Primary teachers' positions of responsibility**

Positions of responsibility	Teachers (*n*=912) %
Curriculum/syndicate leader	30
Receive a salary unit	20
Senior teacher	15
Tutor teacher	15
Deputy principal	9
Assistant principal	6
Other	6

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

There were no differences in terms of morale between those who held a position of responsibility and those who did not. Of those who did not already have a position of responsibility, the majority of those with good or very good morale were interested in having one, while the majority of those with satisfactory or poor morale were not.

Only 13 percent of the total sample were interested in becoming a principal in the future: 20 percent of those under 40, 10 percent of those 40–49 and 8 percent of those over 50. Men were twice as likely to be interested in becoming principals (25 percent, compared with 12 percent of women). Teachers from intermediate schools (20 percent) were more likely to be interested in becoming a principal than those in contributing (13 percent) or full primary (11 percent) schools. As might be expected, deputy and assistant principals were more likely than others to be interested in becoming a principal in future, but even among these groups the proportions were low (28 percent and 19 percent respectively).

Fifteen percent of teachers were unsure if they wanted to become principals, but more than two-thirds (70 percent) were definitely not interested. The main reasons given by those who said they definitely *would* like to be principal were that they wanted the challenge (80 percent), they wanted to work with teachers as well as children (74 percent) and they wanted the opportunity to implement their own ideas (65 percent). A better salary was further down the list, but was cited by 42 percent of those interested in becoming principal.

The main reason given by those who definitely did *not* want to be principal was that they preferred to work with students in the classroom (72 percent; this reason was given by women more often than men). A principal's role was perceived as too stressful (59 percent) and the workload too high (56 percent); further, they were not interested in school management/administration (38 percent).

If teachers did not wish to become principals, what did they want to do? Their career plans for the next five years are summarised in Table 4.26. The most common response (made by over a third of teachers) was that they wished to continue as they were. Some evidently wished to further their careers by getting a permanent teaching job or increasing their level of responsibility. However, a substantial number wished to *reduce* their teaching hours, and/or their level of responsibility. This indicates that time is perhaps more important than money to many, and reflects the desire for a manageable workload and a satisfactory work–life balance (see above, with reference to Table 4.18). This could also be the reason why over a third (36 percent) were thinking of leaving teaching, either for a different career within education, a career outside education or for a different reason. It should also be noted that less than a third of the primary teachers surveyed believed that there was career progression available within their schools (see Section 6.1).

Table 4.26 **Primary teachers' career plans for the next five years**

Career plans	Teachers (*n*=912) %
Continue as I am now	35
Increase level of responsibility	27
Change schools	21
Reduce teaching hours	19
Leave teaching for another reason (e.g., travel, family)	18
Apply for a study award/sabbatical	17
Change careers within education (e.g., become an adviser)	16
Change to a career outside education	13
Get a permanent teaching job	9
Retire	7
Reduce level of responsibility	5
Increase teaching hours	1
Other	2
Not sure	8

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Teachers in intermediate schools were twice as likely to be thinking of changing to a career outside education (23 percent) compared with those in contributing or full primary schools (both 11 percent). Almost a third of deputy principals (31 percent) and a quarter of senior teachers (24 percent) intended to apply for a study award or a sabbatical.

Teachers' career plans for the next five years varied according to their morale (see Table 4.27). Those with good or very good morale were more likely than others to say that they would continue as they were, increase their level of responsibility or get a permanent teaching job. Those with poor or satisfactory morale were more likely to say that they would reduce their teaching hours, reduce their level of responsibility, change careers within education or change to a completely different career.

Table 4.27 **Career plans for the next five years, by morale**

Career plans	Morale			
	Very good	**Good**	**Satisfactory**	**Poor/very poor**
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**
Increase level of responsibility	38	30	17	16
Continue as I am now	36	39	32	23
Change schools	19	21	21	26
Apply for a study award/sabbatical	16	15	20	20
Leave teaching for another reason (e.g., travel, family)	14	18	21	26
Change careers within education (e.g., become an adviser)	13	14	23	22
Get a permanent teaching job	13	10	6	3
Reduce teaching hours	9	15	30	31
Change to a career outside education	7	8	19	32
Retire	7	6	9	4
Reduce level of responsibility	3	3	11	10
Increase teaching hours	1	1	1	0
Other	3	1	4	1
Not sure	8	8	8	14

Teachers' career plans for the next five years also varied according to their stress levels (see Table 4.28). Those who felt that their work-related stress was manageable were more likely to say that they would continue as they were or increase their level of responsibility. Those who did not think their stress was manageable were more likely to say that they would reduce their teaching hours, reduce their level of responsibility, change schools, change careers within education or change to a completely different career.

Table 4.28 **Career plans for the next five years, by manageable work-related stress**

Career plans	Work-related stress is manageable				
	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
Continue as I am now	49	37	37	31	15
Increase level of responsibility	49	32	28	13	19
Change schools	18	16	21	27	41
Apply for a study award/sabbatical	15	16	15	18	37
Get a permanent teaching job	13	11	8	8	7
Leave teaching for another reason (e.g., travel, family)	8	17	18	22	19
Change careers within education (e.g., become an adviser)	8	15	14	21	41
Change to a career outside education	8	7	12	18	56
Retire	5	8	7	7	0
Reduce teaching hours	3	15	19	27	30
Reduce level of responsibility	3	3	5	11	7
Increase teaching hours	3	1	2	1	0
Other	0	2	2	2	7
Not sure	3	9	10	7	4

Of those who did not already have a position of responsibility, but were interested in holding one in future, 20 percent were interested in becoming a principal, but 57 percent were not (the remainder were unsure). They were more likely than others to say that their career plans involved increasing their level of responsibility, getting a permanent teaching job, changing schools and changing careers within education. They were less likely to say that they planned to continue as now, reduce their teaching hours, reduce their level of responsibility or retire.

4.3 Staffing issues in primary schools

Only one-quarter (27 percent) of primary principals believed that their staffing entitlement for the year was enough to meet the school's needs; 70 percent said that it was not (the remainder were not sure, or did not respond). BOT members were slightly more positive: 31 percent said yes, and

61 percent no. Principals were more positive in 2003, when 39 percent said yes to the same question, and 57 percent no (BOT views changed less).

In 2007, half of rural school principals thought their staffing entitlement would be sufficient, compared with only 18 percent in urban schools. This doubtless reflects an association with size: principals of small schools were more likely to say yes (45 percent) than teachers of medium-sized schools (29 percent) or large schools (13 percent).

The number of teachers funded over entitlement ranged from zero to six, with a mean of 0.9 (28 percent said that they did not fund any extra teachers, and only 8 percent said that they funded more than two). The mean for intermediate schools was 1.7, twice as many as for contributing schools (0.9) and full primary schools (0.7). The mean for urban schools was 1.1, compared with only 0.3 for rural schools. The mean for large schools was 1.5, compared with 0.3 for small schools and 0.6 for medium-sized schools.

The work undertaken by these teachers is shown in Table 4.29. In almost a third of schools, they taught in a curriculum area (most commonly maths and English), and in the same proportion of schools they provided literacy and numeracy support. Evidently there is a perceived need for additional help in these key areas.

Table 4.29 **Work by teachers funded over entitlement in primary schools**

Work	Teachers (*n*=196) %
Literacy/numeracy support	31
Teach in a curriculum area	31
Special needs/learning assistance	29
Extension students/GATE	13
ESOL	13
ICT support	12
Music or other arts tuition	11
Principal relief	7
Work with international fee-paying students	6
Pastoral care	6
Te reo Māori	4
Data management	3
Life/work skills	2
Fundraising and promotion	1
Other	11

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Turnover of teaching staff

Principals were asked how stable their teaching staff had been over the past two years. Responses, summarised in Table 4.30, indicate a high level of stability. In more than half of the schools, no more than two teachers had left, and only in 11 percent had six or more teachers left. There was a natural association with school size—23 percent of large schools had lost six or more staff, compared with only 3 percent of small and medium-sized schools—which implies that the number of teachers leaving was proportional to the size of the teaching force. There were also differences by school type and location (both of which relate to size). More than a third (38 percent) of intermediate schools had lost six or more teachers, compared with 9 percent of contributing schools and 5 percent of full primary schools. More than half (57 percent) of urban schools had lost at least three teachers, compared with 13 percent of rural schools.

Table 4.30 **Stability of primary school teaching staff over the last two years**

Stability	Principals (*n*=196) %
No one left	11
1–2 teachers left	43
3–5 teachers left	35
6–10 teachers left	8
11+ teachers left	3

Just over half (53 percent) of the principals said that they had difficulty finding suitable teachers for some of their vacancies. In response to a different question, 71 percent said that they could attract good teachers to the school (see Table 4.9 in Section 4.1) and 80 percent agreed that they could retain good teachers. This may seem inconsistent, but perhaps principals are saying that they can attract good teachers, but not enough of them.

There was an association with decile: 75 percent of principals in decile 1–2 schools reported difficulty in finding suitable teachers, compared with only 38 percent in decile 9–10 schools. The proportion of principals reporting difficulty was higher in state-integrated schools (75 percent, compared with 50 percent in other state schools) and intermediate schools (71 percent, compared with 45 percent of contributing schools and 57 percent of full primary schools). Principals with high stress levels were more likely to report this (64 percent, compared with 47 percent of those with average stress levels and 40 percent of those with low stress).

The reason most commonly given (by 47 percent of principals) was a limited number of suitable applicants. Other reasons related to the school's location: in a remote/rural area (17 percent) or in a low socioeconomic area (12 percent). Three percent of principals reported a shortage of teachers speaking Māori.

A lower proportion (39 percent) of principals said that they had difficulty finding teachers for management roles. A difference by location (27 percent of rural schools, but 43 percent of urban schools) reflects a difference by size (25 percent of small schools, 37 percent of medium schools and 49 percent of large schools). The reasons most commonly given (Table 4.31) explain why teachers would not want management roles: a demanding workload, too much paperwork and not enough money for the responsibility or the additional hours. Other reasons relate to what the school can offer: not enough management units, or situated in a (presumably) undesirable location.

Table 4.31 **Reasons for difficulty in finding suitable teachers for management roles**

Reasons	Principals (*n*=196) %
Not enough money for the responsibility	26
Workload too demanding	24
School doesn't have enough management units	21
Not enough money for the additional work hours	19
Too much paperwork	17
School location	10
School reputation	3
Management roles are unclear	1
Other	2
Don't know	1

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Only one in six principals said that they did *not* have difficulty finding registered day relievers. The others experienced problems frequently (23 percent), occasionally (55 percent) or in the second half of the year (5 percent). This suggests that finding day relievers had become more problematic since 2003, when only 13 percent of principals reported frequent difficulties, and 35 percent no difficulties at all (the "in the second half of the year" option was not given in the 2003 survey).

In 2007, low-decile schools were much more likely to experience frequent problems (44 percent in decile 1–2 and 24 percent in 3–8, compared with only 10 percent in 9–10).

Problems were due mainly to a shortage of suitable staff:

- not enough registered teachers to meet the demand (58 percent of principals)
- many relievers are in long-term positions (50 percent)
- a lack of good-quality relievers (47 percent)
- relievers won't work in the areas or years needed (16 percent).

Pay was obviously not the key issue: only 1 percent of principals identified low pay as a cause of the problem.

Affording the cost of support staff for administrative work or to work with teachers and students was a difficulty for principals. Only 15 percent said that they had sufficient funding to employ enough support staff to meet the school's needs. Small schools were more positive about this: 28 percent said they had enough funding to do this, compared with 14 percent of medium-sized schools and 9 percent of large schools.

4.4   Summary

Compared with 2003, there was greater stability in staffing, reflected in the length of time that principals and teachers had been in post. Three-quarters of schools surveyed had had no more than two principals over the past 10 years.

A quarter of primary principals did no teaching, but another quarter took full responsibility for a class, for varying proportions of the school day. One in five primary principals worked 66 or more hours per week. Two-thirds of primary principals (a lower proportion than in 2003) said that their morale was good or very good.

About nine in 10 agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed their job, but a quarter said that they could not manage their workload, and nearly half said that they did not have a satisfactory work–life balance. Only one in five felt they had enough time for educational leadership.

The main coping strategies employed by principals were delegation to senior colleagues and limiting the number of initiatives worked on at any one time. Principals would like more time for reflection and educational leadership, and less administration and paperwork.

Primary teachers had an average of 2.3 hours noncontact time. Just over half worked 11–20 hours per week outside school time. About nine in 10 said that they enjoyed their job. Less than half of primary teachers felt that they could manage their workload, and their work-related stress; less than a third felt that they had a satisfactory work–life balance.

In contrast with that of principals, teacher morale had improved since 2003, with about two-thirds now rating it good or very good. What primary teachers most wanted was a reduction in class size and less administration/paperwork; only 13 percent were interested in becoming a principal.

Only about a quarter of principals thought that their staffing entitlement was sufficient for the school's needs. Although staff turnover was low, more than half of primary principals said that they had difficulty in finding suitable teachers for at least some of their vacancies.

5. Staffing in secondary schools

This chapter covers the same topics as Chapter 4, this time with reference to secondary schools.

5.1 The secondary principal's role

Principals were asked a number of questions designed to explore their career histories. One in five had been in their current post for no more than two years (see Table 5.1). At the other end of the scale, 7 percent had been in post more than 15 years. Principals of main urban (36 percent) and secondary urban schools (41 percent) were more likely to have more then 10 years' experience, compared with principals of minor urban (13 percent) and rural schools (8 percent).

There was similar variation in the time that respondents had been principals. However, only 12 percent of secondary principals, compared with 36 percent of primary principals (see Section 4.1 above) had been a principal for more than 15 years. This probably reflects the fact that secondary schools are larger, with more complex management structures, so there is a longer ladder to climb, and teachers reach the top at a later stage in their careers.

The 2006 principals were more experienced than those in the 2003 sample. Only 17 percent had been principals for less than three years (35 percent in 2003) and 30 percent had been principals for 11 or more years (17 percent in 2003). This is consistent with the finding reported above, that the 2006 principals tended to be older.

Table 5.1 **Secondary principals' career histories**

Number of years	As a principal (*n*=194) %	As a principal at the school (*n*=194) %
Less than 2	17	21
3–5	23	30
6–10	28	28
11–15	18	13
15+	12	7
No response	2	2

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Again consistent with these findings, more principals of main urban (23 percent) and secondary urban schools (32 percent) had been in post for more than 10 years, compared with only 8 percent of minor urban and rural schools.

Nearly three-quarters of secondary principals (73 percent) had been principal only at one (their current) school; this is almost double the proportion of primary principals, probably for the reason just discussed.

Principal turnover

Principals were asked how many principals (including themselves) their school had had in the last 10 years. As with primary schools, responses indicated a large measure of stability: three-quarters had had no more than two principals, and only 1 percent had had five. There was, however, greater stability in higher decile schools: 35 percent of schools in decile 3 and above had had just one principal, compared with 12 percent of decile 1–2 schools. Conversely, 15 percent of decile 1–2 schools had had four or more principals, compared with 2–3 percent in other schools.

Hours worked

Table 5.2 shows the number of hours that principals worked in a week. Secondary principals worked much longer hours than primary principals. Three-quarters of secondary principals worked 56–70 hours a week, and 13 percent worked more than that. This, however, represents a reduction in working hours since 2003, when more than a quarter of secondary principals were working more than 70 hours a week.

Table 5.2   **Number of hours secondary principals worked in a week**

Hours worked per week	Principals (*n*=194) %
41–50	1
51–55	7
56–60	25
61–65	23
66–70	29
71–80	9
81+	4
No response	2

Morale

Principals were asked to rate their morale (see Table 5.3). More than three-quarters said that it was good or very good; only 7 percent said it was poor or very poor. There was little change in secondary principals' morale since 2003 (comparison figures also shown in the table). In this respect, there was a marked difference between secondary and primary principals (see Table 4.7 in Section 4.1). In 2003, principals' level of morale was essentially the same in both sectors. When they were surveyed again, secondary principals' morale had remained stable, but primary

principals' morale had dropped considerably. (However, it is possible that this change could have happened during the last year of the interval, and we cannot be certain that there would not have been a similar drop in secondary principals' morale between 2006 and 2007.)

Table 5.3   **Morale as a secondary school principal**

Morale	Principals 2003 (*n*=95) %	Principals 2006 (*n*=194) %
Very good	36	39
Good	40	38
Satisfactory	14	14
Poor	4	6
Very poor	1	1
No response	5	3

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Nearly half of the principals of main urban schools (49 percent) said that their morale was very good, compared with 14 percent in secondary urban, 28 percent in minor urban and 31 percent in rural schools.

Workload and job satisfaction

The issue was explored further by asking principals to indicate the level of their agreement with a number of statements related to workload and job satisfaction. Responses are summarised in Table 5.4. Most were positive, and for most common items, similar to those given by primary principals. However, secondary principals were even less likely than their primary counterparts to agree that they had a good work–life balance, that they had enough time for educational leadership and that they could manage their workloads. On the positive side, more than half of secondary principals agreed that there was good career progression available in New Zealand, compared with only a quarter of primary principals; again, this reflects the greater opportunities available in larger schools with more management roles.

Table 5.4 **Secondary principals' workload and job satisfaction**

Principals' views	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral/ Not sure %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
The board chair and I trust each other	63	25	5	2	2
I enjoy my job	43	45	6	2	0
I can retain good teachers in my school	24	57	12	3	1
I can attract good teachers to my school	21	53	14	8	1
I get the support I need to do my job effectively	19	50	12	12	1
There is good career progression available for aspiring principals in NZ	10	47	21	15	2
I can manage my workload	8	37	27	19	4
My work and personal life are balanced	5	18	15	44	14
I have enough time for the educational leadership part of my job	3	14	7	53	19

Principals of high-decile schools found it easier to attract good teachers: 44 percent strongly agreed with this statement, compared with 16 percent of mid-decile schools and 12 percent of low-decile schools.

There were differences by size of school roll although the pattern was not always clear. More than half of the principals in main urban schools *strongly* agreed that they enjoyed their job, but no more than 31 percent in other areas. They were also the most positive about getting the support they needed (75 percent agreed or strongly agreed, compared with 64 percent of secondary urban, 60 percent of minor urban and 46 percent of rural schools) and attracting good teachers to their schools (82 percent, compared with 73 percent of secondary urban, 58 percent of minor urban and 46 percent of rural schools). Main urban (52 percent) school principals and secondary urban (50 percent) were more likely to agree or strongly agree that they could manage their workload, compared with those from rural (38 percent) and minor urban schools (23 percent).

Coping strategies

Table 5.5 below summarises the strategies employed by principals to help them manage their workload. Delegation to management team colleagues was the most common strategy, employed by nine out of 10 secondary principals (but only 73 percent of those in decile 1–2 schools). This is a higher proportion than that given by primary principals, probably because secondary schools

have larger management teams and so there is more scope for delegation. Secondary principals were, however, less likely to try to reduce the size of issues, or to limit the number of initiatives the school works on at any one time. Principals of state-integrated schools were more likely to adopt the latter strategy (72 percent) than principals of state schools (52 percent).

Table 5.5   **How secondary principals manage their workload**

Workload	Principals (*n*=194) %
Delegate to management team/have distributed leadership	90
Limit number of initiatives school is working on at any one time	56
Try to reduce size of issues (e.g., behaviour)	45
Limit time my door is open	18
Hire extra administrative support	16
Other	10

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Desire for change

Principals were asked: *"If you could change anything about your work as a principal what would you change?"* Responses (summarised in Table 5.6) illustrate again the time pressures that principals are under. The top two requests—each made by four out of five secondary principals—was for more *time* to focus on educational leadership, and more *time* to reflect, read and be innovative. Like their primary colleagues, they evidently feel that they do not have time for these things at present. One way of helping to improve the situation and alleviate time pressures would be a reduction in administration or paperwork—requested by two-thirds of primary and secondary principals. This could help them to have a more balanced life, which more than half of secondary and primary principals wished for.

Table 5.6   **Secondary principals' desire for changes to their work**

Changes	Principals (*n*=194) %
More time to focus on educational leadership	81
More time to reflect/read/be innovative	78
Reduce administration/paperwork	69
Have a more balanced life	59
Reduce external agencies' demands/expectations	46
Higher salary	39
Have more support staff	37
Reduce workload	37
Sabbatical leave	34
More contact with other schools/principals	25
Other	3

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

In 2003, secondary principals were asked to identify just three things that they would like to change. Percentages are therefore lower, and not strictly comparable. However, the items at the top of the "wish list" were the same (though in a different order): more time to reflect/read, reduced administration/paperwork and more time to focus on educational leadership.

In 2006, there were significant differences by decile on two items. It was the principals of mid-decile schools who most wanted a more balanced life (67 percent, compared with 39 percent from low-decile schools and 44 percent from high-decile schools) and more time for educational leadership (85 percent, compared with 81 percent from low-decile schools and 65 percent from high-decile schools).

Principals from state-integrated schools were more likely to wish for sabbatical leave (49 percent) than principals from other state schools (30 percent).

Career plans

Principals were asked to describe their career plans for the next five years (Table 5.7). Almost 60 percent said they wanted to continue as principal at their current school. However, a large number of respondents (44 percent) wanted at least one kind of change: leading another school, taking on a different leadership role, returning to classroom teaching or changing to a different career. It is evident that some respondents ticked more than one category, and must therefore be planning two (or more) career stages within the next five years.

Table 5.7   **Secondary principals' career plans for the next five years**

Career plans	Principals (*n*=194) %
Continue as principal at this school	59
Apply for a study award/sabbatical	31
Change to a different career	20
Change to leading another school	17
Change to a different leadership role (e.g., MOE consultant)	17
Retire	14
Return to classroom teaching	5
Other	1
Not sure	11

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

The 10 principals who said they wished to return to classroom teaching were all from mid-decile schools. One in five principals from mid- and high-decile schools were contemplating a change to a different career, but only one of the 26 principals in the low-decile group.

There were marked differences in the career plans of secondary and primary school principals; 30 percent of the latter were planning to change to leading another school, and 23 percent were planning to retire (see Table 4.14 in Section 4.1).

Recent achievements

Asked to rate their main achievements over the past three years, secondary principals perceived significant improvements in all areas, particularly implementing planning and reporting, assessment for learning, meeting the needs of a particular group of students, the performance appraisal system and having a positive learning environment (see Table 5.8). Where fewer principals indicated improvement (e.g., roll growth/stability), this was usually because a higher proportion said that they had sustained an already high level. However, principals had not achieved all their goals: more than a quarter had yet to achieve their desired level in student achievement, parental involvement, learning resources, assessment for learning and meeting the needs of a particular group of students.

Table 5.8   **Main achievements as a secondary principal in the last three years**

Main achievements	Have sustained high level %	Have made improvements %	Yet to achieve level I want %
Leadership	44	42	7
Implementation of NCEA	41	45	6
School reputation	39	40	14
Roll growth/stability	39	30	23
Building/grounds	31	43	19
Quality of staff	30	50	14
Positive learning environment	28	56	9
Professional development for staff	27	52	15
Implementing Student Management System	25	46	21
Implementing planning and reporting	22	57	12
Innovation in implementing curriculum	22	52	19
Performance appraisal system	19	56	19
Student achievement levels	18	48	27
Quality learning resources	16	45	30
Community/parents/board involvement in school	15	50	26
Meeting needs of a particular group of students	8	56	27
Student assessment for learning	7	56	28

There were marked differences by decile in response to this question. Generally, principals of high-decile schools believed that they had sustained an already high level; others might report greater improvement, but still felt that they had further to go. For example, in terms of quality of staff, 53 percent of high-decile principals said they had sustained a high level, compared with 25 percent of principals from mid-decile schools and 23 percent from low-decile schools. Nearly a quarter (23 percent) of the latter group felt that they had yet to reach the level they wanted, compared with 14 percent from mid-decile schools and only 6 percent from high-decile schools. There was a similar pattern for most other items. On student assessment for learning and meeting the needs of a particular subgroup, fewer reported sustaining a high level; low-decile schools were the most likely to report improvement, and mid-decile schools the most likely to say that they had yet to attain the level they wanted.

With reference to school reputation, roll growth and implementation of planning and reporting, larger schools were more likely to report sustaining a high level, and smaller schools were more likely to say that they had yet to achieve the level they wanted. On some items, there were

differences by location, but the patterns were not always consistent. In terms of leadership, main urban schools were most likely to report sustaining a high level, and rural schools most likely to say that they had yet to achieve the level they wanted (this no doubt relates to the fact that principals of main urban schools had been principals, and in their current posts, for a longer period of time). The same was broadly true of school reputation and achieving roll growth (which obviously relates to size).

Principals from state-integrated schools were more likely than principals from other state schools to report that they had sustained a high level in having a positive learning environment, community involvement, performance appraisal, student achievement and quality learning resources. Conversely, principals from state (nonintegrated) schools were more likely to say that they had not yet reached a satisfactory level in these areas.

5.2 The secondary teacher's role

There was a wide spread of experience among secondary teachers. Table 5.9 shows the length of time that they had been in teaching, and in their current post.

Table 5.9 **Secondary teachers' career histories**

Number of years	As a teacher (n=818) %	As a teacher at the school (n=818) %
Less than 2	8	22
2–3	6	30
4–5	8	20
6–10	14	9
11–15	10	9
16–20	12	6
21–25	15	3
26–30	16	1
31–40	10	0
More than 40	1	0

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

On average, secondary teachers had worked longer in that role than primary teachers; 31 percent had worked 21–30 years, compared with 20 percent of primary teachers (see Table 4.16 in Section 4.2).

Ninety percent of the teachers held a permanent position, 8 percent had a fixed-term post and 1 percent were relieving. Their roles are shown in Table 5.10. Only a third of the teachers classified themselves as "ordinary" classroom teachers.

Table 5.10 **Secondary teachers' roles**

Role	Teachers (*n*=818) %
Middle manager/faculty leader	38
Teacher	34
Specialist classroom teacher	15
Dean	8
Senior manager	5

Only 8 percent of the teachers were part-time (but 14 percent of those in state-integrated schools). The majority of these were 0.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) or higher; the mean and the median were 0.7.

Classroom-release time

On average, secondary teachers had 7.5 nonteaching classroom-release hours per week (as would be expected, a much higher figure than for primary teachers, and higher than the 4.6 noncontact periods reported in 2003[5]). Teachers in high-decile schools had 7.9 hours, compared with 7.4 for mid-decile and 7.0 for low-decile schools. There was variation according to main subject taught, ranging from 7.1 hours for maths/science teachers to 7.9 for arts and social sciences teachers.

As would be expected, senior managers had more nonteaching hours (mean 14.6) than other members of staff. Nonteaching time ranged from 6.2 hours for teachers, to 7.9 for middle managers. Men had more nonteaching hours (7.8) than women (7.3), which could link to the fact that more of the senior and middle managers in the survey were male (although this difference was not statistically significant).

Table 5.11 shows how teachers spent their nonteaching/classroom-release time. As with primary teachers (see Table 4.17 in Section 4.2), the most common tasks were lesson planning and preparation, marking students' work and administrative tasks. In general, figures were higher for secondary teachers, but this is no doubt due (at least in part) to the fact that they had more noncontact time and could therefore cover more activities within it.

Though they now had more time than in 2003, activities undertaken in this noncontact time were much as before, with two exceptions: more teachers mentioned updating their skills and knowledge (48 percent in 2006, compared with 34 percent in 2003), or their own professional development (43 percent in 2006, compared with 32 percent in 2003). What may be of interest given the growing emphasis on school clusters is that the proportion of those who would spend

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[5] Though we asked about noncontact periods rather than hours in 2003, periods would usually have been an hour.

some of this time in professional discussions with teachers from other schools remains low, at 16 percent.

Table 5.11 **How secondary teachers spend their timetabled nonteaching time**

Timetabled nonteaching time	Teachers (*n*=818) %
Plan lessons	86
Mark work	83
Administration	83
Prepare assessments	81
Prepare/manage teaching resources	79
Update student records	74
Discuss work with other staff	69
Talk to parents	57
Moderate assessments	49
Update teaching skills and knowledge	48
Own professional development	43
Observe other staff	42
Counsel students	41
Release other teachers/cover other classes	37
Appraise staff	33
Attend management meetings	30
Associate-teacher responsibilities	23
Tutor-teacher responsibilities	21
Train others	21
Test students	18
Develop/revise school policies	17
Have professional discussions with teachers from other schools	16
Deal with professional standards	13
Maintain computers	8
Maintain/develop library	6
Other	5
No official noncontact time	4

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Teachers were asked approximately how much time they spent each week on their work, outside school hours. The responses were similar to those provided by primary teachers—just over half said that they spent 11–20 hours—but the approximate mean was slightly lower, at 14.8 hours.

This contrasts markedly with the 2003 survey, according to which the mean number of additional hours spent working was 17.0. In 2003, a third of secondary teachers spent 21 hours or more on work, but in 2006 this had dropped to 19 percent. This may be because of their increase in noncontact time during this period.

In 2006, teachers in high-decile schools worked the longest out-of-school hours (15.3, compared with 14.7 for mid-decile and 14.6 for low-decile schools).

There was also variation here according to main subject taught in Years 11–13. For most teachers the mean was between 14.7 (English/languages) and 15.5 (maths/science); however, for teachers of technology/HPE (physical education/health)/careers/special education, the mean was 12.8.

Teachers tended to work longer hours as they grew older (from 13.7 for those aged under 40 to 15.6 to those aged over 50); this doubtless relates to increasing responsibility during their careers. Senior managers worked 20.0 additional hours, middle managers 16.6 and teachers 13.2.

On average, men worked longer hours (15.8 additional hours) than women (14.2), although this may reflect the other differences noted above.

Morale

Secondary teachers' rating of their morale was slightly less positive than primary teachers'; just under two-thirds rated it good or very good (Table 5.12). This, however, represents a marked improvement since 2003, when NCEA was introduced (comparison figures included in the table), when less than half of the secondary teachers said their morale was good or very good.

Table 5.12 **Morale as a secondary school teacher**

Morale	2003 (*n*=744) %	2006 (*n*=818) %
Very good	11	20
Good	32	43
Satisfactory	30	25
Poor	23	9
Very poor	3	1

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

In 2006, senior managers were the most positive (a third rated their morale as very good, compared with only 17 percent of teachers) but the difference fell just short of statistical significance.

Workload and job satisfaction

Like principals and primary teachers, secondary teachers were asked to respond to an item set about workload and job satisfaction (Table 5.13). Their level of enjoyment was similar, but they

were more positive about work–life balance: nearly half agreed that "my work and personal life are balanced", compared with less than a third of primary teachers and less than a quarter of secondary principals. Similarly, 57 percent of secondary teachers believed that they could manage their workload, compared with 41 percent of primary teachers and 45 percent of secondary principals. As ever, time was a critical factor: half of the secondary teachers reported that they had enough time for the classroom part of their job, compared with only 32 percent of primary teachers. It could be that the additional noncontact time given to secondary school teachers makes a big difference in their ability to cope with the time pressures of the job.

Table 5.13 **Secondary school teachers' workload and job satisfaction**

Teachers' views	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
I enjoy my job	36	50	8	4	1
Staff are well treated in this school	18	45	21	11	4
This school retains good teachers	17	47	17	13	4
I get the support I need to do my job effectively	13	49	15	16	5
My work and personal life are balanced	11	36	13	30	9
There is career progression available in my school	10	43	24	15	5
I can manage my workload	7	50	21	16	4
I have enough time for the classroom part of my job	7	43	11	29	8

Women were more likely to strongly agree that they enjoyed their job (40 percent) than men (29 percent).

The higher the school decile, the more likely teachers were to agree (or strongly agree) that they got the support they needed, that their school retained good teachers and that there was career progression in their school. As might be expected, teachers from larger schools (and urban schools) were more likely to agree (or strongly agree) that there was good career progression in their schools.

Senior managers were more likely than others to say that their school retained good teachers, that there was career progression in the school and that staff were well treated (almost half strongly agreed with this statement, but less than 20 percent of respondents in other categories). There was a negative correlation between seniority and work–life balance: only a third of senior managers agreed (or strongly agreed) that they had this, compared with just over 40 percent of middle managers and deans and just over half of teachers and specialist classroom teachers.

As might be expected, part-time teachers were more likely than full-time teachers to say that their work and personal life were balanced; they were also more likely to say that they got the support they needed and had enough time for the classroom part of their job (presumably because they had fewer nonteaching responsibilities). Similarly, fixed-term teachers were much more likely than permanent or relieving teachers to say that their work and personal life were balanced, and that they had enough time for the classroom part of their job.

Elsewhere in the questionnaire, secondary teachers were asked whether there were areas of the school's life where they felt they should be involved in decision making, but were not. Those who answered positively were clearly unsatisfied to some extent with their role in the school, so it is hardly surprising that they were less likely than other teachers to report that they enjoyed their job. More strikingly, they were only half as likely to agree or strongly agree that they got the support they needed (43 percent, compared with 80 percent of other teachers).

Responses to all of the items about workload and job satisfaction differed by level of morale (see Table 5.14, which shows the proportions agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement). The differences were striking. There were only 11 teachers with very poor morale, but at least eight disagreed with each of the items. So did a substantial proportion—sometimes a majority—of those with poor morale. Only 14 percent of those with poor morale agreed that they got the support they needed, and only 21 percent said they had enough time for the classroom part of their job. By contrast, a large majority—usually over 80 percent—of those with very good morale agreed with each statement. The least positive responses from this group related to work–life balance, but even here the proportion agreeing was 70 percent, compared with only 30 percent of those with poor morale.

Table 5.14 **Workload and job satisfaction, by morale**

Teachers' views	Morale				
	Very good %	Good %	Satisfactory %	Poor %	Very poor %
I enjoy my job	99	98	76	46	9
I get the support I need to do my job effectively	94	74	42	14	9
I can manage my workload	87	62	41	32	0
This school retains good teachers	86	71	51	37	9
Staff are well treated in this school	85	74	49	24	9
I have enough time for the classroom part of my job	82	55	30	21	0
There is career progression available in my school	72	59	44	28	0
My work and personal life are balanced	70	52	29	30	0

Desire for change

Asked what they would like to change about their work, secondary teachers responded as shown in Table 5.15. As with primary teachers, reducing administration/paperwork was the top priority, but secondary teachers on the whole were less concerned about reducing class sizes—though it was still important to them. In general, secondary teachers indicated more things that they wished to change (mean 8.8), compared with their primary counterparts (mean 5.7).

Table 5.15 **Desired changes to work as a secondary school teacher**

Changes	Teachers (*n*=818) %
Reduce administration/paperwork	70
Better pay	59
Reduce class sizes	58
More time to work with individual students	58
Time to reflect/plan/share ideas	56
More funding/resources for classroom	55
Reduce assessment workload	53
More positive appreciation of teachers	52
Fewer discipline/behaviour problems	52
More noncontact time for preparation etc.	46
Reduce assessment requirements	44
Fewer nonteaching duties	44
More support staff	42
Reduce number of initiatives at any one time	40
More stability in moderation of assessments	34
More professional development	33
Reduce pace of change	31
Reduce curriculum coverage/size	25
Better provisions for special needs	25
Other	2

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

In 2003, teachers were asked to identify three aspects of their work that they would like to change. Percentages are lower and not strictly comparable, but the priorities were similar. A reduction in administration/paperwork was the most requested change in both surveys.

Teachers from low-decile schools were more likely to wish for fewer discipline/behaviour problems (62 percent; 54 percent from mid-decile, 38 percent from high-decile schools). However, it was teachers from mid-decile schools who most wanted more funding/resources for

their classrooms (59 percent, compared with 52 percent from low-decile, and 47 percent from high-decile schools).

As might be expected, the larger the school, the higher the proportion of teachers saying that they would like to reduce class sizes (teachers from urban schools were also more likely to want this). More surprisingly, perhaps, teachers from the largest schools were the least likely to say that they wanted more time to work with individual students. Teachers from secondary urban schools were the least likely to say they wanted time to reflect, plan and share ideas.

Teachers from state-integrated schools were more likely than others to say that they wished to reduce assessment requirements, but less likely to say that they wished for fewer discipline/behaviour problems.

Teachers of maths/science were the most likely to say they would like fewer discipline/behaviour problems; teachers of technology etc. were the least likely.

Women were more likely than men to wish for more support staff, time to reflect/plan/share ideas, more time to work with individual students, fewer nonteaching duties and better provision for special needs.

There was variation by age in what teachers said they would like to happen. The older the teacher, the more likely they were to wish for reduced assessment requirements, more support staff, a reduced pace of change and a reduction in the number of initiatives at any one time. Younger teachers, however, were more likely to wish for better pay and more time to work with individual students.

In accordance with their respective roles, senior and middle managers were more likely than other teachers to wish for a reduction in the pace of change and the number of initiatives at any one time. Teachers on the other hand were more likely to wish for a reduction in class sizes, more noncontact time and fewer discipline/behaviour problems. Middle managers and deans were the ones who most wanted more stability in moderation of assessments.

By comparison with part-time teachers, full-time teachers were more likely to wish for more support staff, more funding/resources for their classrooms, fewer nonteaching duties and better pay. More surprisingly, perhaps, they were also more likely to wish for fewer discipline/behaviour problems (it might be expected that part-time teachers would experience at least as many problems of this kind).

Permanent members of teaching staff were more likely than fixed-term teachers to wish for more support staff, and for a reduction in administration/paperwork, the assessment workload and the number of initiatives at any one time. This is not surprising, as permanent teachers would have greater responsibilities for administration, assessment and implementing initiatives, and would therefore also have a greater need of support staff.

Responses to this question by teachers who said that they felt they should be involved in decision making, but were not, provided evidence of their dissatisfaction with their work. They were more

likely than other teachers to say that they would like a reduction in administration/paperwork, class sizes, curriculum coverage and nonteaching duties, more noncontact time, support staff, funding and PD, better provision for special needs, more positive appreciation of teachers and better pay.

