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“It’s not like they’re dropping from heaven”: Leadership succession in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools

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ABSTRACT

“It’s not like they’re dropping from heaven”: Leadership succession in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools

This study investigated the succession planning practices faith-based integrated schools in New Zealand use to build leadership capacity and ensure their continuity of vision, culture and special character. Globally, schools are facing an impending crisis of leadership replacement as a result of ‘baby boomer’ retirements, the increasingly complex role of school principalship and the lack of succession planning to fill the anticipated vacancies that will inevitably occur. As demonstrated in the existing literature, educational institutions in western countries have been implementing succession planning strategies over the past decade but succession planning has not been a focus of strategic development in New Zealand schools. Evidence shows that recruiting leaders to faith-based schools is challenging and a coordinated strategy of leadership succession planning is needed to address this problem.

An interpretive, qualitative design was employed using several different data-collection techniques to examine the experiences of principal succession 2005-2011 in faith-based integrated schools in New Zealand. Based on Brinkerhoff’s Success Case Method (2003) the study was conducted in two phases – a questionnaire and then a case study – involving six faith-based integrated schools: three Catholic schools, and three evangelical Christian schools. The findings of the research led to the development of a succession planning framework – an impact model with six criteria against which to measure success. Using this framework, informal succession practices were identified in all these schools. It was discovered that the three schools whose practices most closely aligned with the impact model were better prepared for their most recent principal succession event than were the other schools.

It is argued that the findings of this study, particularly the development of the impact model, could guide and support principals, boards of trustees and proprietors in state-integrated and other school systems to develop and implement succession planning as part of school strategic planning. Furthermore, the findings can inform policies and practices for leadership development and succession management to ensure a well-prepared leadership pipeline for the future.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GLOSSARY

APP – Aspiring Principals’ Programme
APIS – Association of Proprietors of Integrated Schools
BES – Best Evidence Synthesis Programme
BOT – Board of Trustees
CEO – Catholic Education Office
DOI – Deed of Integration
ERO – Education Review Office
FTPP – First Time Principals’ Programme
KLP – Kiwi Leadership for Principals
MoE – Ministry of Education
NAGs – National Administration Guidelines
NEGs – National Education Guidelines
NZACS – New Zealand Association for Christian Schools
NZCBC – New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference
NZCPT – New Zealand Christian Proprietors’ Trust
NZEI – New Zealand Education Institute
NZSTA – New Zealand School Trustees Association
NZTC – New Zealand Teachers Council
NZQA – New Zealand Qualifications Authority
PD – Professional Development
NZPPTA – New Zealand Post Primary Teachers’ Association
PSCI Act – Private Schools’ Conditional Integration Act
CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The recruitment of senior leaders to vacancies in New Zealand’s faith-based schools can be a challenge. While this challenge is not unique to such schools, there are specific issues that are particularly significant. This thesis investigates one of these issues: the place of succession planning and the building of leadership capacity to ensure the continuity of vision, culture and special character in New Zealand’s integrated faith-based schools. If the Christian mission and special character of these schools is to be maintained, the transmission of the culture, vision and faith-based values must remain distinctive. Succession planning and leadership development are critical to ensuring that there are plans and processes in place to identify, grow and secure a leadership pipeline for the future.

In addition to the generic educational mandate, integrated schools have a philosophical ethos which underpins their respective education systems. This ethos is encapsulated in a defined special character, and usually there are historic factors related to their vision and mission (Cook, 2012; Lynch, 2012; Norsworthy, 2014). For faith-based integrated schools, the significance of the principal’s role is deeply connected to the vision, the values and the principles on which particular schools are established. Principal replacement is intrinsically linked to these factors.

1.2 Leadership succession

Leadership succession in New Zealand schools is a timely and significant topic for research. The changing nature of principalship and the projected shortage of future leaders in schools is an area of increasing concern to New Zealand’s schools and education systems. New leadership heralds change. Organisational cultures are entrenched in the policies and practices of each school. The loss of many current leaders to retirement and the perceived reluctance of many younger teachers to take on the role, signals a concern.

Leadership succession has been a focus in the business world for over 50 years (Carlson, 1961). However, in the education field it has only been in the last 20 years that it has emerged as a significant concern as schools, globally, have experienced increased difficulties when needing to appoint a new principal (Hargreaves, 2003; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2004; Lacey, 2003a; Quinn, 2002). Earlier writers (Glasman & Heck, 1992; Hart, 1991) did, however, signal concerns
regarding leadership succession in schools. At the turn of this century there was a flurry of activity in the USA and the UK as national and local education organisations and school districts, recognising a reduction in the number of applicants to principal roles, endeavoured to address the issues through preparation programmes designed to meet the future needs of schools (Educational Research Service, 2000; National College for School Leadership [NCSL], 2003, 2004). In New Zealand there has been very little research conducted that focuses on succession in principalship, or the changing nature of school leadership (Macpherson, 2009, 2010). This study, therefore, makes a contribution to professional knowledge and practice, as well as to research. This fits the particular mandate of Auckland University’s EdD programme which allows educational professionals to develop high quality research skills and apply the outcomes of research directly to professional contexts.

1.3 Research questions

The purpose of this study is to explore leadership. In particular the study asks: In what ways do principals and boards use succession planning in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools to ensure the building of leadership capacity and the continuity of vision, culture and special character? As a principal of a faith-based school I had some knowledge regarding the absence of any succession planning policies or processes. I was interested to discover what other faith-based integrated schools were doing to prepare for future leaders in their schools.

Research conducted in the UK and Australia indicated that faith-based schools were experiencing difficulties in finding suitable principal replacements (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007; Boyle, 2010; Canavan, 2001; Dorman & D’Arbon, 2003a; Hartle & Thomas, 2003; NCSL, 2010; Niedhart & Carlin, 2003). Brooking had similarly investigated a potential principal recruitment crisis in state schools in New Zealand (Brooking, 2007, 2008; Brooking, Collins, Court, & O’Neill, 2003) and Macpherson (2009, 2010) had investigated leadership succession practices and strategies within the New Zealand state secondary school domain. I could find no evidence of any research into the place of succession planning in integrated schools, and very little reference to it in any other educational context in New Zealand. Hence, a very strong motivating factor became investigating the phenomena of succession planning and preparation for principal replacement in the environment with which I was most familiar – faith-based, integrated schools. The following sub-questions provide a framework for the study:

1. What plans, policies, practices and processes are in place for principal succession in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools?
2. What role do the Board of Proprietors and Board of Trustees have ensuring the continuity of culture, vision and special character during the process of principal change?

3. What opportunities or programmes are offered to teachers within faith-based integrated schools to build leadership capacity and ensure a leadership pipeline exists for the future that will ensure the maintenance of a school’s vision, culture and special character?

1.4 Key terminology

Within the New Zealand education system, a number of words, phrases and concepts exist that are unique to this context. The following section highlights these in order to provide clarity and understanding, and to share background information about the place of integrated schools within the New Zealand state education system.

1.4.1 The Private Schools’ Conditional Integration Act (1975) – a brief history

The New Zealand school system has a unique feature, not evident in other international education systems. The state education system was established by the Education Act 1877. This Act provided for a free and secular state education for all children between 5-13 years of age. Prior to 1877 schools were operated either by missionaries, churches or private groups, and schools were often subsidised by provincial governments (Cook, 2012; Lynch, 2012; Norsworthy, 2014; Rata & Sullivan, 2009; Swarbrick, 2012). In 1877 the ‘secular’ provision did not suit the Catholic and Protestant churches; they subsequently set up their own private school networks to ensure the continuation of their religious practices within their schools. From the 1930s a small amount of government funding was made available to these faith-based schools. Post-WW2, the ‘baby boom’ led to burgeoning school rolls and the growth of private schools, especially Catholic schools, which had to cope with increased demand. A decrease in the number of religious teachers (nuns and priests), accompanied by this rapid growth in student numbers, began to have negative effects. Where previously the religious teachers had been paid a meagre stipend, the increase in the number of lay teachers and the resulting increases in salary costs started to put considerable strain on the Catholic education system. As children progressed through Catholic primary schools, more Catholic secondary schools opened to accommodate the increased number of students continuing their education beyond the primary years. Greater numbers of students stretched the resources even further. The pressure on resources was not alleviated even in the 1960s when private schools received more generous government grants (Cook, 2012).
When the private Catholic education system ran into serious financial difficulties in the 1970s it became evident that it could no longer be sustained under then current systems (Lynch, 2012). The potential collapse of the Catholic education system and the possibility of thousands of private Catholic school students being placed in state schools would have been very serious. The state system did not have the infrastructure to cope with the sudden influx of thousands of students throughout the country, should the Catholic education system no longer exist. State-integrated schools emerged as a political response to a crisis occurring within the private Catholic education system (Sweetman, 2002). Following the passing of the PSCI Act (Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975) the Labour Party government at that time, instigated state-integrated schools. As state-integrated schools, Catholic schools were then required to fulfil all legislation covering state-funded schools. The PSCI Act (1975) did, however, allow Catholic schools to retain ownership of their considerable land and buildings cache, and retain their special Catholic religious character. All Catholic schools became integrated between 1979 and 1984 (Lynch, 2012). The integration agreement ensured state funding for all school operations and teachers’ salaries which relieved the financial difficulties experienced within the Catholic education system.

1.4.2 Integration of other private schools

The PSCI Act (1975) created a legal framework that enabled all private schools to take advantage of the provisions of the Act and become state integrated, should they wish to do so. Integration into the state system is at the discretion of the Minister of Education (Ministry of Education, 2014). As indicated, all Catholic schools took this option. The first non-Catholic school to integrate under the act in 1976 was Wesley College, a Methodist school. Several other non-Catholic schools followed between 1978 and 1979. In 2015, New Zealand state-integrated schools comprised 13% of all schools (86,000 children). Of the 331 state-integrated schools at this time, 238 are Catholic and the remaining 93 schools include Adventist, denominational and non-denominational evangelical Christian, Rudolph Steiner, Jewish, Islamic and Montessori (MoE, 2013b). Each group of schools is distinct, with its own system of administration. Catholic schools are administered by the New Zealand Catholic Education Office. There are several proprietors who have responsibility for the Catholic schools throughout New Zealand. For all primary schools, the proprietorship rests with the Bishop of the regional diocese who acts as the proprietor, and safeguards the school’s special character. For secondary schools, the proprietor may be the regional Bishop or one of the founding orders such as Marist Brothers or Mercy Sisters. All Adventist Schools are administered by Adventist Education New Zealand, which also acts as the proprietor. The Catholic Education Office and Adventist Education New Zealand
operate in sharp contrast to the third group of schools, the evangelical Christian and independent integrated schools. The latter schools operate independently of any organisation. Each evangelical school has its own proprietor who safeguards the special character of the school, and its own Board of Trustees which is charged with the governance of the school in line with the practices required of all state schools in New Zealand. Montessori and Steiner schools are affiliated by an educational philosophy that underpins their teaching values and practices (Kerr, 2006; May, 2012).

This thesis will focus on faith-based integrated schools which are Catholic or evangelical Christian schools. One Adventist school took part in the wide-ranging Phase 1, but for reasons which will become apparent; it was not selected for inclusion in the more focused Phase 2.

1.4.3 The growth of the Evangelical Christian School Movement

During the 1970s and 1980s there was considerable growth throughout New Zealand of private evangelical Christian schools. Fifty-three schools opened during those two decades. The term ‘evangelical’ relates to being in agreement with the Christian gospel and emphasising salvation by faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ through personal conversion and the authority of scripture (Smith, 2012). The evangelical Christian schools that were established during this time were either part of the religious ministry of a particular evangelical church, or were inter-denominational and set up by a Christian Trust. For the purpose of this study, evangelical Christian schools are defined as those which operate in all aspects of school life from a biblical worldview, based on God’s revealed truth through the Bible. Christian education is defined as education through a curriculum based on Biblical truth and practice as recognised by adherents of the evangelical Christian faith. The Christian schools which opened as private schools were generally small in roll numbers and operated out of rented or borrowed facilities. As they grew in size and popularity, it soon became evident that the huge cost of providing quality education was becoming prohibitive. There was considerable fear and concern that, should the Christian schools choose to become integrated, they would lose control over the things that made them distinctive as Christian schools (Norsworthy, 2014). The inevitable increase in private school fees eventually led to falling roll numbers. In order to keep these schools operating, a number of owners applied for integrated status under the provisions of the PCIS Act (1975). Becoming integrated benefited schools in many ways, as explained in a book detailing the history of the Christian school movement in New Zealand:

Integration has benefited the school in several ways, including having financial stability and salary parity for the teachers. It has also enabled the school to implement more
adequate teacher-training schemes, maintain policy development and review cycles involving parents and develop the facilities to a higher standard than was attainable before integration. (Norsworthy, 2014, p. 85)

Over the past 40 years, since the introduction of the PSCI Act (1975), there have been numerous attempts by various groups, defenders of secularism, teacher unions and subsequent governments, to reverse the PSCI Act. The Act has so far proven durable (Casinader, 2006; Cook, 2012; Smith, 2012; Sweetman, 2002).

1.4.4 Special character

Upon integration, schools are able to maintain their faith-based special character, and freely practise their tenets of faith as documented through an individual Deed of Agreement. This Deed binds the government and individual proprietors. This legal arrangement within the education system is unique to New Zealand. It allows for a variation to Section 79 of the Education Act 1964 which states that student participation in religious instruction must be voluntary. Parents of students attending faith-based integrated schools make a deliberate choice to send their children to such schools, knowing that religious practice is inherent within the culture and practices of the school (PSCI Act, 1975, S. 32). Currently, for a private school to apply to become an integrated school it must be able to demonstrate that the school has a ‘special character’ and that it will be protected and maintained by the proprietor in order for the school to continue to be part of the state-integrated system. Clause 2 of the Individual Integration Agreement for each school states:

The School’s Special Character as is hereunder described, shall incorporate the Education with a Special Character as provided in the School and it is hereby agreed and declared that the School shall at all times be conducted and operated so as to maintain and preserve the School’s Special Character. (http://www.apis.org.nz)

The term ‘special character’ as used in the PSCI Act (1975) means “education within a framework of a particular or general religious or philosophical belief and associated with observances or traditions appropriate to that belief” (Statutes of New Zealand, 1975, No. 129, p. 3, S.2.1). For Catholic schools and Adventist schools, one deed covers all schools within each system, as they each operate under a national organisation. In contrast, all Evangelical Christian schools operate independently. Therefore, each of the latter schools specifies its own special character, and defines this in a document that forms part of the school’s integration deed with the MoE (see Appendices 1A & 1B).
Boards of trustees, working with, and on behalf of, the proprietors of the school, have a responsibility to maintain and preserve the special character of the school (O’Donnell, 2001). The proprietors, through holding a position on the board of trustees, have the right and authority to address any issues where they feel the special character is being compromised.

