

Bali Haque NZPF conference Keynote August 2021

Getting it right: our schooling Futures: stronger together: Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātitini

It was 1991, and I was about 3 months into my first principalship at Tamatea High School when I found this book titled 'GETTING IT RIGHT' in my Pigeon Hole – there was no note – but I thought at the time -it was clearly accusatory- because it appeared right after I had made some rather questionable decisions . I read it, I kept it, and referred to it often. No one ever owned up to gifting it to me, but I have to say -I have always been immensely grateful that they did.

It seems to me that right now, as an avalanche of change is about to be unleashed by the government and the MoE ,there is a need for us to collectively and constructively contribute to the process of GETTING IT RIGHT for the entire nation.

The independent Taskforce which I chaired (with Barbara Ala'alatoa, Mere Berryman John O' Neil, and Cathy Wyllie) gave the government a book- our report. It was not called GETTING IT RIGHT- but that was clearly our intent - it was called *Our schooling Futures Stronger Together: Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātitini*

We know it was read and taken seriously . In fact the government produced its own response to it titled 'Supporting all schools to succeed', and more importantly, a detailed cabinet paper which responded specifically to each of our 52 recommendations

So in the next 45 minutes I intend to:

- Identify the problems that we thought need to be addressed;
- Explain some of our major proposals to address these problems
- Outline the government's formal response
- Comment on what is actually happening right now
- Compare what is happening with what we expected should be happening
- Suggest what you might want to do about it all

So I'll start with the big picture.... what we know:

- We knowachievement and 'well-being' data from a number of sources tells us not is well– I don't need to rehearse our gradual educational decline here -other than to emphasise the persistent and relatively large gaps between those that the system serves well and those it does not.
- We know...we have collectively been trying to address this issue for many years -not particularly successfully. The list of reforms that have ended with a whimper or a storm of protest is long –I don't need to rehearse these here either

- We know.... that though there are lots of innovative and successful initiatives popping up around the country in individual schools and Kahui Ako, they very rarely impact on the whole system and tend to dissipate over time
- We know ...we have an ongoing crisis of workload and burnout right across the system- from support staff to teachers to principals to government officials. People are working extraordinarily hard, and have been in this state a long time.

In short: -we have deep rooted problems, many of us are working to breaking point to address them , and we are making little progress- the problems keep coming back. For older hands- it feels like Groundhog day.

The State Services Commission- (now called the Public Services Commission) nailed it when it reviewed the performance of the education agencies:

“there is too much variation in learner achievement with long standing problems for particular learners and learning populations like Maori and Pacifica. Adoption of good practice is almost always referred to as patchy and the uptake of promising innovation is seen as slow to spread across the system.

There are too many systemic weaknesses in the way funding , information and talent are developed and deployed to be confident that the good results we do see are the result of good system performance rather than personality or situation specific factors”

Depressingly this was written in 2016

This by the way is not really a new problem- you might want to google the 2012 SSC PIF review of the MoE – one of the reviewers incidentally was one Iona Holsted. Much the same story.

I think there are 10 networked **systemic** problems which are holding us back and I want to flag them here today. We need to be clear about the problems we are trying to solve.

Number 1

We have a highly devolved ‘one size fits all’ competitive education system made up of around 2500 self-governing entities . In too many cases it is unworkable and a nonsense –. One result is that a whole bunch of schools which have had ongoing problems, not necessarily of their own making, have short-changed generations of children .

Number 2

The system is not only highly devolved- it also highly centralised -and controlled by a Wellington based MoE which (*until recently*) had been stripped of curriculum and educational expertise. It also has regional offices with little discretionary decision making power, or resourcing. In our report we described the MoE as an ‘overly bureaucratic, top heavy opaque organisation with spaghetti like internal lines of communication’

Number 3

Because of this tension of being both devolved and centralised - we have developed a low trust, top down system, The centre, frustrated by its lack of traction in schools with its well-intentioned reforms, responds by imposing more rules and regulations on all schools ...Boards now have 36 acts of parliament to abide by , but your inbox will tell the story well enough.