There were differences in responses to several items according to level of teacher morale, but the pattern was not always clear. It might be expected that those with poor or very poor morale would be most likely to want change, and this was broadly the case, but those with satisfactory morale usually gave a similar response; for two items (reducing administration/paperwork and assessment requirements) they were the group most wanting change. It may be that those with poor morale have to some extent given up hope that things will improve.

Recent achievements

Teachers were asked to identify their main achievements over the past three years (see Table 5.16). As with primary teachers, the most common response was in terms of increasing their own knowledge and skills (though this was reported by a smaller proportion of secondary teachers). A majority had seen improvements in their learning environment, their teaching programme, student achievement and refining/introducing new NCEA assessments. Teachers in state-integrated schools were more likely to mention the latter (64 percent) than those from other state schools (51 percent).

Table 5.16 **Main achievements as a secondary school teacher in the last three years**

Main achievements	Teachers (*n*=818) %
Increase in my own knowledge/skills	73
Positive/improved learning environment	63
Improved teaching programme	57
Improvements in student achievement	52
Refining/introducing new NCEA assessments	52
Improved student assessment for learning	38
Implementation of an innovative programme	38
Better meeting needs of a particular group of students	37
Involvement of parents with students' learning	11
Other	3

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

In 2003, secondary teachers were asked to identify only their three main achievements over the past three years. Percentages are therefore lower and not strictly comparable, but the patterns were very similar. In 2003, teachers' top three achievements (cited by almost equal numbers) were a positive/improved learning environment, an increase in their own knowledge/skills and the

implementation of NCEA. The latter ranked slightly lower in 2006, perhaps because some teachers felt that the main work had been completed earlier.

In 2006, there were differences in achievements according to role and main subject taught. Arts and social science teachers were more likely than any others to say that they had an improved teaching programme. Teachers of technology etc. were the most likely to report a positive/improved learning environment, but the least likely to mention improvements in student achievement and student assessment for learning. They, and teachers of English/languages, were more likely than teachers of other subjects to report better meeting the needs of subgroups of students.

Specialist classroom teachers were the group most likely to report improvements in student assessment for learning, teaching programme and their own knowledge/skills. Middle managers were the group most likely to mention refining or introducing new NCEA assessments; not surprisingly, permanent teachers were more likely to say this than fixed-term teachers.

Female teachers were more likely than male teachers to report a positive learning environment, improvements in student achievement and better meeting the needs of subgroups, as well as an increase in their own knowledge and skills.

Professional development

Nearly all secondary teachers said that their recent PD had resulted in their trying new strategies in their teaching (29 percent "most of it" and 64 percent "some of it"). Women were more likely to say "most of it" than men; younger teachers were less likely to say it than those over 40. Three-quarters said that they had been able to share the knowledge they had gained with other staff (41 percent because it was expected of them, 34 percent because they actively sought the opportunity). Naturally, it was expected more of those in senior roles, but even among senior managers it was only 59 percent who said this.

Career plans

Secondary teachers' career plans for the next five years are summarised in Table 5.17. Responses were similar to those given by primary school teachers, but a larger proportion wished to continue as they were, again suggesting a higher level of satisfaction with the status quo.

Table 5.17 **Secondary school teachers' career plans for the next five years**

Career plans	Teachers (*n*=818) %
Continue as I am now	40
Apply for a study award/sabbatical	22
Increase level of responsibility	22
Change schools	17
Change to a career outside education	15
Reduce teaching hours	14
Leave teaching for another reason (e.g., travel, family)	13
Change careers within education	12
Retire	10
Reduce level of responsibility	7
Increase teaching hours	3
Other	2
Not sure	4

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Half of maths/science teachers wished to continue as they were, compared with just a third of English/languages teachers. Men were more likely than women to anticipate changing to a career outside education, while women were more likely to plan to leave teaching for another reason.

As would be expected, there were differences in career plans according to teachers' age. Older teachers were more likely to say they would continue as now, retire, reduce their teaching hours or their level of responsibility. Younger teachers were more likely to plan to increase their teaching hours or their level of responsibility, change schools or leave teaching for another reason.

Middle managers were the group most likely to want to reduce their level of responsibility (14 percent). They were also the most likely to apply for a study award/sabbatical, though followed closely in this case by senior managers and specialist classroom teachers. Senior managers, middle managers and deans were the ones most likely to be planning a change of career within education.

Staffing issues

Less than a quarter (22 percent) of secondary principals believed that their staffing entitlement for the year was enough to meet the school's needs; 76 percent said that it was not (one principal was unsure, and two did not respond). BOT members' responses agreed almost completely with principals' (compared with principals, a few more were unsure).

More than half of rural school principals said that their staffing entitlement was sufficient, compared with 18–23 percent of those from urban schools, but this difference fell just short of statistical significance. There was a link with school size, as principals of smaller schools (up to 399 students) were more likely than principals of larger schools to say that their staffing entitlement was enough to meet their needs.

The number of teachers funded over entitlement ranged from zero (16 percent of principals) to eight or more (5 percent), with a mean of 2.5 and a median of 2. The number varied according to size: from 0.9 in schools with up to 250 students to 6.0 in schools with over 1500 students. There was also a difference between rural schools (0.6) and urban schools (3.2 in main urban schools). The two factors are linked, as rural schools are smaller on average than urban schools; smaller schools would need a smaller proportion of teachers, and as noted above, they were more likely to say that their staffing entitlement was sufficient. There was a difference by decile (mean 2.5 in decile 1–2, 2.0 in decile 3–8 and 4.3 in decile 9–10), which may also be related to size.

The work undertaken by these teachers is shown in Table 5.18. In more than half of the schools, they taught in a curriculum area; the most common single subject was English, followed by maths and science, but a larger number taught across the curriculum. There is a marked contrast with the 2003 survey, according to which 25 percent of staff in this category taught maths, and 21 percent science; this may, however, be due to a change in the way that the question was presented. In 2006, a smaller proportion cited ESOL and special needs/learning assistance, but 40 percent mentioned work with international fee-paying students, which was not one of the options listed in 2003.

Table 5.18　**Work by teachers funded over entitlement in secondary schools**

Work	Teachers (*n*=194) %
Teach in a curriculum area	52
Work with international fee-paying students	40
ESOL	35
Literacy/numeracy support	33
Special needs/learning assistance	28
Pastoral care	13
ICT support	13
Life/work skills	10
Extension students/GATE	10
Music or other arts tuition	10
Data management	7
Te reo Māori	5
Fundraising and promotion	2
Noncontact/relief time	1
Other	8

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Principals were asked whether the number of staff funded over entitlement had changed since the previous year. Thirty percent said it had increased, and 23 percent that it had decreased. Reasons for change related mainly to budget pressure, or to changes in class size, school roll, the amount of noncontact time or the number of overseas fee-paying students.

Three-quarters (76 percent) of the secondary principals said that they had difficulty finding suitable teachers for at least some of their vacancies. The problem is evidently more severe than in primary schools, where only 53 percent of principals reported difficulties, but it represents an improvement since 2003, when 85 percent of secondary principals reported problems. It should also be noted that three-quarters of secondary school principals said that they could attract good teachers to their school (see Table 5.4 in Section 5.1); presumably they found good candidates for vacancies, but not enough, or not in all subjects.

The number varied according to location: all rural principals, and 91 percent of secondary urban principals, said that they had difficulty, compared with 78 percent of minor urban schools and 71 percent of main urban schools. It also varied by decile: 88 percent of low-decile schools reported problems, compared with 78 percent of mid-decile schools and 59 percent of high-decile schools.

The reason most commonly given (by 70 percent of principals) was a limited number of suitable applicants. Other reasons related to the school's location: in a remote/rural area (17 percent) or in

a low socioeconomic area (13 percent). Seventeen percent of secondary principals (compared with only 3 percent of primary principals) reported a shortage of teachers speaking Māori.

The subject areas where principals most commonly had trouble attracting suitable applicants are shown in Table 5.19. Half of the principals reported problems finding teachers of mathematics and technology; approximately a third in English, science and te reo Māori.

Table 5.19 **Subject areas where principals had trouble attracting suitable applicants**

Subject areas	Principals (*n*=818) %
Technology	51
Mathematics	49
Sciences	37
Te reo Māori	31
English	30
Languages	14
Arts	11
Physical education/health	9
Special needs/learning assistance	6
Social studies	6
Guidance/careers	5
Literacy/numeracy support	3
ESOL	2
Other	4

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Just over half (52 percent) of the principals said that they had difficulty finding suitable teachers for middle management roles. This problem was more evident in rural schools (85 percent), compared with urban schools (46–55 percent).

The reasons most commonly given (Table 5.20) explain why teachers would not want these roles: a demanding workload, too much paperwork and not enough money for the responsibility or the additional hours.

Table 5.20 **Reasons why secondary schools have difficulty finding teachers for middle management**

Reasons	Principals (*n*=196) %
Workload too demanding	37
Not enough money for the responsibility	29
Not enough money for the additional work hours	28
Too much paperwork	24
School location	9
Middle management roles are unclear	1
Other	6

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Most secondary principals experienced problems in finding registered day relievers, either frequently (17 percent), or occasionally (54 percent). This represents a slight improvement since 2003, when only 23 percent did not have problems (in 2006, the figure was 29 percent).

Again, this problem was most severe in rural schools (54 percent said "frequently", compared with only 6 percent of main urban schools and 30–32 percent of other urban schools). There was a similar (and obviously related) difference according to size: half of the schools with up to 249 students experienced problems, decreasing to just 5 percent of those with over 1500 (it should be noted that the numbers in these categories were very small, but the trend was clear). There was a difference (probably also related) by decile: 38 percent of low-decile schools reported frequent problems, compared with 16 percent of mid-decile and 6 percent of low-decile schools.

As in primary schools, these problems were due mainly to shortage of suitable staff:

- not enough registered teachers to meet the demand (55 percent of principals)
- a lack of good-quality relievers (42 percent)
- many relievers are in long-term positions (22 percent)
- relievers won't work in the areas or years needed (4 percent).

Pay was obviously not the key issue: only 2 percent of principals identified low pay as a cause of the problem.

Help provided by support staff

Only 23 percent of principals said that they had sufficient funding to employ enough support staff to meet the school's needs. This fell to 16 percent for mid-decile schools, but rose to 50 percent for high-decile schools.

Teachers were asked some questions relating to the availability and use of support staff. Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) said that they had regular help from support staff, although only a quarter (26 percent) had 2.5 hours or more. As would be expected, the availability of help varied according to subject, with teachers of technology/HPE/careers/special education more likely to say that they received help than teachers of traditional classroom subjects.

The first column of Table 5.21 shows the forms that this help took. Most frequently mentioned was photocopying (in response to another question, only 3 percent said they could not get photocopying done when they needed it, so evidently some did not think to include it here, perhaps because it was a task undertaken by general office staff, rather than support staff allocated specifically to them). A third of teachers referred to general administrative tasks, and smaller numbers to related activities such as preparing/maintaining resources, record keeping/filing and data entry. Others mentioned help in the classroom with particular groups of students (those with special learning needs, medical needs, behavioural problems, ESOL) or students generally in particular situations (using computers, in the science lab).

Table 5.21 **Forms of help for secondary school teachers**

Forms of help	Current (*n*=818) %	Additional (*n*=818) %
Photocopying	39	22
Clerical/administrative help	32	29
Assisting students with special learning needs	27	28
Preparing/maintaining resources	24	44
ICT technical support	21	17
Data entry	16	23
Shopping for consumables	13	11
Setting up practical activities	13	15
Help with behavioural problems	12	19
Help with ESOL students	8	13
Help with NCEA records/filing	8	25
Help with students' computer use	7	11
Assisting students with medical needs	5	2
ICT help during class	4	10
Supervision of practical activities (e.g., science lab)	3	8
Supervision of assessments	3	9
Other	1	1

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Younger teachers (aged under 40) were more likely to say that they had help with students' computer use. Women were more likely to say that they had help with the supervision of practical

activities. In general, teachers from urban (main and secondary) schools were more likely than others to report receiving help in a number of areas: clerical/administrative tasks, ICT technical support, ESOL students, shopping for consumables and photocopying. Teachers from mid-decile schools were more likely than others to have help from support staff with special needs students and with shopping for consumables; teachers from low-decile schools were more likely to have help with the supervision of practical activities.

Asked if they could use some, or more, support time, two-thirds of teachers said yes (21 percent said no, and 11 percent were unsure). More than half of the teachers wanted between one and five hours; 11 percent wanted more than this. The second column of Table 5.21 shows the tasks for which the teachers would have liked (additional) help. This time preparing/maintaining resources headed the list. Evidently this takes a lot of teacher time, and they would appreciate more assistance with it. One-third of those who said they already received help in this area also indicated that they would like help, presumably more than was currently available.

There were some significant differences according to teacher age, which all related to the use of ICT. The older the teachers, the more likely they were to say that they would like help with ICT technical support, students' computer use and data entry. It is interesting to recall the observation above, that younger teachers were more likely to report already having help from support staff with students' computer use.

Women were more likely than men to say that they would like help with clerical/administrative tasks, and with ESOL students. Teachers in state-integrated schools were more likely than teachers in state schools to say that they would like help with preparing and maintaining resources, and with ICT during class. Teachers from rural schools, and minor urban schools, were more likely than those in main or secondary urban schools to say they would like help with setting up practical activities.

Teachers from low-decile schools were more likely than others to say that they would like help with behavioural problems. Teachers from high-decile schools were half as likely as others to say that they would like help with setting up practical activities.

5.3   Summary

Compared with 2003, there was greater stability in staffing, in secondary as well as primary schools. Three-quarters of the secondary schools surveyed had had no more than two principals over the past 10 years.

Secondary principals worked longer hours than primary principals, 40 percent worked 66 or more hours per week. Despite this, three-quarters said that their morale was good or very good.

About nine in 10 agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed their job, but a quarter said that they could not manage their workload, and only a quarter said that they had a satisfactory work–life balance. Even fewer (one in six) felt they had enough time for educational leadership.

The main coping strategies employed by principals were delegation to senior colleagues and limiting the number of initiatives worked on at any one time. Secondary principals (like their primary counterparts) wished for more time for reflection and educational leadership, and a reduction in administrative tasks and paperwork.

Secondary teachers had an average of 7.5 hours noncontact time. Just over half worked 11–20 hours per week outside school time (about the same as primary teachers). A large majority said that they enjoyed their job, and secondary teachers were more positive than their primary counterparts about managing their workload, and having a satisfactory work–life balance.

Secondary teacher morale had improved markedly since 2003, with nearly two-thirds now rating it good or very good. Like their primary counterparts they wanted less paperwork, better pay, a reduction in class sizes and more time to work with individual students, as well as more time to reflect, plan and share ideas.

Less than a quarter of secondary principals thought that their staffing entitlement was sufficient for the school's needs. Although staff turnover was low, three-quarters of the secondary principals said that they had difficulty in finding suitable teachers for at least some of their vacancies.

6. School culture

The ethos of a school can be difficult to define, but few would deny its importance. In this chapter we report on responses to a range of questions which have some bearing on the issue. In addition to questions relating directly to school culture and relationships, we look at record keeping, monitoring and review, safety, appraisals and disputes. We discuss the culture of first primary and then secondary schools, reporting the views of principals, teachers and trustees.

6.1   The culture of primary schools

Primary principals' views

Primary principals' ratings of various aspects of school culture are summarised in Figure 6.1. A majority (often a very large majority) of principals rated almost all of the aspects good or very good. The least positive assessments related to peer lesson observation, which is a reasonably new development in New Zealand schools. It may be that some principals feel that teachers are not sufficiently critical or insightful in the feedback they give to each other; it could also be that lack of time prevents teachers from providing detailed and valuable feedback to colleagues.

Figure 6.1 **Primary principals' description of the quality of school culture**
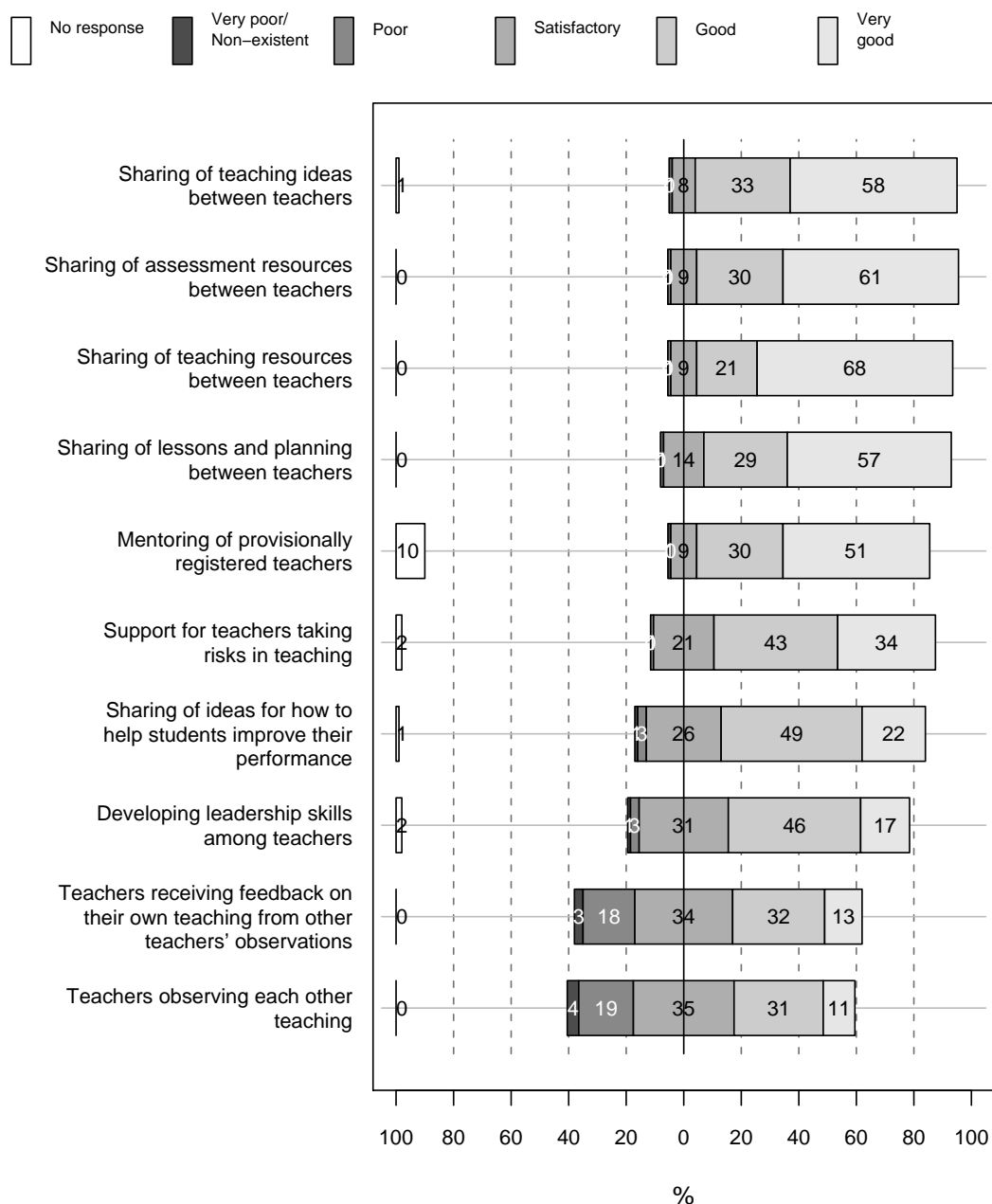
Differences between subgroups

Principals from rural schools were more likely than those from urban schools to describe the sharing of teaching resources, assessment resources and knowledge about individual students as very good. Similarly, the sharing of teaching resources and knowledge about individual students was more likely to be classified as very good in small schools rather than large schools. Rural schools are likely to be small schools, and sharing is easier and more likely to happen in a smaller context where colleagues know each other well. The quality of setting educational goals with students also decreased as school roll increased.

Principals from intermediate schools were more likely than those from contributing or full primary schools to describe the quality of feedback from peer observation as good/very good; they were much *less* likely to describe the consistent approach to student behaviour and discipline as good/very good.

Relationships

Principals also defined the quality of relationships within the school, as shown in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2   **Primary principals' rating of relationships**
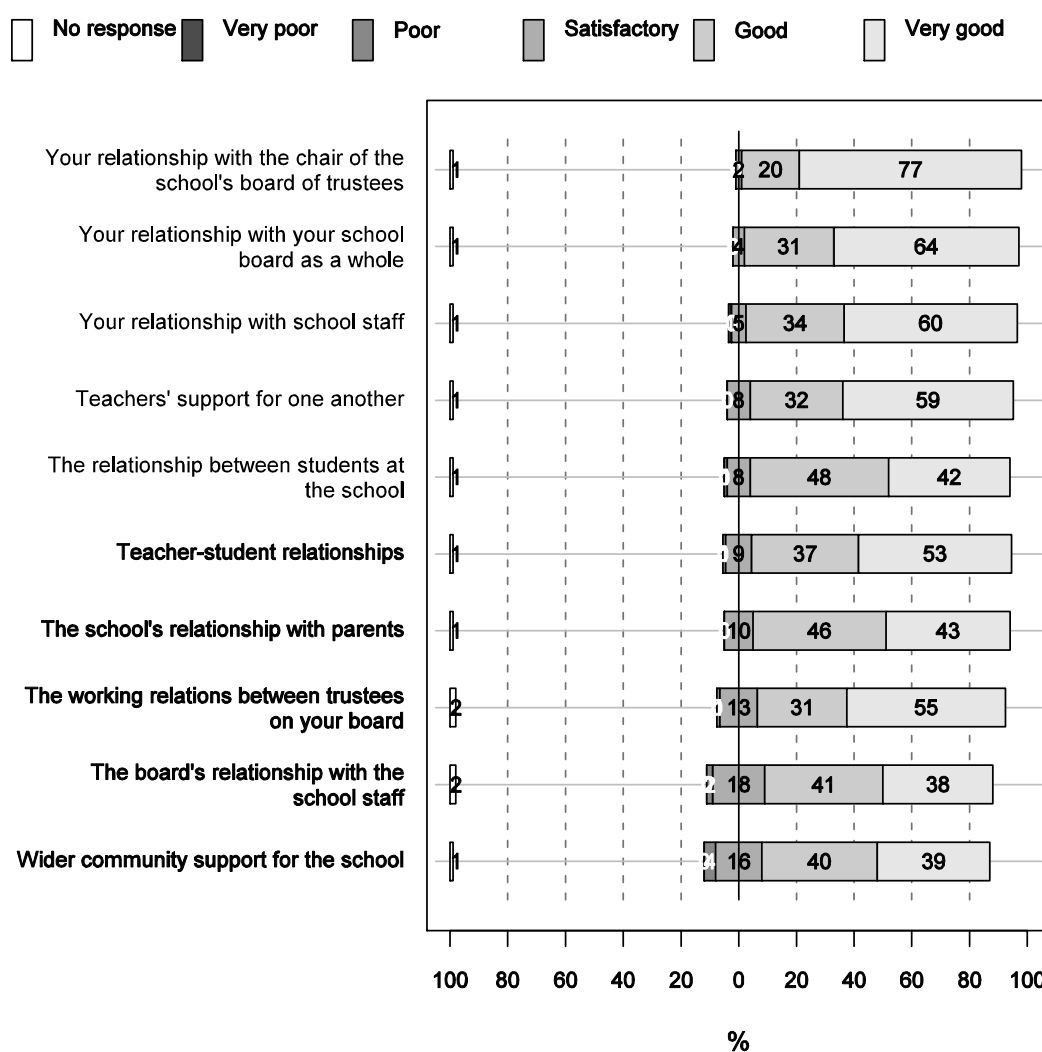
Sixty percent of principals gave a good or very good rating to all 10 of the relationships listed. It is encouraging that three-quarters of principals said they had a very good relationship with the BOT chair. Relationships with the BOT as a whole, and with the school staff, were also highly rated, though it is a concern that 5 percent of principals regarded their relationship with staff as only satisfactory, and one principal described it as very poor. Community support for the school, and BOT–teacher relationships, received the lowest ratings, but even here more than three-quarters of principals described them as good or very good.

Almost all decile 9–10 principals rated school–parent relations and community support good or very good; by comparison, two-thirds of decile 1–2 schools said that school–parent relations were good/very good, and only half gave this assessment of community support.

Monitoring

Principals were asked how they monitored the quality of teaching in the school (Table 6.1). Nine out of 10 principals said that they discussed it with teachers during their personal appraisal (see further below); half read teachers' self-reports ahead of doing their appraisals. Nine out of 10 also said that they had regular meetings with teaching teams, and/or read regular reports from them. Almost all said they observed teachers in their classrooms, either regularly or occasionally.

Table 6.1 **The ways in which primary principals monitor the quality of teaching in the school**

Monitor	Principals (*n*=196) %
Discussion with teachers during their personal appraisal	89
Regular meetings with teaching teams	71
Analyse achievement data from each class several times or more a year	71
Read regular reports from teaching team and curriculum leaders	54
Ask teachers to let them know if they are having any difficulty	53
Regular observation of teachers in their classrooms	51
Read teachers' self-report before doing their appraisals	50
Occasional observation of teachers in their classrooms	50
Analyse achievement data from each class once a year	25
Other	13

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Differences between subgroups

Principals from urban schools were much more likely to read regular reports from teaching-team and curriculum leaders (65 percent, compared with 23 percent of principals from rural schools). There was a strong and obviously related correlation with school size: reading regular reports was rare among the smallest primary schools (13 percent) and very common in the largest schools (74 percent). Evidently, principals in small schools do not feel it necessary to implement such formal procedures. They are more likely to talk to individuals, and this was confirmed by responses to other items. Principals from small schools, and rural schools, were more likely than those in large or urban schools to ask teachers to let them know if they were having difficulties. Rural school principals were also more likely than urban principals to analyse achievement data from each class several times a year.

Principals from state schools were more likely than those from state-integrated schools to monitor the quality of teaching by discussion with teachers during their annual appraisal. There was a correlation between decile and reading teachers' self-reports before doing their appraisals: the lower the decile, the more common this strategy.

Self-review

Ninety-five percent of principals said that their school had a process of self-review (the remainder said that it was in development). They were asked how their student-achievement results were reviewed (Table 6.2).

Ninety percent said they undertook an annual or even more frequent review of literacy results; nearly as many said that they did the same for numeracy results. More than half had established a two- to three-year review cycle of curriculum areas, and 21 percent undertook an annual or more frequent review.

Table 6.2   **The ways in which primary schools review student achievement**

Review	Principals (*n*=196) %
Annual/more frequent review of literacy results	90
Annual/more frequent review of maths results	86
Two- to three-year cycle of review of curriculum areas/school policies	54
Annual review of all curriculum areas/school policies	21
As issues arise	20
Other	6
No process of self-review	5

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Reviewing student achievement by a two- to three-year cycle of review of curriculum areas was more common in rural and small schools, compared with urban and large schools.

Principals in state schools were more likely than those in state-integrated schools to conduct an annual/more frequent review of all curriculum areas, and of literacy results.

In two-thirds of schools, policies were reviewed on a two- to three-year cycle (Table 6.3). A further 10 percent of schools undertook an annual review, but 20 percent said that policies were only reviewed "as issues arise".

Table 6.3   **The ways in which primary schools review school policies**

Reviewed	Principals (*n*=196) %
Two- to three-year cycle of review of curriculum areas/school policies	65
Annual review of all curriculum areas/school policies	10
As issues arise	20
No process of self-review	5

The majority of schools reported that they surveyed their students and staff, though in many cases this was not a regular event but undertaken only "as issues arise" (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4   **The ways in which primary schools survey their students and staff**

Surveyed	Students %	Staff %
As issues arise	43	48
Annual survey of all students/staff	18	29
Students/staff surveyed every two to three years	15	10
Students/staff are not surveyed	11	2
Other	8	8
No process of self-review	5	5

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

The BOT's role in the process of self-review was to discuss results prepared by school management (81 percent) and receive reports from school management (75 percent). (They were much more likely to play this role in state schools, compared with state-integrated schools.) There is an obvious link between these two items, but no other response was given by more than 20 percent of trustees.

Appraisals

Finally in this section, principals were asked how information from performance appraisals was used in the school. The areas most commonly identified were:

• identify staff PD needs (96 percent)
• improve areas of performance (89 percent)
• support and encourage staff (87 percent)
• inform school development/strategic plan (62 percent)
• determine eligibility for pay increment (57 percent)
• renew teacher practising certificates (51 percent)
• plan career development (42 percent)
• supply information to BOT (33 percent).

The use of appraisal information to plan career development was more common in large schools and urban schools. State schools were more likely than state-integrated schools to use the information to inform the school development/strategic plan and for competence procedures.

In comparison with 2003, the proportion of principals saying that they used appraisal information to plan career development had doubled, but the proportion using it to determine eligibility for a pay increment, or to supply information to the BOT, had decreased.

Primary teachers' views

Primary teachers were asked questions similar to those on the primary principals' questionnaire. Their ratings of various aspects of school culture are shown in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3 **Primary teachers' description of the quality of school culture**
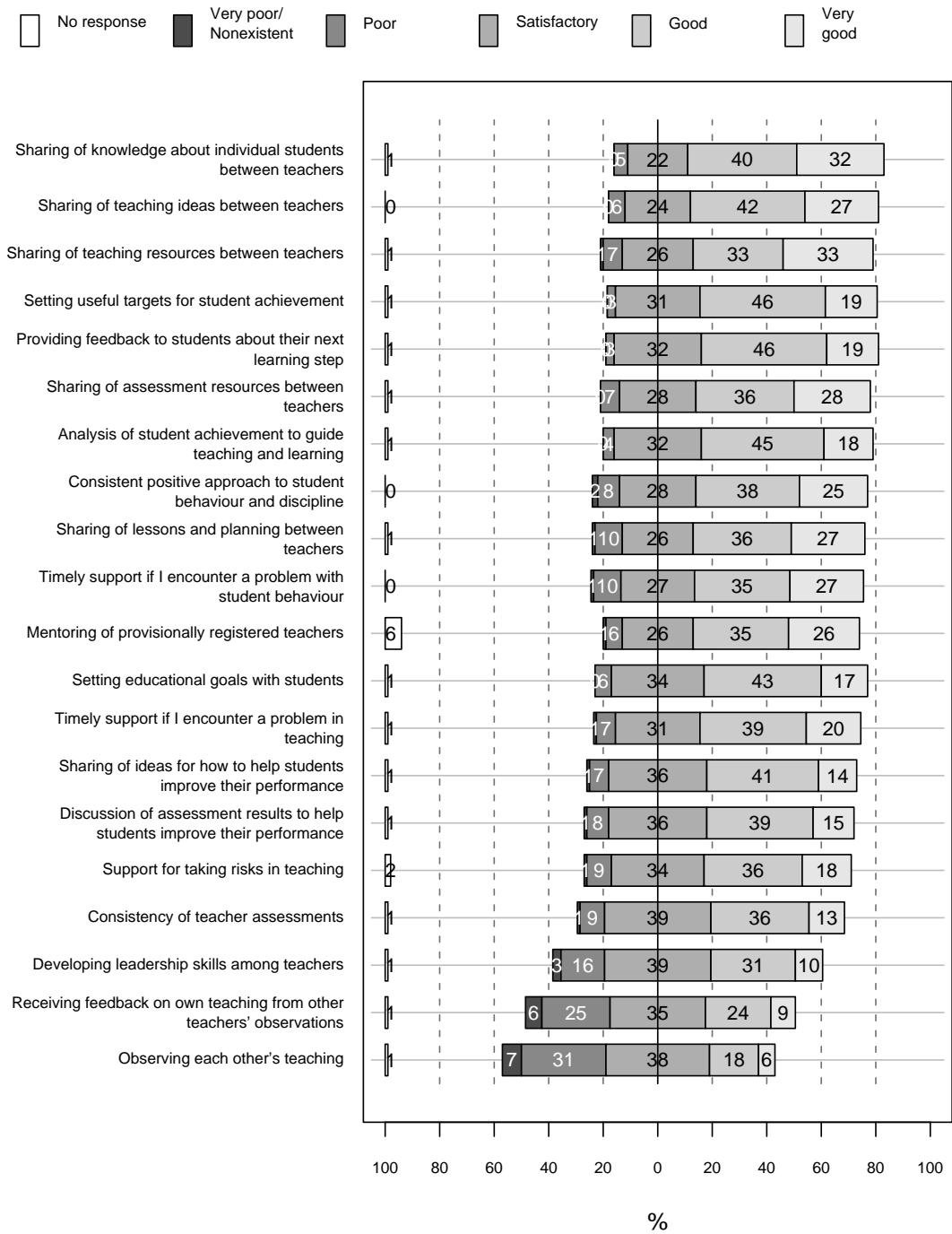
Overall, teachers' assessment of school culture was positive, but less so than principals'. No aspect received a good/very good rating from three-quarters of respondents. Satisfactory ratings were common, and there were a lot more saying "poor". As with principals, the most negative ratings were for peer observation and feedback, but teachers judged it more harshly than principals, and were more likely to say that it was poor, or that it never happened.

Differences between subgroups

Teachers' ratings on a number of the items correlated with school size. The proportion of teachers describing the following as good/very good decreased as school size increased: sharing knowledge about individual students, sharing ideas of how to help students improve their performance, consistent approach to student behaviour and discipline, support if problems are encountered with student behaviour or with teaching. Similarly, teachers from rural schools were more likely than those in urban schools to rate highly the sharing of teaching ideas and sharing ideas to help students improve their performance. This is consistent with the remarks above relating to differences among principals on similar topics (Section 6.1). For reasons also probably related to size, teachers from contributing schools gave the most positive responses on a range of items, followed by teachers from full primary schools and then teachers from intermediate schools.

Teachers from high-decile schools were more likely to describe the mentoring of provisionally registered teachers as good.

Teachers from state schools were more likely than those from state-integrated schools to rate the setting of educational goals with students, teacher observation and related feedback as good or very good.

Primary teachers were given another set of statements relating to school culture, and asked to what extent they agreed with them (Figure 6.4). The item set covered a wide range of topics, including teachers' views of their colleagues, the attitudes prevalent in the school and the opportunities available to them.

Figure 6.4 **Primary teachers' agreement with statements about school culture**

Figure 6.4 Primary teachers' agreement with statements about school culture

Legend: No response | Stongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree

Statement	Values
Teachers respect colleagues who are expert at their craft	1 / 3 12 / 52 / 31
My fellow teachers are committed to doing quality work	1 / 8 16 / 55 / 25
Teachers respect other teachers who take the lead in school or PD	1 / 8 17 / 55 / 23
We regularly identify failing students and focus on improving their achievement	1 / 5 18 / 54 / 21
Teachers are trusted	1 / 6 20 / 46 / 26
We have a "can do" attitude at this school	1 / 6 21 / 50 / 22
We use data on student achievement and engagement when making important decisions	1 / 6 22 / 53 / 17
This school retains good teachers	1 / 3 10 19 / 46 / 21
We do a good job of talking through views, opinions and values	1 / 2 13 27 / 47 / 11
There is too much emphasis on paper trails recording what we do	1 / 2 14 29 / 37 / 17
Everything fits together well at this school	1 / 2 11 32 / 41 / 13
Staff have good processes for making group decisions and/or solving problems	1 / 2 14 32 / 44 / 8
Staff meetings are often used for discussing student achievement and strategies to improve it where needed	1 / 4 17 26 / 41 / 11
Teachers participate in important decision making	1 / 4 17 27 / 38 / 12
Everyone pulls their weight	1 / 3 24 26 / 35 / 11
We don't get distracted from our priorities	1 / 1 15 37 / 38 / 7
There is career progression available in my school	3 / 6 24 36 / 26 / 5
We have sufficient time allowed to work together to plan our teaching and discuss student work	1 / 5 34 31 / 24 / 4
We let outside organisations (e.g., ERO) dictate how we do things	1 / 6 37 38 / 15 3
When a conflict arises, we usually "sweep it under the rug"	1 / 18 43 23 / 11 3
I have regular opportunities to see good teaching practice in other schools	1 / 26 43 20 / 8 2

%

94

In some respects, teachers appeared to rate their colleagues highly. More than three-quarters agreed (or strongly agreed) that their fellow teachers were committed to doing quality work, and that teachers respect expert colleagues, and those who take the lead in school or PD.

However, views of some aspects of school life ethos were less positive. While nearly three-quarters agreed that there was a "can do" attitude in their school, and a similar number reported that teachers were trusted, little more than half felt that there were good processes for decision making and problem solving, that everything fitted together well and that views, opinions and values were properly discussed. Less than half agreed that staff did *not* get distracted from their priorities (although only one in six disagreed—the remainder expressed a neutral view on this item). Less than half agreed that "everyone pulls their weight" and in this case more than a quarter positively disagreed. This might appear to conflict with the view that colleagues are committed to quality work: perhaps teachers felt that the latter statement applied to most of their colleagues, but that there were some (a few, perhaps, in most schools) who were not contributing as much as others. Relatively few agreed that conflicts were "swept under the carpet". More than half agreed that there was "too much emphasis on paper trails recording what we do", but this is an implied criticism of official requirements rather than colleagues.

Ratings were high in terms of fostering student achievement. Three-quarters said that failing students were regularly identified, and attempts made to improve their achievement. Nearly as many said that information on students' achievement and engagement was used when making important decisions. Fewer (just over half) said that staff meetings were often used to discuss student achievement and strategies for improvement, but this could simply mean that such discussions tended to take place in other forums.