The maintenance of the special character is the responsibility of the proprietors of each school, who must be able to demonstrate adherence to the conditions of their Deed of Integration in order to retain their integrated status. The Association of Proprietors of Integrated Schools (APIS) represents proprietors of all integrated schools, and is recognised by the government as the official negotiating body for matters related to integrated schools (http://www.apis.org.nz). A number of documents exist that outline the special character compliances required of boards of trustees of integrated schools. Adherence to these compliances is monitored by the proprietors, normally by way of a triennial special character audit.

1.4.5 Maximum roll
Integrated schools are permitted to give preference in enrolment to students who, either themselves or through their parents, identify with the school’s special character. Preferential enrolment means that parents of students applying for admission usually have to offer some proof (baptism certificate, letter from a priest or minister of the church) attesting to the applicant’s suitability for enrolment under the preference clause. Schools may admit a limited number of non-preference students (usually no more than 5-10% of their total roll) after all preferential enrolments have been accepted, up to the maximum school roll set in the school’s integration agreement. Each proprietor defines what is required for preferential enrolment. When a school is integrated into the state system, the integration agreement includes a stated maximum roll number, and the number or percentage of potential non-preference students. With approval from the Minister of Education, a school’s maximum roll may be changed. This requires an application from the proprietor, along with the support of the school’s board of trustees. The proprietor must be able to provide evidence of unmet demand for education of the special character provided by the school, and an application must also consider whether any other school in the area will be adversely affected if an increase in the maximum roll were to be approved.

1.4.6 Tagged positions
Another unique feature of the PSCI Act (1975), and the individual school’s Deed of Integration, is the inclusion of ‘tagged’ positions. Tagged positions provide a legal safeguard, ensuring that the school can employ a sufficient number of teachers who understand and live by the school’s special character. To ensure that staff employed in integrated schools are suitable and meet the
requirements of the special character criteria set, the deed requires that a certain number of positions be tagged and filled by staff who have a “…willingness and ability to take part in religious instruction appropriate to the special character of the school” (New Zealand Council of Proprietors of Catholic Integrated Schools, 1995, as cited by O’Donnell, 2001, p. 44). Within the Catholic school system there are two positions that are always tagged and can only be held by fully committed members of the Catholic Church: the Principal, as cultural and educational leader, and the Director of Religious Education. All other employees, Catholic or non-Catholic, must be prepared to uphold the special character of the school. In Catholic schools, teachers in tagged positions are required to be actively involved in building the Catholic special character of the school. This may require the teacher to teach Religious Education classes.

In the evangelical Christian schools, many proprietors negotiated a Deed of Integration that requires all teaching positions to be tagged. As a Biblical worldview curriculum is foundational to these schools, the curriculum is interpreted and developed in line with a demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Christian scriptures. Therefore, all teaching positions in these schools are tagged, and staff are required to teach from a personal position as a committed Christian. When appointing to a tagged position, a board of trustees is required by law to include at least one proprietor’s appointee on the Appointments Subcommittee. The proprietor (or an agent of the proprietor) is required to confirm whether each applicant is acceptable in terms of the school’s special character.

In addition to the special requirements within the Deed of Integration, all integrated schools must function in the same manner as state schools and must conform to the requirements of the self-management education system established in 1989.

1.4.7 Self-managing schools in New Zealand
Self-managing school systems exist in many parts of the western capitalist world such as the UK, Australia, Canada, Scandinavia and parts of the USA. The Aotearoa New Zealand education system is the only one where the schools are both self-managing and self-governing. Other western world education systems have regional or district systems through which the governance of the school is managed. New Zealand’s move to its particular model of self-management was as a result of the 1989 education reforms. In 1988 a task force, led by a businessman Brian Picot, was commissioned by the Labour government to review the centralised education system. The Picot Report, titled ‘Administering for Excellence’ (Picot, 1988), argued for the decentralisation of educational decision-making, and a focus on the management of schools by local parent representatives. The policy document embracing the recommended changes and known as
‘Tomorrow’s Schools’ (Department of Education, 1988) was implemented in 1989. Self-governing and self-managing schools are underpinned by notions of democracy, participation, choice, parental and community involvement. The main recommendation from the Picot Report was to make each school self-managing, requiring professionals and parents to work in partnership for the benefit of their school. The board of trustees of each school was charged with the responsibility to consult with their school community to develop a school charter reflecting mission, aims, objectives, targets, and strategic and annual plans in line with the government’s National Education Guidelines, National Administration Guidelines and the board’s priorities (MoE, 2014).

This decentralisation placed the financial and administrative needs of every school in the hands of boards of trustees. This board comprises people elected from the school’s local community, the principal, a staff representative, a student representative in secondary schools and in integrated schools, and board of proprietors’ representatives. Although schools are reviewed by government agencies, they are largely left to make their own decisions. The MoE became the national educational body, the Education Review Office (ERO) was established as the review agency and a board of trustees (BoT) was set up to govern each school. Since 1989 there has been much controversy regarding the change from centralised to decentralised education. Various challenges have surfaced as a result of the 25-year-old reforms in education (Codd, 2005; Novlan, 1998; Openshaw, 2014; Wylie, 2012, 2013). For funding purposes, the MoE assigns a decile rating to each school. State and state-integrated schools are ranked and funded by the MoE for school operational costs on the basis of a socio-economic indicator. This indicator is taken from the census data for households with school-aged children in each school’s catchment area. Decile rankings are a funding mechanism only and do not reflect the quality of the education provided at each school.

Prior to Tomorrow’s Schools and the introduction of self-managing schools in 1989, appointments to the role of principal in state primary schools were made through appointment committees in provincial education boards who appointed people to vacant positions in schools (Novlan, 1998; Wylie, 2011). After the restructuring of education in 1989, when provincial education boards were disestablished, each school’s board of trustees was required to set its own criteria to select and appoint its principal. While this provides autonomy in the process, and some believe it results in more appropriate appointments to positions than were made previously, the policy change moved the accountability for appropriate appointments and succession planning from education authorities to individual school communities (Brooking, 2004; Morrison, 2006).
A major drawback has been that the changing nature of the composition of members on school boards, through triennial elections, can lead to trustees with little experience in the governance of a school being required to undertake the complex process of appointing a new principal.

The change to self-managing schools also included new functions and responsibilities for school principals. Following the introduction of self-managing schools, primary school boards of trustees also became responsible for employing staff. The board’s role is complex, requiring trustees to govern the school, establish policies for effective governance and management, manage the school budget, and take responsibility for school staffing. Wylie (2012) notes, “I suspect that if Tomorrow’s Schools were designed today, with the knowledge we now have, we would not ask so much of school boards” (p. 174).

It is important to consider the role of the board of trustees in the appointment of a principal because, as the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA, 2005, 2009a, 2009b) states, “appointing a principal is one of the most important decisions a board will make. The decision needs to be well-informed” (p. 1). As all elected parent representative trustees on school boards are volunteers from the community, this very critical task is entrusted to a group of people who may not have experience or expertise in human resource management. A study published by the ERO in 2014 noted that only 33% of trustees viewed employing the principal as a key element of their responsibilities, and that many boards relied on the principal to inform them about personnel matters (ERO Report, 2014).

With the implementation of the seismic changes that occurred in the New Zealand education system at the end of the 1980s with Tomorrow’s Schools, the loss of autonomy by the Catholic proprietors of schools pre-integration, was restored, in part, by the structure of school boards of trustees under changes made following the Report of the Taskforce to Review Education (1988). Proprietor representation on each integrated school’s board of trustees (up to four representatives), allowed for fair representation for Catholic proprietors (Sweetman, 2002). The addition of the maximum number of proprietor representatives on a board of trustees of an integrated school can potentially increase the size of the board from seven or eight in state schools to 11 or 12 members in integrated schools. The number of proprietor representatives on the board cannot equal or exceed the number of parent representatives. Boards do have the ability to co-opt additional people if they require some specialist skills for a board project. To support an employment process, the board can employ personnel or educational consultants who bring additional expertise to a principal-appointment process.
The restructuring of education through Tomorrow’s Schools decentralised New Zealand’s education administration 25 years ago, and many people currently in leadership positions in schools have worked only within this self-managing model. The transfer of responsibility for principal appointments to school boards of trustees is an important structural change which has significant relevance for the questions which underpin this thesis.

1.5 My interest in leadership succession

My interest in this topic partially stems from my experience as the leader and principal of an integrated faith-based school. Hamilton (2003) speaks of research as “an extension of self-hood, a thrust of intentionality toward meaning within one’s ‘lifeworld’ (to use Habermas’ term)” (p. 155). As a member of the ‘baby boomer’ generation, I am acutely aware of the ageing population amongst school principals, and the increasing number of my principal colleagues who are reaching the end of their careers. I was also aware that no consideration had been given by my board of trustees to any form of succession planning for my own eventual and inevitable replacement.

With that in mind, as a leader I embraced every opportunity to build leadership capacity at various levels throughout the school. Empowering others to aspire to leadership roles was one of the most enjoyable and rewarding aspects of my role as principal. Hearing of the struggles that many faith-based schools had faced in finding a suitably qualified person to replace a departing principal, led me to this research question, and the investigation that followed.

As principal of a faith-based integrated school, I bring an insider’s perspective to this study. My knowledge of the school system, the opinions of principal colleagues about succession practices, and my experiences with boards of trustees around the issues of succession, are likely to influence the study’s findings. My role has been to faithfully collect the data, interpret them within a qualitative framework and report the research findings accurately. My hope is that the results will be of use and benefit to schools when considering the development of succession policies and practices to ensure the continuity of leaders aspiring to principalship in integrated schools. Somewhat ironically, I was appointed to a new position towards the end of writing this thesis and, therefore, I also witnessed and was involved in the succession-event process.

1.6 Thesis structure

This thesis is organised into seven chapters, with this chapter providing an introduction and some policy context. The remainder of the research is organised in the following way. Chapter 2
provides a Literature Review around the topics of principal leadership, succession planning, principal succession, building leadership capacity, socialisation and cultural organisation, and the challenges of leadership replacement in faith-based, integrated schools. It places this study in a theoretical context. Chapter 3 explains and justifies the methodology used to conduct this study. Chapter 4 sets out the findings. The findings are continued in Chapter 5 where three school cameos highlight the policies and procedures used as these schools replaced their principal. Chapter 6 discusses the findings of the study, and explores the implications of the findings in relation to what is already known about principal succession. The key arguments of the thesis are shared in this chapter. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis, and sets out the limitations of the study, considers implications for practice, and makes recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2: 
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Principal succession is a complex phenomenon. A new principal “changes the line of communication, realigns relationships of power, affects decision making and generally disturbs the equilibrium of normal activities” (Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985, p. 88). The identification and development of school leaders is therefore a critical issue. The principal is regarded as the key influencer in the performance of a school (Bush & Glover, 2003; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson 2005; Fullan, 2003, 2005; Schein, 2004; Sergiovanni, 2005). The role of the principal is multi-faceted, and effective leadership by the principal is pivotal to school success. Principal succession is of interest to those who study leadership, those who appoint principals, those who work in schools and the members of the school community, all of whom have different but complementary interests. The appointment process and outcome can be viewed as a positive and potentially revitalising change in a school organisation.

The focus of this study is to ascertain how integrated schools in New Zealand plan and prepare for a change of principal, and maintain the special character of the school as defined by their integration deed with the MoE. This study emerged from the recognition that succession planning is considered and implemented well in some domains, for instance business and health, but has not, as yet, become normalised or firmly imbedded in the education sector. Succession planning in schools is relatively new in the field of research (Taylor, 2012) and it does not feature strongly in educational leadership and management programmes, or professional development in New Zealand.

This chapter explores the literature related to principal succession, to ascertain what is known about this topic. The chapter also considers the implications for faith-based integrated schools in New Zealand when discussed against the background of global shortages of school principals. Furthermore, this chapter explores national and international trends in principal recruitment, retention and resignation observed as changes in the ageing demographics and the complexities of the principal’s role have simultaneously converged, leading to a perceived crisis of future principal aspirants. The role of the principal within New Zealand schools is discussed and the concept of succession is investigated through a theoretical framework which draws on examples from the business context. The significance of building leadership capacity within the school is
critiqued and principal succession studies conducted nationally and internationally highlight the wide range of issues that contribute to the complexity of this phenomenon. The final section of this chapter focuses on faith-based integrated schools in New Zealand and outlines some additional elements of concern that emerge when considering principal succession. From this literature review the need for research, such as that in this thesis, into succession planning for principal replacement in schools becomes obvious.

The chapter concludes with an impact model for principal succession derived from the literature reviewed in this chapter. Brinkerhoff (2003, p. 75), in describing the importance of the impact model as an evaluative tool states: “The impact model is a carefully articulated and concise ‘forecast’ of what the most successful performance might be expected to look like if the program we are studying is accomplishing what its stakeholders hope it should.” The impact model created for this study demonstrates what successful succession planning could look like if done well in schools.

2.2 Crisis of leadership

Educational leadership issues in the 21st century are complex. The concept of ‘leadership’ has been examined and critiqued in a wide range of books, and articles. Management training programmes, tertiary courses and self-help packages all offer training and improved practice in management and leadership. Eacott (2013) suggests, “Knowledge production in educational leadership, management and administration has been, and continues to be, seduced by fads” (p. 113).

Schools can differ significantly in context, time and place, but the essence of the school institution remains. There have been very few studies conducted in New Zealand relating to the anticipated crisis of lack of applicants for leadership roles. There have, however, been many studies related to this issue, particularly in the United Kingdom, USA and Australia. International trends and patterns ultimately influence what happens in New Zealand. What has changed significantly, particularly in the western world, has been the multi-dimensional nature of expectations influencing the role of school leadership. Today’s school leaders encounter many challenges as they navigate their schools through educational environments that are subject to continual change. School leaders must deal with frequent governmental policy changes by keeping pace with the changes and building frameworks that can withstand the pressures and sustain these changes. At the same time schools must remain strategically focused on improving educational outcomes for students.
2.2.1 International trends

Bush and Jackson (2002) noted the increased accountability for principals in the UK at a time when significant technological changes and political and social pressures made the role more demanding than at any other historical time. In this evolving and changing climate, the desire to lead a school in the 21st century arguably no longer holds the attraction for teachers that it has in previous decades. The decline in the number of teachers seeking to become school principals is causing worldwide concern. Hargreaves, Halasz, and Pont (2008), writing from their research in the field of educational leadership in Finland, state that, “in many countries, almost half of the current generation of school leaders is due to retire within the next five years, creating significant challenges to leadership, recruitment, stability and effective continuity” (p. 71). For the past decade a leadership crisis has been looming globally as there are changes in the ways middle managers and younger teachers are viewing the teaching profession and their place in the future leadership of schools. The shortage of new principals is also exacerbated by the reluctance of middle management to aspire to leadership positions (Cranston, 2009; D’Arbon, Duignan, & Duncan, 2002; Fink, 2010; Lacey & Gronn, 2006; Mulford, 2008), and younger teachers are choosing to stay in the classroom rather than assume leadership roles (Anderson, 2004; Lambert, 2003; Watson, 2007). Extensive research in Australia suggests a looming shortage of future principals there (Barty, Thomson, Blackmore, & Sachs, 2005; Bell, 2012; D’Arbon et al., 2002; Lacey & Gronn, 2006).

