

Principal vacancies and appointments 2009–10

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Summary

School leadership in New Zealand has gained more attention in recent years. The New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) began collecting data on all principal advertisements in the *Education Gazette* in late 2007. As well as collecting the advertisements, NZCER also sends a survey to all of the board chairs of those schools advertising for a principal. This survey asks for information about the applicants, the appointment and the destinations of the departing principals. This report is the second report in a planned series of reports. The third report, to be written in 2012, will use four years of data to look more in depth at some of the trends over time.

This brief report analyses principal vacancies advertised in the *Education Gazette* in 2009 and 2010. It also analyses the data from the surveys of board chairs about appointments made in 2009 and 2010. It makes some comparisons with the 2008 data. Some relevant information on principal careers and teacher interest in becoming principals from recent NZCER national surveys is also included.

Some of the main findings were:

- In 2008, 304 advertisements were placed, in 2009 there were 194 and in 2010 there were 219. These figures suggest that 2008 was an unusually high year in terms of advertisements.
- Small schools and rural schools showed higher principal vacancy rates than other schools. Full primary schools were also overrepresented in 2010. Contributing primary schools and U5 and U6 schools were underrepresented. Decile was not associated with any marked differences in vacancy rates.
- Overall in 2009, the median number of applicants was nine, with a range from one to 41. The median number shortlisted was four, with a range from one to eight. These numbers were similar for 2010, with a median of 10 applicants, with a range from one to 46. The median number shortlisted was four, with a range from one to eight.
- Almost all boards used additional expertise in the appointment process. In 2009, 97 percent and in 2010, 98 percent of boards used some additional expertise in the appointment process. Private consultants were the most commonly used source of advice in both 2009 and 2010. In 2010, 90 percent of all board chairs said that the advice they received was either essential to their making an appointment or very useful.
- In 2009, only 16 percent of boards thought the field of applicants for their school's principalship was very good to excellent. However, 87 percent thought those on their shortlist were good/excellent quality. Similarly, in 2010, 17 percent of boards thought the field of applicants for their school's principalship was very good to excellent; however, fewer (77 percent) thought those on their shortlist were of good/excellent quality. Possible reasons for this difference could be because there were fewer high-quality applicants, that boards had higher standards or that board chairs who felt more strongly about the quality of applicants had a higher response rate to the survey.

- Most boards said they were very satisfied with the appointment they made (in 2009, 92 percent and in 2010, 88 percent).
- In 2009, women made up 53 percent of the shortlisted applicants for principalship, but only 44 percent of those appointed. In 2010, there was an increase in the number of women being both shortlisted (59 percent) and selected (60 percent). However, in 2010, there was a higher proportion of survey responses from full primary schools compared to 2009. Women were more likely to be shortlisted and selected for full primary schools than other types of schools.
- Over half of those who were shortlisted and selected both in 2009 and 2010 were new principals.
- In both 2009 and 2010 the two main destinations of principals who left these positions were to another principalship (27 percent in 2009 and 36 percent in 2010) or retirement (21 percent in 2009 and 26 percent in 2010).
- For secondary schools, the NZCER national survey data indicate that principals have been staying longer in their positions. However, the pattern is less clear for primary/intermediate school principals.
- Data from the NZCER national surveys indicates that a significant minority of principals feel stuck in their role. In the 2009 secondary national survey, 22 percent of principals strongly agreed/agreed that they felt stuck in the principal role (simply) because there were no other opportunities. In the 2010 primary national survey this figure was 30 percent. Over half of principals in 2009 and 2010 said they would like more career opportunities in education, other than the principalship.
- There is increased interest from secondary teachers in the principalship, with 13 percent being interested in the role in 2009, up from 8 percent in 2006. There is also a small increased interest from primary and intermediate teachers: 15 percent in 2010 were interested in the role, up from 13 percent in 2007 and 2003. In 2009, 44 percent of secondary deputy and assistant principals were interested in the role and in 2010, 30 percent of primary deputy and assistant principals were interested in the role.

Introduction

School leadership in New Zealand has gained more attention in recent years. NZCER began collecting data on all principal advertisements in the *Education Gazette* in late 2007 in order to gain a better picture of what was happening in New Zealand.

The *Education Gazette* is free to all schools and all advertisements can be found online. The *Education Gazette* is most likely used by all New Zealand schools wanting to recruit a new principal. We send a survey to all of the board chairs of those schools advertising for a principal. This survey asks for information about the applicants, the appointment and the destinations of the departing principals.

In this report, we provide information from the 2009 and 2010 advertisements and survey. This follows the format of NZCER's previous report¹ which provided information from the 2008 and some of the 2009 advertisements,² and from the 2008 survey (the 2009 survey data were not complete at the time). There have been some changes made to the survey since 2008, therefore some of the questions from the 2009 survey are different from those in the 2010 survey.

Our 2009 survey of board chairs in schools seeking new principals had a response rate of 60 percent. The 2010 survey had a response rate of 41 percent by our cut-off date of 11 April 2011; however, we received some additional surveys after this date which have not been included in this report. Some data from the two most recent NZCER national surveys³ on principal plans and teacher interest in the principalship are also included.