Time was, as ever, a problem for teachers: just over a quarter felt that they had enough time to work together to plan teaching and discuss students' work; almost four in 10 disagreed. Opportunities to see good teaching practice in other schools were rare; only one in 10 were able to do this. Views of career progression within the school were mixed: just under a third felt that there were such opportunities, but an almost equal number disagreed.

Differences between subgroups

Teachers from rural schools were more likely than those from urban schools to agree/strongly agree that they do a good job in talking through views, opinions and values; that teachers participate in important decision making; that everything fits together well in their schools; that they have a "can do" attitude; and that their colleagues are committed to doing quality work. There was a correlation with school size on the first three items, and more: the use of staff meetings for discussing student achievement and strategies for improvement; good processes for decision making and problem solving; identifying failing students and focusing on improving their achievement; teachers being trusted. Teachers from smaller schools were more likely to agree with all these items, and less likely to agree that conflicts would be swept under the carpet. This shows once again that there can be a more positive and collaborative ethos in smaller

schools. On the other hand, small schools offer fewer opportunities for career progression, and this was reflected in responses to that item.

Teachers in low-decile schools were less likely to agree that their school retains good teachers, and that their fellow teachers are committed to doing quality work.

Teachers from state-integrated schools were more likely to *disagree* with the following statements: that staff meetings are often used to discuss student achievement; that they use student-achievement data when making important decisions; and that there is career progression available in their schools.

Further analysis

Responses to the question were further analysed to ascertain the extent of correlation between different items, whether it was possible to identify an overall school culture and, if so, what background factors were most closely associated with it.

First, factor analysis indicated two distinct groupings of items. The first factor related mainly to organisation, planning and procedures: it included items such as "Staff have good processes for making group decisions", "We have sufficient time to work together …" , "We regularly identify failing students …" and "We do not get distracted from our priorities". The second factor related to mutual trust and respect: it included "Teachers are trusted", "Teachers respect colleagues …", "We do a good job of talking through views, opinions and values" and "We have a 'can do' attitude at this school".

Regression analysis was then used to identify the variables significantly associated with these two factors. The answer was the same for both. Not surprisingly, there were strong associations between the factors identified, and teacher stress and morale. However, it is important to note that the link does not imply causality: high morale and low stress can contribute to a positive school culture, and/or be a product of it.

The only two significant school-level factors were type and U-grade.[6] Contributing and full primary schools were more likely to have a positive school culture than intermediate schools. And, in general, the lower the U grade, the more positive the school culture. When these factors were taken into account, decile, location and authority were not significant.

Relationships

Primary teachers assessed the quality of relationships between different groups in the school, as shown in Figure 6.5. Relations between teachers, between students and between the school and parents were thought to be good or very good by more than three-quarters of respondents, and almost all rated them at least satisfactory. Teachers were not, however, quite as positive as

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[6] Every school has a U-grade from 1 (a roll of 50 or less) to 16 (a roll of 2401 or more), which is used as the main component in principal salaries.

principals, about 90 percent of whom rated these relationships good or very good (see Figure 6.2 above).

Not surprisingly, there was a large number of "don't knows" in categories where teachers might not be directly involved. But even allowing for this, teachers were less positive than principals, giving a much higher number of "satisfactory" ratings in each category. It is a concern that 7 percent rated BOT–staff relations poor or very poor (and a further 10 percent could not make a judgement); even more worryingly, one teacher in 10 said that principal–staff relations were poor, and almost a quarter rated them merely satisfactory. This contrasts strongly with the views of principals, only 6 percent of whom rated relations with staff less than good. This major disparity suggests that some principals have an unjustified confidence about the quality of relations with their staff, and are unaware of the limitations perceived by their colleagues.

Figure 6.5 **Primary teachers' rating of relationships**
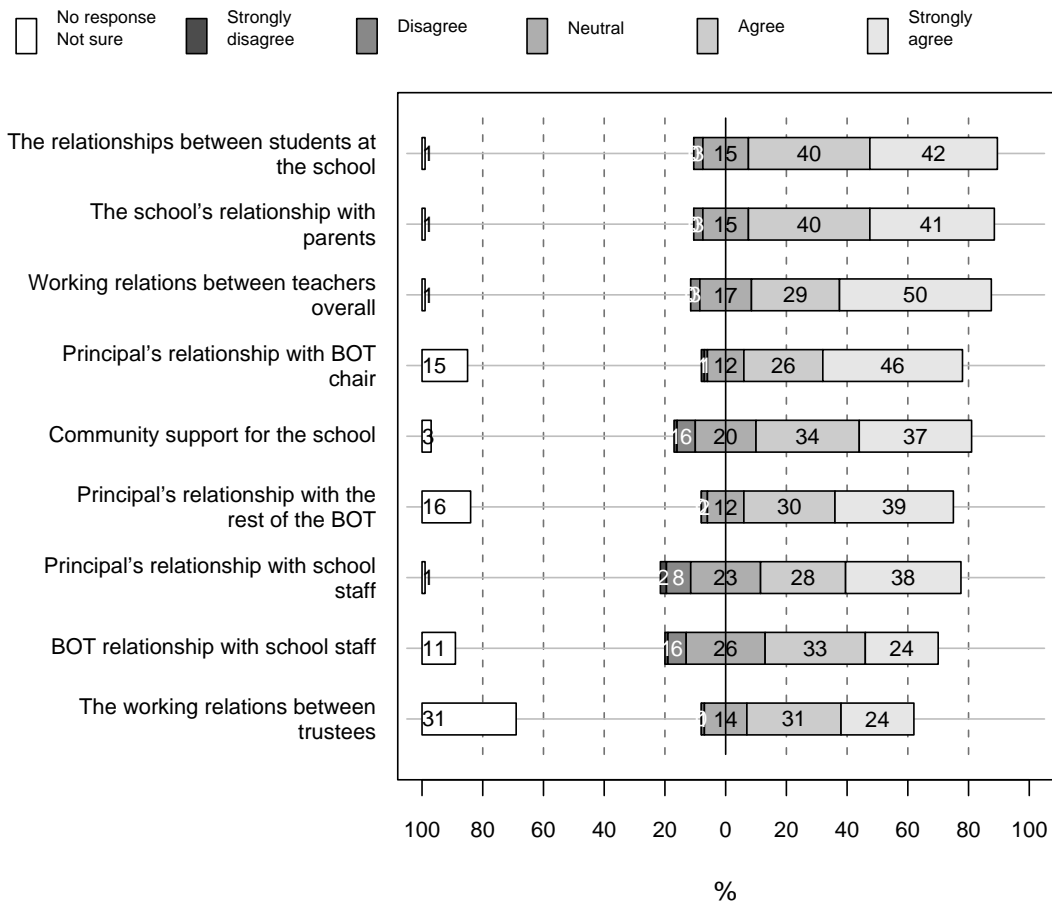
Where is it that principals are falling short, in the eyes of their staff? Some indications were provided in response to another question, where teachers rated their principals on a range of criteria. Although most teachers said that their principal had confidence in their expertise, and took a personal interest in their PD, only 42 percent agreed that their principal gave them useful

advice on their teaching, and one in five positively disagreed with the statement (see Schagen & Hipkins, 2008, for further discussion of this question).

Differences between subgroups

Teachers from state schools were more likely than those from state-integrated schools to rate the principal–BOT relationship as very good.

Teachers from rural schools were more likely to rate the relationships between students as good or very good.

There were significant differences between large schools and other (small or medium-sized) schools. Teachers from large schools (more than 300 students) were less likely to rate as good/very good the principal's relationship with the staff, the BOT and the BOT chair, or the working relationship between BOT members.

Teachers from intermediate schools were less likely than those from contributing and full primary schools to rate as good/very good the principal's relationship with the BOT, the working relations between trustees, the BOT's relationship with the staff, relationships between students and community support for the school.

There was a clear trend towards better relationships in higher decile schools. The BOT's relationship with the staff was the only item not to be associated with decile. In other cases, two distinct patterns emerged. In terms of relations between students, the school's relations with parents and community support for the school, the rating from high-decile schools was more positive than that from mid-decile schools, which in turn was more positive than that from low-decile schools. For the other relations, there was little difference between high- and mid-decile schools, but both received a more positive response than low-decile schools.

Students

Teachers were asked whether they agreed with a number of statements about students in their school (Figure 6.6). More than 80 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the first three statements, and very few disagreed. Teachers were rather less positive about whether students showed them respect, but a large majority agreed that this was the case.

Figure 6.6 **Primary teachers' views of their students**
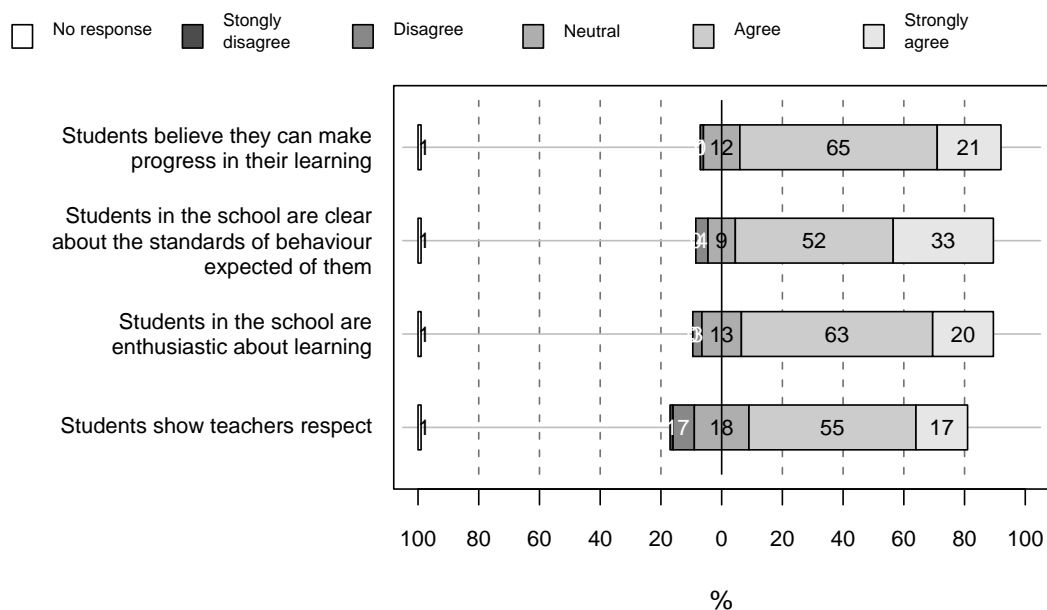
Differences between subgroups

Rural teachers were more likely than urban teachers to agree/strongly agree that students are enthusiastic about learning and believe they can make progress. Teachers from smaller schools were also more likely to say this, and to say that students show teachers respect.

Teachers from contributing schools were the most positive in responding to these statements, followed by teachers from full primary schools; both were more likely to give a positive response than teachers from intermediate schools. Again, this may reflect the size effect which is evident in many of the questions relating to school culture.

Teachers from high-decile schools were more likely to agree/strongly agree with all of the statements than teachers from lower-decile schools.

Teachers from state-integrated schools were more likely than those from state schools to agree/strongly agree that students are enthusiastic about learning and show teachers respect.

Safety

On a related issue, teachers were asked whether they ever felt unsafe in their classroom, or in the school playground. Fourteen percent gave a positive response to both questions, although nearly all said this happened "occasionally"—very few teachers said that they frequently felt unsafe.

There was a correlation between safety and decile: the higher the decile, the more likely teachers were to say that they never felt unsafe in the playground, or in their classroom. Rural teachers were more likely to say this than urban teachers.

Industrial relations

Just over a quarter of the primary trustees (26 percent) had faced industrial relations issues during the past three years. (There were no significant differences by decile, size, location or authority.) In response to a question about the action taken by the BOT, most trustees referred to seeking advice: from NZSTA advisers (62 percent), the NZSTA helpline (51 percent), New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) (40 percent) or the MOE (28 percent). Thirty-two percent said they had obtained legal advice from an unspecified source.

More than three-quarters of trustees concerned (77 percent) said that the problem had been solved completely, but some (13 percent) had only found a partial solution and a few (7 percent) said it was too soon to tell.

6.2 The culture of secondary schools

Secondary principals' views

Secondary principals were asked to assess relationships in their school, and a number of related questions. Their assessment of relationships (shown in Figure 6.7 below) was very similar to that given by primary principals (see Figure 6.2 above). Every one of the relationships listed was rated good or very good by more than three-quarters of the principals. Community support for the school received the lowest rating, but only 5 percent of principals rated it less than satisfactory.

Figure 6.7   **Secondary principals' rating of relationships**
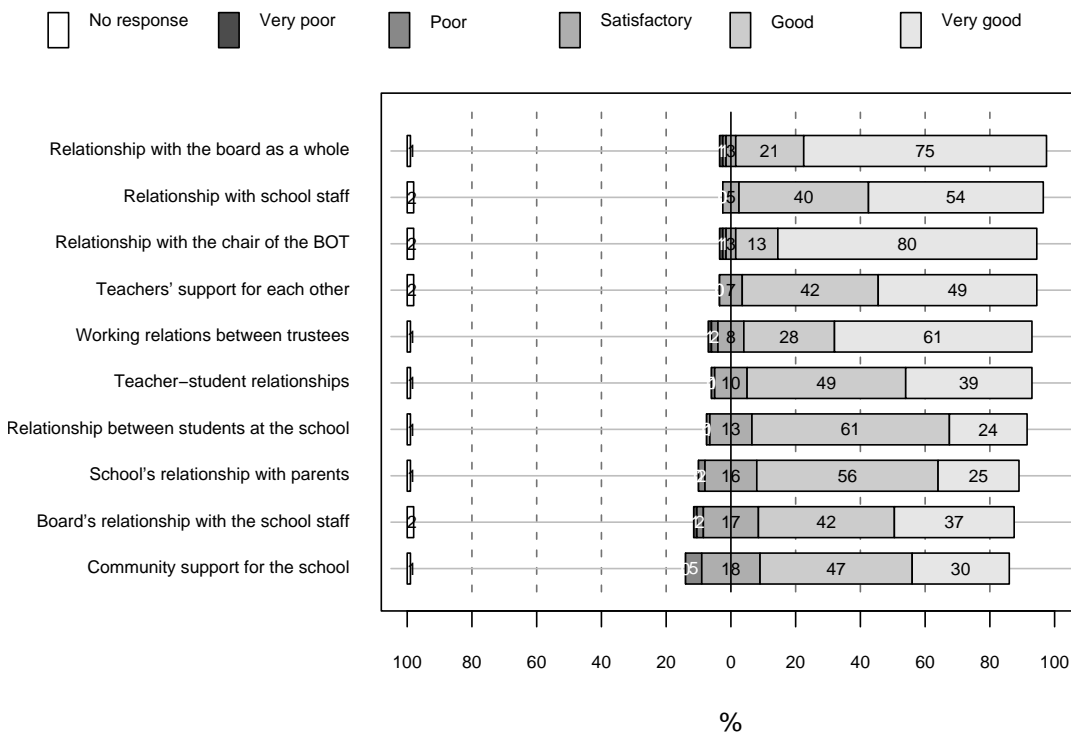
A similar question was asked in 2003, and comparison of responses shows that, in 2006, secondary principals were more likely to rate almost all of the relationships as very good. In particular, the proportion saying that teachers' support for one another was very good had more than doubled (from 23 to 49 percent); and the proportion rating principal–staff relations as very good had increased from 40 to 54 percent.

Differences between subgroups

Principals from state-integrated schools were more likely than others to describe as good/very good teacher–student relations, relations between students and relations between school and parents.

There was a correlation between decile and the following relationships: teachers–students, between students, school–parents and community support. In each case the proportion rating the relationship as good/very good increased as decile increased. The greatest difference was in terms of community support, which was rated as good/very good by less than half of low-decile schools, but 80 percent of mid-decile schools and 88 percent of high-decile schools.

Self-review

Ninety percent of secondary principals said that their school had a process of self-review (and a further 8 percent said that it was in development). They were asked how their student-achievement results, and their school policies, were reviewed (Table 6.5). Three-quarters of all the principals surveyed said that they undertook an annual review of all curriculum areas, and a further 13 percent had a two- to three-year cycle.

With school policies, the pattern was reversed: most schools had a two- to three-year review cycle, but some reviewed all policies annually. Relatively few said "as issues arise" in response to either question (in contrast with primary schools, where one in five gave this response).

Table 6.5 **Secondary schools' reviews of student-achievement results and school policies**

Reviewed	Achievement results (*n*=194) %	School policies (*n*=194) %
Annual review of all curriculum areas/school policies	75	9
Two- to three-year cycle of review of curriculum areas/school policies	13	78
As issues arise	1	4
Other	2	1
No process of self-review	9	9

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

101

Secondary schools' surveys of students and staff were carried out as shown in Table 6.6. Students and staff were surveyed at least every two to three years in just over half of the schools; in another third, surveys took place as issues arose. Regular surveys were thus more common in secondary schools, compared with primary schools, where they were more likely to take place as issues arose (see Table 6.4 above).

Comparison with 2003 figures indicates a trend towards an annual review of curriculum areas (up from 64 to 75 percent) and a corresponding reduction in the proportion of schools with a two- to three-year cycle (down from 26 to 13 percent).

Table 6.6   **Secondary schools' surveys of students and staff**

Surveyed	Students %	Staff %
As issues arise	32	32
Annual survey of all students/staff	28	37
Students/staff surveyed every two to three years	23	17
Students/staff are not surveyed	3	3
Other	5	3
No process of self-review	9	9

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appraisals

Secondary principals, like their primary counterparts, were asked what use was made of the information from performance appraisals. The uses most commonly mentioned were:

- identify staff PD needs (96 percent)
- support and encourage staff (86 percent)
- improve areas of performance (82 percent)
- renew teacher practising certificates (63 percent)
- determine eligibility for pay increment (54 percent)
- inform school development/strategic plan (39 percent)
- plan career (36 percent)
- supply information to BOT (25 percent).

There responses were similar to those given by primary principals, except that far fewer secondary schools used information from performance appraisals to inform the school development/strategic plan.

Comparison with 2003 findings shows an increase in the proportion using appraisal information to renew teacher practising certificates (up from 52 percent in 2003) and a reduction in the proportion using it to determine eligibility for pay increments (down from 66 percent) and supply information to the BOT (down from 38 percent).

Differences by subgroup

Principals from urban schools were more likely than those from rural schools to say that appraisal information was used to plan careers.

Almost a quarter of principals from mid-decile schools said that they used appraisal data to supply information to ERO, compared with 12 percent of principals from high-decile schools, and none from low-decile schools. The use of appraisal information for competence procedures was similar (around 20 percent) in high- and mid-decile schools, but again, it was not used in low-decile schools for this purpose. Principals from high- and mid-decile schools were more likely than those from low-decile schools to say that appraisal information was used to support and encourage staff.

Records

Secondary principals were asked about their use of the SMS: for which purposes does the school keep or intend to keep SMS records about individual students? Answers are summarised in Figure 6.8. SMS records were almost universally used for personal details and subjects taken. Nearly all schools used them, or were thinking of using them, for attendance, NCEA results, behavioural incidents, welfare/pastoral needs and assessment data generally. At the other end of the scale, relatively few schools were using SMS to record Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and homework completion, but others were in the process of implementing systems, and a much larger number were thinking of doing so, although a third of principals said categorically that they would not use SMS to record homework completion.

Figure 6.8 **Secondary principals' use of student management system**

Legend: Missing | Wouldn't use | Contemplating | Implementing | Already use

Category	Missing	Wouldn't use	Contemplating	Implementing	Already use
Subjects taken	2			1	98
Personal details (e.g., contacts, health)	2			1	97
Attendance	2			2	94
NCEA standards and credits	2			3 5	90
Behavioural incidents	4		1	5 3	87
Other assessment data for school purposes	5		6	13	76
Welfare/pastoral needs	6		1 7	5	81
asTTle results for planning and reporting	10	3	16	23	48
Involvement in STAR, Gateway, etc.	9	5	21	13	53
PAT results for planning and reporting	13	17	6	11	53
Other assessment data for planning and reporting	12	1	24	14	49
Extracurricular participation	11	7	22	14	46
Individual learning programmes	19	13	44	8	15
Homework completion	18	32	34	4	12

%

Differences by subgroup

Principals from state schools were more likely than principals from state-integrated schools to say that they kept SMS records about individual students' behavioural incidents and welfare needs.

The higher the decile, the more likely schools were to keep PAT results for planning and reporting (principals from urban schools were also more likely to report this than principals from rural schools) and for individual students' extracurricular participation. High-decile schools were more likely than low- or mid-decile schools to keep SMS records of individual learning programmes.

Secondary teachers' views

Secondary teachers gave their assessment of the culture in their school (Figure 6.9).

Figure 6.9 **Secondary teachers' assessment of the culture in their school**
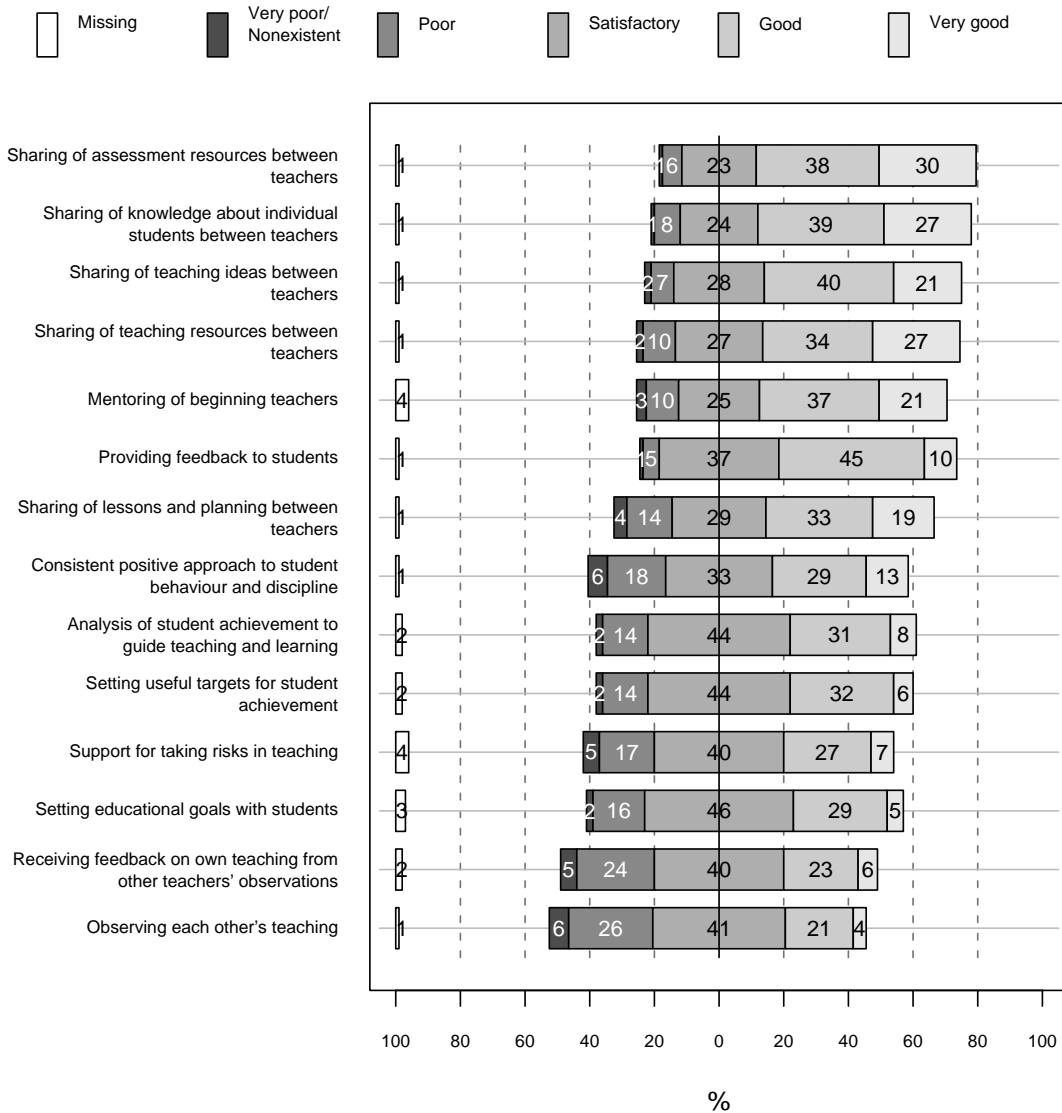
Secondary teachers' responses to many items were similar to those given by primary teachers, as seen in Table 6.7, which shows the proportion of primary and secondary teachers describing the culture as good or very good in each case. On other items, however, there were marked differences. Secondary school teachers were much less likely to say that there was a consistent approach to student behaviour and discipline; that student achievement was analysed to guide teaching and learning; that teachers set useful targets and educational goals; and that there was support for taking risks in teaching. They were also less likely to say that "teachers share lessons and planning", but the difference here was not quite so great and perhaps easier to understand.

Table 6.7 **Teachers describing the quality of school culture as good/very good**

School culture	Secondary (*n*=818) %	Primary (*n*=912) %
Sharing of assessment resources	68	64
Sharing of knowledge about individual students between teachers	67	72
Sharing of teaching ideas between teachers	62	69
Sharing of teaching resources between teachers	61	66
Provisionally registered teachers are monitored	58	61
Teachers provide feedback to students	56	64
Sharing of lessons and planning between teachers	52	63
Consistent positive approach to student behaviour and discipline	42	62
Analysis of student achievement to guide teaching and learning	39	63
Setting useful targets for student achievement	38	65
Setting educational goals with students	34	60
Support for taking risks in teaching	34	54
Receiving feedback on own teaching from other teachers' observations	29	33
Observing each other's teaching	25	23

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Differences by subgroup

Teachers from main urban schools were more likely than those from rural schools to rate as good/very good the sharing of assessment resources and the setting of educational goals. Teachers from rural schools were more likely than those in main urban schools to rate the observation of other teachers as poor, very poor or nonexistent.

Relationships

Like primary teachers, secondary teachers also rated the quality of relationships within their school (Figure 6.10). On every common item, they gave a lower rating than their primary counterparts. In some cases (e.g., working relationships between teachers, principal's relationship with the BOT) the differences were relatively small, but in other cases the differences were considerable. For example, 68 percent of secondary teachers assessed relationships between students as good or very good, compared with 82 percent of primary teachers; 64 percent similarly rated the links between school and parents, compared with 81 percent of primary teachers. Relations between principals and staff were even worse in secondary schools: one in six described them as poor or very poor, and a quarter as just satisfactory. In this case there is an even greater gulf between the views of principals and those of staff on the relationship between them.

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Figure 6.10 **Secondary teachers' rating of the following relationships**
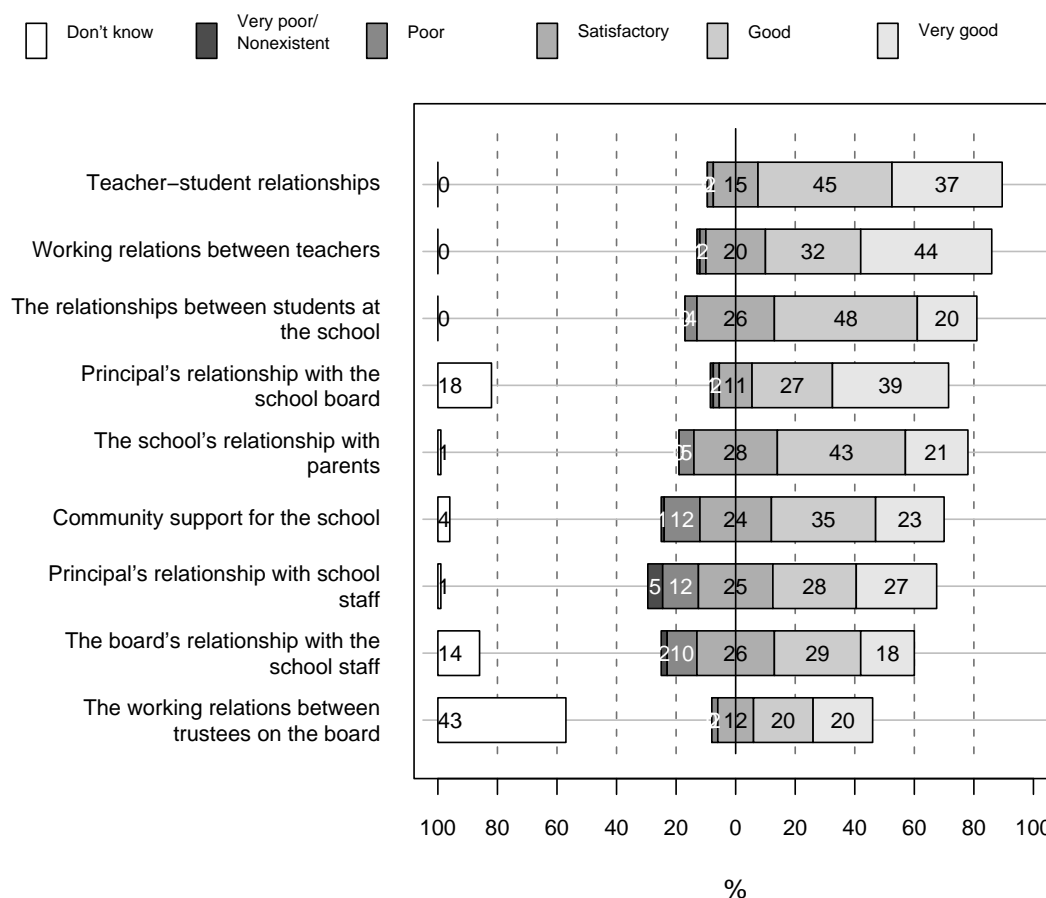
Differences between subgroups

There was an association with location: teachers from main urban schools were the most likely to rate as good/very good working relations between teachers and teacher–student relations. This is somewhat surprising, and contrasts with the finding from primary teachers (see Section 6.1 above).

Community support was more likely to be rated good/very good in larger schools, another finding which may be contrary to expectations.

There was a strong association with decile with respect to student–teacher relationships, school–parent relations, relations between students and community support for the school. As decile increased, so did the proportion of teachers giving a good/very good rating to each of these. The difference was most marked in terms of community support, which was rated good/very good by 30 percent of teachers from low-decile schools, 56 percent from mid-decile schools and 81 percent from high-decile schools.

Teachers from state-integrated schools were more likely than those from other state schools to rate as good/very good teacher–student relations, relations between students, school–parent

relations and community support. Again, the latter difference was particularly marked: 55 percent of teachers from state schools, but 80 percent from state-integrated schools, rated community support as good or very good.

Appraisals

Two-thirds of secondary school teachers (68 percent) were satisfied with the way they were appraised. Those who were not (24 percent) were asked to say why. The most common reason was that they had no confidence in the appraisal (66 percent of those concerned), although this does not of course explain why. Smaller numbers complained that they had no chance for input (13 percent), that they did not know the criteria (5 percent) or that it was rushed (5 percent).

Like principals (see Section 6.2 above), secondary teachers were asked how the information from performance reviews was used in their schools. Their ranking of the possible uses was almost identical, but in every case the proportion of teachers citing a use was much lower than the proportion of principals. For example, almost all principals, but only two-thirds of teachers, thought that appraisal information was used to identify staff PD needs; 80 percent of principals, but only half of teachers, thought it was used to support and encourage staff. There were even differences relating to purely factual matters: 54 percent of principals, but only 34 percent of teachers, said that appraisal information was used to determine eligibility for pay increments.

There is clearly a need for better communication about the purposes of appraisals, and the way in which information from them is used. As it stands, some teachers evidently do not recognise their value. It is not surprising, therefore, that in response to another question, only 54 percent of teachers said that they were satisfied with the use of appraisal information. One in six (17 percent) were definitely not; a quarter (26 percent) were unsure or held mixed views, and the remaining 4 percent did not respond to the question.

Safety

Secondary teachers were asked if they ever felt unsafe in the playground (unlike primary teachers, they were not asked about safety in the classroom). Only 2 percent said they frequently felt unsafe, but 29 percent said they did so occasionally (twice the proportion of primary teachers who felt unsafe).

There was a marked difference between state schools and state-integrated schools on this issue. Nine out of 10 teachers from state-integrated schools, compared with two-thirds from state schools, said they had never felt unsafe in the playground.

There was a correlation with decile: the higher the decile, the more likely teachers were to say that they never felt unsafe in the playground. There was also an association with size: teachers in smaller schools were more likely to say that they never felt unsafe.

Industrial relations

Almost two-thirds of the secondary trustees (64 percent) had faced industrial relations issues during the past three years. This is more than twice the proportion of primary trustees who had been in a similar situation (see Section 6.1 above); it is also a much higher figure than in 2003, when 44 percent reported having had such issues. Again, there were no significant differences by decile, size, location or authority.

In response to a question about the action taken by the BOT, most trustees referred to seeking advice: from NZSTA advisers (77 percent), the regional STA (37 percent), the PPTA (30 percent) or the MOE (29 percent). Two-thirds (67 percent) said they had obtained legal advice from an unspecified source.

The majority of trustees concerned (72 percent) said that the problem had been solved completely, but some (15 percent) had only found a partial solution and others (9 percent) said it was too soon to tell. A few (4 percent) said that it was beyond the BOT's capability to solve the problem, that the school had been required to pay out or simply that their action had not been successful.

6.3 Summary

Primary principals gave a high rating to aspects of their school culture; primary teachers were also positive, but rather less so. A large majority of primary teachers rated the sharing of ideas and resources as good or very good, but there were lower ratings for teacher observation and feedback—a substantial minority said that this was poor, or did not happen. Secondary teachers' responses were similar to primary teachers' on some items, less positive on others.

Relationships within the school were also rated highly by principals, but again primary teachers were not quite as positive, and secondary teachers even less so on all common items.

Almost all schools had a process of self-review, which typically included an annual or more frequent review of literacy and numeracy results (primary) or curriculum areas (secondary). Policies were most commonly reviewed on a two- to three-year cycle. Staff and students tended to be surveyed regularly in secondary schools, but as issues arose in primary schools.

Appraisals were commonly used to identify PD needs, improve performance and provide support and encouragement to teachers. Two-thirds of secondary teachers were satisfied with the way they were appraised, but a quarter were not, most saying that they had no confidence in the process.

In secondary schools, the use of SMS was almost universal for recording students' personal details and the subjects they were taking.

About three in 10 secondary teachers said they occasionally felt unsafe in the playground (about twice the proportion of primary teachers). Almost two-thirds of secondary school trustees, but only a quarter of primary school trustees, said they had faced industrial relations issues in the past three years; for secondary schools, this represents a large increase since 2003.

7. School governance

Boards of trustees play an important role in the governance of New Zealand schools. Two trustees from each of the schools surveyed were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Section 2.1) and principals, teachers and parents were asked some questions about the role of the board and their contacts with it. In this chapter we discuss the governance role, while the following chapter examines board relations with school staff, parents and the community.

When primary and secondary trustees were asked the same questions, responses tended to be similar, so we report patterns from primary respondents and comment on secondary findings where they show a marked difference. A more detailed discussion of the secondary school data can be found in Wylie (2007a).

7.1 The governance role

Ministry of Education (2007) analysis of the 2007 school board elections shows that 57 percent of schools had more candidates than positions, much the same as the 56 percent in 2004. Secondary schools were much more likely to be in this position (78 percent) than primary schools (53 percent). Average numbers of candidates were higher in urban areas, and in decile 10 schools. Participation in voting for boards of trustees was not high: 28 percent across the country overall, with the highest rates (52 percent) in rural area schools. The overall voting rate was lower than the (low) rate for 2007 local authority elections (41 percent).

In the 2007 primary survey held a few months after these elections, parents were asked if they had voted. Exactly half of those who completed questionnaires said that they had—almost double the national rate. This could indicate that the parents who took part in the survey were more interested in their child's school than many parents, or that the schools in the subsample which participated in the parent survey (see Section 2.1) put particular effort into encouraging parents to vote. These explanations are not of course mutually exclusive, but the former is likely to account for most of the difference, as parents choosing to complete the nine-page questionnaire would tend to be those with a greater interest in school affairs, who would therefore be more likely to vote in board elections.

The higher the school decile, the more likely were parents to vote. In contrast with the national figures quoted above, urban parents (50 percent) were more likely to say they had voted than rural parents (46 percent), but this is probably explained by the fact that 13 percent of rural parents (and just 4 percent of urban parents) said that their school had not had a board election that year. Parents without a qualification were less likely to have voted (32 percent), as were Asian parents

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(25 percent). Parents' decision to vote was unrelated to how well connected they felt with the school, or satisfied with the quality of their child's education and the information they had about it.

The main reasons for not voting were: parents did not get around to it (32 percent of those who did not vote), did not think it was important who was on the board since all the candidates seemed to be good people (27 percent), felt they did not have enough information on which to make a decision (22 percent) or did not see a need to vote (10 percent).

Voting parents were influenced in their choice of candidates by their having shown previous commitment to this particular school (75 percent), seeming to have the skills the school needed (74 percent) and by whether they knew the candidate (60 percent). A quarter (25 percent) were likely to favour those who had educational experience, and 9 percent those who had previously served on another school's board. Parents who worked in education were more likely to take account in their voting of whether someone had the skills the school needed, or experience in education.

7.2   Why serve on a school board?

Trustees were asked why they decided to go on their school board; the reasons given (summarised in Table 7.1) were similar for primary and secondary trustees. Over 80 percent of each wanted to contribute to their community. Wanting to help their own child or children was another common motivation. Actively seeking change was not so marked in the reasons trustees gave for deciding to go on their school board, although a quarter of primary trustees wanted to improve student achievement levels. Just under half the primary trustees, and over half of the secondary trustees, said that they had joined the board because they had been asked to do so. The small payment that trustees can receive (and in some cases waive in order to put more funds into the school) was not a major incentive: very few mentioned this.