Number 4

Consequently we have developed a compliance driven system- as schools which are expected to be ‘independent crown entities’ react to waves of what they see as failing reform and suffocating rules . Many feel under siege and respond with a ‘this too shall pass’, often justifiable cynicism. The lack of trust between the MoE and schools is palatable and accepted as the norm. It’s the culture

Number 5

‘Consumer choice’ for some in a competitive model, has resulted in massive decile drift , often on ethnic lines -with appalling social and educational impacts. It encourages schools boards and principals to think in terms of “my school, my community”, rather than ‘our schools and our community’. I will always remember one Auckland Principal at one of our meetings who listened impatiently to our recommendations and then responded with ... ‘yes that’s all very well , but what will I have to give up?’

Number 6

Genuine accessible Kura Kaupapa Māori pathways from ECE to Tertiary are very limited . Kura Kaupapa Maori schooling is under resourced and fragmented and has been for too long

Number 7

We have a post code education system based on location, and type of school which actively widens existing inequalities . Higher decile schools cash in with roll growth and school based funding -at the expense of lower decile schools. It is mind chillingly unfair, and children have to wear the consequences

Number 8

We have created an over complex and incoherent approach to teacher PLD .Teachers have for decades been forced to interpret and implement the curriculum without adequate support and resources. Wheels have constantly been reinvented and workloads have skyrocketed with the MoE acting as no more than a PLD broker and procurement adviser. This too has become accepted practice and part of the culture.

Number 9

The absence of any real action around Leadership development –has dogged us for decades. Crucially, and shockingly -NZ has no coherent national approach around the appointment, development, performance appraisal and career pathways of principals – it beggars belief!

Number 10

‘Mary Pop-ins’ school review processes run by ERO do little to support schools to get better but do drive unnecessary stress and compliance behaviours.

Summary

Let me repeat my earlier comment:

...we have deep rooted problems ; we are all working to breaking point to address them , and we are making slow if little progress. The problems keep coming back. Groundhog day

The Task Forces’ 52 recommendations were designed to address these systemic problems

The government response to our recommendations was positive.

The Government welcomes the Taskforce Report and agrees there is a clear case for change. The Report is substantial, well-informed, and provides many useful insights and suggestions for improving our schooling system. The proposed Government approach set out in this document will make progress on the underlying intent of nearly all of the Taskforce proposals.

A detailed cabinet paper has followed in which each of our recommendations is specifically responded to. Take a look if you have not done so -its online. It’s a powerful resource .

The governments commitment is for almost all of our recommendations to be implemented in some way- some almost immediately some in a year or two, and some in 4 plus years. It’s all in the cabinet paper.

The Taskforce was relatively pleased.

But we identified two key proposals which were dropped (one regarding the configuration of ESA and the other regarding ERO).

Also- we noted with some trepidation , some key proposals were sitting ducks for the bureaucracies to mangle. We worried also about the how much money would be allocated for all this in a Covid crisis.

Pivotal and illustrative is the fate of the Education Service Agency and the Curriculum Centre

We saw the ESA (renamed Te Mahau) as being operational- it would get things done and would provide the systems connections we so badly need.

We envisaged that the ESA **would be separate** from the MoE (leaving the ministry a smaller policy and coordinating entity) but would work closely with it. It would have a head office in Wellington ,and have a network of offices closer to schools throughout the country. The numbers and configurations of these we thought best to leave for further policy work- it would look different across the country - but we were clear that they needed to be local and have strong **connections** with schools.

We expected the current MoE Regional offices would be disestablished . -we felt the sector needed to see a distinct break, a new culture and transparent funding, without more bureaucracy.

Our vision was that the ESA local offices would work closely with schools in their areas and have considerable resource and decision making powers. Specifically we suggested they would:

Support boards with principals' appointments and appraisal , analysis of achievement and well-being data and planning and review. The ESA would also take over responsibility for enrolment schemes, and schooling network planning decisions ,including for Kura Kaupapa Maori schooling.