Table 1 shows the school characteristics of the principal vacancies for 2009 and 2010, with a comparison to the school characteristics of those who responded to the survey and a comparison to the national pattern of school characteristics (using the July 2010 Ministry of Education [MoE] school roll data). The survey responses received for 2009 were underrepresentative relative to the schools that advertised, for full primary and state-integrated schools and schools with a U grade of 4 or below.⁴ The following types of schools were overrepresented: contributing primary; schools with a U grade of 5 or above; deciles 9–10 schools; schools with a low proportion of Māori students on the roll; and state nonintegrated schools. The survey responses received for 2010 were underrepresentative for U1 and U2 schools, urban schools, schools with a low proportion of Māori students on the roll and state-integrated schools. Secondary schools, U3 and U4 schools, rural schools, schools with a high proportion of Māori students on the roll and state nonintegrated schools were overrepresented. In summary, there is variation in each of the years, with neither the

¹ Wylie, C. (2010). *Principal vacancies and appointments 2008–9*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

² This report includes a more complete list of the 2009 advertisements than the previous report, in part because we now have more data about the new schools that opened.

³ NZCER's 2009 secondary national survey and NZCER's 2010 primary national survey.

⁴ U grade is used to determine the principal's salary based on factors such as the size of the school and the number of special needs children.

advertisements nor survey responses in 2009 or 2010 matching the overall school characteristics. Therefore, the sample is not fully representative of the population.

Table 1 **School characteristics of principal advertisements in *Education Gazette* and survey responses 2009 and 2010**

	2009		2010		MOE national total 2010 for state and state-integrated schools
	% of ads (n=194)	% of survey responses (n=116)	% of ads (n=219)	% of survey responses (n=90)	% (n=2,473)
School type					
Full primary	46	40	53	50	43
Contributing primary	25	29	22	22	32
Intermediate	3	3	3	4	5
Composite	5	8	2	1	4
Secondary	17	18	15	20	13
Special	2	1	1	0	2 ⁵
School size (U grade)					
U1 & U2	34	31	37	32	26
U3 & U4	31	27	33	40	35
U5 & U6	24	29	16	13	29
U7+	9	13	10	12	10
Location					
Urban	62	61	58	54	71
Rural	36	37	39	43	29
Socioeconomic decile					
1–2	21	19	17	17	21
3–4	16	16	23	24	20
5–6	23	22	18	19	20
7–8	18	16	19	18	19
9–10	19	24	20	20	19
Proportion of Māori students on roll					
Less than 8%	15	24	11	7	14
8–14%	16	19	19	23	21
15–30%	32	28	34	31	30
31%+	31	29	32	37	34
Authority					
State	82	86	83	87	87
State-integrated	15	9	14	11	13

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding and due to missing school characteristic information (e.g., from new schools).

⁵ This includes The Correspondence School, special schools, teen parent unit, Years 7–10 schools and kura teina.

To ascertain if there were any differences between subgroups, chi-square statistics from contingency tables were used to test for statistical significance. Where statistical differences were found, key differences are commented on in the text below each table. Only statistically significant differences where the p -value was equal to or less than 0.01 are reported. This indicates that there is a 1 percent probability that the differences observed were a chance association. Some statistics that are reported do not add to 100 as there were some nonresponses, some missing school characteristic information (e.g., from new schools) and due to rounding. In each section, the 2009 results are reported followed by the 2010 data.

This report is the second report in a planned series of reports. The next report, to be published in 2012, will use four years of data, therefore it will be possible to look at the trends in the data over time.

Principal vacancies 2009 and 2010

In 2008, 304 advertisements were placed by state and state-integrated schools. These figures suggest that 2008 was an unusually high year in terms of advertisements. In NZCER's previous report on principal appointments,⁶ it was suggested that perhaps 2008 was a peak year and that external factors, such as attractive role changes for primary principals, including overseas contracts (which attracted some media and sector interest), may have played a role.

In 2009, 116 state and state-integrated schools advertised for a new principal. This is about 5 percent of the total number of schools in the national system. Of those that advertised for the first time in 2009, 15 schools had to re-advertise.

In 2010, 219 state and state-integrated schools advertised for a new principal. This is about 9 percent of the total number of schools in the national system. Of those that advertised for the first time in 2010, three schools had to re-advertise.

Possible reasons for schools re-advertising included applicants not being suitable, not enough applicants, the chosen applicant not accepting the position and a principal being appointed but not staying at the school for long.

Table 2 shows the school characteristics of the principal vacancies for 2009 and 2010, with a comparison with the national pattern of school characteristics (using the July 2010 MoE school roll data). Small schools, rural schools and full primary schools—all interrelated categories—showed higher vacancy rates than other schools. Decile was not associated with any marked differences in vacancy rates.