Table 7.1 **Trustees' reasons for going on their school board**

Reasons	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
To contribute to the community	81	84
To help my child/children	65	61
I was asked	46	54
I wanted to improve achievement levels	24	N/A
I wanted to change things at the school	14	20
No one else wanted to do it	6	3
Leadership at the school was lacking	5	7
I would be paid	2	1
Other	18	9

N/A: This item was not included on the questionnaire.

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Rural trustees in primary schools were more likely to have gone on their school board because they were asked to do so (54 percent, compared with 42 percent of urban primary trustees).

The average amount of time served was 3.1 years for primary trustees. Just under a quarter had served less than six months, having presumably been elected for the first time in 2007; at the other end of the spectrum, 21 percent had given five or more years' service. Fifty-three percent of responses came from board chairs, and they were more likely to have longer service as trustees (31 percent of chairs had been a trustee for at least five years, compared with 10 percent of other trustees). Trustees serving on decile 1–2 school boards were also more likely to have given such long service (42 percent, compared with 17 percent in decile 3–8 and 20 percent in decile 9–10).

The picture was different for secondary school trustees, as they were surveyed before the 2007 elections. The average length of service was 4.2 years; only 3 percent had less than six months service, and 36 percent had five years or more.

Primary school trustees were asked about their involvement in their child's school prior to becoming a trustee. All but five identified at least one type of involvement (several had two or more) which would make them known within the school community. They had helped with school fundraising (53 percent), gone to school meetings (44 percent), helped with sports (37 percent), in the classroom (31 percent), with school property (19 percent) and with cultural events (14 percent). Twenty-two percent had served on their school's parent–teacher association (PTA), generally taking on fundraising responsibilities and event organisation.

Trustees in rural or small schools were more likely than those in urban or large schools to have helped with school property. Three of the 43 decile 1–2 school trustees had taught at their school.

Nineteen percent of the trustees overall and 33 percent of the decile 1–2 school trustees were currently employed in the education sector.

What did people gain from their role as a trustee? Responses to that question are summarised in Table 7.2. All the trustees responding thought they had gained something from their service: particularly in terms of purpose, an increase in their own knowledge and relationships with others. The increase in knowledge mentioned underlines the fact that trustees often come to their role without specialist expertise.

Table 7.2 **Trustees' views of their gains from their role**

Gain	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
Satisfaction of contributing to the school	91	92
Increased my knowledge of education	85	82
Increased my knowledge of other areas	75	64
Confidence with school staff	59	N/A
Friendship and social support	45	35
Increased skills in working with others	44	51
Confidence to try new things in life	28	18
Status in community	13	14
Confidence to continue own education	9	8
Other	1	3
Not sure	1	N/A

N/A: These items were not included on the secondary questionnaire.

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Primary trustees in decile 1–2 schools were more likely than those in higher decile schools to mention that they had gained confidence to try new things (44 percent), increased skills in working with others (58 percent), confidence to continue their education (14 percent) or status in the community (23 percent).

Secondary trustees were less likely than primary trustees to report friendship and social support or confidence to try new things. In general, the larger the secondary school, the more likely the trustees were to say that they had expanded their knowledge of education and their skills in working with others.

A third of primary trustees (34 percent) spent less than two hours a week on their work, but more than half (55 percent) spent two to five hours, and one in 10 (10 percent) six hours or more. The average time spent on primary school board work was estimated at 3.4 hours a week, much the same as it has been since 1991. As would be expected, board chairs spent somewhat more time than other trustees on board work: 4.1 hours a week, compared with 2.5 for nonchairs.

Secondary trustees reported a slightly higher average time given to their role each week: one in six (17 percent) spent six hours or more. The overall mean was estimated at 3.6 hours a week, with board chairs on 4.5 hours, and other trustees on 2.7.

7.3 The trustee's role and responsibility

Principals, teachers, parents and trustees themselves were asked what they considered to be the key element(s) in the role of trustees (see Table 7.3 for primary responses and Table 7.4 for secondary). Providing strategic direction for the school was the key element most likely to be identified by primary school trustees and parents. Those who are most involved in a school—the principal, teachers and trustees—tend to be most aware of board–staff partnerships as a key element in the trustee's role. Parents are much less likely to see that this may be important in how boards operate, as they are in thinking of the board's role as the ultimate employer of school staff or overseeing the principal. Yet parents responding to the survey did not put more emphasis than the other groups on the role of trustees as representing parents. These responses show that on the whole people in schools see the role of boards as it is framed by government, but they do not see boards as operating as agents of government.

Table 7.3   **Views of the key element(s) in the role of trustees (primary)**

Key element	Principals (*n*=196) %	Teachers (*n*=912) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %	Parents (*n*=754) %
Partnership with/support of school staff/principal	77	84	64	36
Strategic direction for school	74	64	68	75
Represent parents	57	59	44	49
Oversee finances	46	57	32	N/A
Scrutiny of school performance	38	34	33	28
Employer of school staff	35	43	23	16
Oversee principal	26	26	18	15
Agent of government	10	20	6	6
Other	2	1	4	2

N/A: This item was not included on the parent questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

The picture at secondary level has a few interesting differences: secondary principals put somewhat more emphasis on the board's role in providing strategic direction for the school, scrutinising school performance, overseeing the principal and representing parents, and somewhat less on acting as an agent of government. Secondary school trustees put less emphasis on their role in providing oversight of the principal, acting as employer of school staff and as agent of government, though secondary school parents put more emphasis on the latter two elements of the role than do either secondary school trustees or primary school parents.

Table 7.4   **Views of the key element(s) in the role of trustees (secondary)**

Key element	Principals (*n*=194) %	Teachers (*n*=818) %	Trustees (*n*=278) %	Parents (*n*=708) %
Strategic direction for school	85	75	75	75
Partnership with/support of school staff/principal	81	N/A	52	47
Represent parents	73	53	46	56
Scrutiny of school performance	59	40	34	39
Oversee principal	40	37	12	21
Employer of school staff	36	40	12	27
Agent of government	4	16	2	12
Other	0	2	3	3

N/A: This item was not included on the teacher questionnaire.

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Both primary and secondary board chairs were more likely than other trustees to emphasise the role of principal oversight, and primary board chairs more likely than primary trustees to emphasise scrutiny of school performance.

Principals, teachers and trustees were asked for their views of the overall amount of responsibility asked of school trustees (Tables 7.5 and 7.6 summarise primary and secondary school responses respectively). In the primary sector, more than a quarter of teachers felt unable to make a judgement. Primary board chairs were, however, twice as likely as other primary trustees to think their level of responsibility was too high. More than half of primary trustees (and 80 percent of primary principals) felt that trustees should *not* have responsibility for negotiating the principal's salary (see Section 7.4).

Table 7.5   **Views of the overall responsibility asked of school trustees (primary)**

Amount of responsibility	Principals (*n*=196) %	Teachers (*n*=912) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %
About right	41	46	67
Too much	55	22	20
Too little	4	3	4
Don't know/not sure	N/A	27	7
No response	1	2	2

N/A: This item was not included on the principal questionnaire.
NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

The views of secondary teachers were very similar to those of their primary counterparts, but secondary trustees were more likely to say that they had too much responsibility, and principals less so. On average, secondary schools are much larger than primary schools, and it could be that

secondary trustees feel the burden of responsibility more heavily. It is not clear, however, why principals of secondary schools are more positive than principals of primary schools about the responsibility asked of trustees.

Table 7.6   **Views of the overall responsibility asked of school trustees (secondary)**

Amount of responsibility	Principals (*n*=194) %	Teachers (*n*=818) %	Trustees (*n*=278) %
About right	61	43	61
Too much	35	27	32
Too little	3	2	4
Don't know	N/A	27	N/A
No response	2	1	3

N/A: This item was not included on the principal and trustee questionnaire.

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

7.4   Principal appointments and appraisals

An important part of the trustees' governance role is the appointment and appraisals of principals. One-quarter of the responding *primary* trustees said that their board had appointed a principal during the past three years.[7] Sixty-three percent said they had not, and the remaining 12 percent were unsure (mainly because they had not been board members throughout that period) or did not respond. In the 2003 survey, more than a third of responding trustees said that they had appointed a principal in the past three years. The lower proportion this time indicates greater stability, confirming the trend identified in Section 4.1.

In 2007, the average (mean) number of applicants for principal positions was 13.6, with almost equal numbers of men (5.9) and women (5.8).[8] The mean number was much higher in state schools (14.8) than in state-integrated schools (7.9); in particular, the number of male applicants was almost three times as high (6.7 compared with 2.3). (It should be noted, however, that the number of principal appointments in state-integrated schools was small, and therefore these differences may not be significant.) In decile 1–2 schools, the mean number of total applicants was 7.4, half that in other schools (14.5 in decile 3–8, 14.8 in decile 9–10). The number of applicants was highest in schools with a roll of 101–300 (16.6, compared with 12.7 for larger schools and 8.2 for smaller schools).

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[7]   Note that, because responses were requested from two trustees in each school, it does not necessarily follow that one-quarter of schools had appointed new principals. However, the proportion should be approximately the same.

[8]   Some respondents gave a total number of applicants, but not a male–female split.

An average of 3.9 (2.1 men and 1.9 women) were shortlisted. Two-thirds of the trustees involved described the overall quality of shortlisted candidates as very good, or excellent; only one said that they were disappointing.

Just over a quarter (27 percent) of the responding *secondary* trustees said that their board had appointed a principal during the past three years.[9] The average (mean) number of applicants was 8.8, with more men (5.5) than women (3.7).[10] The number was higher in state schools (9.3) than in state-integrated schools (6.8). It was higher in rural (10.0) and minor urban schools (10.5), compared with main urban (8.4) and secondary urban (6.1) schools. It was also higher in large schools (over 1500 students, mean 11.5) than small schools (fewer than 250 students, mean 6.2).

The number of applicants was higher in low-decile (12.2) and high-decile (11.8) schools, compared with mid-decile schools (7.7). Interestingly, the applicants in low-decile schools were nearly all men (mean 11.2, mean number of women 1.0), while in mid-decile schools the numbers were much closer, and in high-decile schools the female applicants outnumbered the male. It should be noted, however, that these means are based on very low numbers (especially for low- and high-decile schools) as some of those who had appointed a principal could not remember the relevant details.

An average of 3.8 (2.4 men and 1.7 women) were shortlisted. Trustees of secondary schools were less positive about the quality of candidates than primary school trustees: less than half of those involved (42 percent) described the shortlisted candidates as very good, or excellent; 11 percent said that they were "patchy" and 7 percent "disappointing".

Trustees from low-decile secondary schools were more positive about their applicants: nine out of 10 described them as very good, while trustees from mid-decile schools were fairly evenly divided between very good and all right, with a few saying "patchy" or "disappointing". The 11 trustees from high-decile schools were spread almost equally across the four categories; there is no obvious reason why high-decile schools should attract a lower grade of candidate, so it could possibly be that the trustees concerned had higher expectations.

How appointments were made

Asked how decisions were made, trustees responded as shown in Table 7.7. In most cases, the board had made their decision with input from another principal and/or a consultant. Input from the current principal was comparatively rare; input from staff was more common in secondary schools.

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[9] Note that, because responses were requested from two trustees in each school, it does not necessarily follow that one-quarter of schools had appointed new principals. However, the proportion should be approximately the same.

[10] These averages are based on responses from approximately 50 trustees. Others could not remember the number of applicants.

Rural primary schools were more likely than urban primary schools to have input from the current principal; urban schools were more likely than rural schools to have input from another principal. There was a similar, and obviously related, difference by primary school size.

Table 7.7   **How decisions were made on principal appointments**

Decision making	Primary (*n*=82) %	Secondary (*n*=74) %
Board decision with advice from another principal	40	41
Board decision with advice from a human resources consultant	39	41
Board decision with input from school's current principal	12	11
Board decision with input from staff	11	42
Board decision with no external advice	5	3
Board decision—sought external advice but did not take it	2	N/A
Other	12	19
Not sure/not on board at that time	2	5

N/A: This item was not included on the secondary questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Appraisals

Trustees were asked how useful the principal's appraisal was for PD, remuneration and implementing the board's strategic plan. Responses from primary trustees are summarised in Table 7.8. The majority of trustees felt that the appraisal was useful, at least a little, for PD and (to a lesser extent) for implementing the board's strategic plan, but only just over a third thought it was useful for remuneration. Trustees in low-decile schools were more likely to think it very useful ("yes, a lot") for all three purposes.

Table 7.8   **Usefulness of primary principal's appraisal**

Usefulness	A lot %	A little %	No use %	Not sure %	No response %
Professional development	49	30	4	16	2
Implementing the board's strategic plan	30	35	12	20	2
Remuneration	13	25	32	27	3

NB: Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100 across the rows.

Primary principals were asked what they themselves felt they had gained from their last performance appraisal. The most common responses were:

- good acknowledgement of my contribution to the school (77 percent)
- agreement on goals that will move the school forward (65 percent)

- agreement on goals that will move me forward (61 percent)
- opportunity for frank discussion of challenges facing the school and joint strategic thinking (40 percent)
- opportunity for frank discussion of issues at school and joint problem solving (40 percent)
- new insight into how I could do things (28 percent).

Only 7 percent said they had gained nothing, and only 3 percent had found the appraisal a negative experience.

Half of the primary trustees (49 percent) said that the principal's appraisal was undertaken by an independent person who reported to the board chair; a further 16 percent said that an independent person and the board chair had done the appraisal together. Low-decile schools were more likely than others to use an independent person who reported to the board chair, but less likely than others to say either that an independent person had worked together with the chair, or that they had not used an independent person at all. Full primary schools were more likely to use an independent person, either on their own or working with the board chair, than contributing schools or intermediate schools.

This independent person was most commonly an educational consultant (38 percent of trustees) or another principal (23 percent). State-integrated schools were more likely than other state schools to use an educational consultant; state schools were more likely than state-integrated schools to use another principal. S/he was recommended in most cases by the principal being appraised (33 percent of trustees), sometimes by a board member (10 percent) or NZSTA (9 percent).

Responses from secondary trustees to the question about the usefulness of the principal's appraisal are shown in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9 **Usefulness of secondary school principal's appraisal**

	A lot	A little	No use	Not sure	No response
	%	%	%	%	%
Remuneration	9	20	50	16	5
Professional development	52	36	3	7	2

NB: Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100 across the rows.

More than half of the trustees (56 percent) said that the board had used an independent person for the principal's last appraisal. This independent person was most commonly an educational consultant (44 percent of trustees); compared with primary school trustees, relatively few used another principal (7 percent).

BOT responsibility for pay and conditions

Only a quarter of *primary* trustees (26 percent) felt that the board should have responsibility for negotiating the principal's salary and employment conditions, and for 19 percent, this was conditional on the MOE paying what was negotiated. Just over half (52 percent) felt that the board

should *not* have this responsibility, and 22 percent were unsure. Reasons given in favour of the board being responsible were:

• the board is the principal's employer (31 percent of trustees)
• it would allow local conditions to be taken into account (21 percent).

Reasons against fell into three main categories. Some felt that such negotiations belong at national level (45 percent) and it would be inefficient to pass the task to individual boards (17 percent). Some felt that the boards lacked the expertise needed (41 percent). Finally, some were concerned about a possible negative impact on board–principal relationships (35 percent) or on increasing inequities between schools (41 percent).

Principals were also asked whether they felt the BOT should have this responsibility. They were more strongly against than trustees: only 14 percent were in favour (and all but one of these said it was conditional on the MOE paying); 80 percent were against, and the remaining 6 percent were unsure. Not surprisingly, therefore, they were less likely to cite the reasons in favour of the board being responsible, and much more likely to cite all the reasons against.

Secondary trustees were more likely than their primary counterparts to feel that the board should have responsibility for negotiating the principal's salary and employment conditions; 38 percent took this view, although for the majority of these (30 percent) this was conditional on the MOE paying what was negotiated. Just under half (46 percent) felt that the board should *not* have this responsibility, and 15 percent were unsure.

There was a marked difference between state and state-integrated secondary schools on this issue, although the difference fell just short of statistical significance. Half of the trustees from state schools (49 percent) felt that the board should *not* have responsibility for negotiating the principal's salary, compared with a third (33 percent) of those from state-integrated schools.

There were also differences by location, school size and decile, although the pattern was not entirely clear. Trustees from main urban schools were more likely than those from other locations to say that the BOT should have responsibility, providing the MOE pays. Trustees from minor urban schools were the most likely to say no, and trustees from rural schools were the most likely to say they were not sure.

Trustees from secondary schools with 400 or more students were twice as likely as those from smaller schools to say that the BOT should have responsibility, providing the MOE pays. Those from small schools (fewer than 250 students) were the most likely to say that the BOT should have responsibility if what is negotiated comes from operational funding, and those from medium-sized schools (250–749 students) were the most likely to say that the BOT should not have responsibility.

Trustees from high-decile secondary schools were the most likely to say that the BOT should have responsibility; those from low-decile schools were equally likely to say yes if the MOE pays, but less likely to say yes if it comes from operational funding. Those from mid-decile schools were

the most likely to say that the BOT should *not* have responsibility. They and the trustees from low-decile schools were twice as likely as those from high-decile schools to be unsure.

Reasons given in favour of, or against, the board being responsible were similar to those given by primary trustees. As might be expected, there was a difference of emphasis between state and state-integrated schools. Trustees from state-integrated schools were more likely to give the positive reasons above (as were those from main urban schools), while those from state schools (and those from minor urban schools) were more likely to give the negative reasons, except on the issue of inefficiency, where responses were similar.

Trustees from large schools (most in favour of BOT responsibility) were more likely than others to say that it allowed local conditions to be taken into account. Those from medium-sized schools (most likely to be against BOT responsibility) were more likely than others to say that it would have a negative impact on BOT–principal relationships.

Trustees from high- and low-decile schools were more likely than those from mid-decile schools to argue that the BOT is ultimately responsible as the principal's employer. Those from mid-decile schools (most likely to be against BOT responsibility) were more likely than others to say that it would have a negative impact on BOT–principal relationships, and that inequities between schools would grow.

Secondary principals were also asked whether they thought the board should have this responsibility. Forty-three percent said yes, though in most cases this was conditional on MOE funding. Forty-seven percent said no; the remainder were unsure, or did not respond. Secondary principals' views were thus similar to their trustees' views, although they were in fact slightly more positive about the idea. This contrasts strongly with responses from the primary sector, where trustees were less in favour and principals were very strongly against. The reasons given by principals for their answer were very similar to those given by trustees, but principals were less likely to say that the board lacked the necessary expertise, and that it would be inefficient to pass the task on to individual BOTs.

7.5 Progress of school boards

The next two tables compare trustee and principal views in primary (Table 7.10) and secondary (Table 7.11) schools of how the school board was doing overall. Views of primary school boards in 2008 give much the same picture as in the 1999 and 2003 NZCER surveys. Primary principals were the least sanguine about the progress of their boards, with 24 percent seeing them as coping or struggling. Although fewer trustees than principals felt that the board was on top of its task, a much higher proportion felt that they were making steady progress.

Table 7.10 **Views of the primary school board**

View	Principals[11] (*n*=196) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %
On top of its task	32	25
Making steady progress	40	64
Coping	20	8
Struggling	4	1
No response	4	2

Secondary principals were more positive than primary principals, with only 12 percent saying that their board was only coping or struggling. This is much the same picture as in 2003. Interestingly, while primary principals were much more likely to make that judgement than primary trustees, in the secondary sector the proportions were approximately the same.

Table 7.11 **Views of the secondary school board**

View	Principals (*n*=194) %	Trustees (*n*=278) %
On top of its task	41	31
Making steady progress	46	57
Coping	8	9
Struggling	4	1
No response	1	2

Working relations between trustees were generally good. Only 8 percent of primary trustees rated them as (only) satisfactory or poor, as did 7 percent of the secondary trustees. Fifty-six percent of primary trustees rated working relations on the board as very good, and 35 percent as good, with a very similar picture among secondary trustees.

Table 7.12 gives trustees' views of the main achievements of their board over the past 12 months. On average, primary trustees gave six areas, and secondary trustees five, where they thought their school had met a continuing challenge (such as retaining staff or good financial management) or made a positive change (such as improving student achievement or parental involvement). The picture from this gives a sense of what boards were focusing on, as much as areas where they were able to make some noticeable gain.

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[11] Primary principals answered this question in relation to the board they had worked with up until the April 2007 election. Primary trustees answered this for the new board.

The picture is similar for both school sectors. Primary trustees were just as likely to mention improvements in student achievement as secondary, but less likely to mention a greater focus on it. They were more likely than their secondary colleagues to mention retention of good staff, staff appointments, involvement of parents or community and improvements with ICT.

Table 7.12 **Trustee views of their board's main achievements over the past 12 months**

Achievement	Secondary (*n*=278) %	Primary (*n*=329) %
Planning for the future/strategic planning	69	62
Greater focus on student achievement	67	47
Good financial management/stayed in budget	62	66
Improvements in grounds/buildings	53	60
Quality of school/good ERO report	52	54
Retaining good staff	43	54
Improvements in student achievement	42	49
Good systems/policies now in place	41	39
Improvements with ICT	34	47
Improvements in student behaviour	27	22
Appointment of new staff	22	39
Community/parent involvement increased	17	29
Appointment of new principal	13	18
Increased school roll	N/A	29
Kept school roll stable	N/A	26

N/A: These items were not included on the secondary questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Decile 1–2 primary school trustees were more likely than others to mention improved student achievement (61 percent), increased community/parent involvement (40 percent), improved ICT (61 percent), having good systems or policies in place (51 percent), improved student behaviour (40 percent) and keeping the school roll stable (35 percent), although only the latter two differences were statistically significant.

Although boards are encouraged to review their own processes, to encourage good governance, only 37 percent of both the primary and secondary trustees said their board did so on an annual basis. Thirty-five percent of the primary trustees and 46 percent of the secondary trustees said their board sometimes reviewed its own processes.

7.6   Experience and skills

Principals and trustees were asked about their board's current set of experiences and skills (see Table 7.13 for primary responses and Table 7.14 for secondary). Primary boards were most likely to have expertise related to financial matters, and property. These are the issues that have shown up in previous NZCER surveys as dominating board time. Many boards do not have expertise in all the areas that a board is legally responsible for, indicating a reliance on school staff, or on external sector organisations (e.g., NZSTA) or external contractors. The higher confidence generally shown by trustees may indicate that they are thinking of the principal as a board member with relevant expertise, while principals may be thinking of other board members, not including themselves. However, the areas where trustees gave a much higher rating than principals (e.g., property maintenance and repair) are not necessarily those where principals would be expected to have particular expertise.

Table 7.13   **Areas that primary trustees have experience and skill in**

Areas	Principals (*n*=196) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %
Financial	69	81
Governance	68	55
Property maintenance and repair	56	79
Strategic planning	41	53
Human resources/personnel	37	61
Community consultation	36	42
Fundraising	25	51
Public relations	23	38
Educational	21	60
Legal	15	18
ICT	12	39
Industrial relations	11	27
None of these areas	6	0
Don't know/not sure	4	3
Business	N/A	82
Understanding assessment data	N/A	52
Other	N/A	2

N/A: These items were not included on the principal questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Decile 1–2 primary school trustees were less likely to think their board had expertise in property, financial management, business and fundraising. Trustees of state-integrated schools were more likely than those from other state schools to have financial, legal and governance experience and skills.

Trustees at schools with rolls of over 300 were more likely to report their board had expertise related to ICT and industrial relations, indicating that large schools (probably in urban areas) were more likely to find governors from the business world. However, they were less likely to report expertise in fundraising. Conversely, rural trustees were more confident than urban trustees that their board had property, financial management and fundraising expertise, but less confident in relation to industrial relations, legal and ICT expertise.

Table 7.14 **Areas that secondary trustees have experience and skill in**

Areas	Principals (*n*=194) %	Trustees (*n*=278) %
Financial	71	86
Property maintenance and repair	64	74
Governance	61	72
Human resources/personnel	54	70
Strategic planning	52	65
Educational	40	72
Community consultation	39	48
Legal	33	39
Public relations	29	39
Industrial relations	22	43
ICT	17	40
Fundraising	9	31
None of these areas	3	<1
Other	N/A	2
Business	N/A	84
Understanding assessment data	N/A	61

N/A: These items were not included on the principal questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Secondary trustees appear to have more experience and skills than their primary counterparts in a number of areas, most notably strategic planning, human resources, educational, legal and industrial relations. As noted earlier (Section 7.2), the secondary trustees surveyed had longer service on average than the primary trustees, so it could be that they have "learnt on the job". It could also be that potential trustees from the business world are more interested in the secondary sector.

Principals and trustees were also asked whether they thought their board needed more experience in any of these areas (see Table 7.15 for primary responses and Table 7.16 for secondary). While boards may not have the expertise that could assist them in their role, principals and trustees do not seem to see the need for this: the figures they gave for their board needing more experience are lower than the gaps suggested above. This may be because of current board priorities. Principals identify more need than do trustees, most noticeably in relation to educational experience. Perhaps trustees believe that this is unnecessary, because they rely on the principals for guidance in educational matters. Skills in strategic planning and legal matters are high on the "wish list" of both principals and trustees.

Table 7.15 **Skill needs of primary trustees**

Areas	Principals (*n*=196) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %
Educational	41	12
Strategic planning	38	21
Legal	34	24
Governance	33	20
Industrial relations	30	14
Financial	25	15
Community consultation	24	19
Human resources/personnel	21	11
Property maintenance and repair	20	7
ICT	19	12
Public relations	17	13
Fundraising	12	13
Understanding assessment data	N/A	16
Business	N/A	6
Other	2	3
Don't know/not sure	3	13
None of these areas/have all expertise needed	11	18

N/A: These items were not included on the principal questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Only 11 percent of primary principals and 18 percent of trustees thought their board did not need expertise in any of the areas listed, somewhat less than the 21 percent of secondary principals and 29 percent of secondary trustees.

Table 7.16 **Skill needs of secondary trustees**

Areas	Principals (*n*=194) %	Trustees (*n*=278) %
Strategic planning	35	20
Legal	32	21
Financial	25	15
Industrial relations	23	14
Educational	22	10
Community consultation	21	24
Governance	21	13
Human resources/personnel	20	10
Property maintenance and repair	20	9
ICT	18	13
Public relations	16	15
Fundraising	17	16
Understanding assessment data	N/A	16
Business	N/A	8
Other	1	1
None of these areas/have all expertise needed	21	29

N/A: These items were not included on the principal questionnaire.

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Trustees were asked to identify the main things they would like to change about their role (see Table 7.17). The most common response was a wish for more funding for the school (which would not necessarily mean a change in the trustees' role). However, a third or more would like to increase their own knowledge and receive more support for their role, both from the MOE and from parents.

Table 7.17 **Features of their role that trustees would change**

Feature	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
Receive more funding for the school	76	77
Improve knowledge/training	37	32
Receive more support from MOE	33	41
Reduce compliance costs (education legislation)	33	37
Receive more support from parents	33	31
Work more with other schools/schools' management	28	14
More time to focus on strategic issues	22	39
Reduce compliance costs (health and safety)	22	22
Receive more support from independent education experts	21	N/A
Have a clearer distinction between governance and management	19	13
Reduce workload/paperwork	16	22
Increase payment for being a board member	14	26
Better information as a basis for discussion	14	22
More say over the curriculum	6	5
Better communication between board members	6	4
Reduce expectations for community consultation	5	9
Other	1	8
Nothing	6	4

N/A: This item was not included on the secondary questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Secondary school trustees were more interested than their primary colleagues in having more support from the MOE, more time to focus on strategic issues, better information on which to base decisions and higher payment. Primary school trustees showed more interest in working more with other schools and having a clearer distinction between governance and management.

Primary board chairs were more interested than other primary trustees in change, particularly in reducing workloads or paperwork, improving their knowledge or training, working more with other schools and increased payment.

Primary trustees on boards in decile 1–2 schools were more likely than trustees in higher decile schools to want more support from parents (63 percent), more support from the MOE (54 percent), better information on which to base discussions (28 percent) and to work more with management from other schools (12 percent).

Primary trustees from urban schools were more interested than their rural peers in receiving more support from the MOE (37 percent), and in working more with other schools (32 percent)—this might seem more feasible in an urban setting.

7.7 Formal training and support

The MOE supports boards through:

- a contract with NZSTA to provide advisory services—these include advice on individual issues and problems as boards encounter them, as well as written and Internet advice in the form of handbooks and templates (e.g., on principal appointments and appraisals)
- contracts with NZSTA and other providers to provide training for boards
- a contract with NZSTA to help boards prepare for triennial elections
- inclusion of a small sum in school's operational funding to contract in expertise to assist the BOT with its appraisal of the school's principal
- provision of written advice on its websites and on paper
- provision of advice and support when BOTs request it
- indirectly, through its negotiation of national collective employment contracts.

Trustees were asked what kind of formal training or support they had had for their work over the past 12 months (see Table 7.18). Training alongside other school boards—either one-off sessions, or a series—was common. Almost one in five said that they had not had any training.

Table 7.18 **Training/support for work as trustee**

Training/support	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
One-off cluster session/seminar with trustees from other schools	32	26
A series of board sessions focused on their particular school	26	26
A series of cluster sessions with trustees from other schools	19	30
One-off board session/seminar focused on their particular school	18	18
ERO postreview assistance	13	13
A series of individual sessions focused on their particular role on the board	12	10
One-off individual session/seminar focused on their particular role on the board	9	15
Attended conference/s	9	26
Other	5	4
None	18	19

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Primary trustees were half as likely as their secondary school colleagues to attend trustees' conferences.

Not surprisingly, since low-decile schools are more likely to require a supplementary review after their ERO review, 28 percent of the decile 1–2 primary school trustees had taken part in ERO postreview assistance, compared with 12 percent of mid-decile and 8 percent of high-decile schools.

Urban primary school trustees were more likely to take part in a series of training sessions with other school boards (21 percent, compared with 12 percent of rural trustees), and to attend conferences (12 percent compared with 4 percent). This doubtless reflects the greater difficulties of travel for those in rural areas. Rural trustees were more likely to have training focused on their own role (14 percent had one-off sessions, compared with 7 percent of urban trustees).

Eighty-six percent of the primary trustees who had had some formal training said it had met their needs, 6 percent were unsure and only 8 percent said it had not. This is a higher rate of satisfaction than found among secondary trustees in 2006 (72 percent said it had met their needs). However, interest in further training was higher among primary school trustees: 62 percent, with another 13 percent unsure, compared with 47 percent and 15 percent of secondary trustees.

Most trustees were also accessing advice and support from at least three other sources (Table 7.19). They were most reliant on NZSTA and people at their own school; and they favoured printed material over Internet material where the source was beyond the school.

Table 7.19 **Trustees' sources of advice and support for their role**

Source	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
NZSTA—printed material	79	84
Guidance and information from principal/school staff	69	68
MOE—printed material	61	63
Regional STA—material/advice	39	48
Other BOT members—guidance and information	33	45
Material from ERO	30	38
NZSTA—contact	29	38
NZSTA—Internet material	26	36
MOE/TKI—Internet material	23	29
Advice from ERO	23	N/A
MOE—discussions	15	21
Regular contact with other BOTs	14	19
Other	2	4
None	2	1

N/A: This item was not included on the secondary questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Primary school trustees were somewhat less likely than their secondary colleagues to mention regional STA material, other members of their own school board, Internet material from NZSTA or direct contact with it, or material from ERO.

Comparing these patterns to patterns of advice and support from the 1999 survey, there seems to have been a decrease in primary trustees getting guidance and information from fellow board members (50 percent in 1999), from ERO (49 percent in 1999) or through regular contact with trustees in other schools (23 percent).

Advice from ERO was more likely to be mentioned by low-decile or mid-decile primary school trustees (30 percent and 27 percent respectively), compared with high-decile schools (13 percent). Trustees in small schools (rolls below 100) were more likely to mention advice from ERO (33 percent) than those from medium-sized (23 percent) and large schools (17 percent). Trustees from large schools (35 percent) were more likely to mention Internet material from NZSTA than trustees from small or medium-sized schools (24 and 20 percent respectively).

Few trustees who were new to their board in the last year appeared to have had any formal induction. Most frequently mentioned were discussions or meetings with various people at the school, and reading material.

7.8   Summary

Half of the primary parents surveyed had voted in the recent BOT elections; this is twice the national rate, probably because parents responding were those with an above-average interest in their child's school. The main reasons for voting preference were the candidate's commitment to the school, relevant skills and their personal knowledge of him/her.

Trustees put themselves forward because they wanted to contribute to the community, and also because they wished to help their child(ren). Most had had prior involvement in school activities such as fundraising, attending meetings and helping with sports events or in the classroom. Nearly all said that they gained satisfaction from making a contribution to the school, and also increased knowledge of education and other areas. On average they spent about 3.5 hours per week on BOT work, with chairs devoting more time to the task than other trustees.

The majority of trustees, teachers and secondary principals felt that the amount of responsibility given to BOTs was about right, but a sizeable minority (and a majority of primary principals) thought it was too much.

About a quarter of the trustees surveyed said that their school had appointed a principal in the past three years. The mean number of applicants was 13.6 (primary schools) and 8.8 (secondary schools). During the appointment process, around 40 percent had taken advice from another principal and/or a human resources consultant; a similar number of secondary (but not primary) trustees reported input from staff. About half of trustees and secondary principals, and 80 percent

of primary principals felt that BOTs should not have responsibility for negotiating the principal's salary and employment conditions.

Trustees were confident that they were on top of their task and making progress, but primary principals were rather less convinced. In most cases, trustees rated their own experience and skills (in areas such as finance, property and governance) somewhat higher than did principals. Consistent with this, principals were more likely to think that trustees needed more expertise, especially in education.

A large majority of trustees said that they had had some kind of formal training for their role, and most of those said that the training had met their needs. They received advice and support from a range of sources, mainly NZSTA, MOE and the principal and staff of their school. Nevertheless, they said that they would like to have more knowledge, training and support from the MOE and from parents.

8. Relations with the BOT

In this chapter we examine school boards' relations with other key stakeholders, looking in turn at principals, teachers, parents and the wider community. Reported findings are based on responses from all four groups, looking at primary and secondary patterns together.

8.1 Board–principal relationships

School boards employ the school principal. The principal is also a member of their school's board.

Primary trustees were generally positive about their board's relationship with the school's principal: 76 percent of the primary trustees rated this relationship as very good, and 18 percent as good. Only 5 percent rated it as (just) satisfactory, and 1 percent as poor or very poor. Secondary trustees gave an identical picture. Trustees in the smallest primary schools were most likely to rate the relationship as less than good (10 percent, compared with 2 percent of those in schools with rolls of more than 300) as were those in rural schools (8 percent, compared with 4 percent of those in urban schools), though neither of these differences was statistically significant.

Both trustees and principals were asked to give a more detailed picture of their roles stating the extent of their agreement or disagreement with a number of statements. Tables 8.1 and 8.2 show the proportion of primary and secondary respondents respectively who agreed or strongly agreed with each. Trustees, and primary principals, were very positive about the level of trust in the relationship (secondary principals were not asked to comment on this). But over a third of the primary school boards did appear to be dominated by either the board chair or the principal. Most trustees thought their board did undertake one of its main purposes, to scrutinise school performance, on a regular basis, suggesting that they did not simply accept the principal's reports, although a much lower proportion of principals said that they did this. On the other hand, a third of principals believed that the board was [merely] a sounding board for themselves, but only 19 percent of trustees accepted that view.

Table 8.1   **Primary trustees' and principals' views of board–principal relationship**

Aspect of relationship	Trustees (*n*=329) %	Principals (*n*=196) %
Principal and board chair trust each other	90	89
Board regularly scrutinises school performance	80	54
Board's main concern is to support the principal	35	51
Board is mainly a sounding board for the principal	19	34
Chair is the strongest voice on the board	19	14
Principal is the strongest voice on the board	17	25
Board tells the principal what to do in all areas	1	2
Board struggled to contribute to the school	N/A	11
Board added real value to the school	N/A	65
The board chair and I have equally strong voices on the school board	N/A	54

N/A: These items were not included on the trustee questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Trustees in decile 1–2 primary schools were most likely to see their board as acting in support of the principal (53 percent), and acting as a sounding board (33 percent); they were also more likely to say that either their principal (28 percent) or chair (30 percent) was the strongest voice on their board, and that their board did *not* regularly scrutinise school performance (12 percent, compared with only 1 percent of those in decile 9–10 schools).

Table 8.2   **Secondary trustees' and principals' views of board–principal relationship**

Aspect of relationship	Trustees (*n*=278) %	Principals (*n*=194) %
Principal and board chair trust each other	93	N/A
Board regularly scrutinises school performance	85	76
Board's main concern is to support the principal	42	34
Board is mainly a sounding board for the principal	28	43
Chair is the strongest voice on the board	19	19
Principal is the strongest voice on the board	14	29
Board tells the principal what to do in all areas	3	2
The board chair and I have equally strong views on the school board	N/A	52

N/A: These items were not included on the questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Secondary principals were more likely than their primary counterparts to agree that the board regularly scrutinises school performance. Secondary trustees were more likely than primary trustees to say that the board's main concern was to support the principal, and that the board was mainly a sounding board for the principal.

Two-thirds of the primary principals thought that their previous board (the one that held office until the April 2007 elections) had added real value to the school (20 percent strongly agreed, and 44 percent agreed). Only 11 percent thought their board had struggled to make a contribution to the school. Fifty-six percent of the principals said that their current board's chair challenged them in a useful way (see Table 4.9 in Section 4.1).

Just under half of the principals responding had experienced problems in their relationships with members of their school board (Table 8.3). About a third of principals were experiencing problems (mainly minor) with their current board.