Support principals by advice and guidance and ,through our proposed Leadership Centre and Leadership Advisers (more about these later) **connect** up an active vibrant network of principals research and practice - locally, nationally and internationally

Support teachers by providing or brokering a comprehensive PLD curriculum and resources advisory service. This would include access to voluntary secondments and teacher swaps between schools, across the country as well as the locality. We also envisaged the development of teams of para-professionals to work with teachers, much like para-medics work with doctors

Support learners by providing coherent Learner support (I will say no more) and hardwired access to other government services such as Health and Social Welfare

Support whanau by providing complaints resolution services

Be responsible for school review and reporting

We envisaged that ERO would be 'repurposed' by focussing on systems monitoring ,and not be responsible for individual school reviews.

Instead we proposed that ESA advisers would partner with schools to provide **ongoing review** . I will come back to this later.

Pivotal to the success of the ESA was the appointment of Leadership Advisers – which were agreed to in the cabinet paper. Leadership Advisers would be high calibre educators who would work with **both** boards and principals cooperatively professionally and with goodwill- and be key points of contact We envisaged one Leadership Adviser for 10-15 schools. We did the sums by the way, and in the context of the education budget, this is entirely affordable

We also envisaged that the ESA's would employ high quality PLD and Curriculum staff who would be based locally and nationally as necessary

We expected that the relationship between the ESA and schools would be permeable Principals would regard a move to the ESA as a great career move. Similarly principals and others coming back from the ESA into schools would be welcomed back with eagerness to contribute their wider experiences and knowledge. The border would be permeable

So that is what the TF envisaged. And without doubt -the government agreed with our intent to establish this very different way of working with schools

I will come back to what the MoE is actually proposing with the ESA ,in a minute but first I want to talk about

The Curriculum Centre

During our many meetings with MoE staff we often asked :who is in charge of the curriculum ? We were mostly met with blank stares . When we dug deeper and asked to talk to someone in the MoE who understood curriculum and curriculum design we were told that is not core business.

My view is that It is precisely because of the lack of curriculum leadership over the years that our teachers have been forced to carry huge workloads- as they have struggled to understand, resource and implement the curriculum- and it is this ,not the curriculum itself or the assessment regime, or ITE, which provides the most powerful explanation for our relative educational decline and exploding workloads.

This is so important. The system established in 1989 made sure that the MoE was unable to properly support and resource the core job of a teacher- the delivery of the NZC. Teachers and principals were effectively abandoned to their own devices and in the end had to do the work. I think you know this.

The Task force view was that in the future, the MoE needed to *attend to its knitting- the core business of the curriculum.*

So we envisaged that the Curriculum Centre would:

- Build real expertise in the MoE around curriculum and curriculum design and pedagogy - across all learning areas. And we are talking all three curricula here and we are talking grunty high calibre and respected people leading it.
- Provide leadership and guidance around sound assessment
- Lead curriculum change and be responsible for all centrally funded PLD
Make sure principals and teachers were key players in changes
- Work with Leadership Advisers, and the ESA, to provide practical timely curriculum support to classroom teachers as they needed it
- Monitor how effectively the curriculum is being implemented and have the clout to intervene early where it is not working.
- And in particular develop and expand the current National Monitoring Study of Student achievement out of Otago university and NZCER- which has huge potential

We also recommended that the Curriculum Centre would work with an independent expert group of gurus and practitioners who would hold it to account and offer external review

While the Task Force was deliberating, the Curriculum Progress and Achievement Advisory Group led by Mary Chamberlain was also at work -remember it was established after National Standards were removed

What they proposed is relevant to what we were saying about the Curriculum Centre. There recommendations included:

- Establishing a process for an ongoing review of the National Curriculum - so we could be clear about the national 'must do' curriculum and the local curriculum
- Developing a Progress and Achievement map, or set of markers which would be an integral part of that curriculum - to replace national standards, and to support learning and teaching
- Creating a travelling rich ROL for every learner

All initiatives, the Taskforce thought, which were perfect for the Curriculum centre to lead and coordinate

So what's actually happening? How is all this translating into practice?