⁶ Wylie, C. (2010). *Principal vacancies and appointments 2008–9*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Table 2 Principal advertisements in *Education Gazette* 2009 and 2010—school characteristics

	2009		2010		MOE national total 2010 for state and state- integrated schools	
	n=194	% of ads	n=219	% of ads	(n=2,473)	%
School type						
Full primary	90	46	116	53	1,070	43
Contributing primary	49	25	48	22	789	32
Intermediate	5	3	6	3	121	5
Composite	10	5	5	2	110	4
Secondary	33	17	33	15	320	13
Special	3	2	3	1	39	2 ⁷
School size (U grade)						
U1 & U2	65	34	82	37	632	26
U3 & U4	60	31	73	33	268	35
U5 & U6	46	24	35	16	716	29
U7+	18	9	21	10	237	10
Location						
Urban	120	62	126	58	1,750	71
Rural	70	36	85	39	723	29
Socioeconomic decile						
1–2	41	21	38	17	526	21
3–4	31	16	50	23	494	20
5–6	45	23	39	18	503	20
7–8	35	18	41	19	472	19
9–10	37	19	43	20	477	19
Proportion of Māori students on roll						
Less than 8%	29	15	25	11	341	14
8–14%	32	16	41	19	530	21
15–30%	62	32	74	34	741	30
31%+	61	31	70	32	833	34
Authority						
State	160	82	181	83	2,145	87
State-integrated	30	15	30	14	328	13

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding and due to missing school characteristic information (e.g., from new schools).

⁷ This includes The Correspondence School, special schools, teen parent unit, Years 7–10 schools and kura teina.

Interest in becoming a principal

NZCER's secondary and primary national surveys can tell us about the potential supply of future principals. In NZCER's 2009 secondary national survey, 13 percent of secondary teachers⁸ said they were interested in becoming a principal in future, with a further 8 percent unsure. This is an increase on the 8 percent who said they were interested in the 2003 NZCER secondary national survey (which also found 8 percent unsure). Almost half the deputy and assistant principals were definitely interested in becoming a principal (44 percent).

Wanting the challenge (45 percent of those who are interested in becoming a principal) and interest in implementing ideas they have (39 percent) are the main reasons provided for wanting to be a principal. These dimensions are related more to the substance of the role than liking the idea of the responsibility (21 percent) or getting a better salary (mentioned by only 15 percent).

In NZCER's 2010 primary national survey, 15 percent of primary and intermediate teachers said they were interested in becoming a principal in future, with a further 15 percent unsure. This is a slight increase from the 2007 and 2003 national survey responses which showed 13 percent of primary and intermediate teachers were interested in becoming principals. In 2010, 30 percent of deputy and assistant principals were definitely interested in becoming a principal.

The most common reasons for wanting to become a primary principal were: wanting the challenge (79 percent of those who are interested in becoming a principal); interest in implementing ideas they have (72 percent); and wanting to work with teachers and students (68 percent). Reasons that were less common were again related to the idea of the responsibility (36 percent), getting a better salary (mentioned by only 33 percent) or liking the idea of authority (8 percent).

Males were more interested in becoming a principal. In the 2009 secondary national survey, 9 percent of female teachers expressed interest in becoming a principal, compared to 19 percent of male teachers. Thirty-one percent of female deputy or assistant principals expressed interest, compared to 58 percent of male deputy or assistant principals. In the 2010 primary national survey, 13 percent of females and 32 percent of males were interested in becoming a principal. Interest was concentrated amongst those already in senior management positions with 26 percent of female deputy or assistant principals expressing interest and 56 percent of male deputy or assistant principals being interested in becoming a principal.

Application numbers

Overall in 2009, the median number of applicants was nine, with a range from one to 41. The median number shortlisted was four, with a range from one to eight. These numbers were similar

⁸ This includes teachers with management roles (e.g., deputy principals).

for 2010, with a median of 10 applicants, with a range from one to 46. The median number shortlisted was four, with a range from one to eight (the same as 2009).

Table 3 presents the median and range of applications reported for different types of schools in 2009 and 2010. In 2009, the median number of applications was lower for schools that were intermediates, U1 and U2, rural, deciles 1–2, schools with high Māori enrolment and were state-integrated. The lowest median was for rural schools. The most attractive schools for principal applications were contributing primary schools,⁹ U5 and above schools, schools that were urban, deciles 9–10 schools, schools with lower Māori enrolment and state nonintegrated schools.

In 2010, schools with the lower median number of applications were U1 and U2, urban, deciles 3–4, schools with high Māori enrolment and state-integrated. The schools that had the highest median number of applications were contributing primary schools, U3 and U4 schools, rural schools, deciles 5–6 schools, schools with lower proportions of Māori enrolment and state schools. Some of the differences could be because of the low response rates in 2010 from some school types, such as intermediate and composite schools. It is surprising that rural schools had a much higher median number of applications in 2010. This could suggest economic changes in rural areas or that applicants may be willing to consider rural areas because of shortages of principal positions in urban areas.

⁹ Special schools had a high median number of applications; however, there was only one response from a special school to the survey.

Table 3 Number of applications for vacancies 2009 and 2010—school characteristics

	2009			2010		
	n=116	Median	Range	n=90	Median	Range
School type						
Full primary	46	7	2–29	45	10	1–42
Contributing primary	34	11.5	5–28	19	15	6–35
Intermediate	3	5	1–13	4	10	7–46
Composite	9	7	4–33	1	3	NA
Secondary	21	9	4–41	17	7	4–14
Special	1	14	NA	0	NA	NA
School size (U grade)						
U1 & U2	36	6	2–17	28	7.5	1–42
U3 & U4	31	11	4–29	35	12	5–41
U5 & U6	34	9.5	1–30	12	8.5	6–46
U7+	10	9.5	5–19	11	9	4–14
Location						
Urban	71	10	1–41	47	9	1–46
Rural	43	3	3–29	39	10	1–42
Socioeconomic decile						
1–2	22	7	2–20	14	9	1–21
3–4	19	8	5–22	21	7	1–17
5–6	26	8	1–19	17	12	3–46
7–8	19	8	3–28	16	9	4–26
9–10	28	13	5–41	18	11	2–41
Proportion of Māori students on roll						
Less than 8%	28	12	2–6	8	11	4–25
8–14%	22	9	3–28	21	11	5–42
15–30%	32	8	1–22	28	9.5	2–26
31%+	34	8	2–22	31	9	1–46
Authority						
State	100	9	1–29	76	10.5	1–46
State-integrated	11	7	3–30	10	6	3–12

Note: Numbers may not add to total because of rounding and due to missing school characteristic information (e.g., from new schools).