Principals are experiencing stress through changing work demands, and a lack of mentoring or professional training to alleviate pressures. As experienced principals leave their positions there is a decreasing pool of seasoned role models to provide the mentoring and guidance that has traditionally been part of a principal’s role in developing leaders (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Mulford, 2008). Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei (2003) argue that it appears lifestyle choices are taking precedence over the time and energy required by those in the role of a principal. “Generation Xers are likely to be more ‘outwardly’ rather than ‘upwardly’ mobile, with a preference for keeping their life options open rather than committing themselves to one particular career path” (Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003, as cited in Watson, 2009, p. 10). Draper and McMichael (1998), in a study of heads of primary schools in the UK, identified that the decision to apply for a headship was the result of reflection by principals on the balance of lifestyle, personal qualities and professional aspiration, as well as the job itself. Barty et al. (2005), researching the shortage of principals in Australia, linked a decline in applications for principal vacancies to changes in family life and societal expectations, with many putting lifestyle and quality of life ahead of promotion. Thus, internationally, a looming shortage of
principals exists because of the impending exodus of principals reaching retirement age, a shrinking pool of individuals desiring to become principals, lack of desirability in the role and, in some western countries, a high turnover rate of principals (Fuller, Orr, & Young, 2008; Watson, 2007).

Over 20 years ago there was concern that the ageing of the principal population globally would result in an exacerbation of this trend. Weindling and Earley (1987) estimated that 7-10% of principals were replaced each year in the United States. Ten years later, the expected principal shortage was such that half of the US districts surveyed had a shortage of principal applicants for anticipated positions (Educational Research Service, 2000). In 1998, it was discovered that 42% of principals in the United States had left their positions within eight years of tenure, most leaving during the first three years after appointment (David & Keller, 1998). In 2002, 40% of the 93,000 principals in the United States were nearing retirement age (Quinn, 2002). By 2004, 54% were approaching retirement (Lovely, 2004a).

This trend has been recorded in other western countries. The United Kingdom’s National College for School Leadership reported that it was expected more principals would retire than the number being trained for the role of principalship (NCSL, 2007). Gibbs (2008) noted that, from 2005 to 2025, the percentage of people over 65 in the United States and in England would rise from 13% to 20% and in Japan, Sweden, Denmark and Germany from 18% to 25% and, in Australia by 2040 the proportion of the population aged over 64 years is anticipated to be 25%. Hargreaves et al. (2008) state that “in many countries, almost half of the current generation of school leaders is due to retire within the next five years, creating significant challenges to leadership, recruitment, stability and effective continuity” (p. 71). An Australian survey investigating the retirement intentions of various workforce sectors found that the ‘education and training’ sector registered the largest proportion of workers who intended to retire in the next 10 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). This trend signals a significant loss of experience and expertise in the education sector.

Aligned to the problem of decreasing numbers of teachers seeking principalship is a declining number of applicants in western countries to teacher education institutes. In the USA there has been a trend of declining numbers in teacher preparation programmes across most states. A report for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing is one example, where the number of students enrolled as pre-service teachers in 2012 declined by 24% from 34,838 students the previous year to 26,446 students (EdSource, 2013). Fullan, a Canadian educator and organisational expert said, “When you allow the teaching profession to decline, you get a self-
perpetuating future that goes downwards because good people don’t go into it and those who do go in, don’t find it satisfying” (EdSource, 2013, p. 3). An OECD report, Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century (Schleicher, 2012) acknowledged that a number of factors such as occupational status, work environment, sense of personal contribution and the financial rewards determine whether students choose to pursue preparation for a career in teaching. Teacher shortages, which are predicted to grow in the near future as large numbers of teachers reach retirement age, affect the general teacher supply and demand. Many countries also face shortages of specialist teachers and teachers serving disadvantaged or isolated communities.

2.2.2 The New Zealand context

The New Zealand government’s website careersnz (2014) indicates that the chances of successfully gaining a position as a school principal are poor, due to limited vacancies being available. The number of principal vacancies has remained almost static since 2008, as principals have stayed in their jobs for longer due to New Zealand’s uncertain economic climate. The number of advertised principal positions decreased slightly between 2010 and 2012 – from 2,422 to 2,405, with several schools closing or merging during this time. Careersnz suggests that people seeking a principal’s role would have a better chance of securing a position at small, rural or low-decile schools, as these schools find it harder to recruit principals and their principal turnover is higher.

In New Zealand, under the previously discussed system of self-managing schools and within an education system that encourages greater autonomy for school governance and management, principals find themselves responsible for marketing, promotion, media scrutiny, school performance, and almost every area of school operations (Wylie, 2012). The role of school principal has become an extremely tough, demanding role requiring multiple skills, limitless energy, stamina, a large capacity for goodwill, a willingness to sacrifice a personal life and the ability to work very long hours (Fullan, 2001; Goldberg, 2001; Lovely, 2004b). Flockton (2001), addressing the needs of schools in New Zealand under the self-managing model, noted the expanding role of the principal:

Many of today’s schools feed, counsel, provide health care for body and mind and protect students while they also educate and instruct. The principal is expected to be a legal expert, health and social services coordinator, fundraiser, diplomat, negotiator, adjudicator, public relations consultant, security officer, technological innovator and top notch resource manager, whose most important job is the promotion of teaching and learning. (p. 21)
New Zealand Ministry of Education figures demonstrate that primary school enrolments will steadily increase until 2019, when there will be 44,500 more students than in 2011 (Johnston, 2015). More than 2000 additional secondary teachers will need to be recruited to meet this increased demand. Preparing more teachers will be necessary to counter the anticipated number of secondary teachers approaching or beyond retirement age, with demographic data indicating that 14% of these teachers are now aged 60 years or older. The Secondary Staffing Report (New Zealand Post Primary Teachers Association, 2015) indicates a continued concern for teacher supply in secondary schools. The survey on which the report is based, is conducted annually and asks principals to supply information related to quality and quantity of supply of teachers for secondary and composite schools. Key findings in the most recent report include: more jobs being advertised with fewer applicants per position; principals feel less optimistic about retaining teachers and more pessimistic about recruiting; the proportion of teachers leaving to go to other jobs outside teaching has increased; and principals continue to express reservations about the impacts of pending retirements on their own school’s future supply situation (NZPPTA, 2015, p. 3). It follows that a systemic plan is needed to ensure an adequate supply of teachers and leaders within schools to ensure the best outcomes for students of the future.

2.3 The role of the Principal in New Zealand

As mentioned earlier, the role of principal has become increasingly complex. The challenges faced are inherent in the increasing breadth of specialised knowledge required. There is greater accountability to all stakeholders, and increasing societal expectations are placed on schools to have ‘wrap around’ services which meet all student and family needs. A degree of skill is required to manage personnel and finances, while, at the heart of the role, is leading and managing a teaching and learning community. Kiwi Leadership for Principals is a booklet resource provided by the MoE which presents a model of leadership that reflects the desirable qualities, knowledge and skills required of principals to lead schools into the future. In Kiwi Leadership for Principals (MoE, 2008, p. 16) a key principal leadership activity is leading change:

To lead change in schools, principals need knowledge and insight into the complex processes of change and the key drivers that make for successful change (Fullan 2005). In particular they need to keep their focus clearly on the central vision for their school, even in the face of distractions. A principal’s ability to establish relational trust among all members of the school community contributes to building a collaborative learning culture
that can help bring the school community together around the core values that underpin the vision.

There is no formal training programme in New Zealand that routinely prepares principals for this school-based leadership role. Those aspiring to become a principal are able to participate in the Aspiring Principals’ Programme (APP), led by a consortium of providers, contracted by the MoE and coordinated by Waikato University. Once appointed to the role of principal, there is access to some professional development. An example is the First Time Principals’ Programme (FTPP), (Auckland University Centre for Educational Leadership, 2014), an induction programme for new principals, designed to meet their individual needs and develop the professional and personal skills necessary to fulfil the role as a new school leader. The latter programme is a partnership project funded by the MoE, and designed and delivered by the Auckland University Centre for Educational Leadership. These programmes stand independent of any formal qualification in any degree programmes offered in leadership. Both programmes are of one year’s duration, and participants receive a certificate at the completion of the course. There are no mandatory requirements imposed by the Ministry for aspiring principals in state or state-integrated schools to have any formal qualifications in leadership. Notwithstanding this, principals may encourage teachers to participate in programmes that identify and support aspiring principals, while at the same time employing distributed leadership practices within the school for the purpose of resource management and continuity of vision.

For any aspiring school leaders, the challenges of the principal’s role could be seen as a deterrent for a future career move towards principalship. The ‘Professional Standards for Principals in New Zealand’ are comprehensive and are outlined in the Kiwi Leadership for Principals, and listed as part of the educational leadership best practice on the Ministry of Education website (www.education.govt.nz). The Professional Standards form part of all principals’ performance agreements; they are examined in conjunction with school strategic plans, the principal’s job description, and the New Zealand Teachers Council criteria for registration as a teacher. The standards cover the four areas considered most important for a principal to lead in a school:

- **Culture:** Provide professional leadership that focuses the school culture on enhancing learning and teaching.
- **Pedagogy:** Create a learning environment in which there is an expectation that all students will experience success in learning.
• **Systems**: Develop and use management systems to support and enhance student learning.

• **Partnerships and Networks**: Strengthen communication and relationships to enhance student learning.

(MoE, 2014)

School leadership in New Zealand has evolved since the move to self-managing schools in 1989 (see Chapter 1). In examining the strengths, weaknesses and tensions of this change in the 1980s, Wylie (2012) states, “principals were key, but they often worked alone. They received little training for their role, and the same was true of the senior and middle school managers” (p. 63). Thirty years later the style of leadership required of a school principal has changed considerably from a ‘top down’ hierarchical approach to, ideally, a collaborative, inclusive model that focuses on building and leading a community of learners. Leaders are now expected to share and distribute leadership responsibilities:

Effective leadership builds the pedagogical, administrative and cultural conditions necessary for successful learning and teaching. Principals do not do this alone. They use their leadership and management skills in ways that motivate and develop the capabilities of others so that responsibility for strengthening and sustaining the work and the direction of the school is shared. (MoE, 2008, p. 7)

Buchanan and Cotter (2009) investigated ways of building leadership capacity in schools and considered the qualities required of a 21st century school leader. They highlight some of the universal changes that have occurred to make this transition in leadership possible:

• The work of theorists like Senge, Sergiovanni, Fullan, Hargreaves and Crowther stresses the importance of working collaboratively to change, grow and support leadership in an organisation;

• Effective schools literature and school reform initiatives advocate the development of learning cultures, visioning for the future and working together in school communities as more advantageous for improved student outcomes than the notion of a hierarchical or charismatic leader leading from the front;

• Theories of learning based on research endorse the value of relationships at the heart of all learning and the development of communities of learning;

• Fewer teachers now step up to leadership roles because of the demands and complexity of the job;
• The ageing of the workforce and potential shortage of teachers has become a catalyst for change; and
• The complexity of the principal’s job.

(Buchanan & Cotter, 2009, p. 2)

As theories of leadership are better understood and implemented in schools, leadership in the 21st century has become more accepted as a shared journey. Principals are key drivers of vision and culture. A principal’s values and beliefs inform his or her decisions, and these undergird successful principalship (Mulford, 2008). Sergiovanni (2005) suggests that the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism, the modeling of values and practices consistent with those of the school, and the level of care and concern for student outcomes always point to the principal’s leadership as the key to success. Given the significance of the principal’s role, it is prudent that the identification and preparation of suitable leaders for the future are carefully considered and systematically incorporated in the preparation of principal aspirants.

2.4 The concept of succession

Succession is an interactive process in any organisation. It marks the departure of one leader and the entry of a successor. There are many definitions of succession planning, ranging from the simple concept of replacing one person with another in an organisation – “right people in the right places at the right times” (Buckner & Slavenski, 2000, p. 79) and “ensuring survival through a continuity of leadership” (Abrams, 2002, p. 27) – to descriptions of a process that involves significant thought and development over a period of time. Succession has been described as: the process of building the internal leadership pipeline (Blouin, McDonagh, Neistadt, & Heland, 2006); organising, motivating and controlling a plan of development (Altman, 2009); an organisational approach to creating, building and retaining internal bench strength (Cashman, 2001); developing the next generation of leaders (Bryham & Nelson, 1999); and, developing internal talent in our schools and offering opportunities to experience leadership (Hunte, 2010). One of the most comprehensive descriptions for the concept of succession was developed as part of an audit tool for governors in 2010 through the NCSL in the United Kingdom. The guide for school governors is very clear about the purpose of succession planning for schools:

Succession planning is not only about being able to appoint an appropriate head teacher and is not an added extra for governors to consider, succession planning is a core activity
planned as a strategy by a team of governors and is made up of the following actions: retaining effective leaders, recruiting talented leaders, inducting leaders, identifying leaders with ability, developing leaders and accelerating progression where appropriate and considering different models of leadership to achieve the aims of the school. (NCSL, 2010, p. 1)

There are many variables associated with the social dynamics of succession, and especially the way in which a person is integrated into membership of an organisation. Succession is important for two basic reasons: “administrative succession always leads to organizational instability and it is a phenomenon that all organizations must cope with” (Grusky, 1960, p. 105). Grusky, an American sociologist, speculated that succession is disruptive to organisations because it sets the conditions for the development of new policies, disturbs the traditional norms of the organisation, and promotes changes in the formal and informal relationships among members of the system. On the functional side, however, succession brings in ‘new blood’ and new ideas. Succession can also revitalize the organisation so that it can adapt more adequately to its internal demands and environmental pressures. On the dysfunctional side, succession can promote conflict among the staff, and lower employee morale which, in turn, can contribute to a lack of organisational cohesiveness and a decrease in its effective functioning (Grusky, 1960). Other writers have focused more on the importance of strategic planning, recruiting the right person and developing new leadership from within (Butler & Roche-Tarry, 2002; Ibarra, 2005; Maxwell, 2004; Torrisi-Mokwa, 2003). Succession, therefore, can bring multiple effects depending on timing, the choice of internal or external successors, and the abilities of the successors. Succession planning and leadership development should ideally be synonymous in a long-term process for managing the potential leaders across the organisation (Hargreaves, 2009; Hargreaves & Fink, 2004, 2006, 2007).