Table 8.3 **Principals' experiences of problems in their relationship with trustees**

Experience	Primary (*n*=196) %	Secondary (*n*=194) %
Never experienced a problem in relations with trustees	54	56
Minor at current school	23	31
Major at current school	10	7
Problems experienced at previous school[12]	17	6

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Information received by trustees

Trustees were asked about the quality of the information they received from principals (Table 8.4). A large majority agreed that they received all the information they needed for decision making, and that it was easy to understand; however, one in eight primary and secondary trustees said that they received the information at the last minute. Trustees from decile 9–10 primary schools were more likely to think they got information at the last minute (20 percent).

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[12] Secondary principals were less likely to have been principal of more than one school, so that may explain why fewer experienced problems at a previous school.

Table 8.4   **Trustees' views of the quality of information from their principal**

View of quality of information	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
Information from the principal is easy to understand	87	88
Board gets all the information needed to make good decisions	82	77
Board gets information needed at the last minute	13	12

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Primary trustees were asked which areas they regularly received information about (Table 8.5). All but 7 percent of the primary trustees said their board got regular information from the principal about student achievement; other areas of regular principal report were progress on strategic plan goals, property and finance. However, these four main areas were not at 100 percent, as one might expect them to be from reading the legislation on school planning and reporting (Education Standards Act 2001).

Table 8.5   **Areas reported regularly by principal to school board**

Area	Trustees (*n*=329) %
Student achievement	93
Progress on strategic plan/annual goals	87
Property	86
Finance	84
Physical health and safety	67
Emotional health and safety/student wellbeing	65
Personnel	61
Student attendance	51
Other	6

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Trustees in the smallest schools were least likely to get regular information from the principal about finance, property or personal matters.

Trustees in decile 1–2 schools were most likely to get regular information on student attendance (74 percent) and student wellbeing (84 percent).

A quarter of the primary principals said it took too much time to adapt and assemble information required by their board, with a further 20 percent saying they were not sure or expressing a neutral view on this requirement. This is higher than the 16 percent of secondary principals who agreed with the statement (19 percent neutral), perhaps because they have more administrative support.

8.2   Board–school staff relations

School staff elect their own representative on the board. Teachers were asked what contact they had with their staff representative on the board;[13] responses are summarised in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6   **Contact between teachers and their staff representative on the board**

Contact	Primary (*n*=912) %	Secondary (*n*=818) %
Nothing formal	47	50
Regular group report after board meetings	40	38
Asked to provide information for board meetings	26	22
Regular group discussion agenda items before board meeting	11	6
I was the staff representative	9	3
Individual discussion on agenda items before board meetings	7	8
Other	4	5
Don't know who the staff representative was	3	7

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Nearly half of primary teachers said there was no formal contact, but 40 percent said there was a regular group report after board meetings, and a quarter said they were asked to provide information before board meetings. The picture from secondary teachers was very similar.

Fifty-two percent of the primary teachers thought they had sufficient contact with their staff representative, with another 13 percent unsure. Twenty percent said it was not sufficient, and a further 5 percent said they had no contact at all with their staff representative. Nine percent of the respondents were themselves the staff representative, and just over half of these were in middle management positions.

The picture among secondary teachers was similar, although only 3 percent of respondents were staff representatives (in bigger schools, the chances of being a representative would be smaller). Sixty percent felt that they had sufficient contact.

Trustee contact with teachers at their school

Trustees were asked what contact they had had (in their capacity as trustees) with teachers other than the principal, during the current year (Table 8.7). Very few had had no contact, and most talked with or heard teachers in several different contexts, both in and out of school work hours. Secondary school trustees were more likely to share strategic planning sessions with teachers, but

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[13] In the case of primary teachers, the reference was to the previous board, since the current board had only recently been elected.

less likely to encounter teachers at school fundraising events or working bees, or because they helped at the school.

Table 8.7 **Trustees' contact with teachers at the school**

Source	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
Teachers attend/present at some BOT meetings	72	84
Social functions	68	75
Individual discussions outside school hours	48	56
Individual discussions in school hours	44	47
School working bees/fundraising events	43	19
Trustee helps at the school	39	22
Discussion with school staff on ERO review	21	22
Strategic planning sessions	18	34
Participated in working groups to develop policy	17	26
Trustee is a school employee	5	1
No direct contact	4	1
Other	3	4

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Compared with patterns in 1999, trustees appeared to have less contact with school staff through individual discussions, at working bees or fundraising events and in working groups to develop policy.

Rural primary school trustees were more likely to share school working bees and fundraising events with their school's teachers (60 percent). Trustees at schools with rolls of more than 300 were most likely to share strategic planning sessions with school staff (28 percent), but least likely to share in school working bees and fundraising events (32 percent). This is consistent with the difference noted above between primary and secondary schools.

Trustees in low-decile secondary schools were most likely to have individual discussions out of school hours (77 percent) and participate in working groups to develop policy (47 percent). This was much more likely to happen in state schools (30 percent) than state-integrated schools (8 percent).

Seventy-nine percent of the primary school trustees were satisfied with their level of contact with the school's teachers, a slightly lower level than in 1999. Secondary school trustee satisfaction was 71 percent.

Trustees were also generally positive about their board's relationship with school staff in general, with 87 percent of primary trustees and 80 percent of secondary trustees describing it as good or very good. Trustees from high-decile schools were most likely to describe it as very good.

8.3   Parent–board contact

Trustees were asked what contact they had had with their school's parents during the current year. Responses from primary trustees are shown in Table 8.8, alongside data from 1989, the pioneering year for boards of trustees, 10 years later, in 1999, and from 2003. In 2007, most primary trustees had had several forms of contact with the school's parents, and only 12 percent said they had no or little direct contact at all (although this is twice the proportion as in 2003, which was twice the proportion in 1999).

The kinds of contact that trustees have with their school's parents have changed over the years. It has become less common for trustees to have informal discussions with parents who are friends, to seek the views of individual parents known to them and for individual parents to contact trustees on matters of school policy. In 2007, it was much less common for parents to attend board meetings, and for trustees to work or help in the school. On the other hand, new items have been introduced into the question to reflect changes to the role of trustees in the 21st century. In 2007, nearly half of the responding trustees represented the school at functions for parents. They were also involved in discussing ERO reports and student achievement with parents, though apparently to a lesser extent than in 2003. In general, it seems that the role of trustees has become more formal, requiring greater understanding of school and wider educational affairs, and the ability to convey these to parents, leaving less time for more casual contacts.

Table 8.8   **Primary trustees' contact with parents at their school**

Contact	1989 (*n*=334) %	1999 (*n*=376) %	2003 (*n*=352) %	2007 (*n*=329) %
Informal discussions with parents who are friends	93	76	72	61
Individual parents contact trustee on school policy	55	44	47	35
Trustee contacts individual parents known to him/her to seek their views	53	41	31	23
Trustee talks with individual parents not known to him/her at school functions	51	39	43	41
Parents come to board meetings	42	53	45	24
Trustee attends meetings of PTA/home and school association/school council	36	31	29	32
Individual parents contact trustee concerning their children	25	34	40	28
Trustee contacts individual parents unknown to him/her	22	18	15	10
Groups of parents contact trustee on matters of concern/school policy	11	11	11	12
No/little direct contact with parents	3	3	6	12
Trustee works/consults with parents to develop school policy	-	13	-	16
Trustee helps/works at the school	-	53	60	37
Trustee attends whānau/Pasifika support meetings*	-	6	14	11
Trustee takes part in board consultation with parents on strategic plan**	-	-	34	26
Trustee consults with parents to develop BOT policies**	-	-	27	-
Trustee discusses student achievement with parents**	-	-	26	16
Trustee discusses ERO report with parents**	-	-	21	13
Trustee represents the school at functions for parents***	-	-	-	43
Trustee discusses the school's progress towards its planning and reporting targets with parents***	-	-	-	14

*   new question in 1999 survey.
**   new question in 2003 survey.
***   new question in 2007 survey.

Trustees in decile 9–10 primary schools were most likely to talk at school functions to individual parents they had not met before (50 percent), but were least likely to help or work at the school

(28 percent, compared with 44 percent of the decile 1–2 trustees). Decile 1–2 trustees were most likely to attend whānau/Pasifika support group meetings (26 percent), but least likely to attend PTA meetings (12 percent) or to have informal discussions with parents who were also friends (42 percent).

Rural trustees were more likely to contact parents to seek their views, whether or not they knew them as individuals—which fits with the community-building role of schools in rural communities—and to encounter them as they helped or worked at the school. Only 5 percent of rural trustees had no contact with parents, compared with 15 percent of urban trustees.

Sixty-six percent of primary trustees were satisfied with their level of contact with parents, a little down from previous surveys (78 percent in 1999, and 74 percent in 2003). Trustees in decile 1–2 schools were least satisfied with their level of contact with parents: 53 percent, compared with 74 percent in decile 9–10 schools.

Findings relating to secondary schools were similar (for a detailed discussion, see Wylie, 2007a, pp. 25–27). There were some differences however. Compared with primary trustees, secondary trustees were more likely to represent their school at functions for parents (perhaps because secondary schools are more likely to hold open days), and to attend whānau/Pasifika support meetings (probably because secondary schools are more likely to have these groups); they were less likely to help or work at the school (perhaps because secondary schools are less likely to involve parents and others in this way). Individual parents were less likely to contact secondary school trustees about their children, or about school policy.

The parent perspective on contact with their school's board

Parents were asked what contact they had had with the school's BOT over the past 12 months (Table 8.9). More than half of primary and secondary parents said that they had had no contact at all. Much of the contact mentioned by other parents was not direct: it included answering school surveys, receiving newsletters or reading the school's annual report.[14] Primary parents were more likely to talk to individual trustees about school policy, or about their child.

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[14] In this context, 21 percent of primary parents said that they read the school's annual report, but in response to another question, 17 percent said they did so (see Section 9.1).

Table 8.9   **Contact between parents and the school's BOT**

Contact	Primary (*n*=754) %	Secondary (*n*=708) %
No contact	51	57
Read school's annual report	21	19
Received BOT's newsletter/reports	18	20
Answered school survey	18	16
Talked with individual trustee(s) about school policy	13	7
Took part in working bees/fundraising with trustees	11	3
Talked with individual trustee(s) about my child/children	7	5
Read minutes of BOT's meetings	6	3
Attended BOT meeting	4	2
Talked with individual trustee(s) about standing for the board	4	N/A
Read agenda for BOT meetings	3	2
I am a trustee	2	1
Discussed ERO report	2	1
Took part in development of curriculum/learning programme	1	<1
Discussed school's annual report with trustees	1	1
Other	4	2

N/A: This item was not included on the secondary questionnaire.

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Parents were divided about whether they had enough contact with their school's BOT, as they have been in previous rounds of the NZCER national survey. Forty percent of primary parents, and 35 percent of secondary parents, thought that they had, 31 percent and 35 percent respectively thought not and the remainder were unsure.

Issues raised by parents with their school board

Sixty-three percent of primary trustees, and 71 percent of secondary trustees, said that parents had raised an issue with their school board in the past 12 months. These figures are much the same as those reported in earlier NZCER national surveys. The issues raised cover a wide range: they are largely about school policies, quality and student wellbeing (Table 8.10). The pattern is much the same as in the 1999 and 2003 NZCER surveys: these appear to be perennial issues for parents that they will raise with members of their school board. It should be noted that, although student behaviour appears to be a bigger issue in secondary schools, the item on the secondary parents' questionnaire explicitly included uniform, while for primary parents this was a separate item.

Table 8.10 **Issues raised with school boards by parents in 2006 and 2007**

Issue	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
Student behaviour/discipline, including uniforms	27	43
Funding, including fundraising/spending	20	13
Dissatisfaction with a teacher	19	26
Uniforms	16	N/A
Health and safety	16	9
Provision for special needs students	15	10
Student achievement	12	11
Zone/enrolment scheme	12	12
Class size	12	6
Transport	11	10
Concerns about the principal	9	N/A
Homework	9	7
Grounds/maintenance	7	9
Future of the school	7	8
After-school programme	6	N/A
Provision for Māori students	5	9
Curriculum	5	8
Extracurricular provision	4	6
Theft/vandalism	3	8
Strategic plan	2	6
Provision for ESOL students	1	1
Sex education	1	4
Provision for Pasifika students	1	1
Targets in annual plan	1	1
NCEA	N/A	14
Subject/option choices	N/A	10
Other	4	8

N/A: These items were not included on the questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

The school enrolment scheme was an issue most likely to occur for trustees in decile 9–10 primary schools (19 percent). Parents in decile 1–2 schools were least likely to raise issues of funding or fundraising (9 percent of trustees), or dissatisfaction with a teacher (7 percent), though the differences were not significant. School transport was more of an issue in rural schools. Dissatisfaction with a teacher was twice as likely to be raised in schools with rolls of 300 or fewer than in schools with rolls of more than 300.

As reported by secondary trustees, parents in decile 9–10 schools were more likely than others to raise issues concerning the zone/enrolment scheme, while those in decile 1–2 schools were the most likely to raise issues of student achievement. The larger the school roll, the more likely were zone/enrolment schemes to be raised as an issue.

The trustees reporting that parents had raised issues with the board were asked how the issues had been dealt with (Table 8.11). A large majority said that issues were discussed at board meetings, though most of the time parents did not attend these meetings to present a case (only a quarter of those whose board had dealt with an issue raised by parents said parents had done so). The other common way of dealing with an issue was for the principal or a board member to discuss the matter with the parent(s) concerned.

Table 8.11 **The ways issues raised with school boards by parents were dealt with**

Method	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
Discussed at board meeting	58	63
Principal discussed matter with parent(s)	40	42
Board member discussed matter with parent(s)	20	26
Board sought external assistance/advice	14	10
Board altered/developed school policy	12	16
Special board meeting	9	5
Principal took disciplinary action	9	7
Discussions with MOE	7	6
Public meeting	7	5
Set up board–parent committee	5	3
Actively looked for new funding	4	3
Discussions with other local schools	3	5
Taken to joint board–staff committee	2	4
Other	3	3
No action taken	1	0

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Trustees from rural primary schools were more likely than those from urban schools to discuss an issue with parents themselves (possibly because they would be more likely to know the parents concerned). Changes to policy were more likely to be made in primary schools with rolls over 300. Trustees from low-decile secondary schools were less likely to report that issues were discussed at BOT meetings.

8.4   Community consultation

Schools consult with their community—usually parents of the children enrolled—on a range of matters. Eighty-seven percent of primary trustees, and 91 percent of secondary trustees, said their board had consulted with its community in the past 12 months. The methods used were perennial (see Table 8.12): largely paper-based, but with nearly half of the schools holding a public meeting or workshop at the school. Newsletters were used for consultation by three-quarters of trustees, and written questionnaires by more than half. A relatively small number of schools were moving to telephone or email surveys. There had been a decline in the practice of generally inviting parents to board meetings (58 percent of primary trustees and 35 percent of secondary trustees in 2003). Hui, and public meetings or workshops in the community, were more common in secondary schools.

Table 8.12   **Methods used by the board to consult with its community**

Methods	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
Newsletter	73	75
Written questionnaire(s)	58	57
Public meetings/workshops at school	44	45
Parents generally invited to board meetings/join planning/policy groups	26	26
Specific groups met with board members	9	10
A hui	7	23
Public meetings/workshops in community	5	14
Email survey	5	7
Phone survey(s)	5	5
Home/cottage meetings	1	6
Other	2	3

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Rural primary schools were more likely than urban schools to use telephone surveys. Written questionnaires were more likely to be used in small secondary schools (rolls up to 399).

Table 8.13 shows the issues that boards raised with their school community. The issues raised are similar for secondary and primary, but with secondary boards more likely to consult on their strategic plan or charter. Student behaviour, policies and provision for a particular student group were also more likely to be topics for consultation by secondary boards.

Table 8.13 **Topics of school board community consultation in 2006 and 2007**

Topic	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
Reporting to parents	40	N/A
Strategic planning/charter	34	49
Curriculum/subject options	33	35
Student achievement	33	31
Provision for Māori students	23	28
Health and safety of students	21	17
Property	20	21
Policies	19	25
Student behaviour	16	22
Setting targets for the annual plan	16	16
Progress on annual plan target/goals	16	12
Extracurricular activities	15	16
Funding	15	13
Enrolment scheme/zoning	14	18
Provision for students with special needs	9	8
Sex education	7	10
After-school care	7	N/A
Provision for Pasifika students	6	8
Provision for particular group of students	3	13
Provision for ESOL students	3	4
Amalgamation/merger	1	3
Other	8	12

N/A These items were not included on the secondary questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Participation in such consultation was not encouraging in most schools, though it is perhaps on a par with other organisations, unless there is an issue people feel strongly about. A fifth of trustees did not know how many parents had participated, and a further 17 percent of primary trustees and 10 percent of secondary trustees did not respond to the question. Information supplied by other primary trustees indicated an average response of just under a third. In secondary schools the picture was worse; 39 percent of the trustees who provided a response estimated it at less than 10 percent.

Parent participation was highest in the smallest primary schools (44 percent on average in schools with rolls under 100, compared with 21 percent on average in the schools with rolls over 300). Rural primary schools (many of them small) also had higher parent participation in their community consultation (43 percent on average, compared with 26 percent on average in urban schools).

Nonetheless, most of the trustees whose board had consulted its community thought the methods their board had used were successful, either generally or for some issues. Rural and small primary schools were more likely to think their methods had been successful.

Consultations with the Māori community

Seventy-three percent of the primary trustees, and 86 percent of secondary trustees, said their school had an identifiable Māori community. Seventy-nine percent of the decile 1–2 primary school trustees said this, compared with 60 percent of decile 9–10 school trustees. Among secondary schools, the difference was similar (93 percent of decile 1–2 secondary schools, and 79 percent of decile 9–10 schools).

Eighty-four percent of the secondary trustees whose school had an identifiable Māori community reported that they had consulted with them in the past 12 months; the corresponding figure for primary trustees was 77 percent. The main forms of consultation with the school's Māori community were somewhat different from their general consultation, and were more focused on face-to-face meetings (Table 8.14). Primary trustees were much less likely than secondary to indicate that their school had a whānau group or a board member responsible for liaison with the Māori community.

Table 8.14 **Methods used by the board to consult with the school's Māori community**

Methods	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
Asked Māori parents as a group	25	35
Principal (as BOT member) contacted Māori parents	23	N/A
Ongoing discussions with local Māori community	22	45
Asked individual Māori parents	19	18
School has whānau group	14	50
Put on school event	14	14
BOT member responsible for Māori liaison	13	37
BOT members' individual discussion with Māori parents	10	22
Close relations with local marae	9	15
Met with all local iwi	5	15
Contacted all local iwi	4	8
Sponsored hui	4	7
Other	1	4

N/A: This item was not included on the secondary questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

The topics on which school boards consulted their Māori communities had more of a focus on parental expectations and student learning than their general parent consultation (Table 8.15).

Table 8.15 **Topics of consultation with the school's Māori community in 2006 and 2007**

Topic	Primary (*n*=329) %	Secondary (*n*=278) %
Student achievement	36	51
General programme	28	35
Parents' expectations	27	34
Community involvement	15	25
Parent support for student learning	14	28
School charter	12	18
Student behaviour	9	23
Particular programme	9	17
Targets for annual plan	8	16
Teacher–student relationships	5	N/A
Staff appointments	1	8
Other	2	8

N/A: This item was not included on the secondary questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Fifty-three percent of the primary trustees whose school had consulted their Māori community thought this consultation was generally successful, and 28 percent thought it had been successful for some issues. Fifty-two percent of secondary trustees whose board had consulted their Māori community also thought this consultation had been generally successful, and 38 percent, successful for some issues.

Asked if their boards had consulted with other communities, 54 percent of primary trustees said no, and a further 16 percent said they did not know. A similar proportion of secondary trustees said no, but they were not given a "don't know" option. Communities with which boards had consulted included:

- Pasifika (17 percent of primary trustees, 25 percent of secondary)
- Asian (8 percent and 6 percent respectively)
- religious communities (5 percent and 6 percent)
- refugee communities (2 percent and 3 percent).

Consultation with Pasifika communities was more likely in large, urban, decile 1–2 primary schools. There were nonsignificant trends (because the numbers were small) for the same pattern to be evident with Asian and refugee communities. The picture in the secondary sector was similar. State-integrated schools were more likely than state schools to consult with Pasifika and religious communities.

Only 16 percent of primary trustees, but twice the proportion of secondary trustees, said there were issues for their board around community consultation. The main issue in both sectors was the lack of community interest or response. Difficulty in consulting the Māori community was an

issue for 5 percent of secondary trustees, and there was concern about the need to obtain a wider range of views, and the need to use more effective methods of consultation. Seven primary trustees mentioned issues in engaging the Māori and Pasifika communities.

8.5 Summary

Primary trustees were generally positive about their board's relationship with the school's principal: very few rated it less than good. All were very positive about the level of trust in the relationship. The view that the BOT is merely a sounding board for the principal was held by a minority of primary school respondents, but somewhat more of those in secondary schools. Two-thirds of the primary principals thought that their previous board (the one that held office until the April 2007 elections) had added real value to the school.

However, just under half of the principals responding had experienced problems in their relationships with BOT members, and about a third were experiencing problems (mainly minor) with their current board.

A large majority of trustees said that the principals reported regularly to them on student achievement, progress on strategic plans and goals, property and finance. However, a quarter of the primary principals, and 16 percent of the secondary principals, said that it took too much time to assemble the information required by their board.

Just over half of the teachers thought they had sufficient contact with their staff representative on the BOT. Most trustees had contact with teachers in a variety of settings, and were positive about their board's relationship with school staff in general.

In 2007, most primary trustees had had several forms of contact with the school's parents, though the forms of contact had changed over the years, and had generally become more formal. However, just over half of the parents surveyed said that they had no contact with the BOT, and (in response to another question) about a third said that they did not have enough contact.

Issues raised by parents with trustees mainly related to behaviour/discipline, uniforms, fundraising and dissatisfaction with teachers. They were usually dealt with by discussion at BOT meetings, or by the principals talking to the parents concerned.

About nine in 10 trustees said their board had consulted with its community in the past 12 months, using mainly traditional methods. Issues for consultation were mainly around student achievement, curriculum options, reporting to parents and strategic planning. Parent rates of participation in such consultation were not encouraging, particularly in secondary schools.

A large majority of trustees were from schools with an identifiable Māori community. More than three-quarters of those trustees reported that they had consulted with them in the past 12 months, mainly in face-to-face meetings, and most thought that these consultations had been successful.

9. Parents and their child's school

The characteristics of the parents responding to the survey are reported in Appendix A (secondary schools) and Appendix B (primary schools). In this chapter we discuss parents' relations with their children's schools, looking first at the primary and then at the secondary sector. Responses were analysed in relation to three social characteristics: parent qualification level; ethnicity; and whether parents worked in education themselves.

9.1   Parents and primary schools

School choice

Ninety percent of the parents responding said the primary school their youngest child attended was their first choice of school.[15] This is slightly higher than the 83 percent of parents whose children were at their first choice of school in 1999, but much the same as in the 2003 NZCER survey.

Fifty-six percent of the parents said their child was at their first-choice school, and it was also their closest school. Another 34 percent said their child was at the school of their first choice, but this was not their closest school—an increase from the 27 percent who said this in 2003. Seven percent said their child was not attending their first choice of school, three parents said they were unsure and 2 percent did not answer this question.

Twenty-one percent of the parents said they had chosen to live in the area so they were in the enrolment zone of their preferred school, indicating a choice made some time before actual enrolment, presumably on the assumption that the quality of the school would remain stable. Only 1 percent said they had actually moved house specifically to be in their preferred school's enrolment zone. Eight percent had gone into a ballot to enter their first-choice school.

In this sample, Māori and Asian children appeared to be somewhat more likely not to be attending their first-choice school (11 percent each, compared with 6 percent of Pākehā and Pasifika parents), but the difference was not statistically significant. Patterns of school choice did not differ in relation to the parent's highest qualification. Parents whose child attended a decile 9–10

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[15] Fifty-three percent of the parents had just one child at the school; 37 percent had two and the remaining 10 percent had three or more children attending the school. Parents with more than one child at the school were asked to respond with reference to their youngest child. Most of the parents had at least two years of experience of the school, with an average of four years.

school were least likely to say their child was not attending their first-choice school (4 percent, compared with 11 percent of decile 1–2 school parents).

Table 9.1 shows the main sources of information used by parents in choosing a school. It indicates that choice was largely based on the experience of others in the family, or the people they knew, and the fact that the school was attended by other children their child was already interacting with. However, almost a third of parents visited the school, or attended its open day, and just over a quarter used the school's most recent ERO report in their choice.

Table 9.1   **Main information sources used by parents to choose a primary school**

Source	Parents (*n*=754) %
Older child's experience at the school	47
Opinions of other parents	40
Visited the school/attended the school open day	31
Other children the family knew went to the school	30
The school's most recent ERO review	26
Other family members had attended the school	20
Child's friends were going there	19
Early childhood education teacher's views	7
Location/easily accessible	5
School's reputation/information from others	5

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Māori parents were the most likely to mention information from other family members who had attended the school (40 percent). Pasifika parents and those without an educational qualification were less likely to use ERO reports (10 percent and 13 percent). Those without an educational qualification were less likely to mention the opinions of other parents, or visiting the school.

There were differences in the responses from parents in urban and rural schools. Rural parents were more likely than urban parents to cite the fact that other family members attended the school; they also mentioned the reputation of the school, what was on offer there (in terms of programme, structure or culture) and the fact that they were impressed by the principal and/or staff. Urban parents were more likely to say that they had chosen the school because the child's friends were going there, and also mentioned religious reasons (presumably for the choice of a state-integrated school).

Living outside a preferred school zone, lack of transport to reach a preferred school or family reasons (such as changes in employment and residence) were the main reasons given by parents whose child(ren) did not go to their first-choice school. No other reason was cited by more than five parents.

The sources parents relied on to help them decide which school to choose also featured high on the list of their main sources for information about education in general (see Table 9.2). Some parents also actively sought information from other sources, particularly the Internet. Fewer than three parents in 10 used information from ERO or the MOE. Perhaps parents do not see the government agencies as a source of general information, or providing answers to the kinds of questions they might have.

Table 9.2 **Primary parents' sources of information about education other than their child's school**

Source	Parents (*n*=754) %
Other parents	63
Friends	58
Family	57
Newspaper	55
Books	51
TV	44
Internet searches	39
Magazines	29
ERO	27
Radio	24
Ministry of Education	19
Team-Up website	6
Other	8

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Pasifika parents were the most reliant on family as a source of information about education (84 percent), and less likely to use Internet searches. But, in contrast to their lower use of ERO to make a choice about a school, they were just as likely as others to use it as a general source of information about education. Parents without qualifications were also less likely to use the Internet (21 percent), or ERO (11 percent). Parents employed in education were much more likely to use ERO (43 percent) (although they were no more likely than others to use school reports in their choice of schools), the MOE (41 percent) or the Team-Up website (12 percent), and slightly less likely to use friends or other parents.

Parents' contact with their child's teacher

All but 4 percent of the parents responding had at least one kind of contact with their child's teacher (Table 9.3). Most went to parent/teacher interviews, usually held once a year, but it is interesting to see that the figures are lower for discussions specifically focused on work, or ways in which parents can help their child's learning.

Table 9.3   **Parents' contact with their child's primary school teacher**

Kind of parent–teacher contact	Parents (*n*=754) %
Parent/teacher interviews	86
Talk about child's work	63
Talk about how to help learning	50
Talk about written report	47
Talk about child's behaviour	38
Informal talk on school trips	35
Informal talk at school functions	31
When doing voluntary work at the school	27
At school sports training/matches	26
At school meetings	24
See teacher in the community	18
Discussion about curriculum	12
Talk about school policy	9
No contact	4
I work at the school	3
Other	5

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Three-quarters (77 percent) of the parents responding thought they had enough contact with their child's teacher. Fifteen percent thought they did not, and 8 percent were unsure. These proportions are much the same as in previous NZCER surveys since the mid 1990s. However, parents without any qualification and Pasifika parents were less happy with their contact with their child's teacher (only 57 percent of the former and 50 percent of the latter thought they had enough contact).

Almost all the parents (94 percent) thought that their child's teacher(s) would be available if they wanted to raise something with them.

Raising issues or concerns with the school

It is reasonably common for parents to raise an issue or concern with their child's teacher or school: just over half the parents (53 percent) had done so. Parents without a qualification themselves, Pasifika and Asian parents were less likely to have raised an issue (31 percent, 18 percent and 36 percent respectively). The main issues raised were children's progress (12 percent of all parents responding), bullying or stealing (9 percent), the child's behaviour or conflicts between home and school approaches (7 percent), a child's health or special needs (5 percent), the quality of the teacher (5 percent) and the level of work given the child (4 percent).

Most parents who did raise issues thought they had been fairly listened to by their child's teacher or the school (78 percent). More than half of the parents who raised issues (56 percent) thought the right action had been taken as a result, with another 9 percent saying that no action had been needed. In some cases, the right action had been taken, but it was not enough to address the issue (10 percent); in other cases, it had been pursued too slowly (6 percent).

Parents' satisfaction with information about their child's progress

Around two-thirds of the parents thought the information they received about their child's progress and learning programme was good or very good. Around a quarter thought this information was (only) satisfactory, and 7 percent that it was poor.

Despite these relatively high levels of satisfaction, 42 percent of the parents would like more information about their child's progress at school. This proportion has increased over time: in 1999 only 18 percent of parents wanted more information, and 36 percent in 2003.

Of most interest was information about how their child was achieving compared with others at the same year level (37 percent of all parents responding), information about the assessments or tests their child had taken (31 percent), more detailed information (29 percent), ideas for how they could support their child's learning (27 percent), information about their child's attitudes or behaviour (25 percent) or more regular reports (20 percent). Pasifika parents would particularly like more detailed information, that was easier to understand, and information about attitudes or behaviour. Parents who worked in education themselves were somewhat more likely to want more regular reports (27 percent).

Parents' satisfaction with their child's schooling

While a significant minority of parents would like more information about their child's progress and programme, 83 percent said they were generally happy with the quality of their child's schooling. Seven percent were not happy; the remaining 10 percent were unsure, or did not respond. This high level of parent satisfaction with their child's school has been stable through all the NZCER surveys since 1989.

Reasons for being unhappy about the school, or unsure, were mainly around a desire for more information, for their child to make more progress, receive more individual attention (5–6 percent of all parents) or concerns with the quality of student behaviour or teaching, and the desire for more extracurricular activities (3–4 percent).

Those who were unhappy or unsure about the quality of their child's education in general were more likely to also find the information they had about their child's programme and learning progress satisfactory at best, to want more information about that progress and to want to change something in their child's education at the school. Around twice as many of the children of this group were not attending the school of their first choice, which might have coloured parent perceptions.

Just under half of the parents (49 percent), including parents who were generally happy with their child's schooling, would like to change something about their child's education at the school, with a further 9 percent unsure. This proportion seeking change of some kind is much the same as in 2003, and higher than the 28 percent in 1999. Interest in some change was lowest among parents with no qualification (31 percent, compared with 60 percent of those with a university qualification).

Table 9.4 shows the range of changes that at least 5 percent of parents would like. These are much the same kinds of changes as parents have wanted in previous surveys: changes that are as much about giving students more support as they are about extending their learning opportunities. Interest in more formal approaches to education, such as more homework and emphasis on academic work, are not as marked as things that have a more direct bearing on student engagement in learning and support for their learning. Although these options were printed on the questionnaire, hardly any of the parents said they wanted less assessment, less emphasis on academic work or less strict discipline.

Table 9.4   **Primary parents' desire for changes in their child's education**

Kind of change	Parents (*n*=754) %
Smaller classes	31
More communication about progress	24
More individual help	22
More information to support learning at home	21
More teaching resources	15
More challenging work	14
More use of computers	14
More interesting work	11
More emphasis on academic work	10
More homework	8
More emphasis on values	8
More parent involvement	7
More accountability	7
More strict discipline	7
More assessment	6
More project work	6
More emphasis on students supporting each other	6
Less homework	5

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Parents' involvement in their child's school

A large majority of the parents responing (88 percent) felt welcome in their child's school. Only 1 percent said they did *not* feel welcome, but 10 percent said "it varies".

One of the aims of the decentralisation reforms was to extend parent involvement in schools. The 1989 NZCER survey at the start of the reforms showed that parental involvement of some kind was high (86 percent). But by 1999, only 65 percent of parents were involved in their child's primary school. By 2003 this had risen slightly to 71 percent, and in 2007, to 77 percent.

The areas in which parents were involved are shown in Table 9.5. More parents now helped with sport: up from 25 percent in 1999 and 26 percent in 2003, which probably reflects the greater policy emphasis on healthy schools. Another policy emphasis, respecting individual children's cultural backgrounds, is evident in the doubling of the proportion of parents who said they helped with cultural activities (up from 6 percent in 1999 and 2003). However, despite the financial pressure on schools, there has been a decline in parents helping with fundraising (from 47 percent in 2003).

Table 9.5 **Parental involvement in their child's primary school**

Source	Parents (*n*=754) %
School trips	57
Fundraising	41
Sports	40
Responding to school surveys	33
Classroom help	19
Help with class/school projects	18
Help with cultural activities	12
Help with reading	9
PTA/school council	8
Canteen/school lunches	7
Help with arts and crafts	7
Took part in consultation	6
Building repairs and maintenance	5
Library	4
Supervision around grounds during school hours/duty	3
Other	4

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Information parents receive about their child's school

Weekly school newsletters were going out to most parents responding (76 percent). Thirty percent mentioned newsletters every two to four weeks, and 13 percent, once a term. (This implies that

some schools produce more than one series of newsletters.) Parents were less likely to initiate seeking information about the school themselves: 27 percent would look at the latest ERO report, and 18 percent look at the school's website (not every school has one), either occasionally (12 percent), or at least once a month (6 percent).

One in six parents (17 percent) said they looked at their school's annual report (in response to another question, 21 percent said they did so—see Table 8.9 in Section 8.3). Answers to a question on whether parents were satisfied with how their school developed its charter and annual plan suggest that quite a few parents may not know much about this process. While just over half (54 percent) said that they were satisfied, 22 percent said they did not know what was happening, and another 15 percent were unsure whether they were satisfied with it. A few were not really interested (4 percent), and only 3 percent said they would like more input.

A quarter (23 percent) would like more information about their child's school: particularly around overall student achievement (17 percent of all parents), the curriculum (15 percent), the school's use of its funds (13 percent), board of trustees' decisions (12 percent) and school planning and progress on its annual targets (11 percent). Ten percent would like more information on school policies. Student achievement is covered in school annual reports, but, as noted in the previous paragraph, only a small minority of parents reported reading these.

Parents also showed some uncertainty about their involvement in school consultation: while 54 percent felt they were genuinely consulted about new directions or issues, 19 percent thought they were not and 26 percent were unsure. Supplementary comments did not add much to the picture. Twenty-two parents wrote that they felt well-informed through newsletters, surveys etc., while 15 said that consultation could be better, and 15 said that there was no consultation—they were simply informed about decisions.

However, only 13 percent of the parents thought there was an area of school life where they would like to have a say, and felt they could not, with a further 10 percent unsure. Nine percent of all parents would like more say about their child's classes or teacher, 8 percent about students' behaviour and 4–6 percent each about curriculum, school policies, uniform/dress code and allocation of funding.

The cost to parents of primary schooling

Parents were asked to indicate how much they spent on various aspects of their child's education. The information provided is summarised in Table 9.6. Seven percent of parents were not asked for a school donation, but almost two-thirds paid one of up to $100, and some paid considerably more. There was a similar picture for activity fees and school trips. A fifth of parents paid nothing for transport (and a similar number did not respond to this item), presumably because they lived within walking distance of the school. Although a quarter said they spent nothing on school uniform, and a further 16 percent did not respond, uniform was the second most expensive item (after classes outside school); more than a third of parents said they spent over $100 on it.

Table 9.6 **The amount parents spent on their child's primary school education**

Aspects of education	$0 %	$1–100 %	$101–200 %	$201+ %	No response %
Classes outside school	31	18	9	19	24
Other donations	27	37	2	1	33
Uniforms	25	22	27	10	16
Transport	20	40	6	12	21
School donation	7	63	12	7	11
School trips/camps	6	62	17	3	13
School fundraising	3	73	11	2	12
Activity fees/materials	3	71	12	3	12
Stationery	1	84	8	1	6
Other costs	25	21	5	6	43

NB: Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100 across the rows.

Parents estimated they were spending an annual average of $794 in total on their youngest child's primary school education in 2007. Some parents gave particularly high figures (more than $5,000), so the median figure was lower: $500. This compares with an average of $629 in 2003, with the same median. The difference in means is likely to be due to more parents giving very high estimates in 2007.

The money spent on every aspect of schooling varied with decile. Only 7 percent of decile 1–2 parents reported paying a school donation of over $50, compared with 72 percent of decile 9–10 (4 percent reported paying over $500). Parents from decile 9–10 schools were more likely to report paying nothing for school trips and transport, but if the number not responding are assumed to be nonpayers, the difference is greatly reduced. The mean amount paid for transport was highest in low-decile schools; possibly more parents in other schools give their children lifts to school, and do not count this as a cost. Twenty-nine percent of decile 1–2 parents reported paying nothing for school uniform, and a further 32 percent did not respond; the comparable figures for decile 9–10 were 14 percent and 8 percent respectively. Just over half of the decile 1–2 parents estimated their total costs at up to $400, compared with only 26 percent of decile 9–10 parents. For decile 1–2 parents the mean total cost of their child's education was $495 (median $300); for decile 9–10 parents it was mean $1,045 (median $700).