Board use of advice in appointing principals

Not only is it important that there are enough applicants for principals' positions, it is also important that the process for making the selection is well informed and thorough. Boards have the task of appointing principals, a task that is infrequent for many boards, and one in which almost all boards seek additional expertise.

In 2009, 97 percent of boards used some additional expertise in the appointment process. Forty-five percent of school boards used private consultants, 41 percent used another (current) principal, 16 percent used the school's current principal, 15 percent used the School Support Services advisers and 16 percent used other sources of advice (including 5 percent who used their school's Limited Statutory Manager—appointed by the MoE to work with schools facing major issues). Schools with low Māori enrolment were the least likely to use School Support Services advisers (0 percent).

We asked these board chairs how they thought this advice helped in the appointment process. Eighty-three percent said that it helped guide their discussions throughout the process and 13 percent said that some advice was useful.

Of the schools that advertised in 2010, 98 percent of boards used some additional expertise in the appointment process. Forty-six percent used a private consultant, 42 percent used another (current) principal, 22 percent used the school's current principal, 11 percent used the School Support Services advisers, 10 percent used the Board of Trustees training and support provider, 7 percent used their school's Limited Statutory Manager, 6 percent used the MoE, 2 percent used a recruitment agency and 16 percent used a different source. Deciles 1–2 schools were more likely to use the Board of Trustees training and support provider (33 percent).

In 2008, a similar number of boards had used the advice of private consultants (48 percent) and that of the School Support Services advisers (13 percent). Slightly fewer had used the advice of another (current) principal (34 percent) and their school's Limited Statutory Manager (3 percent). Trends over time in the different sources of advice will be investigated in the next report once more data are gathered.

In 2010, around half (54 percent) of board chairs said that the advice they received was essential to their making an appointment. Thirty-six percent said that the information was very useful, 3 percent said it was of some use and 1 percent felt that it was of limited use. This particular question was not asked in the 2009 version of the survey for board chairs.

Advice was given on many different aspects of the selection and appointment process. Seventy-two percent got advice on the quality of the candidates to help them make a shortlist, 71 percent got advice on the practicalities of making an appointment, 71 percent used someone with additional expertise as a member of the interview panel for the shortlisted candidates, 70 percent got advice on developing the job description and person specifications, 62 percent got information on the legal obligations of the appointment process, 57 percent got advice on what weighting

should be given to each of the key factors in the job description, 48 percent got advice on the final choice between candidates, 26 percent had the development of the job description and person specifications done for them, 23 percent had the advertising and shortlisting of candidates done for them, 20 percent had assistance in getting good candidates to apply and 19 percent reported that they got advice on something else. More urban schools got assistance in getting good candidates to apply (31 percent) compared to rural schools (8 percent). This question and the question described below were also not included in the 2009 version of the survey for board chairs.

In 2010, board chairs were also asked what documents they used to develop the job description for their school's principal. Eighty-two percent used the school's strategic plan, 81 percent used the New Zealand School Trustees Association guidelines for principal appointment, 61 percent used the professional standards in the principal collective agreement and 14 percent used the *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* document. More urban schools used the *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* document (22 percent) than rural schools (3 percent).

Thirty-nine percent of trustees responding to the 2009 NZCER secondary national survey said they would like MoE advice on professional experts to help with principal appointments and 20 percent said they already got such advice. Those who got or wanted such advice from the MoE outweighed those who did not want it (23 percent). Twenty-eight percent of the trustees would also like MoE advice on making this crucial decision for their school and 18 percent said they already got such advice. Thirty-five percent did not want MoE advice on the appointment. They were also asked whether they would want MoE support in making the appointment. Thirty-six percent wanted this, 18 percent said they already received this support and 28 percent did not want this support.

In the 2010 NZCER primary national survey, fewer boards of trustees (compared to the secondary schools' boards of trustees) said they would like MoE advice on professional experts to help with principal appointments (21 percent) or that they already got such advice (13 percent). A greater percentage than the secondary school boards said they did not want this advice (31 percent). Compared to the 2009 NZCER secondary national survey data, a similar number wanted MoE advice on making an appointment decision (26 percent), stated that they already got this advice (13 percent) or said they did not want this appointment advice (31 percent). Twenty-seven percent wanted MoE support in making the appointment with 18 percent saying this currently occurs. Twenty-two percent did not want this support.

Board chair views of the quality of applications for principal

In 2009, 16 percent of boards thought their field of applicants for their school's principalship was very good to excellent. Around half (52 percent) thought the quality of applicants was all right, 28 percent thought the quality was patchy and 2 percent said it was disappointing. However, 87 percent thought those on the shortlist were good/excellent quality, 12 percent thought they were all right and 1 percent thought they were patchy.