Where once succession planning was seen largely as job replacement, the proliferation of literature and training in the business world has changed the concept from unplanned to a more purposeful, strategic planning tool (Beeson, 2000, Froelich, McKee, & Rathge, 2011; Leibman, Bruer, & Maki, 1996; Schoonover, 2011). Succession planning is the strategy that an organisation establishes to ensure that within the organisation there is an adequate supply of appropriately prepared personnel from whom to make a selection, to guarantee a smooth transition of leadership when a leader moves either by retirement, or takes a position at another location. This happens through the deliberate and systematic efforts made by the organisation, to recruit, develop and retain individuals with a range of leadership competencies, who are capable
of implementing current and future organisational goals (D’Arbon & Dorman, 2004; Lacey, 2002a; Leibman et al., 1996).

Succession management is an on-going flexible approach, orientated toward developmental activities that grow leadership capacity within the organisation, rather than focusing only on selected employees and considering the positions they might potentially fill in the future. Identifying and encouraging emerging and aspiring leaders, and establishing programmes to develop leadership skills, should be seen as a key part of a school’s strategic plan (Davies, 2007; Earley, 2013). Succession planning can include activities to attract, extend and keep the best staff at all levels. Such planning provides for continuity of culture, and the evolution of necessary institutional-based skills.

Effective succession planning considers how each future employee might add value to team performance. According to the Hagberg Consulting Group (1998), succession planning and clear expectations have helped school districts in the USA by engaging senior management in a disciplined review of leadership talent; guiding development activities of administrative teams; bringing selection systems, rewards systems and leadership development into alignment with the process of leadership renewal; assuring continuity of leadership; avoiding transition problems, and preventing premature promotion of principals through professional development. Normore (2004b) supports the notion that clear expectations are essential in order for effective succession planning to occur. Rarely does an organisation have only one leader to whom its members turn for inspiration and direction. There is usually evidence of a variety of colleagues taking initiative and fostering interesting developments in classrooms and other areas of school operations. Quinn (2002) notes that an effective succession plan anticipates administrative vacancies, and also develops a pool of qualified candidates prior to the need for a new principal.

To understand how succession planning can assist schools in their strategic development it is useful to consider the background to early ideas of succession that emerged from the business sector over 50 years ago. For the purposes of this study and based on a synthesis of the literature reviewed above, succession planning is defined as intentionally developing a strategic plan to recruit, identify and develop leadership talent within a school to ensure organisational readiness for future senior leadership roles.
2.5 Succession planning in the business context

Succession planning in education is a relatively new concept with much of the related literature emerging only this century. Previous examples of succession planning models have come from the business world. Prior to 2000, much of the research which has provided a context for understanding succession planning in the business world has predominantly taken place in small-to medium-sized businesses of up to 250 employees. Some authors in the business literature have looked for prescriptive ‘one size fits all’ step-by-step solutions for succession planning. However, no one formula will fit every business context so principles of succession planning can only act as guidelines; it is incumbent upon each business to develop a model that best suits their situation (Baldwin, 2001; Gold, 2013; West, 2005). Ip and Jacobs (2006) state that much of the literature on succession planning in business is contradictory and “succession planning is generally considered to be a unique, case-by-case process, where a one size-fits-all mentality is simply not appropriate, and thus a wide variation in viewpoints cannot be avoided” (p. 341).

Many businesses have the acumen to run a profitable enterprise, but lack the ability to complete a smooth transition to the next generation of leaders. This is not surprising as succession planning is a complex process dependent on a number of criteria. Schoonover (2011) suggests a clear set of criteria (Table 2.1) for all organisations to consider as essential in determining the success of succession-planning methods.

Table 2.1 Best practices in implementing succession planning, Schoonover (2011, p. 8).

| • Create a clear purpose and guiding principles. |
| • Fit program design to culture and organizational readiness. |
| • Develop specific criteria and process. |
| • Provide appropriate support (e.g., buy-in, change management, training, tools). |
| • Develop clear ownership for the key elements of the process (including clear roles at each integration stage). |
| • Make it an integrated process, not an event. |
| • Provide linkages to other talent development applications (e.g., preparation assignments, development planning, performance management). |
| • Leverage key data and technology to drive decisions. |
| • Continuously improve the process. |
| • Stay the course with implementation. |
Successful businesses, such as those studied by Collins and Porras (1997), have made the connection between the practices of identifying and supporting possible successors (succession planning), and creating a culture where leadership development is valued and all workers can share in leadership responsibilities (succession management). The mark of a good succession management programme in business depends on having a strategic, systematic and consistent approach that further develops employee and organisational capability (Carey & Ogden, 2000; Clutterbuck, 2012; Goldsmith, 2009; West, 2005). Succession planning strategies range from simple replacement planning, to a purposeful talent identification, development and management programme. Common components of effective succession planning in business are: goal articulation, business strategy assessment, management talent association, excellent communication, and a sound understanding of corporate finance (Holland, 2008).

Businesses and schools are complex organisations and, despite some commonalities in human resourcing, the strategies used in business succession planning cannot be easily transferred to an educational context. Garchinsky (2008) investigated practices used by successful school principals to ensure continuity of culture and vision in the school beyond their tenure. He considered business leadership succession alongside educational leadership succession, and contrasted them in three ways:

1. Business and schools view the process of leadership succession differently, and have different strategies to enact it. Businesses have generally identified it as an inevitable process so plan towards it. Many schools view it as a ‘necessary evil’ and have no specific plan.

2. Education literature views leadership succession from the perspective of the successor, while business focuses on the predecessor’s role in the process.

3. Businesses generally see the practice of identifying and supporting possible successors to be intricately involved with the process of sharing leadership responsibilities among various stakeholders. Some schools participate in both practices but often do not see them as necessarily related. (p. 25)

While drawing on some of the traditional literature around leadership succession management, Garchinsky explored the more contemporary practices of distributed leadership and other options for building leadership capacity. He showed that activities that promote a planned process of leadership succession may result in a smoother succession of leadership for school principals in the same way as happens in the business community. The activities Garchinsky referred to specifically were those activities which encouraged a focus on the vision and culture. He
considered leadership management to be “the planned use of specific activities to promote the smooth transition from one leader to his or her successor” (p. 75).

2.6 Historical theoretical framework for understanding succession

An early study of executive succession and its consequences was conducted by Carlson (1961) and it provided a platform for subsequent research in the areas of business and education. Carlson’s large study of administrative succession and its consequences in public schools in USA established a framework of inquiry that has supported many subsequent succession-based research studies. He discussed a framework that included stages of pre-succession, the actual succession event, its consequences, and the preparation for subsequent succession. He also examined central patterns of motivation and action dependent on the origin and goals of the succession, and how these patterns may influence the selection of the next successor. Carlson categorised superintendents (school district leaders in USA) as being either ‘place bound’ (insiders) or ‘career bound’ (outsiders). The primary focus of Carlson’s study was to observe the actions of these administrators and the ways others from within the school organisation responded to them. He identified that place-bound superintendents tended to maintain the school system as it was, whereas the career-bound individuals tended to facilitate change. Carlson (1961) identified succession as an “event that calls forward an array of feelings from school personnel” (p. 41) and he determined that succession elicits feelings of excitement, apprehension and expectation that considerably influence the actions of school personnel. He also suggested that the response from the organisation to a succession event was dependent on a number of variables accompanying the succession process. Although Carlson’s work was completed last century it has continued to be used as a significant point of reference in the study of succession management. In particular, Carlson’s work contributes to the debate on ‘insider’ versus ‘outsider’ appointments in the succession process. By examining this study’s place in succession planning, it is possible to then make significant links between the practices of 60 years ago and consider what relevance they have, if any, to a 21st century school setting.

2.7 Building leadership capacity in schools

Across business and education there are some common practices and purposes in building capacity in leadership. However, as suggested by Garchinsky (2008), significant differences exist between the organisational cultures of the business world and public education. Business models of executive leadership tend to be highly structured and concentrated around the use of
autonomous executive power (Collins, 2005). Schools, although complex, are not as tightly structured and leaders tend to have less executive authority.

There are many possible approaches to the preparation and development of those aspiring to become school principals. The issues surrounding principal development span international boundaries where very different preparation systems exist. Wildy, Clarke, and Slater (2007) identify four complex roles of principalship that lead to the need for professional and psychological preparation of potential principals. Firstly, the principal’s leadership significantly impacts student achievement. The ability for a school to demonstrate increased effectiveness is dependent on a competent principal. Secondly, principal leadership requires high levels of skill in strategic management, curriculum knowledge and human resource management. Thirdly, the complexity of the role has been a contributing factor in influencing many capable teachers and potential school leaders to be reticent about applying to become principals (Cranston, 2007; D’Arbon et al., 2002; Draper & McMichael, 2003). Finally, a fourth reason to prepare people for the role of principalship is the need to mentor and support an aspiring leader into the role, and develop their capacity to contend with the complexity of the role. This includes providing opportunities for the aspiring principal to deal with tensions and dilemmas in decision-making, the challenge of dealing with the demands and expectations of many stakeholders, managing time, and coping with potential isolation from peers and colleagues.

The issues surrounding principal preparation are recognised globally. In some countries principals receive support and preparation, while in many others principals receive very little preparation for the role or assistance when transitioning into the new role. Fink (2011b) recounts the experience of one new head teacher in the UK:

I had a brief meeting with the previous head teacher and during that meeting he gave me three big bunches of keys, told me the combinations to all the door locks and gave me a list of the parents who would cause me grief and that was it. It’s staggering to think about it. But that was it. That was his handover process. (p. 11)

In countries such as the USA, Canada and the UK there are formal qualifications which lead to principalship, whereas in countries like Australia and New Zealand, as indicated above, there are programmes available for professional development for aspiring and first-time principals, but participation is not mandatory.

A major form of leadership practice found in the literature as well as in actual practice is to build ‘leadership capacity’ across the staff (West-Burnham, 2004). The concept of building capacity
originates from the literature surrounding school improvement and the importance of professional development initiatives to ensure improved student achievement (Harris & Lambert, 2003). Sustained school improvement requires leadership capacity to be built from within a community, where the learning of teachers and students is valued equally. Building capacity requires the principal to share leadership in a collaborative manner that allows others to be involved in key elements of strategic planning. Shared leadership can enhance school performance across all areas of school life. There are several terms commonly used to describe ways of building leadership capacity such as ‘shared leadership’ (Lambert, 2003), ‘distributed leadership’ (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004) and ‘collaborative leadership’ (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Duignan and Bezzina (2006) state that “shared or distributed leadership has been demonstrated to contribute to improved student outcomes, increased recognition of the profession, and more effective change management” (p. 4). Spillane (2005) suggests that there is perplexity about the term ‘distributed leadership’ as it can be described and labelled in a variety of ways to suit a number of contexts. He states “distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice rather than leaders or their roles, functions, routines and structures” (Spillane, 2005, p. 146). For the purposes of this study, references to shared or distributed leadership relate to an organisational practice within a school which seeks to develop leadership skills to improve organisational efficiency leading to enhanced student outcomes.

One of the best ways to secure successful succession is to stretch and spread leadership across people now; not just in the future, to distribute and develop leadership so that successors will emerge more readily and take over more easily. (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 93)

While building leadership capacity may be achieved through the use of various models of sharing leadership in schools, the responsibility for ensuring this happens ultimately rests with the principal. As indicated in the impact model, providing leadership opportunities for aspiring leaders in a faith-based integrated school is critical to ensuring an on-going supply of leaders for the future.

Research indicates that preparing capable leaders must begin long before any appointment (Crow & Matthews, 1998; Daresh, 1997). Capacity building is an effective method of improving and sustaining an organisation (Collins, 2001; Fullan, 2003; Lambert, 1998), and it need not be limited to site-specific strategies. While leaders are have some responsibility for developing potential leaders to replace themselves, the organisation should ideally be structured in a manner that allows for growth and opportunity, so that leaders can emerge. For example, a core group of
future leaders can be formed by developing the leadership capacity of current employees. Collins (2001) identified that developing leaders from within is crucial to building great organisations. A key element in building leadership capacity is to increase the talent pool from which future principal appointments can be made. Gronn and Lacey (2006) discussed the merits of ‘cloning their own’ when investigating aspirant principals and the operation of school-based processes of application and selection. They concluded that, while cloning might be self-serving, it could also turn out to be self-defeating, and may not offer a viable solution to the shortage of principals.

Fullan (2005) described capacity building as “developing the collective ability – dispositions, skills, knowledge, motivation and resources – to act together to bring about positive change” (p. 4). He also discussed lateral capacity building involving principals and teacher leaders in collaborative efforts to learn and contribute to school improvement. Fullan’s descriptions of building leadership capacity are based on developing leadership skills for formal leadership roles. Developing leaders from within by providing the educational and leadership opportunities will benefit both the organisation and the individuals within it. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) contend that, “leadership stands on the shoulders of those who go before and lays the groundwork for those who will follow” (p. 57). The concept of ‘growing your own leaders’ has been endorsed as a positive way to guide and mentor aspiring leaders within the school. Potentially such a practice will ensure a continuous pipeline of future leaders and suggests that leadership development still belongs within the school, under the guidance and direction of effective leadership practitioners (Christie, 2005; Gronn & Lacey, 2006; Harris & Lambert, 2003; Lovely, 2004b; NCSL, 2006; Nixon, 2008).

It is important to form a strong culture in schools from which leaders can emerge and flourish. Effective leadership development and succession planning practices can lead to a strong culture. Essential components in school systems that prepare and professionally develop the most capable school leaders include recruitment, selection and induction (Hart, 1993). There is a growing realisation by government education agencies that leadership development in schools must not be left to chance, and consideration needs to be given to formal leadership development practices to prepare successors for the principalship. School improvement and success requires effective principal leadership that is consistent, sustainable and strategically managed. This can be attained either through externally provided leadership development programmes, or by developing personnel within the school who can provide dynamic and effective leadership in the future. The complexity of the principal’s role and the increased demand for greater accountability to stakeholders necessitates the development of a strategic plan that includes
succession planning and professional development that will encourage and inspire experienced teachers to aspire to this position. “Sustaining a culture of school improvement processes relies on continuity of the formal leadership position of principal and that can only be achieved through coordinated leadership succession planning” (Bell, 2012, p. 1).