A key response is of courseTe Mahau

You will all have seen the Te Mahau document sent out by the Secretary of Education .

I found the document fairly difficult to read- **But there is no doubt it very broadly reflects our intentions**

According to the Secretary of Education Te Mahau will:

- Be a **separately branded** business unit—which is good- *but still remain* within the Ministry. That's not so good.
- Change the way the MoE works, with much more outward facing **customer focus**
- Give effect to te Tiriti o Waitangi with very strong bicultural focus throughout
- Give priority to regional and local voices and services
- Deliver greater responsiveness, accessibility and integrated services and support
- Improve feedback loops and information flows across the whole system

This is to be achieved by

- Setting up three new frontline 'super' regional offices for national coverage
- Retaining current MoE Regional offices intact -as the delivery arm with unspecified 'smaller arms' – for more local contact- (a problem I think).
- Shifting substantial resources and capability from Wellington to the regionally based Te Mahau
- Establishing a Curriculum Centre

It's progress, and maybe has potential , so I am not damning it outright-But I see significant challenges ahead:

- The Minister did not establish a separate ESA – it would be too 'disruptive '. For us this was a disappointment particularly now that The Minister of Health has done exactly that by establishing an operational Health ESA, alongside the MoH. In Health there will be 4 front line regional offices while education will have 3; there is a certain amount of madness here- if we really are keen on an integrated whole of government approach
- No Leadership Advisers have been employed as yet. Establishing Te Mahau without Leadership Advisers is a bit like building schools without any teachers. The Minister has committed to them in the cabinet paper – but as yet the funding is **precisely zero** for Leadership Advisers.
Nothing will be achieved without these appointments.
- MoE Regional offices have been left intact as the 'delivery arm' The culture and staffing of the Regional Offices will need to change dramatically if this is going to fly. It might -if the **Minister provides the right leadership** –but there is a real danger, a **very very** real danger of simply creating another layer of management with a lot of music accompanying the chairs, lots of deputy secretaries, and zero change -of the kind that is needed at least.
- Alarmingly-there is no mention of principal and professional **Leadership** that I can find – I will return to this question later

Curriculum Centre

I was pleased to update this section of my address last week because the MoE announced the Curriculum centre will be established in early October .It has also appointed an expert advisory group.

At last! - because there has been quite a lot of action regarding the curriculum recently

You have all seen the 5 year curriculum refresh which looks familiar enough

But we also know

- A curriculum refresh is on its way to your school
- The MoE is already employing 40 curriculum Wellbeing leads- but no one is sure what they will do yet
- A further group of up to 48 unspecified advisers will be employed by 2024 (which seems awfully light)
- A Lead writers group **of contractors** is in existence to oversee the curriculum refresh rewrite
- An enriched digital RoL is being worked on by someone
- 'Curriculum voices' groups have been established to provide input from all stakeholders
- The NZ histories curriculum has been written and been consulted on
- The intention is that ALL learning areas will be refreshed based on the NZ histories template (understand, know and do)with a strong bicultural lens

These are huge issues here. Our intention was that the Curriculum Centre headed up by a senior MoE Deputy Secretary ,and supported by an expert advisory group would be asked to do the initial broad brush design work with teachers, principals and the community at large. **This would be a calm and measured process**

Right now-I am really concerned that we are in the middle of a classic rushed job, and in danger of missing a huge opportunity . The Curriculum Centre has not yet been established, and the advisory group (I wonder whether there is enough diversity in thinking/philosophies in the group?) has just been appointed but we have rushed in- and made many major decisions already

- Building work has begun without foundations
- The horse has bolted
- We are repairing the aeroplane in mid-flight
- We are putting the cart before the horse

I have seen this sort of thing before in the bureaucracies - far too often!

The process has all the hallmarks of being siloed and disconnected and plain amateurish. Different parts of the MoE are working on bits of it. They will each have their own work programmes and deadlines- and I can see absolutely no evidence that they are really talking

through the network of overlapping and complex curriculum and assessment issues that need to be talked about. If we don't act, Teachers in your schools will once again be left to sort it out.