Parents of children in state-integrated schools spent considerably more than other parents on school fees/donations and uniforms. They also spent more on activity fees, though parents from state schools spent more on school trips. Overall, the mean total cost of primary education was $1,327 (median $900) for state-integrated schools, compared with $731 (median $500) for state schools.

Urban parents spent more on school fees/donations and school uniforms, while rural parents spent more on transport. Overall, however, the costs were much the same. Parents of children in large

schools were also likely to pay more on school fees/donations, school uniforms and activity fees, but their overall costs were higher (medians $550 for schools with rolls over 300, $500 for schools of 101–300 and $400 for schools with up to 100 students).

9.2   Parents and secondary schools

School choice

Attending the family's first choice of school was a little less likely at secondary level, but still at high levels. Eighty-four percent of the parents responding said the secondary school their youngest child attended was their first choice of school.[16] Sixty percent of parents said their child was attending their first-choice school, and it was also the closest one (somewhat more than the 54 percent in 2003); and 24 percent were attending their first-choice school, which was not the closest one to them (down from 30 percent in 2003).

The higher the parental qualification level, the more likely it was that the chosen school was *not* the closest school, though the difference was not statistically significant within this sample. Parents whose child attended a decile 9–10 school were also most likely have chosen a school that was not their closest, and least likely to be at a school that was not their first choice.

Thirteen percent of parents said their child was not at their first choice of school, much the same as the 15 percent in 2003. The main reasons for not being at that school were the school's enrolment scheme (34 percent of those not at their first-choice school), cost (23 percent), transport (17 percent) and the child not wanting to go to the parents' first choice (20 percent). Māori parents were more likely to say their child was not at the first-choice school (24 percent).

In choosing a secondary school, parents were more likely to use school visits or open days, but less likely to use the school's most recent ERO report than parents choosing a primary school (Table 9.7). Possibly they felt that if they had visited the school for themselves, they did not need to seek out published information.

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[16] Sixty-two percent had just one child at the school; 32 percent had two, and 4 percent had three or four children attending the school. Most of the parents had at least two years of experience of the school, with an average of 3.5 years. Parents who had more than one child at the school were asked to respond with reference to their youngest child at the secondary school.

Table 9.7   **Main information sources used by parents to choose a secondary school**

Source	Parents (*n*=708) %
Visited the school/attended the school open day	49
Older child's experience at the school	43
Other children the family knew went to the school	31
Opinions of other parents	29
Other family members had attended the school	20
The school's most recent ERO report	12
Primary/intermediate teachers' views	8
No choice—only local school	4
Location/easily accessible	3
School reputation	3

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Parents with no qualification were most reliant on other family experience, and least likely to use ERO reports (4 percent), or to visit the school (34 percent).

Asian parents were more likely to use ERO reports (25 percent), perhaps because they had less direct family experience than parents of other ethnicities. None of the Pasifika parents had used an ERO report, and they were also less likely to visit the school.

Parents employed in education were more likely to use the school's ERO report (but still only 19 percent). Parents of children in main urban schools were also more likely to use ERO reports. The higher the decile of the school, the more likely it was that ERO reports would be used (27 percent for decile 9–10, compared with 7 percent for decile 1–2), as would school visits, and other people's opinions, rather than direct family experience.

When children reached secondary school, parents had much the same sources of information about education as when their children were at primary school, with one exception: they paid more attention to newspapers, and less to books (Table 9.8).

Table 9.8 **Secondary school parents' main sources of information about education other than their child's school**

Source	Parents (*n*=708) %
Newspaper	67
Other parents	55
Friends	50
TV	47
Family	46
Internet searches	36
Books	33
Radio	23
Magazines	22
ERO	21
Ministry of Education	21
Team-Up website	4
Other	6

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

While parents of students attending a decile 9–10 school were more likely to use ERO as a general source of information about education (38 percent), the parents most likely to use books or magazines had children at decile 1–2 schools; and these parents were also most likely to use the Team-Up website, but still at a small proportion (10 percent).

Parents' contact with their child's secondary-level teachers

Secondary school students have more than one teacher, but patterns of contact (see Table 9.9) were generally similar to primary school, although with markedly lower proportions for most kinds of contact. The items starred are the ones where the proportions are similar.

Table 9.9   **Parents' contact with their child's secondary-level teachers**

Kind of parent–teacher contact	Secondary parents (*n*=708) %
Parent/teacher interviews	73
Talk about written report	45*
Talk about child's work	39
Talk about how to help with child's learning	25
Talk about child's behaviour	25
At school meetings	21*
At school sports training/matches	20*
Informal talk at school functions	19
See teacher in the community	15*
Informal talk on school trips	14
Discussion about curriculum	8
When doing voluntary work at the school	8
Talk about school policy	7*
I work at the school	3*
No contact	11
Other	4

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Secondary school parents were asked a supplementary question to give them the opportunity of indicating whether contact levels varied between teachers. A fifth (21 percent) said they had enough contact with all of their child's teachers, a third (32 percent) with most of them and a quarter (26 percent) with some of them. Twelve percent felt they did not have enough contact with teachers, and 8 percent were unsure.

Despite the lower contact levels, parents of secondary students were reasonably confident that teachers would be available if they wanted to raise something with them: 54 percent thought all their child's teachers would be available, 25 percent thought most of them would. Fourteen percent thought only some of their child's teachers would be available, and 6 percent were unsure. Only 1 percent of secondary parents did not think their child's teachers would respond if they wanted to raise something with them.

Raising issues or concerns with the school

Forty-six percent of the parents of secondary students had raised an issue or concern with their child's school. Parents employed in education were more likely to have done so (58 percent). Parents with no qualification, Pasifika or Asian parents were less likely to have done so (36, 27 and 25 percent respectively). The main issues raised were bullying (8 percent of all parents responding), teacher fairness or attitude to the child (7 percent), the child's behaviour, including

absences (7 percent), health and special needs (4 percent) and a concern about the child's progress, or subject choice (3 percent each).

Most secondary parents who did raise issues thought they had been fairly listened to by the school (73 percent of those raising issues; a further 8 percent were unsure). Half the parents who raised issues thought the right action had been taken as a result, with another 3 percent saying that no action had been needed. Fifteen percent of the parents thought the school had not taken the action needed. In some cases, the right action had been taken, but it was not enough to address the issue (14 percent). In others, the right action had been pursued too slowly (6 percent).

Parents' satisfaction with information about their child's progress

Some progress seems to have occurred in giving parents of secondary students the information they want. Fifty-nine percent of the parents thought the information they received about their child's secondary learning programme was good or very good, and 64 percent gave the same rating to information about their child's learning progress. This is an improvement from around half the parents rating this information good or very good in the 2003 NZCER national survey. However, around three in 10 thought this information was (only) satisfactory, and 8 percent that it was poor.

Thirty-five percent of the parents would like more information about their child's progress at school, a decrease from the 46 percent in 2003.

Of most interest were information about the assessments or tests their child had taken (31 percent of all secondary parents responding), more detailed information about progress (28 percent), ideas for how they could support their child's learning (27 percent), information about their child's attitudes or behaviour (23 percent) and a comparison with national standards (22 percent). Twelve percent would like to see more regular reports on progress, and 10 percent would like to have information about their child's progress that was easier to understand.

Parents' satisfaction with their child's secondary schooling

Seventy-nine percent of parents with a child at secondary school were generally happy with the quality of their schooling. Twelve percent of parents were not sure about this, and 9 percent were not happy with the quality. This is slightly better than the same picture as in 2003 (74 percent were generally happy, 11 percent were unsure and 15 percent were not happy with the quality of their child's secondary schooling). Parents of students attending decile 1–2 schools were more likely to be unhappy with the quality of their child's education (14 percent, compared with 2 percent of parents of students attending decile 9–10 schools).

Reasons for being unhappy about the school, or unsure, were mainly around wanting more information shared with parents, a desire for their child to receive more individual attention, concerns with the quality of student behaviour or teaching and the child not making progress (each of these was mentioned by 7–9 percent of all secondary parents responding).

As we saw with parents of primary students, dissatisfaction at a general level is reflected in lower ratings of information about learning programme and progress, a desire for more information and a desire for changes. Just under a quarter of the parents who were not satisfied with their child's education or unsure about it were not at their first choice of secondary school.

Fifty-four percent of parents of secondary students would like to change something about their child's education at the school, with a further 10 percent unsure. This proportion seeking change of some kind is much the same as in 2003. Māori parents were most interested in some change (65 percent), and Pasifika and Asian parents were less interested in change (33 and 25 percent respectively). Parents of students attending decile 9–10 schools were less interested in change also (43 percent).

Table 9.10 gives the range of changes parents would like. While they are generally similar to those sought by parents of children at primary school, parents of secondary students showed more interest in accountability and discipline.

Table 9.10   **Parents' desire for changes in their child's secondary education**

Kind of change	Parents (*n*=708) %
More individual help	32
Smaller classes	26
More communication about progress	26
More information to support learning at home	25
More accountability	17
More interesting work	16
More strict discipline	16
More teaching resources	15
More challenging work	15
More emphasis on values	14
More emphasis on academic work	13
More emphasis on students supporting each other	12
More use of computers	9
More assessment	6
Less assessment	2
Less strict discipline	2
Less emphasis on academic work	2
Other	5

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Māori and Pasifika parents were particularly interested in more communication about their child's progress, their children having more interesting work, students supporting each other, more

emphasis on values, more teaching resources and more use of ICT. Asian and Pasifika parents were more likely to seek more emphasis on academic work.

Parents' involvement in their child's secondary school

Only 2 percent of the parents responding did not feel welcome in their child's secondary school, but another 17 percent said their sense of being welcomed varied. Only two parents had never been into their child's secondary school.

But parents of secondary students were much less likely than those of primary students to be involved in the school: 45 percent of secondary parents said they had some involvement, compared with 77 percent of primary parents. However, this is an increase on the 32 percent in the 2003 NZCER survey. Table 9.11 summarises the types of parental involvement in secondary schools, in 2003 and in 2006. Involvement in every type of activity was higher in 2006, and one-fifth of parents said they had responded to school surveys, a question that was not even asked in 2003.

Table 9.11 **Parental involvement in their child's secondary school**

Type of involvement	2003 (*n*=503) %	2006 (*n*=708) %
Sports	20	29
Fundraising	12	19
Responded to school surveys	N/A	19
School trips	10	16
Cultural activities	5	10
Participation in consultation	N/A	6
PTA/school council	3	5

N/A: These items were not included on the questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Information parents would like about their child's school

Secondary school parents were not asked what kind of information they read about the school, but they were asked if they would like information that they did not already receive. Almost a quarter (23 percent) said that they would like more information about their child's secondary school, particularly around overall student achievement (15 percent of all secondary parents responding); NCEA (13 percent); curriculum, policies or the school's use of its funds (10 percent each); board of trustees' decisions (8 percent) and school planning (7 percent); and progress on its annual targets (6 percent).

The pattern described above is similar to that for primary parents; however, parents of secondary students were more likely to think there was an area of school life where they would like to have a

say, and felt they could not (21 percent, compared with 13 percent of primary parents). Māori parents were more likely to feel there was an area of school life they would like some say in and could not (31 percent), as were parents of children at decile 1–2 schools (28 percent). Sixteen percent of all parents would like more say about their child's classes or teachers; 12 percent each about students' behaviour or uniforms; and 6–8 percent each on curriculum, school policies or allocation of funding. Student behaviour and school policies mattered particularly to Māori and Pasifika parents.

Forty-five percent of parents with children at secondary school said they were satisfied with the process of how their school developed its charter and annual plan, somewhat lower than for the parents of children at primary school (54 percent). Twenty-six percent said they did not know what was happening here, with a further 16 percent unsure. Only 4 percent would like more input though, and 7 percent were not really interested. Only one in five (19 percent) said they had read their school's annual report.

Secondary parents also showed mixed views about their involvement in school consultation—in which very few said they had actually participated in 2006. Forty-three percent felt they were genuinely consulted about new directions or issues, 26 percent thought they were not and 29 percent were unsure. Additional comments related mainly to the school newsletter or newspaper reports, but 15 parents said they had no or little contact with the school, and 10 said that there was no consultation, they were simply informed of decisions made.

The cost to parents of secondary schooling

Parents were asked to indicate how much they spent on various aspects of their child's education. The information provided is summarised in Table 9.12. Five percent of parents were not asked for a school donation, but half paid one of up to $100, and a quarter of $101–200. The pattern was similar to that for primary schools (Table 9.6), except that only 1 percent reported spending nothing on school uniform, and only 5 percent did not respond.

Table 9.12 **The amount parents spend on their child's secondary school education**

Aspects of education	$0 %	$1–100 %	$101–200 %	$201+ %	No response %
Boarding fees	57	<1	0	1	41
Classes outside school	40	10	6	10	34
NZQA fees	31	32	7	2	28
Other donations	30	25	5	2	39
Transport	23	25	8	19	25
School fundraising	18	45	6	2	29
School trips/camps	6	32	28	19	14
School fee/donation	5	50	24	15	7
Activity (subject/materials) fees	2	45	33	12	8
Uniforms	1	15	33	46	5
Stationery	<1	49	38	6	7
Other costs	28	13	7	8	44

NB: Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100 across the rows.

In general, however, costs for secondary schooling were much higher than for primary education. For one-third of parents, it was over $1,000. The mean, according to parents' estimates, was $1,530, and the median $1,000—double the primary school figures. As was the case in the primary survey, some parents gave particularly high figures (up to $20,000) and this is why the mean is so much higher than the median, which therefore represents a more accurate indication of the sums that parents are paying. In 2003, these estimates gave an average of $1,469, with the same median of $1,000.

For most but not quite all aspects of education, costs varied with decile. Eighty-four percent of parents in decile 9–10 schools paid a donation of over $100, compared with only 31 percent of those in decile 1–2 schools, although in both categories there were a substantial number of parents paying over $500. (In the low-decile category, there were 17 parents paying over $500, all from the same school.) There were relatively few in decile 3–8 schools, and therefore the mean donation paid in decile 1–2 was higher than in decile 3–8, although not as high as in decile 9–10. Activity fees rose with decile, but it was parents in low-decile schools who paid most for NZQA fees and fundraising. (The four parents who reported spending over $500 on NZQA fees were all from a low-decile school, which helps to explain the former finding.) Total costs were highest in high-decile schools (mean $3,533, median $2,100), and lowest in mid-decile schools (mean $1,102, median $850). In low-decile schools the mean was $1,388 and median $1,000.

Parents of children in state-integrated schools reported paying more than other parents on every aspect of their children's education; in almost every case the difference was statistically significant. Overall, the means for state-integrated schools was $4,273 (median $4,000) and for state schools $1,113 (median $850).

School fees or donations tended to be much higher in main or secondary urban schools, compared with minor urban or rural schools. Rural parents reported paying less than others for activity fees and school trips. Perhaps surprisingly, transport costs were lowest in minor urban schools and next lowest in rural schools. Total costs were highest in main urban schools (mean $1,676, median $1,000) and lowest in rural schools (mean $904, median $750).

The cost of school donations and uniforms varied by school size, but the pattern was not clear. The median total cost was $1,000 for schools of up to 749 students, but fell to $830 for those with rolls of 750–1499 and $650 for those of 1500 and above.

9.3 Summary

A large majority of parents reported that their child was attending their first-choice school. For around a third of primary students and a quarter of secondary students, this was not the closest school.

The choice of primary school was based mainly on the experience of family members and people known to the parents, but one-third had visited the school or attended an open day, and a quarter had looked at ERO reports. For secondary school choice, visits to the school acquired greater importance, but ERO reports were consulted by only 12 percent.

Almost all of the parents responding reported contact with their child's teacher(s). A large majority attended parent/teacher interviews, but the proportion was lower in secondary schools compared with primary. Three-quarters thought that the level of contact (with at least some teachers, for secondary parents) was sufficiently high.

Around two-thirds of parents (rather less in secondary schools) rated the information they received about their child's progress and learning programme good or very good. Nevertheless, more than a third said that they would like more information. Four in five were generally happy with the quality of schooling, but around half would like to change one or more aspects of it. Most commonly parents wanted smaller classes, more communication about progress and more individual help for students.

Around half of parents had at some stage raised an issue or concern with their child's school, and most parents who did so felt the school had listened fairly to them, with half thinking that the right action had followed.

Three-quarters of primary parents, but less than half of secondary parents, said that they were involved in their child's school, with activities such as fundraising, school trips and sports. Support with sports had increased in primary schools since 2003.

Primary schools kept most parents informed with weekly school newsletters. One in six parents[17] said they read their school's annual report, which contains the school targets and how the school performed against those. One in five primary parents, and a quarter of secondary parents, said they were not consulted about new school directions, but there was little evidence of demand for further involvement; only 13 percent of primary parents and 21 percent of secondary parents thought there was an area of school life where they would like to have a say and felt they could not.

The costs of primary education had risen to a mean of $794, median $500. The figures for secondary education were $1,530 and $1,000 respectively. There was considerable variation by decile, and parents from state-integrated schools paid a lot more than parents from state schools.

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[17] Responses to another question suggested a slightly higher figure.

10. Links with other schools

Some schools are located in isolated communities, but many have other schools in the same neighbourhoods. The question of relationships with other schools therefore arises: is it primarily one of collaboration, or competition? Principals were asked a series of questions relating to this issue. In this chapter we summarise the responses, from first primary and then secondary schools.

10.1 Primary school links with other schools

If schools are oversubscribed, there may be competition between students for places. If schools are undersubscribed, there may be competition between them for students.

Three-quarters of the primary principals (73 percent) said that they had places on their roll for all students who applied. (This represents a reduction since 2003, when 85 percent of primary principals said they had enough places for all applicants.) Approximately a quarter, therefore, were oversubscribed, and just over a third (35 percent) said that they would like to see an increase in their school's physical capacity. This was either because they could not take all the students who applied, or to help them get new facilities (which some principals might want, even if not oversubscribed). Of course, these two reasons are not mutually exclusive, but principals were allowed to select only one.

There were differences according to location, size, decile and authority. Places were more likely to be available for all applicants in rural schools, small schools, low-decile schools, intermediate schools and state (as opposed to state-integrated) schools. The larger the school, and the higher the decile, the less likely were principals to say that the school had unfilled places.

Only 9 percent of principals said that their roll size had not changed since 2003. The most common reason for change was general population/housing changes in the area (63 percent) followed by change in student/parent preferences (38 percent). Other reasons included zoning (14 percent) and reorganisation of local schools (10 percent).

Principals were asked to describe their relations with other local primary schools, and responses are summarised in Table 10.1. The majority of schools reported one or more forms of contact. Two-thirds of schools said that they were part of a cluster; almost as many said that they shared PD; and even more said that they shared RTLB. More than half said they shared resources and mutual support; a third or more said that they shared social contact with staff, specialists other than RTLB and information on individual students. Only 7 percent said that there was no or limited contact with other schools.

Table 10.1 **Primary principals' description of their relations with other local primary schools**

Relations	Principals (*n*=196) %
Share RTLB	82
Part of cluster	67
Share professional development	65
Share resources, provide mutual support	56
Share information on individual students	40
Share specialists (other than RTLB)	35
Social contact with staff	33
Some competition	30
Varies	17
No/limited contact	7
Some combined classes	2
No other local primary schools	1
Other	1

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Large schools, urban schools and state (not integrated) schools were more likely to share information. Small schools, and low-decile schools, were more likely to share specialists (other than RTLB). Small schools, and rural schools, were more likely to have social contact with staff from other schools.

However, despite these forms of contact, 30 percent of principals admitted that there was some competition between their school and other primary schools in the area. They were asked next whether the actions of any local school had affected their own roll. Responses were remarkably balanced. Half said no; a quarter said that they had lost students to other schools; and a quarter said that they had gained students from other schools. (Of course, it is possible for a school to gain and lose students, so some principals ticked both boxes, and a further 11 percent said that they were not sure.) High-decile schools were more likely to say that the actions of other schools had *not* affected their roll.

It appears that the extent of competition had decreased somewhat since the last survey in 2003. Since then, the proportion of primary principals mentioning competition had decreased from 43 to 30 percent, and the proportion saying that their roll had been unaffected by the actions of other schools had increased from 40 to 50 percent. These changes seem likely to reflect the lower proportion of schools with spare places on their roll in 2007 compared with 2003.

Principals were asked to state more specifically which clustering arrangements they were part of (Table 10.2). Nearly all were part of an RTLB cluster (although some presumably had not

regarded "sharing RTLB" as belonging to a cluster when responding to the earlier question (Table 10.1)). The next most common type of arrangement was an ICT cluster, followed by an Extending High Standards cluster. Most other arrangements involved training or support for specific groups within the school.

Large schools, and urban schools, were more likely to belong to RTLB clusters (very few did not) and to share specialist subject teachers. Intermediate schools were more likely to belong to an Extending High Standards cluster.

Table 10.2 **Primary schools' clustering arrangements with other schools**

Clustering arrangements	Principals (*n*=196) %
RTLB cluster	94
ICT cluster	41
Extending High Standards cluster	17
Trustee training cluster	15
Share specialist subject teacher	12
School support	10
Administrative support	9
Other	19

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Principals were also asked whether their school would be interested in establishing new working relationships with local schools: if so, for what purpose(s). Only one in six schools (17 percent) said no, although a further 9 percent were unsure. That means that three-quarters of schools were interested in forming new relationships with neighbouring schools. The most common purpose was to share PD/support each other professionally, which was given by 56 percent of principals, even though 65 percent said that they already shared PD (see Table 10.1 above). Presumably they would like to share PD with a different range of schools, or share different forms of PD. Other reasons given were to share specialist facilities (26 percent), to provide additional subjects (14 percent) and to provide more efficient administrative support (14 percent). More than half (53 percent) admitted that a reason for forming new relationships (not necessarily the only reason, of course) was that it would give them access to new funding pools.

Rural schools, and small schools, were more likely to say that they would be interested in new working relationships in order to provide more subjects/topics and more efficient administrative support. Small schools were also more likely to be interested in new relationships in order to share PD.

One third of state-integrated schools (compared with 15 percent of state schools) said they were *not* interested in establishing new working relationships with other local schools.

10.2 Secondary school links with other schools

Sixty-two percent of secondary principals said that they had places on their roll for all students who applied (a lower proportion than the 73 percent of primary schools, but slightly higher than secondary schools in 2003). About a third were oversubscribed, and 44 percent said that they would like to see an increase in their school's physical capacity, either because they could not take all of those who applied or as a means to get new facilities.

Rural schools, small schools, state (not integrated) schools and low-decile schools were more likely to have places for all students who applied. The association with decile was particularly striking: 92 percent of decile 1–2 schools could offer places to all applicants, compared with only 24 percent of decile 9–10 schools. Small schools were more likely to say that their schools already had unused space, and state schools were more likely to say that their school roll was already big enough. Low-decile schools, and minor or secondary urban schools, were more likely to welcome an increase in the school's physical capacity as a means to get new facilities.

Secondary principals were asked why their roll size had changed; only 11 percent responded "not applicable", meaning presumably that their roll had *not* changed since 2003. The most common reasons for change were again general population/housing changes in the area and change in student/parent preferences, but in this case the reasons were almost equal, given by 51 and 50 percent of principals respectively. The fact that half of the principals thought that student/parent preferences had led to a change in roll size suggests a degree of volatility in perceptions of relative school quality. Other reasons included reorganisation of local schools (11 percent), zoning (10 percent) and change in the number of fee-paying students (10 percent).

Principals were asked to describe their relations with other local secondary schools, and responses are summarised in Table 10.3. Compared with primary schools, it seems that there is less contact and more competition between secondary schools. Almost two-thirds said that there was some competition, compared with only 30 percent of primary schools. A much lower proportion said that they shared an RTLB; sharing PD, being part of a cluster and social contact between staff were also less common. It could be that secondary schools, being on average much bigger than primary schools, are more able to obtain resources for their schools exclusively and have less need to share with others; it could also be that secondary schools are more competitive and therefore less willing to share. However, it should be noted that the proportion sharing information on individual students (51 percent) was higher than in primary schools.

Compared with 2003, competition among secondary schools had slightly increased, while among primary schools there was a marked reduction (see Section 10.1 above). However, there was also a considerable increase in the extent of sharing PD in secondary schools, from 38 percent in 2003 to 53 percent in 2006.

Table 10.3   **Relations with other local secondary schools**

Relations	Principals (*n*=194) %
Some competition	63
Share professional development	53
Share information on individual students	51
Share RTLB	49
Share resources, provide mutual support	43
Part of cluster	41
Social contact with staff	26
Share specialists (other than RTLB)	18
Varies	17
Some combined classes	9
No/limited contact	8
No other local secondary schools	6
Other	4

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Secondary principals were asked next whether the actions of any local school had affected their own roll. Forty percent said no; almost the same proportion (39 percent) said that they had lost students to other schools; and a quarter said that they had gained students from other schools. Of course, it is possible for a school to gain and lose students, so some principals ticked both boxes.

Rural principals were much more likely than urban principals to say that they had lost students to other schools. Principals of high-decile schools were more likely to say that the actions of other local schools had *not* affected their rolls, and less likely to say that they had lost students to other schools. State-integrated schools were also more likely to say that the actions of other local schools had *not* affected their rolls, and less likely to say that they had lost students to, or gained students from, other schools.

Secondary principals were also asked to describe their relations with local postsecondary education providers (Table 10.4). Only 13 percent said they had no/limited contact with providers. Four out of five used them for STAR courses and three in 10 for Gateway courses (presumably on a regular basis). Three in five said they used them "sometimes" for specialist courses. Twenty-two percent said that there was some competition between themselves and postsecondary providers in the area.

Half of the principals from low-decile schools said that they used postsecondary education providers for Gateway courses, compared with only 6 percent of principals from high-decile schools. State-integrated schools were more likely than state schools to share RTLB with

postsecondary providers. Main urban schools were less likely than others to see postsecondary providers as offering competition.

Table 10.4   **Relations with local postsecondary education providers**

Relations	Principals (*n*=194) %
Use them to provide STAR courses	80
Use their specialist resources from time to time	61
Use them to provide Gateway courses	30
Some competition	22
Share information on students	17
No/limited contact	13
Share RTLB	5
In cluster together	2
Social contact with staff	2
No local postsecondary education providers	1
Other	5

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Principals were asked to state which clustering arrangements they were part of (Table 10.5). Like primary schools, nearly all were part of an RTLB cluster. Half of the secondary schools belonged to an alternative education/activity-centre cluster, and 12 percent to a STAR cluster. The proportion of secondary schools belonging to ICT clusters, and Extending High Standards clusters, were similar to those in primary schools.

State schools were more likely than state-integrated schools to belong to an ICT cluster, to share specialist subject teachers and belong to an alternative education cluster. Mid-decile schools were more likely to belong to an ICT cluster; minor urban schools were more likely to belong to an ICT cluster or a trustee-training cluster.

Table 10.5 **Secondary schools' clustering arrangements with other schools**

Clustering arrangements	Principals (*n*=194) %
RTLB cluster	89
Alternative education/activity-centre cluster	51
ICT cluster	43
Extending High Standards cluster	17
STAR cluster	12
School support	10
Trustee-training cluster	9
Share specialist subject teacher	8
Administrative support	3
Other	19

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Principals were also asked whether their school would be interested in establishing new working relationships with local schools: if so, for what purpose(s). Only 12 percent said no, and a further 5 percent were unsure. As with primary schools, the most common reason for clustering was to share PD/support each other professionally, which was given by 65 percent of secondary principals. The proportion wishing to share specialist facilities was lower among secondary schools (19 percent, compared with 26 percent of primary schools), presumably because secondary schools have more specialist facilities of their own, but the proportion wishing to provide additional subjects or courses was double (29 percent compared with 14 percent), no doubt because offering a wide range of subjects is more likely to be needed in secondary schools. More than half of secondary principals, like their primary counterparts, were keen to form new working relationships because it would give them access to new funding pools.

Secondary school teachers were also asked to describe their *department or faculty*'s relations with other local secondary schools (Table 10.6). Their responses differed considerably from those of principals. More than a third said that they had no/limited contact with other schools, compared with only 8 percent of principals. This apparent discrepancy does not mean, however, that principals had overestimated the amount of contact; it is likely that the interschool contacts involved a relatively small proportion of staff, or certain departments, and therefore fewer teachers would be directly involved.

Table 10.6 **Department or faculty's relations with other local secondary schools**

Relations	Teachers (*n*=818) %
No/limited contact	37
Share professional development	34
Share resources, provide mutual support	34
Some competition	21
Social contact with staff	20
Varies	17
Share RTLB	14
Share specialists (other than RTLB)	10
Share information on individual students	9
No other local secondary schools	7
Share classes	3
Other	3

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the proportion of secondary teachers reporting shared activities or resources was smaller than the proportion of principals. The proportion reporting some competition was also much lower (21 percent compared with 63 percent), but competition is more likely to exist between schools, rather than departments or faculties.

Teachers from main urban and secondary urban schools were more likely than those from minor urban and rural schools to say that they shared resources and PD with other local schools, but also more likely to say that there was some competition between them. State-integrated schools were more likely to say that they shared resources and classes.

10.3 Summary

A quarter of primary schools, and a third of secondary schools, were oversubscribed. Most had experienced roll changes since 2003, due to population/housing changes or student/parent preferences. In primary schools, the former was the key reason, but in secondary schools the two factors were given equal weighting.

Various forms of contact were common between primary schools, but rather less so between secondary schools. Conversely, there was double the amount of competition between secondary schools. However, three-quarters of primary principals, and an even higher proportion of secondary principals, said that they would be interested in new working relationships with other schools. The main reason given was to share PD and support each other professionally, but more than half of principals admitted that one of the motivations was to access new funding pools.

Only 13 percent of secondary school principals said that they had no/limited contact with postsecondary education providers. Four in five said that they used them for STAR courses.

11. Relations with government and other agencies

Schools have to liaise in a number of ways with the MOE, ERO and other education-related agencies. They receive support and advice from them, and are required to supply information to them. They are reviewed by the ERO every three years. How effective are these relationships? Do schools see them as a source of useful help and guidance, or do they feel overburdened by their requirements?

In this chapter we report the responses from principals, trustees and secondary school teachers to questions on this topic, looking first at primary and then secondary schools.

11.1 Primary school links with government agencies

Primary principals were asked to rate their experience of working with a range of agencies. First they were asked whether they could get timely and appropriate support and advice (Figure 11.1). There are some positive findings: more than 70 percent agreed that they could get "timely and appropriate support and advice" from NZEI staff, from the closest MOE office, from NZSTA staff and from School Support Services (SSS) advisers. The high number of neutral/not sure responses should also be noted, as these may imply that the principals had not felt the need to seek advice and support from the agency concerned. For example, nearly half of the principals responding were neutral about the Teachers Council; thus the number agreeing that the Teachers Council had provided advice and support, although only 38 percent, was much higher than those disagreeing with the statement (15 percent).

Figure 11.1 **Primary principals' views of their ability to get support and advice**
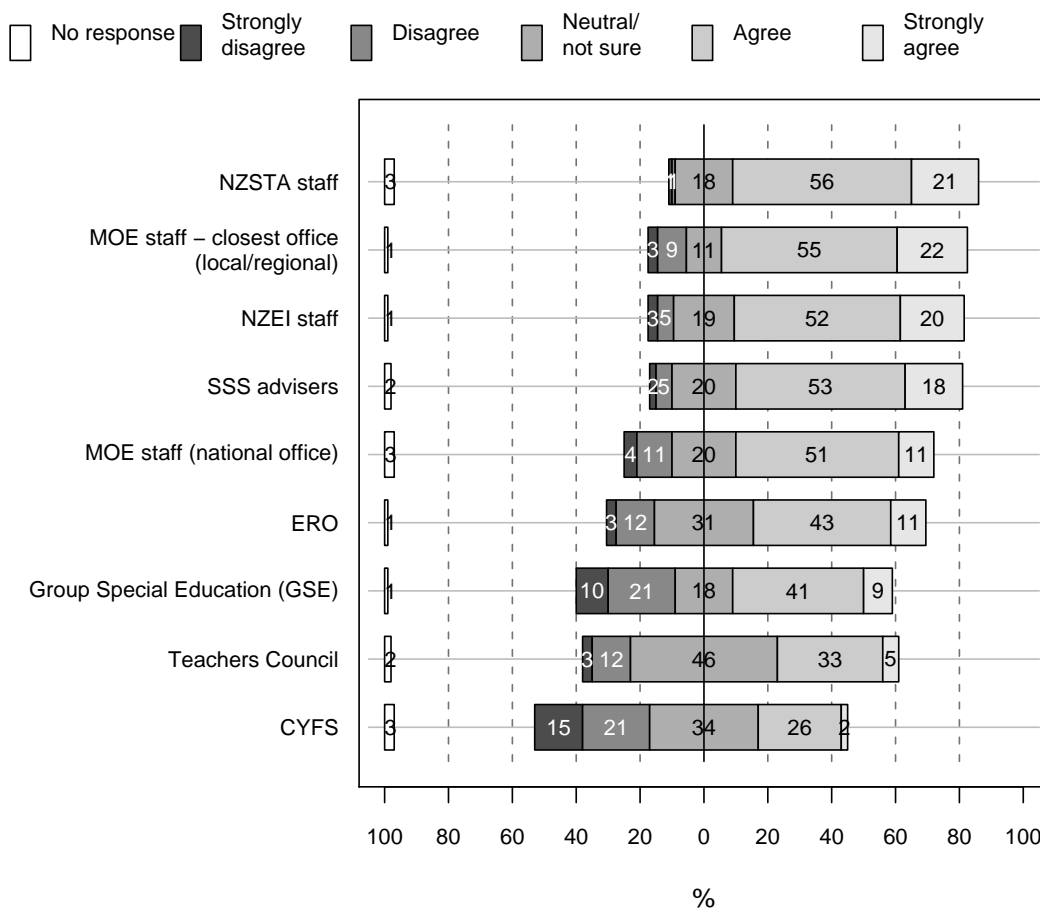
Over 30 percent of primary principals did not think they could get timely and appropriate support or advice from two agencies, CYFS and GSE, where that support and advice is often sought for individual students, and where it might be needed to resolve immediate issues.

Principal workload and the size of the school management role have been persistent issues since New Zealand took the self-management route. Principals and boards have shown interest in reducing what they see as the compliance demands from external agencies. Principals were therefore asked whether they agreed that "it takes too much time to adapt and assemble information required by" government agencies, and whether that statement held true for their own governing body, the school board. Responses are illustrated in Figure 11.2. Just over half agreed that was the case for MOE (national office), ERO and GSE, with 41 percent thinking this was the case for MOE (local/regional office).

Figure 11.2   **Primary principals' views of whether it takes too much time to adapt and assemble information required by external agencies and their school board**
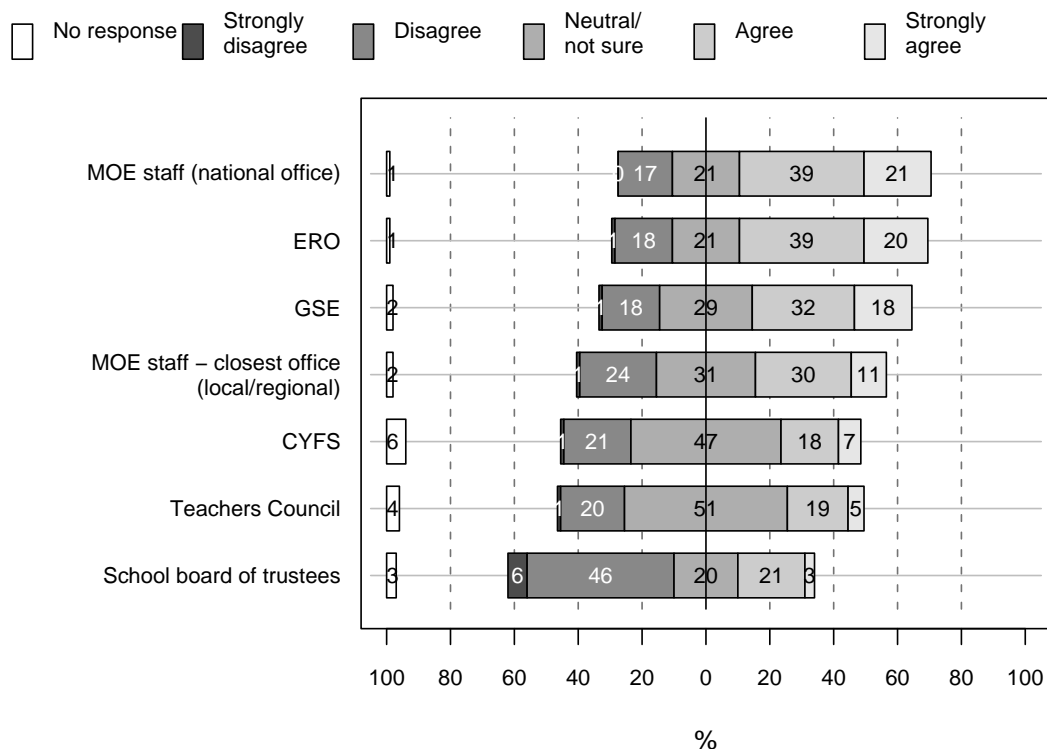
Decile 9–10 school principals were most likely to think it took too much time to adapt and assemble information required by their board (35 percent, compared with 13 percent of decile 1–2 school principals). State-integrated school principals (79 percent) thought it took too much time to provide information for ERO compared with their state school colleagues (56 percent).

Principals did exercise some discretion over whether they met MOE deadlines for receipt of information. Only a third said they always met these deadlines (less than the 42 percent in 2003); and 45 percent said they met most of these deadlines. Sixteen percent would meet them if it seemed important for the school, and 6 percent, if they had time (indicating that these requests were not given priority).