Two percent of the 116 applicants offered a principal's position did not take it. The board chairs were asked to rate those on their school's shortlist's suitability from 1 (will probably cope) to 5 (is ideal match). Unsurprisingly, those who were selected were more likely to be an idea match (78 percent) compared to those who were not selected (12 percent were thought to be an ideal match). Ninety-two percent of boards reported that they were very satisfied with the appointment they made, 4 percent were reasonably satisfied and the rest did not respond.

Similarly, in 2010, 17 percent of boards thought their field of applicants for their school's principalship was very good to excellent. Just under half (49 percent) thought the quality of applicants was all right, 30 percent thought the quality was patchy and 3 percent said it was disappointing. A somewhat smaller proportion (77 percent) of boards thought those on the shortlist for their school's principal's job were of good/excellent quality, 19 percent thought they were all right and 3 percent thought they were patchy or disappointing. There were no significant differences by school type, size, location, decile, proportion of Māori students on roll or authority.

Possible reasons for the difference between 2009 and 2010 could be because there were fewer high-quality applicants, that boards had higher standards or that board chairs who felt more strongly about the quality of applicants had a higher response rate to the survey.

Only 1 percent of the first choice applicants in 2010 did not accept the position they were offered. When the board chairs were asked to rate the suitability of those selected, 75 percent thought they were an ideal match compared to 6 percent of those who were not selected. The majority (88 percent) of board chairs were very satisfied with the appointment they made, with 6 percent being reasonably satisfied, 1 percent being satisfied and 1 percent being dissatisfied.

Social characteristics of shortlisted applicants and those selected

We do not know the social characteristics and experience of all those who applied. However, we do have information on 384 shortlisted candidates and the 116 of these who were selected for principalships in 2009. We also have information on 299 shortlisted candidates and 87 of those who were selected for principalships in 2010. The figures reported in this section only include those where there was a significant difference.¹⁰ The following comparisons were made:

- differences in the number of applicants by the categories below (e.g., gender, age)
- differences by if selected or not
- of those selected, differences by school characteristics (e.g., decile).

¹⁰ This is the case throughout the report.

Gender

In 2009, women made up 53 percent of the shortlisted applicants for principalship, but only 44 percent of those appointed. A greater proportion of men than women were selected; however, this difference was not quite statistically significant.

Women were more likely to be among the shortlisted applicants for U1 and U2 schools (79 percent and 69 percent of those selected), for rural schools (71 percent) or for full primary schools (68 percent).¹¹ They were less likely to be shortlisted applicants for U7 and above schools (28 percent and 20 percent of those selected), secondary schools (26 percent) or schools with low Māori enrolment (42 percent).

In 2010, there was an increase in the number of women being shortlisted and selected with 59 percent of the shortlisted candidates being women, and women making up 60 percent of those appointed. However, this may be due to the differences in the school characteristics of the survey responses. For example, in 2010 there was a higher proportion of survey responses from full primary schools compared to 2009. Women were more likely to be shortlisted and selected for full primary schools than other types of schools in both 2009 and 2010. In 2010, women were more likely to be among the shortlisted applicants for full primary schools (65 percent and 69 percent of those selected) than for secondary schools (36 percent and 39 percent of those selected). Again, there were no significant differences based on gender between those who were selected or not.

Ethnicity

In 2009, 85 percent of the shortlisted applicants were Pākehā, 11 percent were Māori, 2 percent were South African, 1 percent were Pasifika and 1 percent were Asian. Two percent were of other ethnic origins.

Eighty-four percent of the appointed candidates were Pākehā, 12 percent were Māori, 3 percent were South African, 1 percent were Pasifika and 2 percent were Asian. One percent were of other ethnic origins. Patterns in terms of school characteristics were much the same for the appointed principals as they were for the shortlisted applicants.

In 2010, 80 percent of the shortlisted applicants were Pākehā, 11 percent were Māori, 1 percent were South African, 1 percent were Pasifika and none were Asian. Two percent were of other ethnic origins.

Of those selected, 76 percent were Pākehā, 14 percent were Māori, 1 percent were South African, 1 percent were Pasifika and none were Asian. Two percent were of other ethnic origins. Again, patterns in terms of school characteristics were much the same for the appointed principals as they were for the shortlisted applicants.

¹¹ Special schools had a higher proportion of women shortlisted; however, there were only four responses from special schools to the survey.

Age

In 2009, 44 percent,¹² of the shortlisted applicants were in their forties and another 31 percent were aged 50 or older. Twenty-three percent were in their thirties and 2 percent in their twenties. Among the appointed candidates, there is a very similar age profile. Forty-seven percent of those were in their forties, 29 percent were over 50, 22 percent were in their thirties and 2 percent were in their twenties. There were no significant differences between those who were selected or not selected based on age.

In 2010, 42 percent of the shortlisted applicants were in their forties, 29 percent were in their thirties, 20 percent were between 50 and 55 years, 6 percent were 56 years and above¹³ and 3 percent were in their twenties. This pattern was very similar to that found in 2009.

Among the appointed candidates, 33 percent were in their forties, 38 percent were in their thirties, 24 percent were between 50 and 55 years, 3 percent were 56 years and above and 3 percent were in their twenties. This is a slightly higher proportion of those in their thirties and those between 50 and 55 compared to those shortlisted. Again, there were no significant differences between those who were selected or not selected based on age.