The Task force proposed a Curriculum Centre specifically to avoid this scenario!

I am reminded of Dr. Atul Gawande's book called *The Checklist Manifesto* (it changed my life) ... he tells us about a 30% drop in botched surgical procedures after he insisted that the entire surgical team in the operating room introduced themselves (not everyone knows everyone in a big hospital) **before the first incision** and explained their role- and the lead person said out loud ... 'we are here to cut off this person's left foot', or whatever....'

Then he used this checklist to make sure everything was coordinated and in place before the first incision

Surgical Safety Checklist
World Health Organization | Patient Safety
A World Alliance for Safer Health Care

Before induction of anaesthesia	Before skin incision	Before patient leaves operating room
(with at least nurse and anaesthetist)	(with nurse, anaesthetist and surgeon)	(with nurse, anaesthetist and surgeon)
<p>Has the patient confirmed his/her identity, site, procedure, and consent?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm all team members have introduced themselves by name and role.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm the patient's name, procedure, and where the incision will be made.</p> <p>Has antibiotic prophylaxis been given within the last 60 minutes?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<p>Nurse Verbally Confirms:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> The name of the procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Completion of instrument, sponge and needle counts <input type="checkbox"/> Specimen labelling (read specimen labels aloud, including patient name) <input type="checkbox"/> Whether there are any equipment problems to be addressed
<p>Is the site marked?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<p>Anticipated Critical Events</p> <p>To Surgeon:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> What are the critical or non-routine steps? <input type="checkbox"/> How long will the case take? <input type="checkbox"/> What is the anticipated blood loss?	<p>To Surgeon, Anaesthetist and Nurse:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> What are the key concerns for recovery and management of this patient?
<p>Is the anaesthesia machine and medication check complete?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>To Anaesthetist:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Are there any patient-specific concerns?	
<p>Is the pulse oximeter on the patient and functioning?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>To Nursing Team:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Has sterility (including indicator results) been confirmed? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there equipment issues or any concerns?	
<p>Does the patient have a:</p> <p>Known allergy?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Is essential imaging displayed?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
<p>Difficult airway or aspiration risk?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, and equipment/assistance available		
<p>Risk of >500ml blood loss (7ml/kg in children)?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, and two IVs/central access and fluids planned		

This checklist is not intended to be comprehensive. Additions and modifications to fit local practice are encouraged.
Revised 1 / 2009 © WHO, 2009

I think we might use this concept for education reform what's on the checklist

- before the change?
- during the change ?

- and after the change?

It's not rocket science but so is ensuring you don't cut off the wrong leg...or forget to retrieve a sponge tucked somewhere to stop the bleeding?

Right now -far too many people and I mean the bureaucrats, teachers and principals have not the faintest idea or understanding of what is going on, and why and how and when.

We could be headed for a botched operation

Nevertheless on a positive note we will have a Curriculum Centre in Octoberwhich is really good ,and there is still plenty to play for

Here are some specifics that are worrying me:

- Are the people working on the ROL and Progress and Achievement road map and the people rewriting the curriculum regularly talking and planning together?
- Are the appropriate assessment processes being **concurrently** developed - and tested for reliability validity and workload ?
- How will the newly created progress and achievement markers not turn into another version of National Standards
- Will the proposed 'Know, Understand and Do' template used for NZ histories work for all learning areas?
- Is the bicultural lens to the refreshed curriculum being thought through given the enormous pedagogical and PLD challenges it throws up?
- What is the PLD for the refresh going to look like? What is the balance between an online portal and face to face mentoring and support
- And -last but certainly not least-what role do school principals have in all this ?

....which brings me to one of my biggest worries

Leadership

it is beyond comprehension to me that the we do not have a coherent process for the identification, appointment ,professional development ,appraisal and career development of (I believe) the most crucial component of the system.