Schools and school boards need to seriously consider the challenges of succession and sustainability for long-term leadership (Fink & Brayman, 2006). One way of building the leadership capacity of an organisation is to implement a comprehensive, strategic succession planning initiative that encourages high-potential employees into leadership (Lambert, 1988; Leibman et al., 1996). Identifying, attracting, recruiting, selecting and socialising aspiring school administrators are important aspects of leadership preparation (Normore 2004a, 2004b). Leadership succession strategies encourage the development of a common culture (Hargreaves, 2005a; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). In discussing sustainable leadership, Hargreaves and Fink (2003) outline seven principles of sustainable leadership. They suggest that sustainable leadership creates and preserves learning that matters; secures success over time; sustains the leadership of others; addresses issues of social justice; develops human and material resources; develops environmental diversity and capacity; and actively engages with the environment. They highlight the importance of school systems working in a way that supports sustainable leadership. Hall (1988) suggested that school principals should have the attributes of professional internal change agents. They should have knowledge of the change process, the phases of change, their role in the change and skills relevant to the techniques, processes and roles involved in the change. By shifting the responsibility of leadership succession from the successor to the predecessor, and by incorporating the motivations of leadership succession into the practices of distributed leadership, schools can move from a focus on succession planning to a focus on succession management.

2.8 Studies of principal succession

Effective succession is dependent on skillful facilitation of the powerful relationships among the many dimensions of school culture and organization. A group of studies about principal succession emerged in the mid1980s through to the early 1990s. Hart (1993) whose research is based on her own experiences of principal succession, views succession as an interactive process through which the principal is integrated into membership in the organisation. She notes that, “… when a person holding an influential office in a formal organization is replaced, the effects reverberate throughout the organization” (p. 5). Those who appoint new leaders, those who work
with them, and those whose lives may be affected by them, watch for signs that the change will make a positive difference in their work lives and outcomes.

The process of succession also has a significant impact on the new leader. Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) say of principal succession that it, “changes the line of communication, realigns relationship of power, affects decision making and generally disturbs the equilibrium of normal activities” (p. 88). A change of principal precipitates a complex social process that affects all individuals within a school community (see, for instance: Fauske & Ogawa, 1987; Hart, 1991, 1993; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985; Miskel & Owens, 1983; Ogawa, 1991; Ogawa & Hart, 1985). These researchers concur that principal succession significantly affects the life of a school, and the complexities surrounding a succession experience can be immense and varied. Studies about principal succession were not as prolific in the late 1990s and there was a period of relative inactivity until a resurgence of interest after the year 2000.

It is unclear whether or not intentional practices to support principal succession enhance school effectiveness. However, research suggests that effective schools are led by effective principals, and the role of the principal is crucial (Ogawa, 1991). Most organisations recognise the benefit of having a carefully designed and well executed system for passing the leadership mantle. Having a succession plan in place allows the incumbent principal to be able to assure the board that leadership development and distributed leadership practices are part of the professional development of teachers, and of middle- and senior-level leaders. The literature that details a variety of studies conducted over the past 30 years attests to the wide variety of contexts, strategies and plans that have embraced the concept of succession planning within schools globally.

Principal succession research presents some evidence that leader succession affects school performance (Bartlett, 2011; Bruggink, 2001; Kuehn-Schettler, 2014). During the last 20 years of the 20th century a number of studies of principal succession emerged in Canada, USA, England and Australia. Research regarding principal succession has been approached in a number of different ways and these appear to have followed particular trends from their beginnings in the 1960s. These trends include insider/outsider theories; socialisation perspectives; stage frameworks; culture and organisational change; systemic issues; and, more recently, studies focused on developing leadership capacity and investigating practices and strategies used in preparation for principal succession. Studies comprising each of these trends are reviewed next.
2.8.1 Internal versus external candidates for succession

When a principal’s position has been advertised, applicants may come from within the school or from other schools and educational institutions. Teachers’ expectations for the new leader are often tied to the origin of the new principal. If appointed from outside of the school, the principal will likely be viewed by teachers as a change agent (Crow, 1987; Ganz & Hoy, 1977; Hoy & Aho, 1973). In other studies, however, the mere fact that a new principal is appointed seems to be sufficient to lead teachers to expect change (Johnson & Licata, 1995; Weindling & Early, 1987).

When applying for the role, applicants usually consider whether they have the qualifications, skill and ability to match the criteria of the position being advertised. In some jurisdictions, aspiring principals need leadership qualifications before they can apply for such position. Thus, in countries where an academic qualification is a requirement for appointment to a principal’s role (USA, Canada, and UK), the pursuit of the qualification forms a large portion of their preparation for the role. In New Zealand, however, as already indicated, an aspiring principal does not require a leadership qualification to apply for a principal’s position in state, integrated or private schools. As mentioned in Chapter 1, all New Zealand integrated schools require that applicants are willing to uphold the special character of the school should they be appointed to a tagged position in the school. In faith-based integrated schools this may mean that the applicants need to demonstrate a commitment by way of membership or adherence to a particular denomination or faith community.

Hoy and Aho’s (1973) early qualitative study determined whether the patterns of succession of high school principals affected the faculty’s perception of the principal as a change agent. Data were collected from 60 New Jersey high schools. It drew on Carlson’s (1961) notion of insider and outsider leadership, and applied Carlson’s findings to school-based administrators. The researchers concluded that insider principals seemed to be at a distinct disadvantage, not only in terms of sound principal–teacher relations, but also in their ability to act as change agents. This supports Carlson’s earlier findings. They also agreed with Carlson’s understanding that the insider faces a social system that is well defined, structured and relatively unaltered, while the outsider faces a social system which has been temporarily suspended because of the new arrival. This has the potential to “place the outsider at an advantage with respect to organizational development and adaptation because of the inherent opportunity to reshape the structural and normative patterns of the social system” (Hoy & Aho, 1973, p. 87). Hoy and Aho conclude that insider principals seem to be at a distinct disadvantage, not only in terms of sound principal–
teacher relations, but also in their ability to act as change agents. They agreed with Carlson’s findings that the insider faces:

- a social system that is well defined, structured and relatively unaltered while the outsider faces a social system which has been temporarily suspended because of his/her arrival.

This has the potential to place the outsider at an advantage with respect to organizational development and adaptation because of the inherent opportunity to reshape the ‘structural and normative patterns of the social system. (1973, p. 87)

More recently, Chalstrom (2007) studied internal promotion within a public school system. He examined the complex experiences of individuals who were promoted internally and focused on the challenges faced by individuals who had been long-time instructors within a school district, and then assumed administrative responsibilities within the same district. In contrast to Hoy and Aho (1973), Chalstrom concluded that “internal hiring should be adopted as a norm within school districts as a succession planning strategy” (p. 116). Insiders have problems and advantages. Insider succession can cause problems when one or more of existing assistant or aspiring principals have been unsuccessful applicants for the position. High internal rivalry can create particular obstacles to the success of an insider. Outsiders have some advantages but may experience initial problems in being accepted as the newcomer. Ultimately, each principal’s goal is to affect student learning positively, and the outcome of the success of an ‘internal’ or ‘external’ appointment will be dependent on a number of variables including the leadership traits, expectations, instructional abilities and managerial competence of the person appointed to the position.

Myung, Loeb, and Horng (2011) explored the informal recruitment mechanism of ‘tapping’ in the USA whereby teachers are approached to consider leadership. Their study, which used survey and administrative data on teachers and principals from the Miami-Dade County Public Schools 2007-2008, explored whether such tapping prompted teachers to pursue leadership positions. Their findings revealed that principals tend to ‘tap’ teachers who feel better equipped to take on principalship, and who have more school-level leadership experience. They also discovered that principals disproportionately tapped male teachers, and those who shared their ethnicity. They concluded that their evidence supported the idea that principals are capable of effectively identifying and encouraging teachers with strong leadership potential to become principals, although additional training and succession planning management may ensure that teachers are selected based on their leadership competencies (p. 696). Myung et al. (2011) also identified a study of promotion patterns of suburban principals in Chicago: nearly 75% of
principals promoted within the district had been sponsored by a superior in that district to attain their principal position (Lortie, 2009).

In contrast, Whitlock-Pope (2010) investigated the issues faced by newly appointed principals in their first years of principalship. She compared the experiences of insider principals and outsider principals to evaluate to what degree the appointments were successful, and what advantages there were to being either an insider or outsider. Based on her data analysis of six first-year suburban public elementary school principals, with an equal number of insiders and outsiders participating, her results did not support Carlson’s research on leadership. The differences between the groups and their degree of effectiveness in leading school change was not measurably different within the context of Whitlock-Pope’s study. Over 50 years separate this study from the work of Hoy and Aho (1973) and Carlson (1961). Although the settings for the studies are similar, there have been extensive changes in the educational leadership landscape over this extensive period of time, with there now being a broader range of factors that influence principal succession.

2.8.2 Organisational socialisation

It is important to consider the processes and practices of school systems as they have a profound impact on the socialisation of a new principal. Merton’s (1963) socialisation theory distinguished between professional socialisation and organisational socialisation. Professional socialisation is defined as the process by which individuals acquire the specialised knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, norms and interest needed to perform their professional roles acceptably, while organisational socialisation is the process which involves learning the knowledge, values and behaviours required to perform a specific role within a particular organisation after appointment. In a succession context, professional socialisation generally begins in the pre-appointment phase of a school leaders’ career, and continues into early post-appointment growth and development.

Organisational socialisation begins upon appointment and is specific to the education context. When principals are appointed to schools they are being asked to enter organisations that generally have existed long before their arrival. Each school has a distinct context and culture and new principals often have to learn what is expected of them from the school community, in order to earn legitimacy and validation in that context. Therefore, the principal will experience a process of learning to adapt to the expectations of members of the organisation. Responses to a new leader begin in the pre-succession stage during which variables such as origin, experience and reputation of the new leader set the stage for the succession event (Fauske & Ogawa, 1987; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985). Research on the socialisation stages of new principals suggests
features of development such as learning and uncertainty and gradual adjustment occur and lead to stabilisation taking place (Hart, 1993).

Hart’s work on principal succession and the establishment of leadership in schools (1993) drew on her previous interest in leader succession and socialization (1987, 1988, 1991). She provided insight into ways successors can enhance their acceptance into a new environment and set the stage for an effective administration. Hart (1993) claimed that systems of support that may be helpful throughout a school’s principal succession experience have not been studied, largely because there appeared to be no school systems that have a defined system in place. She asserted that the best possible outcome of a principal’s succession experience would result from the implementation of systems of support that are grounded in a more thorough understanding of the complexities of principal succession. Hart (1993) viewed succession not as a time-bound ‘event’ but as a complex social process characterised by interactions among a school’s faculty and their new principal, and among the principal and others. Hart noted that a succession is one major event and a series of smaller events, and principals undergoing succession analyse and manage these events until they feel socialised into that school community.

Hart (1993) understood that “succession and socialization research present two views of the same event involving the same people – one view focused on the school and distinct effects on the newcomer, the other concentrated on the newcomer’s effect on the group” (p. 40). She further suggests that successors, although in legitimate positions of authority in the school structure, are still new members of a group and are, therefore, subject to the same social forces that shape people who join established social groups. Hart is convinced that the addition of organisational socialisation factors to the study of succession will advance understanding and practice. It is during the first stage of the succession that the principal encounters and confronts a new social setting and where personal interaction confirms expectations, explores personal values, confronts the climate of the school and reinforces “aspects of self that the setting will reinforce or suppress” (Hart, 1991, p. 459).

Much of the early literature found that principals who were new to a school preferred to adopt a ‘wait and see’ approach before introducing change initiatives of a substantive nature to the school (Cosgrove, 1986; Macmillan, 1996; Weindling & Earley, 1987). They did so in order to form a cognitive map that included knowledge of the students, staff and parent community. Brock and Grady (1995) suggest that there is an expectation for a new principal to quickly learn the culture of the school and become an integral member of the organisation.
Considering the socialisation process, Weindling and Earley (1987) found new principals tried to collect as much information as possible about their schools and their predecessors before making major changes. Principals were more likely to be successful if they adopted a collegial approach to decision making from the start of their tenure. New principals were also advised to expect the socialisation process to be “lonely, individual, informal and random” (Brock & Grady 1995, p. 23). Brock and Grady claim that a period of “scrutiny, skepticism and opposition” (p. 23) is likely, so patience is essential. Shackelford (1992) advised new principals to “take control of the socialization process, set their vision, refine their reflective skills and develop the strategic senses needed to dodge the bullets and when to brace for support” (p. 163). Part of taking control of the socialisation process is to acknowledge that individual characteristics have an impact on the socialisation experience, for example, such characteristics as gender, ethnicity, prior experience and prior location. It is also important to recognise how others may perceive the new principal (Matthews & Crow, 2003). Johnson’s study (1999) revealed that the first few months of succession are characterised by challenges and opportunities that convey the complex, interactive, dynamic nature of succession. He specifically looked at how principal successions unfolded during the first few months of socialisation as experienced by veteran and newly appointed principals in a school district that rotated principals around the schools every five years.

Other more subtle, but powerful influences on socialisation as a new principal, are the “shadows of principals past” (Weindling, 1992, p. 334). Weindling used this phrase to emphasise that when a new principal enters a new school, the teachers’ often have expectations of that principal based on the previous principal’s style and relationship with them. Dependent on the performance of the previous principal, this can have a positive or negative impact on the new principal. The transition process of a principal into a new role involves a socialisation experience that is critical to the early success of the new leader in this role.

A study by Bengtson, Zepeda, and Parylo (2013), conducted within the USA educational system, examined school systems, processes and practices which control the organisational socialisation of succeeding school principals. The socialisation process of principals was examined through a case study of four school districts, with 29 participants (principals and superintendents) who told the stories of the socialisation experience when the principal was new to the school. The findings of the study showed that principal socialisation was largely determined by the school systems and the manner in which they influenced the assimilation of the new principal. Schools which were seeking a change and prepared to embrace a more innovative style of leadership from the
new principal were more inclined to use a socialisation process incorporating more random or individual-type tactics. This study showed that, “the degree to which a succeeding principal becomes acclimated to their new role, and the nature of their socialization experiences, are largely dictated by the organization” (Bengtson et al., 2013, p. 158).

A more recent study (Steyn, 2013) considered the professional and organisational socialisation of a new principal in a South African primary school during the first three years of the principal’s appointment. This narrative inquiry, using visual ethnography, told the story of the experiences of this principal as he navigated his way through the socialisation process and made sense of his new role. Steyn (2013) concluded that a principal’s socialisation into a school can be challenging and she recommends that principals be nurtured and supported through this transition phase with an understanding of the challenges they face during this time of socialisation into a new community.

The socialisation of a new principal into a new school, therefore, can be challenging and there are numerous factors that may influence the professional and organisational socialisation of principals. New principals enter the role at different levels of professional socialisation, depending on their background and experience. Learning the accepted values, attitudes and beliefs in the school context, therefore, can greatly assist a newcomer to gain acceptance and form a foundation from which to ensure support and future success in the role.