All of those in their twenties were shortlisted at primary/intermediate schools and at either U1 and U2 or U3 and U4 schools. Those in their twenties were more likely to be shortlisted by rural schools (86 percent). The opposite pattern occurred for those over 56 years; they were more likely to be shortlisted by urban schools (88 percent). About half of those shortlisted by secondary schools were in their forties, compared to about a third in primary schools. Primary schools were more likely to shortlist younger candidates than secondary schools. However, in primary and secondary schools about two-thirds of appointments were of people aged 30–49.

Qualifications

In 2009, half of the shortlisted applicants' highest qualification was reported to be a teaching degree. Twenty-six percent had a postgraduate degree and 13 percent a teaching diploma. The selected candidates had a similar qualifications profile: slightly more had a postgraduate degree (31 percent) and slightly less a teaching degree (38 percent).

U5 and U6 schools were more likely to shortlist those with postgraduate degrees (45 percent) compared to U1 and U2 schools (7 percent). Schools with low Māori enrolment were also more likely to shortlist those with postgraduate degrees (44 percent and 43 percent of those selected) as were urban schools (34 percent shortlisted) and secondary schools (58 percent shortlisted, 76 percent of those selected). State-integrated schools were more likely to shortlist those who had a teaching degree as their highest qualification (66 percent).

¹² The figures in this section were calculated excluding the nonresponses, as the nonresponse rate to the question about age was fairly high.

¹³ In 2010, there was a finer age distinction with the categories 50–55 years and 56 years and above. In 2009, this was one group 50 and above.

The overall frequencies for 2010 were very similar to 2009, with 45 percent of the shortlisted applicants having a teaching degree as their highest qualification, 27 percent having a postgraduate degree and 14 percent a teaching diploma. Of those selected, slightly more had a postgraduate degree (37 percent) and slightly fewer had a teaching degree (38 percent) or teaching diploma (11 percent).

Secondary schools were more likely to shortlist those with a postgraduate degree (58 percent shortlisted) compared with primary/intermediate schools (19 percent shortlisted). Schools with low Māori enrolment were also more likely to shortlist those with postgraduate degrees (43 percent) as were U7 and above schools (57 percent shortlisted) and deciles 3–4 schools (51 percent).

Teaching and management experience

In 2009, most of those who were shortlisted had at least 10 years' teaching experience (28 percent had between 10–15 years' experience and 55 percent had 16 or more years). Ten percent had between four to nine years' experience and 1 percent (five people shortlisted) had less than four years' experience. Of those who were selected, there were slightly more who had between four to nine years' experience (16 percent) and slightly fewer had between 10–15 years' experience (22 percent).

All of those who had less than four years' teaching experience applied to U1 and U2 schools and primary/intermediate schools. Urban schools were more likely to shortlist those with more than 16 years' teaching experience (64 percent shortlisted and 70 percent of those selected) compared to rural schools (40 percent shortlisted and 35 percent of those selected). Schools with low Māori enrolment were also more likely to shortlist those with more than 16 years' experience (76 percent).

Of those who had been shortlisted, 52 percent had experience being a deputy principal and 43 percent had been a principal.¹⁴ The pattern was very similar for those who had been selected.

In 2010, most of those who were shortlisted had at least 10 years' teaching experience (32 percent had between 10–15 years' experience and 38 percent had 16 or more years). Twenty-one percent had between four to nine years' experience and 1 percent had less than four years' experience. Urban schools were more likely to shortlist those with over 16 years' experience (44 percent) compared to rural schools (26 percent). U7 and above schools were also more likely to shortlist those who had a lot of prior experience (60 percent) as well as secondary schools (64 percent shortlisted with 56 percent of those selected). Compared to 2009, the proportion of those who had more than 16 or more years' experience decreased and the proportion of those with between four

¹⁴ In the 2009 version of the survey deputy principal and principal were the only two options provided. However, in 2010 the survey also asked whether they had experience as a senior teacher or an associate principal. This question examined the previous positions held rather than just the most recent position. In both years this question was phrased: "School management position(s) already held (Circle all that apply)".

to nine years' experience had increased. Of those selected in 2010, 38 percent had 16 years or more experience, 28 percent had between 10–15 years' experience, 23 percent had between four to nine years of experience and 1 percent had less than four years' experience.

Of those who had been shortlisted, 44 percent had been a principal, 38 percent had experience being a deputy principal, 19 percent had been a senior teacher and 11 percent had been an associate principal. As was the case for the 2009 data, just over half of those shortlisted did not have previous experience as a principal. This pattern was similar for those who had been selected; for example, 41 percent had been a principal. However, there was a higher percentage of those who had been deputy principals who were selected (47 percent).

Secondary schools were more likely to shortlist those who had been deputy principals (58 percent shortlisted and 78 percent selected) compared to primary and intermediate schools (33 percent shortlisted and 41 percent of those selected). U7 and above schools were also more likely to shortlist those who had been deputy principals (46 percent). Primary and intermediate schools were more likely to shortlist those who had been senior teachers (22 percent), as were deciles 9–10 schools (34 percent) and rural schools (28 percent shortlisted, 40 percent of those selected).