The Taskforce saw the Leadership Centre as being the 'go to' place for leaders and potential leaders to access support and guidance, request bespoke research information- (for example you might pick up the phone and ask for a session with a Leadership Adviser in the planning stages of a new initiative), a directory of available PLD opportunities here in NZ and overseas, and mechanisms to connect with other principals anywhere in the country and overseas.

The Leadership Centre would also

- Accredite private PLD providers
- Set some entry standards for principalship- there are none at the moment
- Provide national guidelines for principal appointment and performance review
- Make Sabbaticals and Scholarship opportunities available in NZ and overseas
- Coordinate secondments and swaps locally and nationally

We envisaged the Leadership Centre as a networked collaborative professional hub and repository of leadership advice and resources for all principals which would work closely with Leadership Advisers across the country – and the MoE, the Curriculum Centre the NZTC and NZQA.

-and thus ensure leadership support and development was coherent and connected to the system as a whole .

Think of the possibilities!!!

What's happened ?

It is pretty much documented in the relevant cabinet papers- they are all online

In a nutshell we have had a demarcation dispute between the NZTC and MoE which has directly resulted in a mess.

- The MoE initially wanted to host the Centre (although we recommended it go to the NZTC).
- The NZTC objected and met with the minister
- As a result another cabinet paper was produced which turned the Leadership Centre into “ a more visible support system for school leadership” and split the functions between the two agencies with strategy going to NZTC and Implementation going to MoE.
- And in so doing significantly diluted its intent and value

I cannot find any mention of a Leadership Centre in Te Mahau or anything that the MoE has recently produced.

This is a mess created by the politics of the education agencies, aided and abetted by the minister who **has spectacularly failed to fund any leadership work at all**

It's disappointing

However , I remain optimistic. I sense a strong consensus that the time is right for much more leadership support, particularly for principals, so - the agencies need to be made to

sort themselves out and the Minister to front up with the cash. I will come back to that in a minute

ERO

Let me turn now as promised to the question of school reviews

The Taskforce was convinced that the prevailing high stakes 'Mary Poppins' review process is largely a nonsense and that what we need is an ongoing process (not popping in every 3 years) of review and development with highly respected Leadership Advisers in particular, and not ERO, supporting, guiding and yes, holding schools to account as necessary.

We thought that Achievement and well-being data about schools, could be made available on an official MoE website – (some of it is there already) - on an ongoing basis, for parents to look at.

But the core of school review would involve Leadership Advisers working with principals and boards in a trusting and improvement based relationship, dealing with problems as they arise and actively encouraging innovation and thoughtful risk taking.

The TF was convinced that doing school review in this way would fundamentally change the way many schools operate- for the better.

But, unfortunately this was one recommendation that the Minister said no to. He worried that parents would miss ERO. A great pity.

However he did ask ERO to adopt a more collaborative approach to the review process which some of you will know about – It's too early to tell how it's going, but I wish them and you well it may well be a step in the right direction.

NEXT STEPS

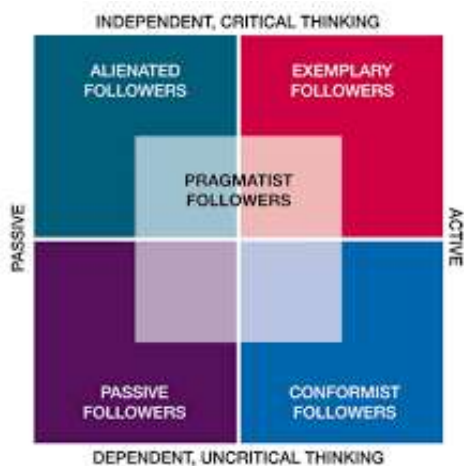
You may be feeling jaded at the moment. There seems to be a lot happening
So what can I leave you with to help -whether you are from a large urban school or from a small rural school- high decile/low decile ...strong board/ weak board – wherever and whoever you are

First I want to say this: Despite the significant reservations I have highlighted today, I do believe- especially if you read the cabinet papers and understand their intent- **we could be on the cusp of an opportunity to design an education system that works for everyone, addresses equity issues and prepares our children well for the challenges they will face.**

I would not want to squander that opportunity

I have found this tool rather useful

Robert Kelley's Followership dimensions and styles, adapted from Kellerman (2008)



I know the term 'follower' has negative connotations- please try to put these aside. We are all followers and actually followership is an immensely powerful thing- just google it, if you haven't already.