2.8.3 Stage frameworks
Applying theory from organisational and cultural perspectives to succession of principals, Fauske and Ogawa (1987) conducted one of the most thorough case studies of a school faculty’s pre-succession emotive responses through observing and recording the language and culture of a small suburban elementary school in USA. They analysed shared organisational beliefs as well as identifying the influence the principal had on the school. The researchers identified three themes: detachment, fear and expectation. The study was conducted to extend Gephart’s (1978) grounded theory analysis of leadership succession. Fauske and Ogawa (1987) observed a “non-forced succession in an organization in which members exerted little, if any, influence on the selection process” (p. 25). In their study, four existing norms within the school were identified: order; instructional isolation of teachers; limited personal contact for teachers; and the importance of external expectations. Teachers expressed fears of intrusion, and the unknown expectations of the incoming administrator. They also shared the desire that the new administrator would compensate for the perceived weaknesses of the outgoing administrator.
Discovering considerable disagreement in the literature with respect to the effects that a succession may have on any organisation, Gordon and Rosen (1981) reviewed the relevant literature on succession; they recognised the need to bring together disparate studies of leadership succession. They reviewed literature based on case studies of individual successions, studies of large numbers of successions, laboratory studies of selected aspects of the succession process and some field experiments in natural settings. They developed a framework to categorise the results of various researchers and understand the dynamics of the succession process. Their framework proposed two phases: (a) the set of events that occur prior to the actual entrance and arrival of a new successor to the group; and (b) the set of events that occur once the successor has taken over the position and begins to act, in other words, pre-arrival factors and post-arrival factors. The process of succession was divided into these two groups of factors; the first includes characteristics of the successor such as age, education, gender, race, prior employment, skills and abilities and aspirations and motivations. Post-arrival factors are those aspects of succession which occur after the successor has commenced the role and includes the way workers compare the successor to the previous person in the role, the successor’s actions and reactions, and the manner in which the power and influence sources work in the organisation. Gordon and Rosen (1981) concluded their study by making a “plea for leadership succession research as a substitute for more traditional studies of leadership” (p. 252). Their study was undertaken over 30 years ago and many subsequent studies did, in fact, investigate the process of leadership succession, more so in the world of business than in education. This indicates that there is a place for an updated framework or model, suited to the needs of schools, outlining the stages of principal succession and considering the possible outcomes and impact of this event on the school and its community. In a similar way to the work of Gordon and Rosen (1981), the impact model developed for this study (and discussed later in this chapter) is a framework that deliberately outlines criteria that are important to the principal-succession process.

Educational leadership research in USA during the 1970s and 1980s cast doubts on the notion that administrators of schools affected student learning through instructional leadership and, therefore, to change the administrator would improve school performance. Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) considered Gordon and Rosen’s recommendation that school leadership succession research replace more traditional leadership studies. They presented a modified version of the work of Gordon and Rosen (1981) by adding a third category which they called ‘succession effects’. These consisted of “modifications in the pre-arrival and arrival factors that can be attributed to changing administration” (p. 100). Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) restated the
discussion of Gordon and Rosen which had two models of managerial succession but also added ‘school culture’ which they suggested contributed to the events surrounding leadership change. They supported Gordon and Rosen (1981) and Carlson (1961) in their calls for investigation into the interactions among the factors of pre-succession and post-succession and organisational effectiveness, and reaffirmed the importance of succession to the field of educational administration.

2.8.4 Culture and organisational change

Jackson and Parry (2008) state: “Leadership is essentially a cultural activity – it is suffused with values, beliefs, language, rituals and artifacts” (p. 63). At a very simplistic level, organisational culture can be understood as, ‘the way we do things around here’ (Bower, 1966 as cited in Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 3). Willower (1984) described the school’s culture as its essence, composed of the traditions, beliefs, policies and norms of the school. Schein (2004), a most influential thinker in the area of organisational culture formally defined culture as:

A pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and that have worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to these problems. (Schein, 2004, p. 9)

Any change of personnel can impact the culture of an organisation, but it is often believed that the core values and norms of the organisation are less likely to be disrupted with an internal successor. A study carried out by Collins and Porras (1997) culminating in their best seller, Built to Last found that companies which maintained a stellar performance and endured through the 20th century had one essential ingredient, a culture of succession practices in management. According to the authors, visionary companies like Proctor and Gamble, General Electric, Wal-Mart, 3M and Sony preserve their core values and culture by developing, promoting and carefully selecting home-grown management talent. In a later book, Good to Great (Collins, 2001), the research team focused on a review of the practices in leadership succession in what were identified as ‘great’ organisations within American businesses. The team found that only one organisation of the 11 studied failed to utilise an internal successor to the CEO of the corporation (Collins, 2001). Succession planning that embraces this internal succession prioritises selecting a successor from within the current employee base. Among other benefits, it is believed that this internal focus contributes to maintaining a stable organisational culture. Collin’s (2001) study raises questions as to whether internal or external selections make better successors to leadership positions. He asks, if the successor is internal, will he or she be able to
accomplish the internal transition in position and satisfy the expectations of peers? If the successor is external, will he or she be able to adapt to meet the expectations and demands of the established organisation culture?

Some of the research on principal succession points to the challenge that principals face in establishing their leadership role in the context of the existing culture of the school. It suggests that teachers allow new principals a ‘honeymoon period’, the length of which depends upon a particular school and aspects related to the school in the past (Johnson & Licata, 1995; Ogawa, 1991; Weindling & Earley, 1987). A principal entering a new leadership role is ideally expected to learn the intricacies of a unique and complex system, determine what the vision and culture of the school are, lead the stakeholders through the process of creating a plan for improvement, acquire buy-in from those same stakeholders, implement a plan for improvement, monitor success of the organisation and continuously build momentum for academic and cultural gains – all within an average principal tenure of five years (Lovely, 2004b).

Maehr and Buck (1993) proposed that principal succession experiences set the course for the cultural transformation of a school community and suggested the importance of understanding the complexities that influence the outcome of principal succession. One who is in harmony with the school’s culture can expect to always be welcome in the organisation. One who chooses to ignore or clash with the culture can expect a lonely and sometimes difficult future (Short & Greer, 1997):

One of the great secrets of leadership is that, before one can command the respect and followership of others, she or he must demonstrate devotion to the organization’s purposes and commitment to those in the organization who work day by day in the ordinary tasks that are necessary for those purposes to be realized. (Sergiovanni, 2006, p. 19)

Macmillan’s (1996) study of principals in Ontario, Canada provided insight into the process of leaders’ adaptation to their new settings, and the effect on staff. He found that, as principals gained experience and settled into a school, they took fewer risks. He cautioned against the practice of principal rotation which he contended may help principals, but impede improvement efforts. Macmillan (1996) used Miskel and Cosgrove’s (1985) ‘succession effects’ but focused specifically on culture, leadership practices and the relationship between these two during the process of succession. He reviewed and summarised the findings of 88 research projects that investigated succession events in elementary schools, secondary schools, across schools, at
school system level, higher education institutions and organisations outside of education. Findings indicated that the appointment of a new principal created potential for instability in the school, and teachers regarded any change with concern and suspicion. Macmillan (1996) noted the resilience of a school’s culture, particularly in school systems that followed a systematic rotation policy. Teachers in these schools were less willing to trust new principals until they had proven themselves to be committed to the norms, values and traditions which had been upheld by the school. One of the conclusions of his study was that the degree of acceptance of a new principal’s administration was contingent upon the principal’s ability to interpret information about the school’s culture, and to develop practices consistent with teachers’ perception of this.

Where Macmillan (1996) found there was a ‘vague’ relationship between the practices of the principal and the culture of the school, a large-scale quantitative study (Johnson & Licata, 1995) sought to examine the relationship between the conditions of the principal succession and teachers’ perceptions of the successor’s effectiveness. Similar to studies by Macmillan (1996) and Ogawa (1991), teachers expressed anxiety about possible threats to their teaching autonomy but both the principals and teachers in this study accepted the realisation that new principals bring with them expectations for change. In addition, new principals who were viewed by their teachers as being robust leaders and effective at articulating and advancing a school vision did not appear to resent challenges by teachers to their professional autonomy.

Macmillan (1996) also reported the reactions of teachers to the prospect of a succession event. Often the relationship teachers had with the former principal strongly influenced the way they treated the successor (Boesse, 1989; Kirby & Bogotch, 1993). Macmillan’s study is significant because it demonstrates the resilience of a school’s teaching culture. Macmillan advised that principals should take time to get to know the culture of the school before attempting to make any substantive changes, and he concluded his research by warning that “permanent alteration of the culture may not be a realistic expectation” (p. 270).

A case study of one small school (270 students) in Western Canada by Jones (2000) included participation by students, parents and support staff, groups that are noticeably absent in previous research studies. Jones (2000) invited further consideration of the work by Hart (1987), Fauske and Ogawa (1987) and Ogawa (1991) by examining principal succession as an interactive group experience, in which the school community and the new principal influence each other. He contended that, by focusing on the principal, it was not possible to consider the history and life of the school that may influence the responses of people to the new principal. However, by focusing solely on the response of the school organisation, including people, processes and
contexts, the important social forces that shape the processes of succession are ignored. “When succession is seen and dealt with as a group process, the outcome may be personal and professional growth and development for both the school and the new principal” (Jones, 2000, p. 15).

No other studies were located which investigated the response or sense making of stakeholders other than teachers and school or system leaders. Students, parents and support staff appear to have been ignored in principal succession literature. An understanding of their influence on all of the variables may be crucial to gaining a better understanding of the process and enculturation of new principals.

2.8.5 Systemic factors influencing principal succession

A case study by Johnson (1999) aimed to develop a better understanding of principal succession as it occurred in four elementary schools of the amalgamated Catholic school district in a large urban region of Canada that rotated its principals from school to school every five years. He discovered that, if approached effectively, regular principal rotation may enhance school growth. On the other hand, strong school cultures coupled with the frequency of rotation in school communities may militate against school growth and renewal. He concluded that a well-informed knowledge and understanding succession processes could lead to principals being more effective leaders.

Daresh and Male (2000), in a parallel study that explored practices in the UK and USA, considered three areas: preparation for headship and principalship, the culture of the transition and professional support received over the induction period. There were 16 participants, eight from each country, all of whom had become school principals or head teachers between 1996 and 1998. Daresh and Male (2000) explored the changes that occurred for the participants as they transitioned into the leadership role. They noted that significant changes in education promoting widespread reforms and greater levels of accountability had brought about certain modifications in roles, practices and processes in schools. Roles of school leaders were directly affected by mandated policy changes. British headship had undergone radical change from being traditionally teaching positions, to nearly full-time management. In both the UK and USA, successful school leaders needed to acquire a range of knowledge and skills which would permit them to carry out the duties of leadership consistent with programme and policy reform. The researchers noted that both groups of participants felt inadequately prepared for their new roles and for the impact it had on their personal lives. They concluded:
… alienation, isolation and frustration often mark the work of those who led schools. There are many celebrations along the way and school leaders also point to numerous indicators of intense pride and satisfaction resulting from their work. But as we move into the 21st century, the question will be asked worldwide: will the job continue to grow in complexity to the point that no one wants to move toward that career goal. (Daresh & Male, 2000, p. 99)

There is a substantial body of literature internationally that relates to principalship and the need for succession planning. Many studies have tended to focus on systemic issues such as the role of the principal and the impact of change in education particularly in primary schools (Jones, 1999), workloads of primary teaching principals in New Zealand (Livingstone, 1999), shortages of people willing to take on the role of principal (Rowe, 2000), leadership challenges and ethical dilemmas of service organisations including schools (Duignan & Collins, 2003). There are fewer studies that view succession from the viewpoint of both the principal and the school community. The role and place of integrated schools is unique to New Zealand and there have been no studies undertaken that relate specifically to principal succession.

2.9 Studies of principal succession since 2004

Very few studies of principal succession were published between the mid-1990s and 2004. However, from the early 2000s the topic did begin to gain more attention. A study by Australian researchers D’Arbon and Dorman (2004) argued that succession planning is the business of everyone engaged in the schooling enterprise, and particularly the principal. The researchers found that effective educational leaders are strategic about building leadership schools, to sustain the school and education generally into the future. Several studies cited by White, Cooper, and Brayman (2006) on systematic rotation of principals in Canada and USA (Aquila, 1989; Boesse, 1989; Hart, 1993; Stine, 1998) suggested that the rotation of principals encouraged them to tackle new challenges, rejuvenated principals, and rotation was a means to promote school improvement. White et al. (2006) also suggested that studies by earlier researchers (Fauske & Ogawa, 1983) and (Davidson & Taylor, 1999) challenged these opinions. They noted that school reform and principal succession are not necessarily incompatible when the new principal’s methods and ideas around change and reform are similar to the previous principal, or if there are strong teacher leaders committed to change. White et al. (2006) suggested that those making decisions regarding principal rotation and succession could consider the value of mentoring as an integral part of the succession process. This would assist with the transferal of knowledge and
skills between outgoing and incoming principals and ease the transition phase through on-going professional development and support.

A significant longitudinal study, the ‘Change over time’ project (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006) highlighted the importance of leadership, leadership sustainability and leadership succession as being key to influencing positive change in education. It investigated principal succession, both from individual and institutional perspectives and examined specific school districts that initiate a change of principal, principals involved in the change and teachers who experience changes in leadership. The project explored changes in leadership in general, and principal succession in particular. The findings are based on more than 200 interviews, observations and extensive archival data which examined perceptions and experiences of educational change in eight high schools in USA and Canada among teachers and administrators who worked in schools from the 1970s to the 1990s. The study aimed to determine long-term patterns of change and continuity. The 30+ year project, demonstrated “the importance and necessity of taking a historical perspective on educational change if change efforts are to be sustainable achievements rather than matters of only transient interest” (p. 35).

Through Hargreaves and Goodson’s (2006) project it was discovered that the times of leadership successions were “always emotionally intense events” (p. 18). It was also found that the pressures generated by educational reform did not provoke as much direct or dramatic change within a school as did changes of leaders and leadership. The most successful examples of principal successions were apparent in schools within the study which appointed ‘insider’ applicants who were “groomed to follow their leader’s footsteps and further their achievements within the culture of the school” (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006, p. 19). This study concluded successions are usually poorly planned and happen as a response to events, principal retirement or promotion, rather than a well-considered plan for the sustainable improvement and future of the school. The ‘Change over Time’ study revealed that one of the most significant factors affecting the life of a school and the sustainability of its improvement efforts was leadership succession. The evidence of a lack of planning does not necessarily indicate neglect on the part of school boards, but rather suggests a lack of strategic development and planning for the future; a key area that this thesis explores and addresses.

Mansour (2011) and Matte (2012) investigated the importance of building leadership capacity within a school to ensure sustained school improvement and an ongoing supply of potential leaders who could become principals in the future. Mansour (2011) conducted case studies in three private secondary schools in Canada to investigate the process of building leadership
capacity and how it sustained school improvement. Matte’s study (2012) considered the relationship between the principal’s involvement in leadership development and ability to lead the school. Their studies showed that the identification, recruitment and training of leaders could guarantee an ongoing leadership pipeline, and the role of succession planning could be strategic and purposeful in building leadership capacity. Drawing on the work of other educational theorists, Mansour (2011) and Matte (2012) demonstrate that building leadership capacity is the key to successful succession and sustainability in an organisation. Such practice creates layers of leaders who are prepared to take over and sustain the organisation when key people leave.