Contacts with the MOE

Principals also initiate contact with the MOE, particularly around support and resourcing for their own school. They were asked what steps they had taken during the past year to obtain satisfactory answers to their questions about their school's funding and resources. Only 18 percent of principals felt no need to take action; this figure has been largely consistent since 1993, indicating that principals take responsibility to get their school its full entitlement, or seek to improve that

entitlement. Table 11.1 shows the steps taken by other principals, in terms of direct negotiation, and enlisting of other support.

Table 11.1 **Steps taken to get answers on primary school funding and resources**

Action	Principals[18] (*n*=196) %
Principal negotiated with local MOE staff	60
Principal negotiated with national MOE staff	41
Principal and/or trustees discussed situation with national organisations (e.g., NZEI, New Zealand Principals' Federation, NZSTA)	25
Principal and/or trustees discussed situation with local MP	19
Direct contact with Minister for Education's office	14
Principal and/or trustees discussed situation with district committee representatives (for capital property funding)	10
Principal and/or trustees discussed situation with people in position of national influence	9
Principal and/or trustees went to media	5
Other	1

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Over time, primary principals have become more likely to negotiate with national office staff (up from 25 percent in 1996).

State school principals were more likely to take some action: 84 percent did so, compared with 67 percent of state-integrated school principals.

Trustees were asked what contact their board (other than the principal) had with the closest MOE office. Twenty percent said their board had had no contact with the local MOE office, and 19 percent did not know if it had. Most contact was about property, funding and resources. The main reasons for contact were to:

- discuss property (40 percent)
- discuss issues the school was experiencing (27 percent)
- discuss funding and resourcing (26 percent)
- obtain general information about policy changes (15 percent)
- discuss the school charter and annual report (11 percent).

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[18] Primary principals answered this question in relation to the board they had worked with up until the April 2007 election. Primary trustees answered this for the new board.

Could the MOE do more to support primary schools?

The MOE took a largely "hands-off" role in the 1990s in relation to support for schools. It did retain a role in working with schools on property allocations and advice, however. And it started to provide some support for schools it identified as facing substantial issues (often using ERO reviews and financial health as a prime indicator), with 15 percent of schools supported through external advice, clustering or oversight by 2000. The planning and reporting requirements that began in 2003 also gave an opportunity to identify school support needs, but the emphasis on school self-management has made it difficult for the MOE and schools to develop ongoing working relationships which could provide schools with more ongoing support (Wylie, 2007b).

Primary principals were asked about possible roles for their closest MOE office—in what ways they were already involved, and in what ways principals would like them to be involved. Responses are summarised in Figure 11.3. Principals were most likely to get MOE advice or support in relation to problems or property work—and all but a few would like to have this kind of advice or support from the MOE.

A large majority of principals would also like or currently have local MOE consultation with them on any local changes that would affect the school (94 percent), allocation of discretionary funding (81 percent) and provision of support for schools to work together professionally (82 percent). Sixty percent would like or currently have professional discussions with their local MOE on their school's annual report and targets, to feed into school discussion of strategies related to student achievement. Half feel the same about MOE advice to boards when it comes to the appointment of new principals. The only item from the list provided where principals were more wary of MOE involvement was working with the BOT in the appointment of principals, supported by 39 percent.

Figure 11.3 **Primary principals' interest in MOE support**
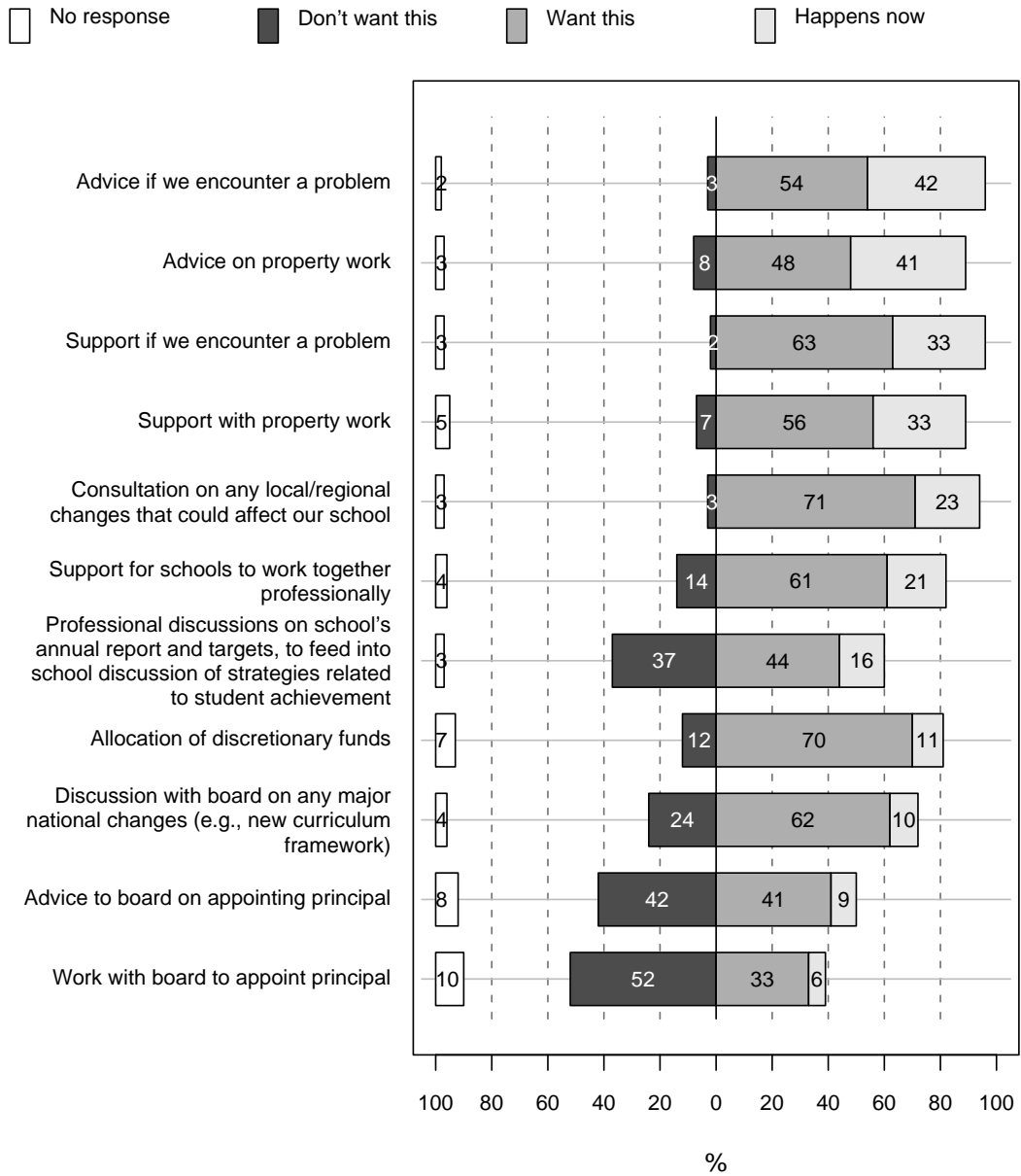
Decile 1–2 primary school principals were most likely to have professional discussions with the MOE on their annual report (34 percent, compared with 12 percent of decile 9–10 school principals). Decile 9–10 school principals were somewhat less likely to work with the local MOE office, but their interest in doing so was as high as other primary principals'. State-integrated school primary principals were also just as interested as others—unlike their secondary counterparts (see Section 11.2). Rural principals showed slightly more interest in having more support than did their urban colleagues, but this was marked in terms of professional discussion on their annual report (60 percent wanted it, compared with 39 percent of urban principals).

Trustees were asked the same question, and (as Figure 11.4 shows) they were also interested in getting more support from their local MOE office, discussion on the school annual report and consultation. Half would like or already have some support when they appoint a principal, and 44 percent would like or already have MOE advice with this crucial decision. Only a fifth of trustees were clear that they did not want either MOE support or advice with this.

Figure 11.4 **Primary trustees' interest in MOE support**
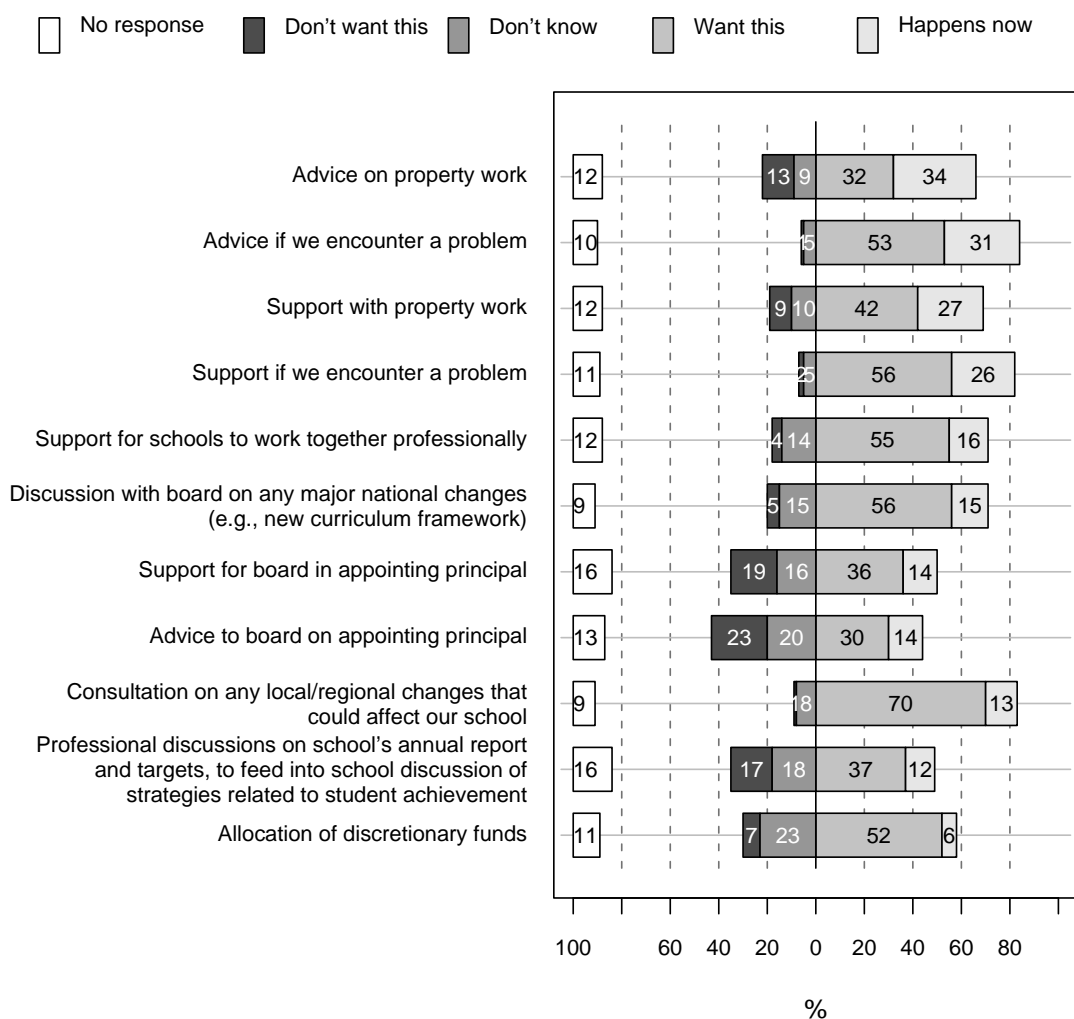
Primary principals and trustees were asked what role they would like school boards to play if the closest MOE office were to have more responsibility in terms of allocating resources for local areas. As Table 11.2 shows, views were mixed, with some favouring several options. A significant minority thought that boards should be part of the decision-making group for their local area. A slightly smaller proportion thought their role should be as part of an advisory group to the MOE. More principals than trustees thought that boards should not be part of a collective approach, but act as advocates for their own school or have no role beyond their own school.

Table 11.2 **Primary principals' and trustees' view of the role boards should play**

Role boards should play	Principals (*n*=196) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %
Advocates for own school only	44	29
Part of decision-making group for local area as a whole	38	42
No role beyond own school	33	19
Part of advisory group for local area as a whole	30	34
Other	3	<1
Don't know	N/A	11

N/A: This item was not included on the principal questionnaire.

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

State school principals showed a wider range of answers than state-integrated principals, with a higher proportion wanting their board to have no role beyond the school, but also a higher proportion wanting their board to be part of local decision making. Rural school principals were more likely than urban principals to want their board to be part of local decision making or an advisory group for the whole area.

Experiences of ERO

Schools are reviewed by ERO every three years, unless they are seen as needing to improve their performance substantially, with more frequent review to encourage change. Forty-seven percent of the principals said their last ERO report was excellent, and 48 percent that it was generally good. Eight percent said the report had identified some problems in the school (half of these also said their review was generally good) and 2 percent, serious concerns that took the school off the normal review cycle (half of these principals also described their review as generally good, possibly thinking of two reviews, one which took them off the normal review cycle, and one which returned them to that cycle). Six percent had returned to the normal review cycle of three years after their last ERO report; most of these said their report had been generally good, or excellent.

National figures indicate that low-decile and rural schools are over-represented among those taken off the normal review cycle. In our sample there were only 11 schools that had been taken off the cycle, too few for any subgroup differences to be identified. The low figure may suggest that responses to this survey are somewhat biased (as might be expected) towards schools that are passing ERO reviews, and not struggling.

State-integrated school principals were less likely to report an excellent ERO review (25 percent, compared with 50 percent of state school principals), and more likely to indicate that some problems had been identified (21 percent). However, all the schools that went off the normal ERO

cycle or returned to it were state schools. Rural principals were less likely to say their report had been excellent, and three of the four schools that went off the normal review cycle were rural.

Principals were asked what their school had gained from its last ERO report and review (see Table 11.3). Probably because most schools do get positive reports, most principals felt affirmed by them. A significant minority did learn something new from the report that they could use formatively to improve their practice; and principals also used it as a lever to get changes they had already seen were important. A quarter however gained nothing, and/or felt pressure to make changes they did not consider valuable.

Table 11.3   **Primary schools' gains from their last ERO review**

Action	Principals (*n*=196) %
School approach affirmed	76
Saw some things in a new light—led to positive changes	30
Helped principal get some needed changes in the school	28
Could use to promote or market the school	25
Nothing but unnecessary stress	12
Nothing	11
Felt pressure to change what we were doing without seeing value of that change	6
Helped get school additional support/resources from MOE	4
Other	4

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

None of the decile 1–2 school principals felt pressure to make changes they did not see the value of. Principals whose school received an excellent report were most likely to feel their school approach had been affirmed (95 percent) and to have gained something they could use to promote the school (37 percent). These principals were just as likely as others to see things in a new light as a result of their review, and to feel that the review had helped them get additional resources from the MOE. Those whose review identified some problems or serious concerns were most likely to say the review helped them see things in a new light (just over half), or that it had helped them make needed changes (two-thirds). Those who felt they had gained nothing from the review were more likely to have had a generally good review.

Methods of accountability

The primary sector has generally been positive about the move to "advise and assist" ERO reviews that began in 2002. This approach has also raised expectations that ERO reviewers will do more than check compliance (a common complaint in the 1990s). Some ambivalence about the role of ERO reviews is expressed by principals and teachers particularly when experienced

principals and teachers feel their approach is being measured against a set of ideas about "what works" in student learning which may be too rigid, or less applicable in their context, or that their ERO reviewer cannot offer any fresh insights or observations. Primary principals were therefore asked two open-ended questions to probe a little more deeply into views of ERO: "How would you most like your school to be held accountable?" and "What would this provide you and the school that is different from the ERO model?"

Eighty percent of the principals made some comment about accountability. Most of the comments show how much principals see their school as being on its own journey: accountable mostly to the school community of students, parents and the board, with the role of external reviewers most welcome if their knowledge could be harnessed to make that journey better. What schools share is their focus on learning, and this is what they seek in review. This focus on the school's needs, which is the essence of school self-management, can create a sense of distance from national priorities.

Around a fifth of the principals who commented were happy with ERO as it was. Some illustrative comments:

> I think the ERO has a valid place, and see any feedback as advice that I can use amongst other sources of information.

> ERO coming in was stressful for staff, but positive outcomes compensated for this. We were honest with them, and the approach of ERO as far as being able to offer some direction for the future, rather than just picking holes in what is going on in a school, is positive for everyone.

Around a third would like to see some changes in ERO, largely around ERO reviewers' quality, use of school self-report or having the knowledge and role to work more with schools to support schools' own goals for improvement and innovation. Some illustrative comments:

> The present system is fine, but calibre of ERO reviewers is often poor.

> I reckon we should combine the best of the old inspectorial regime with the best of ERO. That would see more time devoted to classroom programmes (what's being taught, how effective it is, what areas for improvement) and school-wide approaches. It would see less time spent on the paper war hopefully. ERO people should be paid as much as U4–5 principals, then they'd get properly qualified, experienced people who could look objectively and pragmatically at schools.

> I still feel the whole ERO thing is a real stress in that if things aren't documented, it's not happening according to ERO. Conversely, some schools where there are real staffing/pupil/parent concerns get glowing reports because of superior paper work.

Around 10 percent of those who commented would like to change to a system of more ongoing review and working together to move forward. An illustrative comment:

> A school mentoring system where we are supported by an experienced principal to bring about change. To recognise individual direction and growth by schools.

A fifth wanted to make more use of school strategic planning and the annual-reporting framework, which includes a self-review strand, particularly around student engagement and achievement. Some saw more of a role for the MOE here; some wanted schools left alone to conduct their own self-review:

> Through our annual reporting/variance report. Does this actually get read in depth and our progress/initiatives considered? If a school is struggling, it should be picked up here, and not through a slap on the wrist three years apart.

A further 15 percent thought that the school community should be the ultimate decider of school quality. Ideas here ran from the passive evidence of full rolls, to regular surveys of students and parents ("good feedback from community, especially parents and students") and to parents and students working with school staff in processes of school self-review.

Changes to the current model

Fifty-six percent of the principals commented on what they thought they would gain from an approach to accountability that differed from the current ERO approach. There were four main themes here, which overlap to some extent, since all the principals were seeking something that would provide something more for their school.

For some, this meant changing processes of review from something that did not feel like it added much to what they were doing, or that turned them away from what they thought they needed to do (e.g., develop learning cultures in the school as a way to tackle underachievement, rather than focus on raising achievement without also raising capability). There was a sense that ERO criteria for judgement were often different from those used by the school in its work. Some principals were confident about this, and saw the review process as something they could manage, knowing this. Others showed vulnerability to being judged, changing practice unwillingly. Perhaps it also says something about the comparative isolation of schools that some principals expressed such a need for affirmation from external review.

Around 30 percent of the principals who commented thought review processes would be more meaningful if they were more focused on each school. Comments here also included a desire for more affirmation of the particular "journey" a school was on. Some principals were still wrestling with the notion that a government agency review or any national benchmarking had any validity, since they saw their accountability was to their school community (only):

> A more meaningful report reflecting on the community needs as compared with ERO political, government targets that often don't relate to our community or school situation.

> The current ERO model looks for things to criticise. The need to find something to suggest means that sometimes ERO suggests something "left field" that has little relationship to school goals. The review is not critiquing school practices so much as pushing agendas.

> ERO is very threatening—the perception that you will pass or fail. Why do you have areas for improvement if things are going really well? Why not call them "next steps", as we do with progress in student learning, curriculum development, professional development etc?

Another 30 percent thought a more formative approach to accountability would allow a better focus on school development, and student achievement:

> Opportunity to work long-term towards set goals with continued contact and support. Opportunity to develop relationships. A team approach to teaching and learning. Perhaps a more collaborative approach would prove beneficial to both parties.

> Someone who is capable of understanding the big picture of education, not a narrow ERO focus. This would allow the principal to have someone to reflect with and create effective action plans.

> Balanced, ongoing, dynamic, unbiased advice that is closely linked to school development plans. The whole process would focus on development.

About the same proportion thought the changes they had suggested to school review would reduce stress, paperwork and what seemed to them too much focus on compliance, despite the change in ERO approach from 2002. Sometimes this compliance was about health and safety requirements; sometimes, about the areas suggested for improvement, and sometimes about "passing":

> ERO model is too rigid. Too much work goes into documentation for ERO at the expense of teaching and learning.

> Less need to "manage image" or second-guess what ERO is looking for.

> A more honest approach, with more genuine professional discussion.

> To have a system that is seamless, that is not "additional" or burdensome for the principal, would be beneficial.

Around 10 percent of the principals who commented wanted more fairness and consistency, with comments about the need for knowledgeable and creditable ERO reviewers, who would support innovation:

> Reliable results, not reliant on the quality (or lack of quality) of ERO team.

> Some reviewers are not up with the play, e.g., inquiry learning.

11.2 Secondary school links with government agencies

Secondary principals' views of their links with government agencies and others who provide support and advice were much the same as primary principals' views (see Figure 11.5). They were more negative about the Teachers Council, which may reflect their being asked about it in 2006, before the council made some substantial changes. Many were positive about their contact with NZQA.

Figure 11.5 **Secondary principals' views of their ability to get timely and appropriate support and advice**
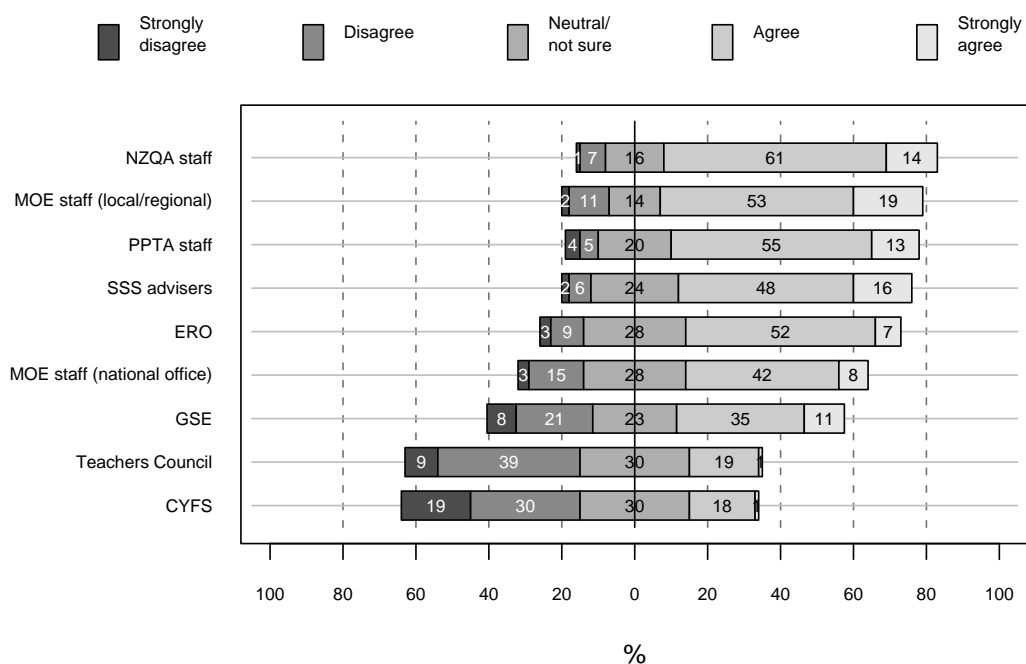
Because there had been stories of experiences of discrepancies in the advice given by different organisations, particularly around NCEA and staffing, secondary principals were asked to state the extent of their agreement with the statement "there is no conflict between the advice I receive from …". Figure 11.6 shows that conflicting advice was not uncommon, particularly between the Teachers Council and the PPTA.

Figure 11.6 **No conflict between sources of advice for secondary principals**
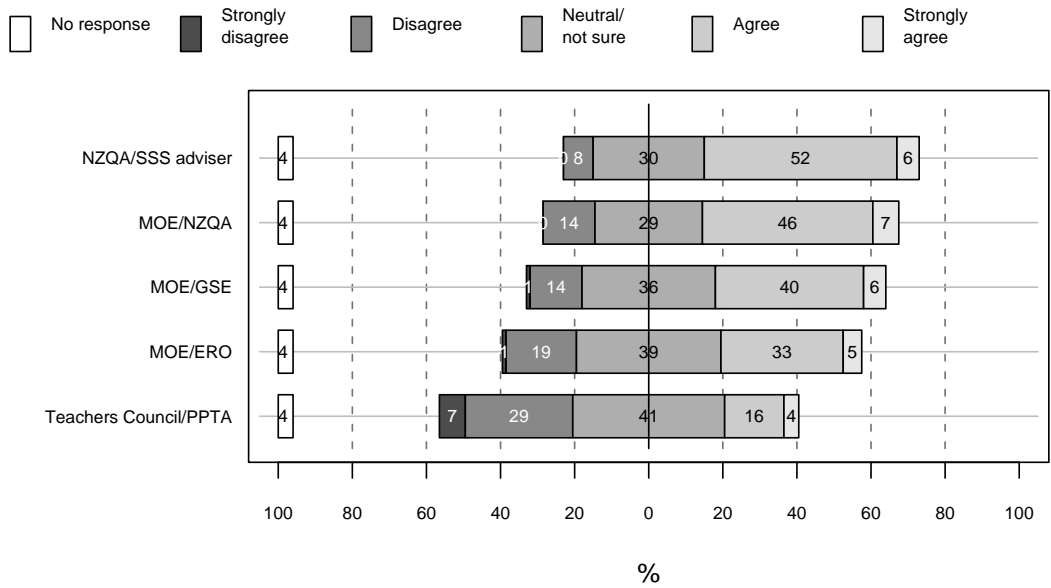
Secondary principals, like their primary counterparts, were asked how strongly they felt about the time taken to adapt and assemble information required by government agencies. At least half thought that the information requirements of the MOE national office, ERO and NZQA took too much school time (see Figure 11.7). They were somewhat more sanguine than their primary colleagues about the time taken to provide information to other agencies (except the Teachers Council) and their own school board.

Figure 11.7 **Secondary principals' views of whether it takes too much time to adapt and assemble information required by external agencies and their school board**
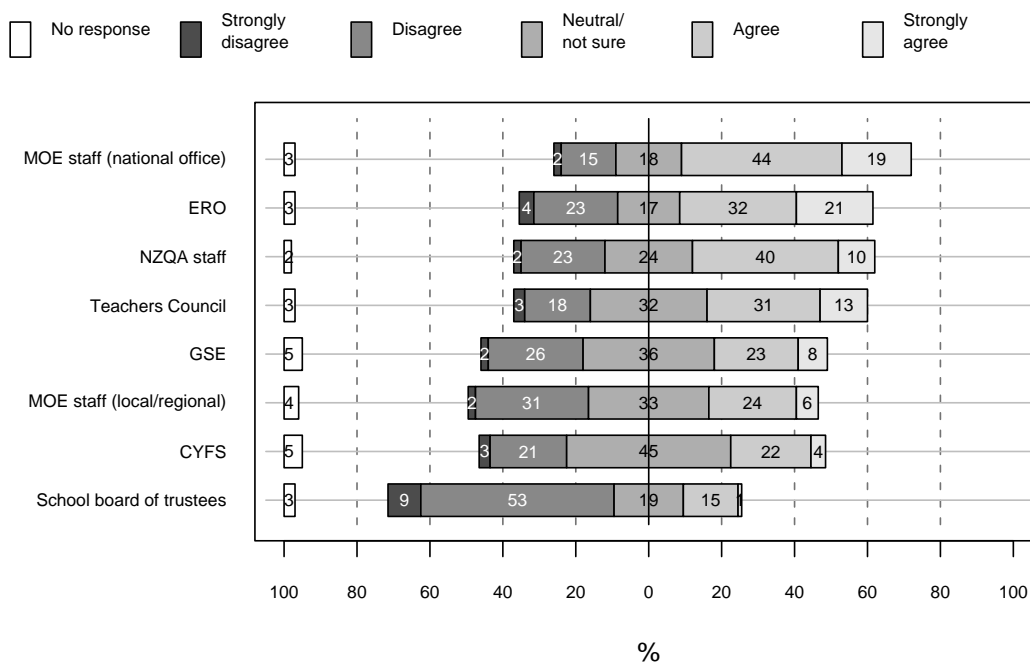
Principals from decile 1–2 schools were more likely to say that GSE and CYFS information requirements took too much time, probably because they have a higher number of students needing support from these two sources. Rural principals also thought providing GSE with information took too much time. However, rural principals were also more likely to think that GSE provided them with timely and appropriate information and advice.

Secondary principals were also asked whether they thought that their school was spending more in the current year than in the previous year on compliance with legislation, and meeting the requirements of government agencies and local government. Almost three-quarters (73 percent) said yes; 15 percent said no, and the remainder were unsure, or did not reply.

Asked about meeting MOE deadlines, the response of secondary principals was similar to that given by their primary counterparts. Thirty-one percent said they always met MOE deadlines for receipt of information, and 48 percent met most of these deadlines. Twelve percent would meet them only if they thought it was important for the school, and 8 percent, if they had time. Both of the latter responses were less likely in 2003.

Contacts with MOE

Secondary schools were just as likely as primary schools to take action to get satisfactory answers to questions about funding or resourcing from the MOE; but they were somewhat more likely to

talk to others, particularly the local MP, people with national influence or the media (see Table 11.4). Nineteen percent of secondary principals felt no need to take any action, an increase from the 11 percent in 2003. However, in 2006 schools were less likely to seek help from national organisations (42 percent did so in 2003).

Table 11.4 **Steps taken by secondary principals to get satisfactory answers on funding and resources**

Action	Principals (*n*=194) %
Principal negotiated with local MOE staff	56
Principal negotiated with national MOE staff	49
Principal and/or trustees discussed situation with local MP	29
Principal and/or trustees discussed situation with national organisations (e.g., PPTA, SPANZ [Secondary Principals' Association], NZSTA)	24
Direct contact with Minister of Education's office	20
Principal and/or trustees discussed situation with district committee representatives (for capital property funding)	17
Principal and/or trustees discussed situation with people in position of national influence	17
Principal and/or trustees went to media	10
Other	2

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Socioeconomic decile was unrelated to the steps reported by principals. Main and minor urban principals were somewhat more likely than rural or secondary urban principals to contact the Minister of Education's office. State-integrated school principals were less likely to negotiate with local MOE staff, and none reported going to the media.

Secondary school trustees were asked what contact their BOT had had with the closest MOE office. Secondary boards appear to have somewhat more contact than do primary boards, even allowing for a higher proportion of the primary trustees not knowing about such contact. Around three-quarters of the secondary trustees said their board had had some contact with their local MOE office, compared with about 60 percent of primary trustees. The main reasons for contact were to:

• discuss property (45 percent)
• discuss funding and resourcing (39 percent)
• discuss issues the school was experiencing (33 percent)
• obtain general information about policy changes (18 percent)
• discuss the school charter and annual report (14 percent).

The proportion of secondary trustees who said that they discussed funding and resourcing was much higher than the proportion of primary trustees (26 percent).

Trustees at decile 1–2 schools were more likely than those at higher decile schools to have had contact with their local MOE office. They were twice as likely as trustees at higher decile schools to have had discussions on issues for the school, and on the school's charter and annual report. Trustees of state-integrated schools were less likely to have contact with their local MOE office than trustees of state schools; few had discussed funding or property, but the figures were similar for discussion of school issues. The larger the school, the more likely it was that trustees had discussed property matters with their local MOE office.

Could the MOE do more to support secondary schools?

Secondary principals and trustees were asked to comment on possible roles for their closest MOE office, indicating what already happened and what they would like to happen. Responses are illustrated in Figures 11.8 (principals) and 11.9 (trustees). Most secondary principals were already getting advice or support of some kind from their local MOE office. Along with trustees, they would generally like more support and involvement with their local MOE office on matters that concern their school. Views were divided among principals with reference to professional discussions on schools' annual reports, and for both principals and trustees with reference to principal appointment.

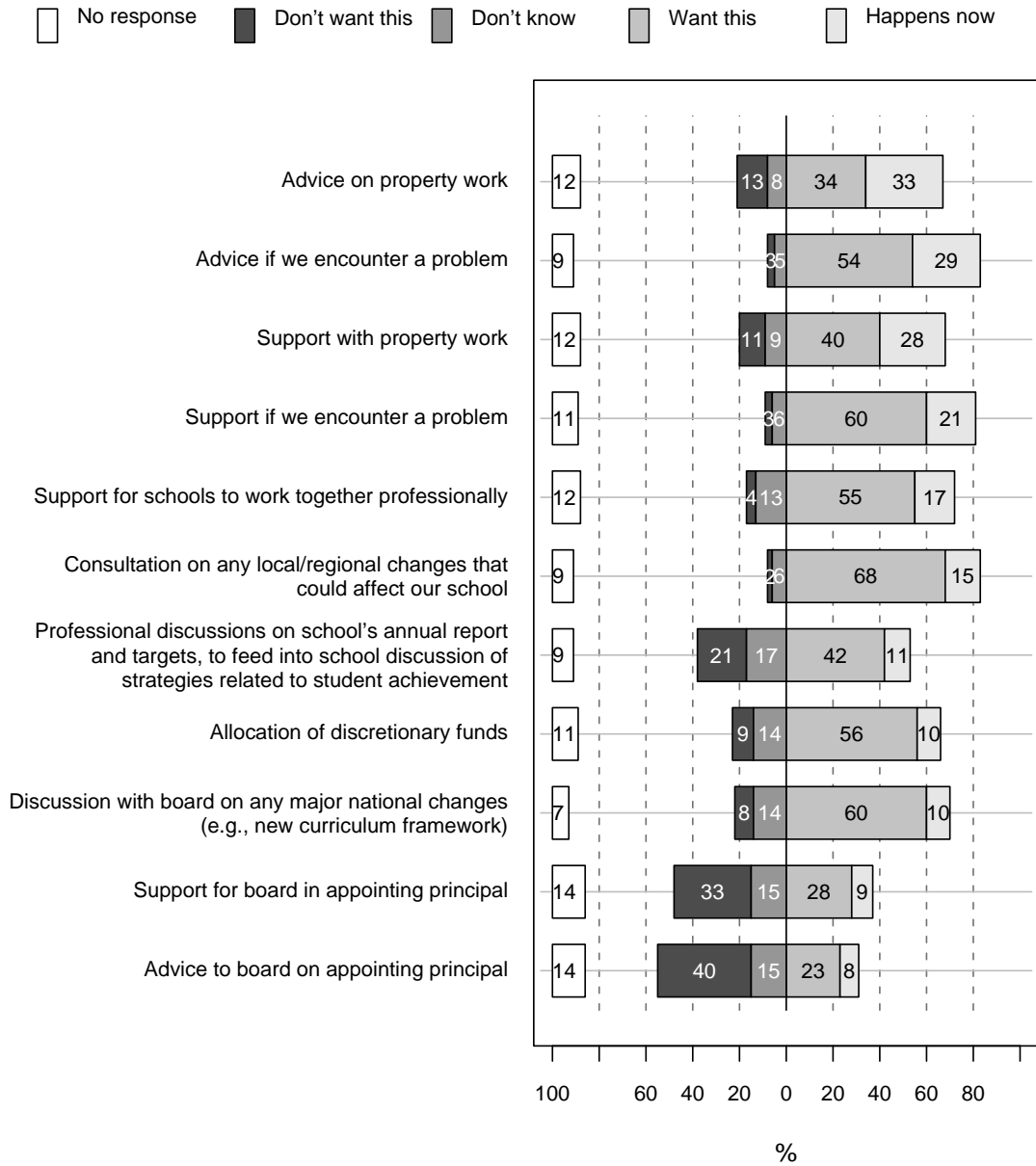On balance, somewhat more principals than not have or would like professional discussions with the MOE around their annual report, and to have boards supported when they appoint a principal. But somewhat fewer principals would like the MOE to advise boards on this appointment, and a similar pattern is evident for the trustees, though a small proportion is also unsure whether they would like advice.