Leadership professional development

In 2009, 28 percent of the shortlisted applicants were reported by board chairs to have completed the First Time Principals programme, 23 percent the Aspiring Principals programme, 20 percent the Principals Development and Planning Centre programme and 6 percent had undertaken a different leadership development programme. Principals who had undertaken professional development were slightly more likely to be appointed: 32 percent of appointments came from those who had undertaken the First Time Principals Programme; 28 percent, Aspiring Principals programme; and 25 percent, Principals Development and Planning Centre programme.

In 2010, 31 percent of the shortlisted applicants were reported to have completed the Aspiring Principals programme and 28 percent the First Time Principals programme. In 2010, board chairs were not asked about any other leadership development programmes. Of those selected, 33 percent had completed the Aspiring Principals programme and 35 percent had completed the First Time Principals programme.

Primary and intermediate schools were more likely to have shortlisted those who had completed the First Time Principals programme (33 percent) compared to secondary schools (14 percent). However, secondary schools were more likely to shortlist those who had completed the Aspiring Principals programme (53 percent) compared to primary and intermediate schools (26 percent). Schools that were more likely to shortlist those who had completed the Aspiring Principals programme were U7 and above schools (57 percent) and urban schools (38 percent). Nonintegrated state schools were more likely to shortlist those who had completed the First Time Principals programme (32 percent) compared to state-integrated schools (6 percent).

Principal careers

We also gathered some information from board chairs on where principals came from and where they move on to. The background of the new principal selected is first discussed followed by information on the destination of the principal being replaced.

Where the principals came from

In 2009, 39 percent of new principals came from another principalship, 49 percent came from a senior school management position and 5 percent came from a teaching position (scale A).¹⁵ Those who were appointed to urban schools were more likely to come from a principal position (44 percent) compared to rural schools (30 percent). All of those who had teaching position as their most senior experience were selected at rural schools. There were no significant differences between primary and secondary schools in terms of where the new principals came from.

Most new principal appointments were made from external candidates (with 16 percent being internal candidates). Forty-one percent came from a larger school,¹⁶ 26 percent came from a smaller school and 12 percent came from a school of the same size. Those who were appointed to rural schools were more likely to come from larger schools (58 percent) compared to urban schools (31 percent).¹⁷

Most of those who were already principals came from smaller schools than the one they were applying for (64 percent), with 22 percent coming from the same size school and 11 percent coming from a larger school. Most of those who came from senior management positions came from larger schools (65 percent), with 23 percent coming from within the school and 7 percent coming from the same size school. The majority of those who came from a scale A teaching position came from a larger school (83 percent) with 17 percent coming from within the school.

In 2010, 39 percent of new principals came from another principalship, 41 percent came from a senior school management position, 6 percent came from a middle management position, 3 percent came from a teaching position (scale A) and 4 percent did not come from a school. Urban schools were more likely to select someone who came from a principal position (43 percent) than rural schools (33 percent) and were also more likely to choose someone who came from a senior management position (47 percent) compared to rural schools (33 percent).

Of those appointed, 11 percent came from within the school, 37 percent came from a larger school, 26 percent came from a smaller school, 18 percent came from a school of the same size and 7 percent did not come from a school. Rural schools were more likely to select someone who

¹⁵ This question asked: "Where did your new principal come from? Previous position (Tick one only)".

¹⁶ Larger and smaller schools refer to the size of the previous school the applicant was from in comparison to the new school they were appointed as principal to.

¹⁷ Larger and urban schools are interrelated categories.

came from a larger school (44 percent) compared to urban schools (31 percent). All of those who did not previously come from a school were selected for rural schools.

Most of those who were already principals came from smaller schools (60 percent), with 29 percent coming from the same size school and 11 percent coming from a larger school. Most of those who came from senior management positions came from larger schools (68 percent), with 11 percent coming from within the school and 14 percent from the same size school. These figures were very similar to those in 2009.

Destination of existing principal

In 2009, the two main destinations of principals who left these positions were reported by board chairs to be to another principalship (27 percent) or retirement (21 percent). Amongst the remaining half, there were many different destinations of the existing principals: 8 percent went overseas, 6 percent became consultants, 5 percent pursued a career outside the education sector, 4 percent returned to the classroom at another school, 4 percent pursued study, 3 percent became deputy principals, 3 percent joined the MoE, 2 percent returned to the classroom at their current school, 2 percent took on a management role at a larger school, 1 percent joined the Education Review Office and 1 percent joined tertiary education institutions. Eleven percent of board chairs did not give a destination for their departing principal and 10 percent gave other reasons.

The most common reason for principals leaving their school, according to the board chairs, was career progression (36 percent). Other reasons for leaving included health reasons (22 percent), retirement (22 percent), family reasons (16 percent), to take time out from education (7 percent), to go overseas (2 percent) and for other reasons (11 percent). Three percent did not know why the principal left.

Again, in 2010, the two main destinations of principals who left positions were to another principalship (36 percent) or retirement (26 percent). The percentage of principals leaving to retire has slightly increased over the years: from 20 percent in 2008, to 21 percent in 2009 to 26 percent in 2010. It will be interesting to see if this apparent trend continues as more baby boomers reach retiring age.

There were many different destinations of the existing principals in 2010: 8 percent went overseas, 4 percent pursued a career outside the education sector, 3 percent became deputy principals, 3 percent joined tertiary education institutions, 1 percent became consultants, 1 percent took on a management role at a larger school and 1 percent joined school support services/advisory. Four percent did not give a destination for their departing principal and 13 percent mentioned other destinations.