2.10 New Zealand studies

No New Zealand studies were found that focus specifically on the succession process, impediments to leadership succession, or the development of strategic plans to ensure schools have a pool of potential candidates for future principal roles. Macpherson (2009), lamenting the lack of strategic planning by educationalists to fill the anticipated leadership shortage, notes that very little has been done in this regard. He suggests that “the nation’s leadership professionalization strategy is based on serial incompetence” (p. 44). Theories of school leadership abound, but little attention has been paid to issues surrounding principal succession and policies and procedures that guide decision-making by Boards of Trustees relating to principal succession. No studies were located regarding principal succession in state-integrated schools in New Zealand where, by law, special character requirements exist in addition to the usual transition factors. Two New Zealand studies investigated the ways in which New Zealand boards of trustees selected and appointed school principals, and these are described next.

A study by Morrison (2006) investigated the capacity of five boards of trustees to appoint highly effective principals. She noted that the board of trustees’ ability to appoint a principal who was likely to be highly effective in the role occurred more by chance than through careful planning and consideration. Morrison (2006) found that boards generally lacked the educational expertise required to identify and appoint a suitable applicant to the role. They were easily influenced by market discourses, and adopted an approach that relied on the acceptance of external advice from a range of sources, without question or critique. This study revealed that some boards, particularly smaller, rural schools, would prefer to appoint an inexperienced male applicant rather than a highly successful female applicant. Morrison concluded that “if they are to appoint principals who are highly effective in adapting their leadership to new, complex and rapidly changing circumstances…it is essential that a current and evolving educational leadership discourse dominates their thinking (2006, p. 110).
An extensive study by Brooking (2008) investigated the future challenges of principal succession in New Zealand primary schools, and the implications of quality and gender. Drawing on her earlier work in 2004, Brooking identified that boards tended to appoint men to principal roles disproportionate to women. She found that the gender and market discourse dominated the process and influenced the board’s decision when selecting the new principal. In this work she notes that boards of trustees have shown a preference for male principals and that there have been problems regarding the quality of some younger, less experienced, male applicants. In New Zealand in 2006, 53% of school leaders (Principals and Senior Management Teams) of all state and state-integrated schools were over 50 years of age and 31% were over 55 years old (Brooking, 2007). The challenge not only concerns the supply of teachers or getting the required number of leaders in place but also in ensuring candidate’s suitability for the role. No further data related to these demographics have been made available by the MoE since 2006.

The few studies connected with principal succession that could be located were related to issues of recruitment and retention of school leaders (Macpherson, 2009, 2010; Morrison, 2006) and the challenge of principal succession in New Zealand primary schools (Brooking, 2007). A study by Taylor (2012) identified a potential problem in leadership succession within the field of education of the deaf. He noted a critical shortage of leaders within deaf education facilities, and an absence of people pursuing a leadership career in this field. Taylor advocates for the development of planned succession strategies for this ‘niche’ sector. Taylor (2012) noted that “the upcoming decade provides a finite window in the landscape of New Zealand educational leadership, during which time, knowledge can be transferred between incumbent leaders and aspiring talent” (p. 3). The work of Avuva’a (2008) highlights the plight of Pacific Islanders aspiring to leadership roles. He identified that few Pacific Islanders pursue leadership roles because of systemic conditions (e.g., lack of support, institutional racism and discrimination, lack of motivation, lack of role models) and personal factors (e.g., lack of confidence, lack of professional network, impact of gender and ethnicity, and ‘silent voice’). He recommended that career pathways be developed to ensure the development of Pacific Islander principals for the future. The studies by Avuva’a (2008), Macpherson (2009, 2010), and Taylor (2012) all highlight systemic gaps in areas of education within New Zealand, and suggest the need for strategic planning for the future development and replacement of leaders in New Zealand schools.

The paucity of New Zealand studies into the area of principal succession indicates that it has not yet become as significant a problem as has been seen internationally, to warrant much interest or
research. A National Evaluation Report conducted by the Education Review Office, *Student Safety in Schools: Recruiting and Managing Staff* (ERO, 2014), noted that schools are likely to make “risky appointments when they have only a few applicants” (p. 69). No studies could be found that related to principal succession in integrated schools.

2.11 Principal succession in faith-based schools

The importance of succession planning for integrated schools, and indeed any faith-based schooling system, is the need for people who not only have the requisite capabilities to be principals, but also have the confidence of the faith group that they have the necessary background, motivation and commitment to ensure the values of the system are faithfully transmitted (D’Arbon & Dorman 2004). This requirement amplifies the need to develop a pipeline of potential leaders who can fulfil the role of principal in a school which has a designated special character. The problem that exists in state schools is exacerbated in state-integrated schools where an extra dimension of being able to meet the employment requirements for the special character element of the school considerably reduces the pool from which potential principals can be selected. Studies conducted in Australian faith-based schools indicate that the same problems exist regarding principal shortage, recruitment and retention, as are evident in New Zealand (Canavan, 2001; Carlin & Niedhart, 2004; Dorman & D’Arbon, 2003a; Fraser & Brock, 2006; Gronn & Lacey, 2006). Reviewing these studies provides further insight into the problems of principal appointment in faith-based schools. There is very little evidence of research into principal succession in such schools within New Zealand, although there is an extensive body of literature available in Australia, particularly related to Catholic education, where researchers have been considering the issues for the last 15 years (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007; Canavan, 1998, 2001; Cannon, 2004; D’Arbon & Dorman, 2004; Pyke, 2002).

In New Zealand, the principal is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the integrated school’s special character, as defined by the school’s Integration Deed. The issue of principal succession within special character schools has an added socialisation dimension as the new principal must subscribe to the ‘special character’ of the school. Each school has its own set of criteria for special character, based on the foundational philosophy of the school.

Canavan (1998) observed that there is little evidence that Catholic schools in Australia have embraced succession strategies apart from an “ardent prayer that there will be someone out there, somewhere, who will be able to fill the vacancy” (p. 27). D’Arbon et al. (2002) expressed an increasing concern in Catholic education systems in Australia for the need to develop a strategy
to ensure an ongoing supply of well-qualified and highly motivated principals. They acknowledged that the problem was not unique to Catholic schools, as similar problems are being experienced in a number of education systems in a variety of countries.

Growing concern for a continuing supply of appropriately prepared leaders is evident in reports from the Catholic Education Office Sydney (2001) on the need for planning for leadership succession. The Office reported fewer suitable applicants applying for advertised positions in Catholic schools, and found anecdotal evidence that this situation is being replicated in other religious-order-owned schools. This is the result of a shrinking pool of applicants for principal roles. Principals of Catholic schools, who are mostly lay people, are expected to take up the role of religious leader formerly embraced by members of religious orders who were also principals. Many lay people feel unprepared for such a demanding role. In New South Wales the composition of teaching staff has changed from being 69% members of religious orders in 1975 to 2.3% in 1997 (Canavan, 1998).

The increasing concern in Catholic education circles in New South Wales led to the realisation of a need to develop a strategy to ensure an ongoing supply of principals for Catholic schools in Australia. A survey distributed in 1999/2000 to 3,000 middle managers elicited 1024 replies from 588 Catholic Schools in New South Wales (Catholic Education Office, 2001). The research question asked why more eligible people were not applying for the principalship in Catholic Schools in New South Wales. One conclusion from the findings was that the role of the Catholic school principal may be too demanding, both in terms of role complexity and because of the added ‘faith leadership’ dimension in a Catholic school. It may be too much to expect that one person can be the ‘principal educator and administrator’ as well as the embodiment of the faith culture of the school (Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2001). Related research studies conducted by the Australian Catholic University began in 2000 to examine questions of why more people were not applying for leadership positions in Catholic schools in New South Wales (D’Arbon & Dorman, 2004). There are also numerous reports of a lack of suitable applicants in general: in Victoria by Lacey (2001), in New Zealand by Rowe (2000), in the USA by Thompson, Blackmore, Sachs, and Tregenza (2003), in the UK by Pyke (2002) and in Australia by D’Arbon et al. (2002). Dorman and D’Arbon (2003b) investigated leadership succession in New South Wales Catholic schools and concluded that leadership succession is already a significant problem. With their additional requirements and responsibilities relating to the faith-based community, Catholic schools were even more affected in their attempts to find suitable successors for principalship.
2.11.1 Catholic schools: key characteristics

Dimmock and Walker (2002) argue for the importance of institutional culture, noting that it is necessary to understand the contexts in which principals are working in order to understand some of the significant factors involved in forming leadership. Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) conducted research in Catholic schools in the USA. They argued that there are three major factors which make Catholic schools unique and contribute to these schools’ effectiveness: focused academic structure, communal school organisation and inspirational theology. The Church document, ‘The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium’ (Congregation for Catholic Education [CCE], 1997), describes strategies that Catholic educators can use to assure strong Catholic schools for the future, and to develop an identity that will distinguish Catholic schools from other schools, “a Catholic school is a place of integral education of the human persons through a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation” (1997, p. 2). Archbishop Michael Miller (2006) believes a Catholic education is a role model for students and gives testimony by his or her life and committed to mission. Miller (2006) states that those involved in Catholic schools, with very few exceptions, should be practising Catholics, committed to the Church and living the sacramental life. Therefore, principals, pastors, trustees and parents should be concerned with this important duty of finding teachers and leaders who meet the standards of doctrine and integrity of life essential to maintaining and advancing a Catholic identity.

In New Zealand, there are 24 Catholic proprietors who operate 238 state-integrated schools. Groupings of these proprietors were established between 1981 and 1986 and were set up in six dioceses across the country (Lynch, 2012). It is the responsibility of the proprietors’ representatives of each school to ensure that the special Catholic character is maintained in all schools.

2.11.2 Importance of the transmission of charism within Catholic schools

Applicants for the position of principal within a Catholic school in New Zealand must have undertaken studies at the Leadership Level or Graduate Level Certification as determined by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference. This is because the role of principal is viewed not merely as an administrative role but as the faith leaders and the leader of teaching and learning. In Catholic religious culture, charism refers to the special sense of calling or mission that characterises certain individuals or religious congregations. It is also suggested that transmission of charism is essential for principalship formation, as urged by Pope Benedict XVI (2008) who praised the religious who, “with great tenacity and foresight, laid the foundations of what is
today a remarkable network of parochial schools contributing to the spiritual well-being of the church…” (p. 2). According to Brien and Hack (2005) charism is a spiritual gift that inspires and compels Catholics to live this call to discipleship. Principals of Catholic schools as leaders have to meet the increasing demands of the secular state for better academic results, skill development, meeting secular education goals and a range of administrative and leadership tasks, while at the same time ensuring that religious, moral and social development and spiritual formation are not neglected.

Dorman and D’Arbon (2003a, 2003b) conducted studies in Australian Catholic schools, and found that principals in these faith-based schools have particular difficulties to deal with, especially when taking on the dual roles of faith leader and school leader. The difficulty in replacing principals with suitable leaders is urgent because, with the decline in the numbers of religious as school leaders, a new lay leadership must be prepared for service in the future. Many researchers, such as Cannon (2004) and Grace (1995, 2002) have argued that the preparation of school principals, especially in Catholic schools, must build a wider vision of principals, as they are promoting both moral and educational outcomes. Catholic educational planning embraces education as a vocation and a mission. Consequently, succession planning seems to be more complex for religious principals than for lay principals. (Bryk et al., 1993). There is the need to integrate the spiritual dimension and the professional dimension of leadership (Grace, 2002).

2.11.3 Evangelical Christian schools

The second group of integrated schools that are the focus of this thesis are those whose special character would be influenced by an “evangelicalism that underpins all they do and is the very strong uniting factor among them: it is their belief in the authority of scripture and their personal relationship to Jesus” (Smith, 2012, p. 43). While there are commonalities amongst this group of schools, there are also many differences in the way evangelical Christian schools operate. There are two main groups of proprietors: those belonging to a particular denomination or church, and those who may operate as non-denominational trusts or boards, where there is no particular relationship to a denomination or church. Unlike the Catholic schools, there is no organisation that binds these schools to any particular modus operandi. As explained in Chapter 1, there are Christian education organisations that these schools can belong to, but membership is voluntary. The story of the New Zealand Christian school movement (Norsworthy, 2014) chronicles the growth of Christian schooling over 50 years. The successes and failures of these schools are shared, and Norsworthy notes:
…the school leadership needs to regularly revisit and review the vision, and in light of this, reinvent the programme – the policies and practices of the school – to best fulfil the vision in the next phase of the school’s life. (p. 361)

There are approximately 85 schools in New Zealand which could be described as ‘evangelical’ in their expression of faith. Smith (2012) defines the term ‘evangelical’ in relation to faith-based Christian schools as, “a movement within all branches of the Christian church that hold to the inerrancy and authority of the Christian scriptures as found in the Holy Bible” (p. 32). Many of these evangelical schools were established in the late 1980s, some in reaction to how Christian parents viewed state education as being of a secular–humanistic orientation with declining moral standards, poor discipline and a flawed curriculum (Norsworthy, 2014). Other schools grew out of groups of parents who homeschooled their children together, or from churches which wanted to establish a school to partner with parents in the education of their children. Unlike the Catholic schools, there is not a central authority that oversees evangelical Christian schools. The onus for maintaining the special character of each school rests with the proprietor for that school. An organisation was established in 2006 with the aim of growing a network of non-denominational state-integrated Christian schools with the vision of becoming a national proprietorship. The New Zealand Christian Proprietors Trust (NZCPT) is the proprietor for seven schools (as of 2014), one of which has two satellite schools attached.

2.12 Towards a model for principal succession in integrated faith-based schools

This review has established that leadership succession is not an episodic event or exception. It is a regular and reoccurring part of the life of every school. Internationally there is concern about the shortage of suitably well-qualified and well-prepared teachers who can lead the school into the future. This trend is becoming more evident in New Zealand, particularly as those born in the ‘baby boomer’ era are reaching retirement age. The impact of appointing a new principal for a school is charged with feelings of expectation, apprehension, abandonment, loss, relief or even fear.

Whatever the response, leadership succession events are rarely treated lightly, as they are crucial to the ongoing success of the school. The role of the principal is pivotal to the success of the school and the development of effective succession policies and practices will enable the continuation of school communities that promote outstanding learning communities for teachers and students. Education and schools are in a constant state of change and formalised succession
planning may not necessarily resolve the predicted shortfall in principal applicants, however, the continued awareness and development of a strategic plan to augment the leadership pipeline and mitigate the effects of the shortfall, is essential in every school.