You can apply this tool to members of your staff - you could probably name people in each quadrant- but I want to use it to ask questions about how we, as **followers of the Minister and his team of officials**, might respond to what's coming our way.

There are two axes :

- left to right (you might be passive or active)
- Bottom to top (you might be uncritical and dependent or critical and independent)

Pragmatic followers: survive but they tend to self-centred and ask: what's in it for me?

Passive followers: will do as little as possible and comply with what they can get away with - they want to get on with their job and be left alone. Passive followers might well say " this too shall pass'

Conformist followers : will be keen to do as they are asked and do it well; tick the box, be efficient and get on with the job

Alienated followers: will probably have done their research , understand what is happening but not be happy about it, and will at every point express opposition, and put up road blocks. They will be grumpy and negative , but they know their stuff- which will drive leaders to despair.

Exemplary Followers will understand and comprehend and try to see it all from the perspective of the leader. But they will ask : what is the objectives? What might be done better? How might it work? .Does the left hand know what the right hand is doing? Is it

connected ?Is it coherent? They will be constructive and will be relentlessly focussed on achieving the desired ends.

Exemplary followers will make every effort to support the leaders to get the desired result though active engagement , questioning and honest and constructive feedback.

I think Exemplary followers have by far the best shot at influencing leaders- and I mean the Minister and his officials- to GET IT RIGHT

So with that I mind I leave you 4 short final observations and a heartfelt call to action.

1. We must double down on our purpose- to arrest our educational decline and the dreadful inequities in our system- in the end we all benefit if we get this right -but if we don't there will be appalling social and economic consequences
2. We must all focus on how the system delivers for **everyone**. We have systems wide problems , and we simply cannot solve them by focussing only on our own school or community. Doing that won't fix the systemic problems.
3. We can do it- because we are blessed with committed, professional and ultimately fair minded teachers and principals *and government officials* .There is huge potential in the changes currently underway. Let's not retreat into cynicism and become alienated or passive or even conformist followers.
4. We should assume goodwill (but not necessarily clarity of thinking) on all sides- because in this country, goodwill is abundant .

A call to action

I think that every single one of you , as exemplary follower school principals - individually and collectively can help put the waka back on course- and ensure we do indeed GET IT RIGHT

You might start by being as informed as we can be about how the system is changing and how these changes affect all our children- frankly it's a core professional task of principalship.

- As a minimum -you should read the cabinet papers on the Tomorrow's Schools review, the curriculum refresh and leadership. They are all online . Knowledge is power. There is almost nothing as effective as quoting a cabinet paper to the minister or an official.
- Read the relevant official communications coming from the ministry regarding these changes You ignore them at your peril – we don't want more ground hog days and more failed reform. The MoE probably thinks it's doing a good job on the comms.....
- Give all these issues priority at your regional groups and caucus meetings and be prepared to make honest judgements about **whether intentions are being translated into well directed actions or not**

You can do all this by asking powerful questions and not resting until you have a satisfactory answer and a sense of clarity, coherence and direction about what is being proposed-I have suggested some questions today you might be interested in following up-but you will no doubt have your own.

And finally and crucially:

- Monitor changes as they occur and be prepared to hold the minister and officials to account- use all the social/political/union and professional associations and media networks you have to do so.
- do this as individuals
- as well as in your groups.
- And as a Federation

Don't give up- it's too important

Right now , today, we have a once in a generation opportunity to GET IT RIGHT. As exemplary followers -as well as enormously powerful leaders in your communities , individually and collectively I respectfully suggest to you –Let's not do another groundhog day.

YOU HAVE THE POWER, YOU HAVE THE PASSION and you need to act with PACE

Thanks for listening