The reasons given for leaving were career progression (42 percent), retirement (26 percent), for family reasons (20 percent), for health reasons (11 percent), because of unsatisfactory

performance¹⁸ (12 percent), to take time out from education (9 percent) and for other reasons (20 percent).

For secondary schools, the NZCER national survey data indicate that principals have been staying longer in their positions. For example, only 12 percent of the principals responding to the 2003 secondary survey said their current school had had only one principal in the last 10 years; in 2006, this had risen to 32 percent and in 2009 it was 28 percent. In 2003, only 37 percent of secondary principals thought they would continue as principal of their school in the next five years; by 2006, this had increased to 59 percent and in 2009, 65 percent. Twenty-two percent of secondary principals thought they would like to change to the leadership of another secondary school in the next five years (slightly more than in 2006 and 2003), 21 percent would like a different role within education and 17 percent (a little more than in 2006 and 2003) thought they would probably retire. A quarter of the principals were thinking of at least two options (other than sabbatical leave). For example, just over half those who thought about retirement were also thinking they would stay as principal of their current school.

However, for primary/intermediate schools, the trend is less clear. For example, in 2003, 25 percent of the principals reported that their current school had had only one principal in the last 10 years: in 2007, this had risen to 35 percent; however, in 2010, this had returned to 25 percent. One indication of perhaps an increase in stability is the proportion of primary principals who plan on continuing their role as principal of their school in the next five years increasing since 2003. In 2003, this figure was 26 percent, in 2007, 60 percent thought they would continue in their role for the next five years and in 2010, this figure had grown to 65 percent.

When primary principals were asked in the 2010 national survey what they were planning on doing in the next five years, 34 percent thought they would apply for a study award/sabbatical (a little more than in 2007), 32 percent thought they would change to lead another school (similar to 2007 and 2003), 19 percent were planning on retiring (slightly less than in 2007 but more than in 2003), 14 percent thought they would change to a different career and 13 percent thought they would like a different role within education.

The next NZCER secondary national survey is planned for 2012 and the next primary survey in 2013. It will be useful to examine what pattern emerges in the following years.

Increased stability can have an impact on the opportunities for new principals and those looking to change schools. In the last principals appointments report¹⁹ it was suggested that some reasons that could lead to increased stability included principals feeling better supported (e.g., a substantial minority have come through the First Time Principals programme, which began in 2002); they may find sufficient ongoing challenge in their roles within one school setting (e.g., changes due to the introduction of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA),

¹⁸ A new option added to the 2010 survey.

¹⁹ Wylie, C. (2010). *Principal vacancies and appointments 2008–9*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

the bedding in of *The New Zealand Curriculum*²⁰, the introduction of National Standards) or they may not wish to move; or they may find it, or think it, more difficult to win jobs despite their experience.

A significant minority of principals do feel stuck in the principal's role (despite the fact that many of them gain enjoyment and satisfaction from their work). In the NZCER national survey, principals were asked about their career opportunities. In the 2009 secondary national survey, 53 percent of principals said they would like more career opportunities in education, other than the principalship. Twenty-two percent strongly agreed/agreed that they felt stuck in the principal role (simply) because there were no other opportunities. In the 2010 primary national survey, 57 percent of principals said they would like more career opportunities in education, other than the principalship. Thirty percent strongly agreed/agreed that they felt stuck in the principal role (simply) because there were no other opportunities. There was no significant difference between how stuck primary and secondary principals felt.

²⁰ Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Conclusion

Appointing principals is a challenging and high-stakes task for school boards of trustees. The process relies on having enough good-quality applicants, as well as a good selection process.

With the number of principals who are reaching retirement age potentially increasing, it will become increasingly important to ensure there is an adequate supply of future principals. Currently, small schools, rural schools and full primary schools show higher vacancy rates than other schools. There is a large variation in the number of applicants for vacancies. Some schools only get one applicant, yet others get more than 40. The quality of the overall field of applicants varies, but most board chairs were happy with the quality of those on their shortlist.

One of the clear themes coming through in this report was the importance of advice being available to boards throughout the appointment process. Almost all boards used some additional expertise in the appointment process. This advice was seen as being very important by almost all the board chairs responding. Most board chairs have been very satisfied with the appointment they made.

This report has indicated some potential trends over time in who is being shortlisted and appointed. For example, in 2010, there was an increase in the number of women being shortlisted and selected. However, this may be due to the differences in the school characteristics of the survey responses. For example, in 2010, there was a higher proportion of survey responses from full primary schools compared to 2009. Women were more likely to be shortlisted and selected for full primary schools than other types of schools. The next report, which will be published in 2012, will further investigate whether these are trends or whether they reflect the characteristics of the sample.

It is also important to look at the support and options existing for principals. Data from the NZCER national surveys indicate that a significant minority of principals do feel stuck in their role. Over half of principals in 2009 and 2010 said they would like more career opportunities in education, other than the principalship. In both 2009 and 2010, the two main destinations of principals who left these positions were to another principalship or retirement. However, there is also an increased interest from both primary and secondary teachers in the principalship, and a substantial minority of both primary and secondary deputy and assistant principals were interested in the role.