Figure 11.8 **Secondary principals' interest in MOE support**
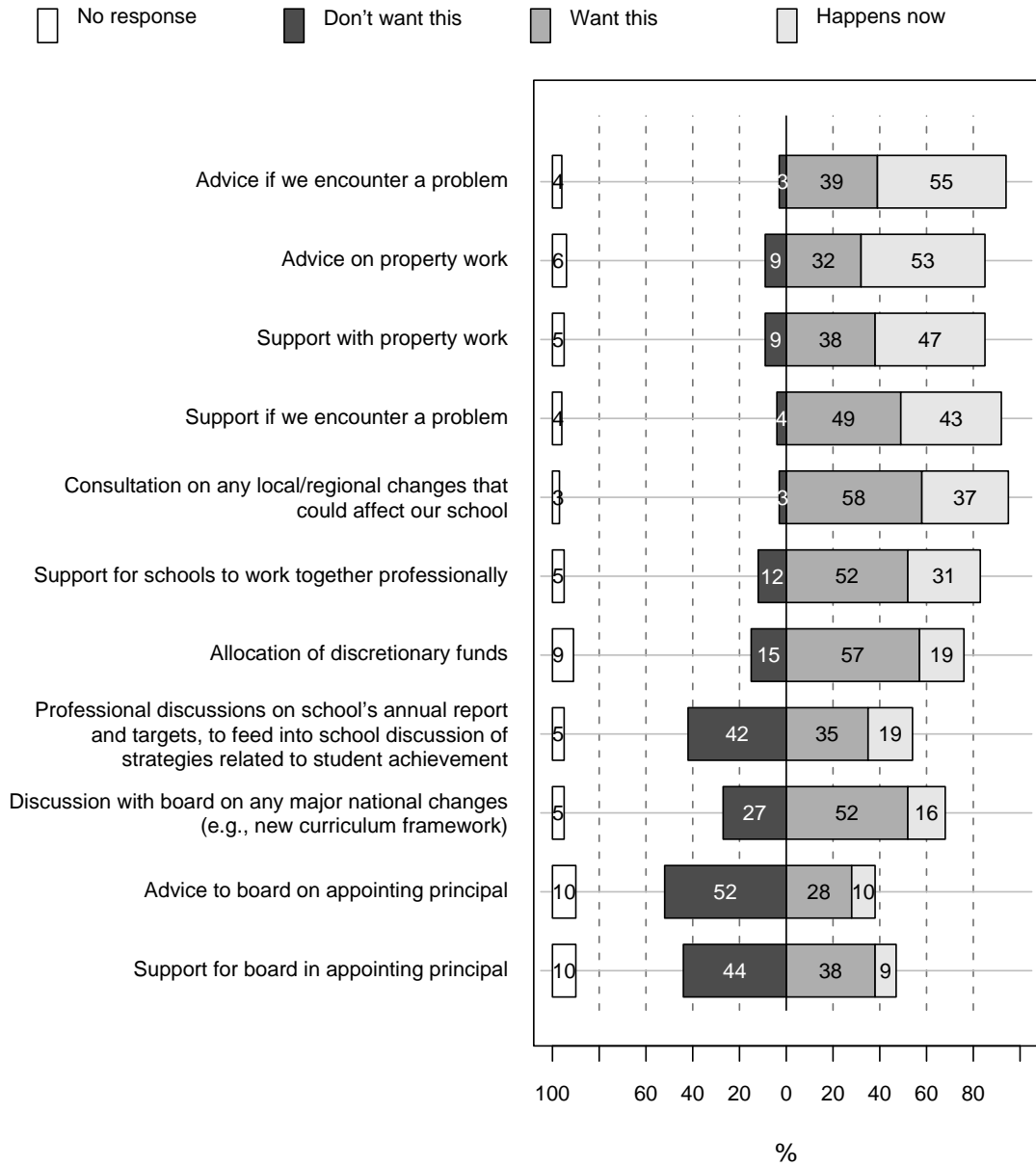
The overwhelming majority of state school principals either had advice on property work (61 percent) or wanted it (33 percent). By comparison, only 23 percent of principals of state-integrated schools said that they already had advice in this area, and 36 percent said that they did *not* want it. Figures for support with property work were similar. However, in terms of problems encountered, just over half of the principals from state-integrated schools said that they would like advice or support, and relatively few said they did not want this.

Figure 11.9 **Secondary trustees' interest in MOE support**

| | No response | Don't want this | Don't know | Want this | Happens now |

Advice on property work — 12 | 13 8 | 34 | 33

Advice if we encounter a problem — 9 | 3 5 | 54 | 29

Support with property work — 12 | 11 9 | 40 | 28

Support if we encounter a problem — 11 | 3 6 | 60 | 21

Support for schools to work together professionally — 12 | 4 13 | 55 | 17

Consultation on any local/regional changes that could affect our school — 9 | 2 6 | 68 | 15

Professional discussions on school's annual report and targets, to feed into school discussion of strategies related to student achievement — 9 | 21 17 | 42 | 11

Allocation of discretionary funds — 11 | 9 14 | 56 | 10

Discussion with board on any major national changes (e.g., new curriculum framework) — 7 | 8 14 | 60 | 10

Support for board in appointing principal — 14 | 33 15 | 28 | 9

Advice to board on appointing principal — 14 | 40 15 | 23 | 8

%

Trustees from state secondary schools were more likely than those from state-integrated schools to want advice on making a principal appointment. They were twice as likely to say that they already received advice on property—but nevertheless, they were more likely to say that they would like help (30 percent of state-integrated school trustees did *not* want help in this area).

What role did secondary school principals and trustees think school boards should play if the closest MOE office were to have more responsibility in terms of allocating resources for local areas? Responses from both groups are summarised in Table 11.5. Secondary principals were less supportive of collaborative involvement than their primary colleagues (but also less likely to want the BOT to advocate for their own school only). Secondary trustees showed much the same range

of opinions as their primary counterparts, but with more interest in being part of an advisory group, and fewer thought they should not have a role beyond their own school.

Table 11.5 **Secondary schools' views of the role boards should play**

Role boards should play	Principals (*n*=194) %	Trustees (*n*=278) %
Advocates for own school only	37	30
Part of decision-making group for local area as a whole	32	42
No role beyond own school	30	10
Part of advisory group for local area as a whole	25	45
Other	2	1
Don't know	N/A	6

N/A: This item was not included on the principal questionnaire.

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Many trustees thought their board should be part of an advisory group, or part of the decision-making group for resource allocation in the local area. Thirty percent thought they should only advocate for their own school, and 10 percent, that they should have no role beyond their own school.

Trustees at state-integrated schools were least interested in being part of local decision making (23 percent), followed closely by those at decile 9–10 schools (26 percent, with 19 percent not wanting any role beyond their own school).

Views among principals were less clear. Over a third thought school boards should only advocate for their own school in this situation, and 30 percent that they should have no role beyond their own school. A slightly smaller proportion thought their role should be as part of a decision-making group, or as an advisory group to the MOE.

State-integrated principals had a slightly different response pattern from trustees in those schools. They were less likely than state school principals to want their board to advocate only for the school, and to be part of an advisory group for the local area. However, they were just as likely as state school principals to see their boards as part of a local decision-making group.

11.3 Summary

Two-thirds or more of responding principals felt that they could get timely and appropriate advice from the local MOE office, the NZSTA, the SSS and their union (the NZEI or PPTA). However, half felt that it took too much time to adapt and assemble information required by the national MOE, ERO and (in the case of secondary schools) the NZQA. A third of principals said that they always met MOE deadlines, and nearly half said that they met most of them.

A majority of trustees' boards had had contact with their local MOE office, mainly on issues connected with funding, property and resources. Most principals and trustees would like (if they did not already have) advice and support from the local MOE office on a range of issues, particularly dealing with problems, property issues, consultation about local changes, collaboration between schools and the allocation of discretionary funds. There appears to be a real interest now in revisiting the relationship between schools and the MOE, in order for schools to gain useful advice and support.

Three-quarters of primary principals said that their main gain from their most recent ERO report was that it affirmed the approach they were taking. A fifth specifically stated that they were happy with the current system of accountability, but others made various suggestions for improvement, mainly around getting reviews focused on schools' own goals for improving student learning, and providing more advice.

As noted in Chapter 10, there was an encouraging degree of existing contact among primary schools, less so among secondary schools. However, principals and trustees were somewhat cautious about working together to decide resource allocation in their local area.

12. The overall picture

In this final chapter we draw together the themes running through this report. We look first at what principals, teachers, trustees and parents considered to be the main issues facing schools when the surveys were undertaken. Then we summarise what the findings tell us about resources, culture and relationships in New Zealand schools today.

12.1 The primary school picture

Issues facing primary schools

Each of the groups surveyed was asked "What do you think are the major issues confronting your school, if any?", and was given a list of options from which to select (Table 12.1).

Funding headed the list of all four groups (at secondary level too—see Section 12.2). This is not surprising: it has been at the top of lists of issues identified by people in schools since the start of our school self-management—and before it. But in recent years it has had more focused attention drawn to it, including the MOE's own 2006 review of operational funding (Ministry of Education, 2006). Hence in this survey, it was not simply the first of stakeholders' concerns: it was mentioned by twice as many principals as any other issue, and in other groups also there was a big gap between funding and the second most commonly mentioned item.

After funding, there was a divergence of views. Property was understandably the second area of concern for trustees; it was joint second for principals, third for teachers but of much less importance to parents. For principals, the new curriculum framework was of equal importance to property development, but for other stakeholders it was much less so.

Table 12.1 **Primary schools' issues**

Issue	Principals (*n*=196) %	Teachers (*n*=912) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %	Parents (*n*=754) %
Funding	82	60	71	53
Property development	42	39	43	12
New curriculum framework/new draft curriculum	42	25	15	7
Student achievement	39	28	31	24
ICT	38	31	12	7
Assessment workload	36	43	22	N/A
Using assessment data	36	N/A	N/A	N/A
Assessment driving the curriculum	34	21	11	7
Staffing levels	30	18	16	18
Declining school roll	28	20	24	8
Quality of teaching staff	26	14	12	N/A
Recruitment of teaching staff/getting enough teachers	24	12	12	14
Quality of teaching	24	12	7	19
Student behaviour/discipline	18	29	14	21
Achieving school targets	16	16	14	12
Getting a good ERO review	15	12	9	9
Planning/policy/charter	13	14	13	9
Quality of BOT	13	5	6	7
Parent/community support	12	18	25	25
Retention of teaching staff/keeping good teachers	12	14	13	32
Role of the BOT	8	7	8	4
Lack of continuity in BOT/continuity of BOT	3	3	11	5
School is too large	2	4	1	3
Other	2	3	2	4
Principal's leadership	N/A	20	9	16
Expanding school roll	N/A	18	N/A	N/A
Rapid growth of school	N/A	N/A	N/A	12
Don't know	N/A	N/A	2	N/A

N/A: These items were not included on the questionnaire.

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Principals identified more issues than others: a mean of 6.0, compared with 5.0 identified by teachers, 4.3 by trustees and 3.7 by parents. Their responses illustrate the multiple competing priorities for schools at the present time. Funding was very clearly the top priority, but after that there were several items which gained a similar number of mentions, relating mainly to the sustainability of the school, and the actual work of teachers in terms of curriculum, assessment and use of ICT.

Along with funding (top priority) and property development (third) teachers mentioned their assessment workload (second) and ICT (fourth), followed by student behaviour and student achievement, which were of almost equal concern. Their top issues were similar to principals', but they were rather less concerned about the new curriculum framework and more about student behaviour.

Trustees were mainly concerned with issues around sustainability, support and student learning. After funding and property development, their greatest concerns were student achievement, parent and community support and declining school rolls. These priorities reflect the areas where trustees have particular responsibility.

Parents' major issues were mainly focused around support for student learning, with some awareness of sustainability issues. After funding, their second key concern was keeping good teachers, an issue which did not feature high on any other lists. They were similar to trustees in their next choice of key issues (parent/community support and student achievement) and like teachers in being concerned about student behaviour.

Summary of primary school survey findings

A large majority of principals and trustees considered that their funding would be insufficient for the school's needs in the current year. They were planning to cut provision for initiatives, relievers for PD, ICT depreciation and property depreciation. One in six had increased the parent donation requested.

A quarter of primary principals did no teaching, but another quarter took full responsibility for a class, for varying proportions of the school day. Primary principals commonly worked 51–60 hours per week, but one in five worked 66 hours or more. Two-thirds of primary principals said that their morale was good or very good. About nine in 10 agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed their job, but a quarter said that they could not manage their workload, and only about a quarter said that they had a satisfactory work–life balance. Even fewer felt they had enough time for educational leadership. Principals would like more time for reflection and educational leadership, and less administration and paperwork.

Primary teachers had an average of 2.3 hours noncontact time. Just over half worked 11–20 hours per week outside school time. About nine in 10 said that they enjoyed their job. Less than half of primary teachers felt that they could manage their workload, and their work-related stress; less than a third felt that they had a satisfactory work–life balance. About two-thirds rated their morale

as good or very good. What primary teachers most wanted was a reduction in class size and less administration/paperwork; only 13 percent were interested in becoming a principal.

Only about a quarter of principals thought that their staffing entitlement was sufficient for the school's needs. The number of teachers funded over entitlement ranged from zero to six, with a mean of 0.9. Just over half said that they had difficulty in finding suitable teachers for vacant posts; a smaller number had difficulties in finding suitable teachers for management posts, and a large majority experienced difficulty at least sometimes in finding suitable relievers, though these are of increasing importance now for PD.

About a quarter of the trustees surveyed said that their school had appointed a principal in the past three years. During the appointment process, around 40 percent had taken advice from another principal and/or a human resources consultant. About half of trustees and 80 percent of primary principals felt that BOTs should *not* have responsibility for negotiating the principal's salary and employment conditions.

Primary principals gave a high rating to aspects of their school culture; primary teachers were also positive, but rather less so. A large majority reported sharing ideas and resources, but there were lower ratings for teacher observation and feedback—a substantial minority said that this was poor, or did not happen. Relationships within the school were also rated highly by principals, but again, teachers were not quite as positive.

Almost all schools had a process of self-review, which typically included an annual or more frequent review of literacy and numeracy results. Policies were most commonly reviewed on a two- to three-year cycle.

Half of the parents surveyed had voted in the recent BOT elections. Trustees put themselves forward because they wanted to contribute to the community, and also because they wished to help their child(ren); they gained satisfaction from making a contribution to the school, and also increased knowledge of education and other areas. On average they spent about 3.5 hours per week on BOT work, with chairs devoting more time to the task than other trustees. Two-thirds of primary trustees felt that they had the right amount of responsibility, and only 20 percent that it was too much.

Trustees were generally positive about their board's relationship with the school's principal, and the school staff in general. However, just under half of the principals responding had experienced problems in their relationships with BOT members, and about a third were experiencing problems (mainly minor) with their current board.

Most trustees had had several forms of contact with the school's parents, but just over half of the parents surveyed said that they had no contact with the BOT, and about a third said that they did not have enough contact.

Most BOTs had consulted with their community in the past 12 months, using mainly traditional methods, but parent participation in such consultation was low. More than three-quarters of

trustees from schools with an identifiable Māori community had consulted with them in the past 12 months, mainly in face-to-face meetings.

A large majority of parents reported that their child was attending their first-choice school. Choice was based mainly on the experience of family members and people known to the parents, but one-third had visited the school or attended an open day, and a quarter had looked at ERO reports.

Most parents rated the information they received about their child's progress and learning programme good or very good. Nevertheless, more than a third said that they would like more information. Parents were generally happy with the quality of schooling, but some wanted smaller classes, more communication about progress and more individual help for students.

The costs of primary education had risen to an annual mean of $794, median $500.

A quarter of primary schools were oversubscribed. There were already various forms of contact between primary schools, but three-quarters of principals said that they would be interested in new working relationships with other schools. The main reason given was to share PD and support each other professionally, but more than half of principals also wanted to access the new funding pools structured around school clusters.

Local MOE offices were providing advice and support for a substantial minority of primary principals and trustees on a range of issues. Many other principals and trustees would like such advice and support, though views were more varied in relation to principal appointments.

ERO reviews provided affirmation (rather than challenge) to the majority of primary principals, and many would like reviews to be more focused on school goals, and to include advice.

Differences between schools

In some cases there were differences by size, and similar differences by location, reflecting the fact that small schools are often rural schools. Thus in small and/or rural schools:

- places were more likely to be available for all children who wanted to attend the school
- there was more concern about rising costs (although parents were more likely to pay the requested donation)
- principals were more likely to say that their staffing entitlement was sufficient
- principals were more likely to have a high teaching commitment
- principals were less confident about managing their workload, and more likely to wish for a balanced lifestyle
- there was likely to be more sharing of teaching resources and knowledge about individual students
- teachers had less release time, and worked longer hours
- teachers were more positive about relationships within the school
- teachers were more positive about their students.

Principals in small/rural schools were more likely to talk to individuals, and less likely to institute formal procedures, such as reading reports from teaching teams. Accordingly, teachers from those schools were more likely to report a participatory approach to decision making, and opportunities to talk through views, opinions and values.

There were also significant differences by decile. High-decile schools were more likely to request, increase and receive parental donations; to attract good teachers and suitable relievers; and to have a larger number of applicants for principal positions. Teachers in high-decile schools were likely to work longer hours, have less classroom-release time and be more positive about their students; they were less likely to feel unsafe in the playground. Relationships within the school and community were rated more highly than in lower decile schools. Trustees were more satisfied with their level of contact with parents. However, overall education costs were much higher, and schools were more likely to be oversubscribed.

According to principals, state schools were more likely than state-integrated schools to attract good teachers, to use staff meetings to discuss student achievement and to use student achievement data when making important decisions. On the other hand, teachers from state-integrated schools were more likely to report that students were enthusiastic about learning and showed them respect. State-integrated schools were more likely to be oversubscribed, and were less interested in forming working relationships with other schools. Parents of children in state-integrated schools spent considerably more than other parents on school fees/donations and uniforms.

Multivariate analysis showed that a positive school culture was associated with high teacher morale, low stress and low U grade. When these factors were taken in account, decile, location and authority were not significant.

12.2 The secondary school picture

Issues facing secondary schools

Secondary school respondents were asked the same question as those in primary schools: what were the major issues facing their schools? Principals identified the most issues: a mean of 7.4, compared with teachers 6.0, trustees 5.3 and parents 4.1 (Table 12.2).

As in the primary survey, funding was the issue cited most often by all groups of respondents. But student achievement and behaviour, and teacher recruitment, were more prominent in the issues raised by respondents from secondary schools. After funding, principals were most concerned about student achievement, assessment workload and property development. Teachers were also very concerned about workload, but for them the second key issue (almost equal with funding) was student behaviour. This was a major issue for more teachers than student achievement, although it ranked relatively low among principals' priorities. The difference probably reflects the

fact that classroom teachers bear the brunt of behaviour problems, while principals are held responsible for student achievement.

As noted in Section 12.1, the three areas of most concern for primary trustees were funding, property and student achievement. These were the top concerns for secondary trustees also, but student achievement ranked higher, slightly ahead of property development. One in six trustees expressed concern about the continuity of the board, perhaps because this survey was carried out in 2006, some months before the triennial board elections.

Parents' top priorities were funding, student achievement and behaviour, and the quality of teachers and teaching. Not surprisingly, workload and staffing issues ranked lower with them, as they are mainly concerned with things that already affect the individual student, rather than those relating to teachers or the school as a whole.

Table 12.2 **Secondary schools' issues**

Issue	Principals (*n*=194) %	Teachers (*n*=818) %	Trustees (*n*=278) %	Parents (*n*=708) %
Funding	81	53	74	41
Student achievement	60	44	45	37
Assessment workload	55	44	28	15
Property development	53	39	42	14
NCEA workload	47	49	33	21
Quality of teaching	44	19	21	30
Assessment driving the curriculum	41	43	18	8
ICT	40	26	15	4
Recruitment of teaching staff	38	24	19	16
Student behaviour/discipline	37	52	27	36
Quality of teaching staff	37	22	22	33
New curriculum framework	28	17	12	7
Staffing levels	27	13	12	15
Parent/community support	25	19	22	18
Declining school roll	24	17	23	4
Retention of teaching staff	18	24	16	10
Achieving school targets	18	12	16	8
Quality of BOT	12	4	6	4
Getting a good ERO review	11	11	7	8
Planning/policy/charter	11	7	10	8
Lack of continuity in BOT/continuity of BOT	10	2	17	3
Role of the BOT	8	5	4	4
Other	5	3	5	7
School is too large	3	13	3	9
Principal's leadership	N/A	27	9	13

N/A: This item was not included on the principal questionnaire.
NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

In previous reports of the NZCER national surveys, we have noted the greater challenges facing low-decile schools, particularly around attracting and keeping good-quality staff, and the extent of parent support. In this survey, on the whole, people at high-decile schools tended to identify issues, at lower proportions, particularly in relation to student achievement, student behaviour, parent–community support and staffing. People at low-decile schools were most likely to identify

these issues as ones confronting them, along with declining school rolls; principals at these schools were also much more likely to mention the quality of their school board, and in primary schools, teachers were more likely to mention principal leadership. On the other hand, at the secondary level, high-decile school respondents were more likely to identify issues around NCEA and assessment.

Summary of secondary school survey findings

A very large majority of secondary school principals and trustees considered their funding insufficient for the current year. A quarter of the schools had increased the parental donations requested.

Secondary principals worked much longer hours than primary principals. More than three-quarters said that morale was good or very good, but secondary principals were even less likely than their primary counterparts to agree that they had a good work–life balance, that they had enough time for educational leadership and that they could manage their workloads. They wanted more *time* to focus on educational leadership; more *time* to reflect, read and be innovative; and a reduction in administration and paperwork.

Secondary teachers had 7.5 nonteaching classroom-release hours per week. Their rating of their morale was slightly less positive than primary teachers'. Their level of enjoyment was similar, but they were more positive about work–life balance, and more believed that they could manage their workload.

Less than a quarter of secondary principals believed that their staffing entitlement for the year was enough to meet the school's needs; BOT members were in almost complete agreement. The number of teachers funded over entitlement ranged from zero to eight or more, with a mean of 2.5 and a median of 2. Three-quarters of the secondary principals said that they had difficulty finding suitable teachers for vacancies, and most also experienced problems in finding registered day relievers.

Just over a quarter of the responding trustees said that their board had appointed a principal during the past three years. Trustees of secondary schools were less positive about the quality of candidates than primary school trustees. More than a third felt that the board should have responsibility for negotiating the principal's salary and employment conditions, but for the majority this was conditional on the MOE paying what was negotiated. Principals took a similar view.

Secondary teachers' responses were similar to primary teachers' on some aspects of school culture, but less positive on others, and also in their assessment of relationships within the school.

Almost all secondary schools had a process of self-review, which typically included an annual or more frequent review of curriculum areas. Policies were most commonly reviewed on a two- to three-year cycle. Staff and students were surveyed annually, every two to three years or as issues

arose. The use of SMS was almost universal for recording students' personal details and the subjects they were taking.

Trustees' reasons for putting themselves forward were similar to those reported by primary trustees, and they spent about the same amount of time on their task. However, a majority of secondary school trustees felt that they had too much responsibility.

Trustees were generally positive about their board's relationship with the school's principal, and with staff in general. However, some respondents took the view that the BOT was merely a sounding board for the principal.

Just under half of the principals responding had experienced problems in their relationships with BOT members, and about a third were experiencing problems (mainly minor) with their current board.

Most BOTs had consulted with their communities in the past 12 months, using mainly traditional methods, but participation in such consultation was very low. More than three-quarters of BOTs with an identifiable Māori community had consulted with them in the past 12 months, mainly in face-to-face meetings.

A large majority of students were attending their first-choice school. Half of the parents visited the school in order to inform their choice, but few consulted ERO reports. Parents of secondary school students were less likely to attend parent/teacher interviews than parents of primary school children.

A majority of parents rated the information they received about their child's progress and learning programme good or very good, but more than a third said that they would like more information. Four in five were generally happy with the quality of schooling, but around half would like to change some aspects of it; they wanted smaller classes, more communication about progress and more individual help for students.

The costs of secondary education had risen to a mean of $1,530, median $1,000 per year.

A third of secondary schools were oversubscribed. Compared with primary schools, there was more competition and less collaboration between secondary schools. However, a large majority of secondary principals said that they would be interested in new working relationships with other schools. Very few secondary school principals said that they had no contact with postsecondary education providers. Four in five said that they used them for STAR courses.

Secondary school principals and trustees reported that they were getting advice or support from their local MOE office on a range of issues, and would like more, with views divided around professional discussions on school annual reports, and on principal appointments.

Differences between schools

Principals in main urban schools were the most positive about getting the support they needed, and attracting good teachers to their schools. Rural schools, and small schools, were more likely to experience problems filling teacher appointments and finding suitable day relievers, although they were more likely to say that their staffing entitlement was enough to meet their needs. They were also more likely to have places for all the students who applied.

In high-decile compared with low-decile schools:

• the overall cost of education was much higher
• parents were more likely to pay the requested donations
• there were less likely to be places for all applicants
• parents were more likely to have chosen a school that was not their closest
• students were less likely to be at a school that was not their first choice
• parents were less likely to be unhappy with the quality of their child's education
• teachers had more release hours, but also worked the longest out-of-school hours
• relationships and community support were more likely to be rated good or very good
• teachers were more likely to say they never felt unsafe in the playground.

Mid-decile schools had the fewest applicants for principal appointments.

In state-integrated schools, compared with state schools:

• parents were more likely to pay the requested donation
• parents paid more for every aspect of their child's education (the overall median was more than four times as high)
• there were more applicants for principal appointments
• principals and teachers rated relationships and community support more highly
• teachers were less likely to feel unsafe in the playground
• there was less likely to be places for all students who applied.

12.3 Changes since 2003

Throughout this report, reference has been made to the NZCER survey conducted in 2003, and differences have been noted which are summarised here. Some changes are common to primary and secondary sectors; others apply to one only, and in a few cases the trends seems to be going in opposite directions in each sector. It is important to bear in mind that the recent surveys were undertaken a year apart (secondary 2006, primary 2007) and therefore the gap between surveys was longer for primary schools.

Common trends

Most schools had experienced roll changes since 2003, due to population/housing changes or student/parent preferences. In primary schools, the former was the key reason, but in secondary schools the two factors were given equal weighting.

Compared with 2003, there was greater stability in staffing, reflected in the length of time that principals and teachers had been in post. Three-quarters of schools surveyed had had no more than two principals over the past 10 years.

In both sectors, teacher morale had improved since 2003. However, there was little change in secondary principals' morale, and primary principals' morale was not as good as it had been in the earlier survey.

There was a change in the use of appraisals. Compared with 2003, primary principals were twice as likely to use appraisal information to plan career development, and secondary principals were more likely to use it to renew teacher practising certificates. Principals in both sectors were less likely to use appraisal information to determine eligibility for pay increments, or to report to BOTs.

The mean cost to parents of their child's education was higher, although the median remained the same.

There had been an increase in parental involvement in school activities, especially sport and cultural activities. Parental help with fundraising had also increased in secondary schools, but declined in primary schools.

There had been changes in the nature of community consultation. Although traditional methods were still favoured, there had been a decline in the practice of inviting parents to BOT meetings, and a small number of schools were moving to telephone or email surveys.

Varying trends

More primary schools experienced difficulty in finding day relievers, while in secondary schools it had become slightly easier—though still problematic.

In secondary schools more parents rated highly the information they received about their child's progress and learning programme, and fewer said they needed more information. By contrast, primary school parents were more likely to want further information on these topics.

Primary schools were more likely to be oversubscribed, and reported less competition with other local schools. By contrast, a slightly higher proportion of secondary schools had places available for all, and were more likely to say there was competition (although they were also more likely to be sharing PD with other schools).

Other changes

In primary schools

Principals were less confident about their school's financial situation than they had been four years earlier. Nearly all felt that government funding was insufficient for their school's needs. They were also less likely to believe that their staffing entitlement was sufficient.

In 2007, trustees were less likely to be satisfied with their level of contact with the school's parents. Forms of contact had changed over the years, and had generally become more formal.

In secondary schools

Fewer principals worked excessively long hours than in 2003, and teachers also worked fewer hours.

Although three-quarters of principals experienced problems filling teacher vacancies, this was an improvement on the 2003 situation.

Principals were more likely to give a positive rating to relationships within the school community.

There was a trend towards an annual (rather than less frequent) review of curriculum areas.

More trustees had faced industrial issues. Views on trustee responsibility had changed; trustees were more likely to feel they had too much responsibility, but principals less so.

12.4 Conclusion

On the whole, we see that schools are often sites where people experience positive, worthwhile working relationships that give them a sense of achievement. We see more interest than previously in schools working together, or being open to receiving more advice and support, if it allows them to progress their own school's priorities. Ambitions and expectations remain high, but they are not matched by the resources at schools' command. Schools continue to struggle with funding the administrative support they need (particularly with school self-management), teacher aides and ICT. Good-quality teachers are not available everywhere; and this includes the relievers who have become more important as schools put more emphasis on PD as part of ongoing improvement of their professional practice. Workloads and stress levels are high for principals.

Parental satisfaction levels remain high. Though around a third of parents would like some changes at their child's school, the changes they would like vary; many would involve more resourcing.

Thus it seems that a core challenge New Zealand faces, particularly as we share a deepening economic recession with the rest of the world, is to think about what schools could do differently—how they could do things differently, but well, within existing resources, or resources that are unlikely to increase much in the next few years. These are not issues that individual

schools can solve on their own: we will need a systematic response that uses the collective creativity of the whole education community.

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Appendix A: Profiles of secondary schools responding to the 2006 National Survey

Table A1   **Profile of responses by school size**

Size	MOE data (*n*=315 schools) %	Principals (*n*=194) %	Teachers (*n*=818) %	Trustees (*n*=278) %
<100	1	1	<1	<1
100–249	7	6	3	8
250–399	14	13	6	15
400–749	31	33	24	31
750–1499	37	37	48	34
1500+	10	11	19	10

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Whereas the principal and trustee samples closely reflect the overall characteristics of secondary schools (as shown in the MOE data), it is evident that the teacher sample is skewed towards larger schools (see Table A1). This reflects the much larger number of teachers employed in bigger schools—it is not possible to simultaneously represent the full teacher population *and* the experiences of teachers in different types of schools in the same sample. Because each school has one principal, and only two trustees per school were sampled, this sampling dilemma does not arise for those populations.

Table A2   **Profile of responses by decile**

Decile grouping	MOE data (*n*=315 schools) %	Principals (*n*=194) %	Teachers (*n*=818) %	Trustees (*n*=278) %
1–2 (low)	16	13	11	11
3–8 (mid)	66	69	67	70
9–10 (high)	18	18	21	19

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

The largest secondary schools tend to be high-decile schools and so the pattern of responses again reflects the over-representation of teachers in larger schools (see Table A2). The slight under-representation of low-decile schools, for all three responding groups, is likely to be associated with the smaller size of many of them.

Table A3 shows the profile of responses according to the areas where schools are located.

Table A3   **Profile of responses by school area type**

School type	MOE data (*n*=315 schools) %	Principals (*n*=194) %	Teachers (*n*=818) %	Trustees (*n*=278) %
Main urban	63	61	71	58
Secondary urban	10	11	11	14
Minor urban	20	21	14	22
Rural	7	7	3	6

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Note that secondary urban schools are in suburbs of cities and minor urban schools are in towns. Again, principal and trustee samples reflect the overall school population, but the teacher sample is weighted towards the main urban areas, which tend to be where the largest schools are located.

Table A4   **Profile of responses by school authority**

Authority	MOE data (*n*=315 schools) %	Principals (*n*=194) %	Teachers (*n*=818) %	Trustees (*n*=278) %
State	78	80	87	78
State-integrated	22	20	12	22

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

As for the other characteristics, the teacher sample is somewhat skewed, with teachers in state-integrated schools under-represented (Table A4). The largest schools are state schools, so this is to be expected in view of the sampling dilemma outlined above.

Principals who responded

The overall response rate for principals was 62 percent,[19] from 194 of a possible 315 secondary schools. As in 2003, more males (72 percent) than females responded, reflecting gender differences in this role. Most of these principals (90 percent) identified as Pākehā/European, and 6 percent were Māori.

Seventeen percent of respondents had become principals in the last two years. A further 23 percent had served between three and five years, 28 percent between six and 10 years, 18 percent between 11 and 15 years and 12 percent over 15 years. Compared to 2003, the 2006 sample has more experienced principals.

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[19] This compares favourably with the 48 percent response rate from the smaller overall sample of 200 schools in 2003.

Teachers who responded

Of the 2061 teacher surveys distributed, 40 percent were returned in a sufficiently completed state to be included. Sixty-two percent of the respondents were female, which is almost identical to the response profile in 2003 and is representative of the gender composition of teachers. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents identified as Pākehā/European, 5 percent identified as Māori, 3 percent as Asian and 2 percent as Pasifika or as "New Zealander" respectively.

Sixty-six percent of the responding teachers had some management responsibility. Five percent were senior managers, 38 percent were middle managers (e.g., curriculum or faculty leaders), 15 percent held the newly established role of specialist classroom teacher and 8 percent were deans.

Eight percent of respondents had become teachers in the last two years. A further 14 percent had served between three and five years, 13 percent between six and 10 years, 10 percent between 11 and 15 years and 54 percent over 15 years. Compared to the principals, more of the responding teachers were in younger age groups.

Table A5 shows the age distribution of responding teachers and principals.

Table A5   **A comparison of responding teacher and principal age groups**

Age of respondents	Principals (*n*=194) %	Teachers (*n*=818) %
<30 years	2	11
30–39		19
40–49	22	27
50–59	69	36
60+	7	6

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Trustees

Forty-four percent of a potential pool of 630 trustees responded. Just one trustee responded from each of 76 schools, with two responding, as requested, from each of a further 101 schools. The intention to have a balance between chairpersons (51 percent) and other trustees was achieved.

Responding trustees tended to be relatively experienced in the role. The mean length of time as a trustee was four years. Just 11 percent had been a trustee for less than one year and 36 percent had served in this role for more than five years. The most common reason for wanting to be a trustee was to "contribute to the community" (84 percent).

The sample was gender balanced (47 percent female, 53 percent male). Just 6 percent of respondents were aged under 40, with nearly half (42 percent) 50 or over.

Parents

Parents from 27 schools were surveyed, producing an identical response rate (47 percent) to that of 2003. Ninety-five percent of parents currently had one or two children at the school, with 71 percent reporting having had a child at the school for two to six years. Twenty-one percent of respondents indicated they were employed in the education sector.

More females (82 percent) than males (18 percent) responded. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents identified as Pākehā/European, 12 percent identified as Māori, 8 percent as "New Zealander", 5 percent as Pasifika and 2 percent as Asian.

Appendix B: Profiles of primary schools responding to the 2007 National Survey

Table B1 **Profile of responses by school size**

Size	MOE data (*n*=351 schools) %	Principals (*n* = 196) %	Teachers (*n*=912) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %
Up to 100	25	20	5	25
101–300	45	44	38	44
300+	30	35	57	30

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

While the trustee sample closely reflects the overall characteristics of primary schools (as shown in the MOE data), the principal sample is slightly skewed towards larger schools, and the teacher sample strongly so (Table B1). This reflects the much larger number of teachers employed in bigger schools—it is not possible to simultaneously represent the full teacher population and the experiences of teachers in different types of schools in the same sample. Because each school has one principal, and only two trustees per school were sampled, this sampling dilemma does not arise for those populations.

Table B2 **Profile of responses by decile**

Decile grouping	MOE data (*n*=351 schools) %	Principals (*n*=196) %	Teachers (*n*=912) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %
1–2 (low)	19	16	15	13
3–8 (mid)	60	57	57	60
9–10 (high)	21	27	28	27

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

As shown in Table B2, principals, teachers and trustees in high-decile schools were rather more likely to respond to the survey than those in other schools.

Table B3　**Profile of responses by school area type**

School type	MOE data (*n*=351 schools) %	Principals (*n*=196) %	Teachers (*n*=912) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %
Urban	71	73	89	70
Rural	29	27	11	30

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Table B3 shows the profile of responses according to where schools are located.

The achieved sample of principals matches the MOE data on this criterion, and the trustee sample is close. The teacher sample, however, is heavily skewed towards urban schools, since they have much larger teacher populations.

Table B4　**Profile of responses by school authority**

Authority	MOE data (*n*=351 schools) %	Principals (*n*=196) %	Teachers (*n*=912) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %
State	87	88	89	88
State-integrated	13	12	11	12

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Principals and trustees from state-integrated schools were less likely to respond than those from other state schools (Table B4). Teachers from state-integrated schools were also under-represented, but this could be due to the fact that the largest schools are state schools.

Table B5　**Profile of responses by school type**

School type	MOE data (*n*=351 schools) %	Principals (*n*=196) %	Teachers (*n*=912) %	Trustees (*n*=329) %
Contributing	41	44	46	43
Full primary	51	45	40	48
Intermediate	8	11	14	8

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Principals from intermediate schools were more likely to respond, and principals from full primary schools less so (Table B5). Teachers from intermediate schools were over-represented in the sample, as intermediate schools are on average larger than contributing or full primary schools.

Principals who responded

The overall response rate for principals was 56 percent. More males (62 percent) than females (37 percent) responded, reflecting gender differences in this role. Most of these principals (93 percent) identified as Pākehā/European, 7 percent were Māori and 1 percent Pasifika.

Thirteen percent of respondents had become principals in the last two years. A further 12 percent had served between three and five years, 19 percent between six and 10 years, 18 percent between 11 and 15 years and 36 percent over 15 years.

Teachers who responded

A total of 1901 teacher questionnaires were distributed and the response rate was 48 percent. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents were female (a strong contrast with the gender balance of principals). Eighty-eight percent of the respondents identified as Pākehā/European, 8 percent as Māori, 3 percent as Pasifika or "New Zealander" and 1 percent as Asian.

Fifty-eight percent of the responding teachers held positions of responsibility. Nine percent were deputy principals, 6 percent were assistant principals, 30 percent were curriculum/syndicate leaders and 15 percent were senior or tutor teachers.

Eight percent of respondents were relatively new to teaching (less than two years). A further 17 percent had served between two and five years, 21 percent between six and 10 years, 12 percent between 11 and 15 years and 42 percent more than 15 years.

Compared with the principals, more of the responding teachers were in younger age groups, as would be expected (see Table B6).

Table B6   **A comparison of responding teacher and principal age groups**

Age of respondents	Principals (*n*=196) %	Teachers (*n*=912) %
<30	} 9	17
30–39		23
40–49	25	26
50–59	56	29
60+	10	4

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Trustees

Forty-seven percent of a potential 702 trustees returned completed questionnaires. Just 1 percent had been a trustee for less than one year and 9 percent had served in this role for more than five years. The most common reason for wanting to be a trustee was to "contribute to the community" (81 percent).

The sample was gender balanced (53 percent female, 45 percent male). Twenty-eight percent of respondents were aged under 40, 56 percent aged between 40 and 49 and 14 percent were 50 or over.

Parents

Questionnaires were distributed to 1615 parents and 47 percent responded. Ninety percent of parents currently had one or two children at the school with 66 percent reporting having had a child at the school for two to six years. Sixteen percent of respondents indicated they were employed in the education sector.

More females (81 percent) than males (18 percent) responded. Seventy-five percent of the respondents identified as Pākehā/European, 16 percent as Māori, 7 percent as Pasifika, 4 percent as Asian and 2 percent as "New Zealander".