Throughout this literature review key indicators have emerged pointing to what might constitute a successful principal succession event. Many different aspects of principal succession have been explored through a broad range of contexts and across several countries. The key indicators for a successful principal succession emerging from this review suggest the following criteria might guide the planning process in integrated/faith-based schools: the importance of developing succession policies and practices (Froelich et al., 2011; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; Leibman et al., 1996); the value of seeking advice from experts when looking to employ a principal (D’Arbon & Dorman, 2004; Morrison, 2006); involving stakeholders through consultation and discussion (Jones, 2000); consideration of the importance of the school’s culture, vision and special character (Avuva’a, 2008; Garchinsky, 2008; Hart, 1993; Macmillan, 1996); and, identification and development of teachers with leadership potential (Fullan, 2005; Gronn & Lacey, 2004). These key indicators are used as the Key Skill & Knowledge (Criteria) of a tentative impact model and a theoretical framework for principal succession (Table 2.2 below) also attached as Appendix 2. For each key indicator, its application, results and impact are determined and, as described next in Chapter 3, I demonstrate how this model was developed and used to guide this study.
Table 2.2  Impact model for principal succession processes in schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Skill &amp; Knowledge (Criteria)</th>
<th>Critical Application</th>
<th>Key Results</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Succession practices</td>
<td>Planning using key elements of succession planning</td>
<td>Boards should be well prepared for the inevitability of a change of principal.</td>
<td>Board appoints suitable replacement who best fits the needs of the school community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. External input</td>
<td>Seeking advice and Input from external advisors or professional agencies</td>
<td>Boards are well advised from those with experience in principal appointments processes.</td>
<td>Decisions made are founded on sound advice from experts in this field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Appointment processes with documented evidence of policies and procedures</td>
<td>Discussion and planning by Board of Trustees with strategic future focus</td>
<td>Successive changes in Board members will not hinder or affect the process and there is a basis from which to begin.</td>
<td>Ability to access information that will assist the process and lay a foundation for further input and discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Community Involvement</td>
<td>Involvement of key stakeholders through consultation and discussion</td>
<td>Fulfils the importance of community involvement in strategic planning and development in NZ schools.</td>
<td>Community satisfaction with the process and outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Consideration of the importance of the school’s culture, vision and special character</td>
<td>Ensuring that there is a continuation of the culture, vision and special character elements important to the school.</td>
<td>Meeting the requirements of the Integration Deed</td>
<td>New principal upholds the special character of the school and ensures its continued implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Leadership development opportunities, building leadership capacity</td>
<td>Identification and development of teachers with leadership potential</td>
<td>There is an on-going supply of educators within the school who understand and maintain the practices essential for the continuity of culture, vision and special character.</td>
<td>Successful changes of principal within a faith-based integrated school either through internal/external appointment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design selected for this study. The framing paradigm is discussed and the reasons given for a qualitative approach. The methodology for this study stems from the purposes of the research and the type of research data most appropriate to these purposes. The selected methodology determines the relationship between succession planning and the ability of principals and boards in schools to develop leadership capacity in a way that will ensure continuity of leaders for the future. An adapted impact model was introduced at the end of the previous chapter. The use of an impact model to drive the investigation stems from the work of Brinkerhoff (2003, 2006), and his Success Case Method. This is discussed in detail later in this chapter. This chapter begins with an overview of the research design, then looks specifically at each of the two phases of the design: questionnaire and case study. These tools were the two key data-collection methods selected and each of these is described in detail. The collection of additional data from documents, archival material and through observation is also discussed. The approach taken to analysing the data is described and explained. Trustworthiness and ethical considerations are examined at the end of this chapter.

3.2 Research design

An interpretive, qualitative design was employed, using several different collection techniques (questionnaire, case study interviews, observations, documents and archival material) to examine the experiences of principal succession in integrated faith-based schools in New Zealand. Research design and implementation decisions are made according to which methods best meet the practical demands of a particular inquiry (Patton, 1988). A qualitative approach originates in descriptive analysis as an inductive process, reasoning from the specific situation towards a general conclusion. Qualitative research requires the researcher to study the particulars collected to construct an understanding of the topic, in much the same way that a picture, unrecognised initially, is constructed from the collection and examination of its many parts (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Maxwell (2005) summarises qualitative research as follows: “The strengths of qualitative research derive primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers” (p. 22). It is these strengths that make a qualitative approach the best means to answer the research question posed. Qualitative processes
enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of underlying opinions and motivations at play when new principals are chosen and appointed.

Qualitative research is an inquiry approach which is useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon. To learn about this phenomenon, the researcher asks participants questions, collects the detailed views of participants, observes practices and reads documents, and analyses the information for description and themes. From these data, the researcher analyses and interprets the meaning of the information, drawing on personal experiences and past research to build a complex, holistic picture of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 1998, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The research question asks in what ways principals and boards use succession planning in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools towards ensuring the building of leadership capacity and the continuity of vision, culture and special character. In order to answer this question extensive data about culture, vision, special character and leadership development were gathered. The connection to succession planning and leadership development was then analysed. The decision about the choice of method was based on assumptions that participant perceptions about principal succession would be multiple, subjective and constructed so that the chosen methods of investigation would provide a rich source of knowledge and understanding. The decision to use a mix of qualitative methods was made because it enables the consideration of multiple viewpoints, perspectives, understandings and positions. The study was undertaken in two phases. In this chapter these phases are described separately and their rationales are justified.

3.3 The Success Case Method

Success Case Method (SCM) is a particular form of case study where a single unit analysis is based upon depth that is both holistic and exhaustive (Bassey, 2007) but which also retains “the meaningful characteristics of realistic events” (Piggot-Irvine, 2009a, p. 21). The Success Case Method (Brinkerhoff, 2003) is designed to find out how well an organisation or initiative (in this case principal succession) is working. The first step in SCM is to conduct a literature review to identify elements associated with success. These elements are collated into a matrix (or matrices) which then form the criteria for investigation. In SCM there is no intent to examine a range of modal responses as only the most effective cases are investigated in order to highlight successful features that can be transferred to, or used within, other contexts. SCM is a general approach to assessment and evaluation through the use of an evaluation tool that can be used for “finding out what is working and what is not, which also provides accurate and trustworthy information that can be used to make timely decisions” (Brinkerhoff, 2003, p. 3).
The SCM combines the craft of storytelling with a more current evaluative approach of inquiry and case study (Brinkerhoff, 2003). One of the limitations of storytelling is the credibility of the story, therefore, SCM incorporates selected elements into its consideration of cases that include most of the elements associated with success, and those that do not appear to incorporate such elements. Each case selected for this methodology is backed by evidence that would “stand up in court” (Brinkerhoff, 2003, p. 4). The goal of SCM in the selection of cases is to choose a case that tells how something was used, and then confirm the results in a way that can be backed by substantiated evidence. This evidence involves corroboration and documentation of experiences that can be confirmed and validated. The selection of contrasting cases may be accomplished through survey, word of mouth, interviews, reports of performance data, or reviews of usage records (Brinkerhoff, 2006). SCM differs from other traditional organizational evaluations in that it seeks targeted qualitative information in specific areas when evaluating performance, rather than broadly considering many factors that could be evaluated (Brinkerhoff, 2006).

Following the first step in SCM, construction of the impact model and selection of success cases, the second step involves interviewing persons linked to the handful of identified cases to determine and document the actual nature of the success being achieved. These data provide the evidence to illustrate the scope of the success the programmes or organisation helped to produce. Here it is important to gather verifiable and documentable evidence so that the success can be demonstrated. The overall steps to be conducted in a SCM study include the following: create a programme impact model, survey participants, analyse survey data and gauge scope of impact and identify success and non-success cases, interview selected cases and write case stories, articulate conclusions and make recommendations. While these steps provide the general framework of an SCM study, some of the steps may need to be altered or have different internal elements, depending on the purpose and scope of the study.

Important to the structure of SCM is the creation of the impact model. The impact model answers the question: “If things were working well, what would be happening?” (Brinkerhoff, 2003, p. 75). It is a structured model in a table format in which intended goals, intended performance, measurement of actual performance and final results are evaluated. This structure sets the basis for the questions to seek answers to. The purpose of the impact model is to show what success might look like for that particular initiative based on intended goals, so a comparison to actual performance of the initiative can be made.

SCM has been used by a small number of education researchers in New Zealand (Piggot-Irvine, Aitken, & Marshall, 2009; Aitken, Bruce-Ferguson, McGrath, Piggot-Irvine, & Ritchie, 2008).
SCM is based on the notion that we can best learn how to improve the performance of a programme, strategy or initiative from those who have been the most and least successful. “Modifications of the SCM concept and design are sometimes necessary for implementing the approach in nonprofit environments where business goals are not necessarily an explicit objective” (Coryn, Schroter, & Hanssen, 2009, p. 80). Piggot-Irvine et al. (2009) adapted Brinkerhoff’s model of SCM (Figure 3.1). Their modifications enabled them to define success in a context which, whilst grounded in organisational settings, did not specifically have observable, measurable returns on investment as is the desired case in the training settings in which Brinkerhoff developed this method. Other examples cited by Piggot-Irvine, 2009a, 2009b) as utilising this alternative design of SCM include: teacher induction; evaluation of a development programme for special education teaching; and effective change leadership.

Figure 3.1 Piggot-Irvine et al. (2009, p. 4) adapted from Brinkerhoff & Dressler (2003)

SCM has strengths and benefits as a process. However, there are some limitations to consider when using this method. Brinkerhoff acknowledges that:
The Success Case Method is not a comprehensive and ‘one fix’ sort of approach. Rather, it is a … useful tool that change leaders and others can use to help them get the information they need to more effectively guide change initiatives.

(Brinkerhoff, 2003, p. 24)

He notes that other techniques may be more thorough, but cautions that other methods are also more likely to be time- and resource-intensive. Brinkerhoff defends criticism of bias by claiming that, although SCM research is often based on only a small number of successful cases, it is very useful to learn from stories of success if they are “objective and rigorously supported with confirmable evidence” (Brinkerhoff, 2003, p. 24). Biesta (2007) argues that SCM can help us unpack and understand what has worked in particular contexts and circumstances. Researching issues surrounding principal succession in faith-based schools lends itself well to SCM methods.

While there is merit in knowing which cases are successful, there are also reasons for knowing which cases are not successful, and why. There are ethical issues to consider when a researcher is assigning labels of ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’ to a case study school, even when using a tool such as an impact model. For this reason, when creating an impact model and selecting schools, it proved difficult to clearly identify schools as successful or not successful when the baseline criteria had so many variables. While Brinkerhoff’s model works well in a business setting it needed modification for this educational context.

3.4 Phases of the study

In line with the discussion above, this investigation used questionnaire and case study, specifically an adaptation of SCM (Brinkerhoff, 2003) to focus on the succession planning experiences of faith-based, integrated schools. Phase 1 of the study involved surveying schools using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on criteria identified in the impact model (see Table 2.2) and the research literature regarding two key areas: leadership development and succession planning. The questionnaire asked for demographic and organisational information from leaders in each participating school. Analysis of the data collected from the questionnaire provided a profile of the preparedness of each school for a change of principal, and the existence or lack of succession practices within each school.

Phase 2 of data gathering involved a case study of six schools chosen from the 157 who were initially contacted to complete the questionnaire. The six schools were selected using the criteria of the impact model (Table 2.2) constructed from the literature review (Chapter 2). Phase 2
focussed on investigating succession planning and the maintenance of vision, culture and special character in the six schools. Semi-structured interviews and the examination of key documents rendered sufficient information to draw conclusions by “providing an in depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance” (Denscombe 2003, p. 32). Each phase of the study is described in detail in the following sections.

3.4.1 Phase 1: Qualitative questionnaire
The terms ‘survey’ and ‘questionnaire’ are sometimes used synonymously in literature. For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire is defined as a research tool using questions to gather information from different respondents. The questionnaire is a survey tool. Denscombe (1998) defines the survey as “an approach in which there is empirical research pertaining to a given point of time which aims to incorporate as wide and inclusive data as possible” (p. 7). It is relevant to note that Denscombe defines survey as an approach rather than a single method or technique. A quantitative survey results in direct numerical values, whereas a qualitative survey allows for explorations of ideas, processes and thoughts. A qualitative study uses open-ended questions in order to build a rich description of the activity under study, rather than to measure specific variables as in quantitative research. Case and Yang (2009) studied the effectiveness of different survey, data-collection methodologies and revealed that the survey format can dramatically influence the results of surveys, and that multi-method survey approaches should be used whenever possible (p. 5). Therefore, the design of the questionnaire presented the questions in a simple format that enabled the respondents to reply to questions briefly, or in greater detail if they wished.

Questionnaires are used as a means of collecting information from a wider sample than can be reached by personal interview. Though data are generally limited when seeking answers to closed questions, they can still be very useful. A problem can arise if respondents do not interpret items in the way intended, therefore triangulation of data, by means of verification using two or more resources, assists in capturing other interpretations of the same questions. Questionnaires often seem a logical and easy option as a way of collecting information from people. The structure of the questionnaire included a mix of open-ended and closed questions (see Appendix 3).

The Catholic Education Office, Adventist Education New Zealand, the New Zealand Association for Christian Schools and the Association of Proprietors of Integrated Schools all agreed to provide information about principal changes within their respective school systems. During the selected time period, 2005-2011, 10 Adventist Schools, 12 Christian Schools and 135 Catholic
Schools (total 157) experienced a change of principal. The invitation to participate, participant information sheets, consent forms and the questionnaire were distributed to the board chairs of all 157 schools. Of the 157 surveys sent, 36 completed surveys were returned. This is a 23% return rate. Three board chairs replied by email that lack of institutional knowledge prevented them completing the survey, and two board chairs responded that their schools did not take part in surveys of any type. Fourteen of the schools which returned the questionnaire indicated they were prepared to be part of the next stage of the research – the case study phase.

Initially the questionnaire was intended to be an online survey tool because experience as a principal has shown me that school communities (staff, boards, parents, students) are usually more willing to complete an online survey as it is perceived to take less time than paper surveys (Evans & Mathur, 2005). Also it does not require handling paper copies and dealing with envelopes and postage. Online surveys are convenient and accessible to a large number of people because most have access to the internet. However, despite the convenience of this method it was difficult to determine the email addresses for the board chairs of 157 schools, therefore, it was more practical to send a paper copy addressed to the board chair of each school. This did take more time as the mail passed through the administration system in each school before reaching the board chair. The questionnaire was designed using a mixture of quantitative questions relating to school statistical information and demographics, and qualitative questions relating to the key criteria as established through the impact model. The focus of the qualitative questions was on succession planning processes (Criteria 1, 2 & 3), consultation with stakeholders (Criterion 4), criteria for principal selection (Criterion 5) and leadership development (Criterion 6). The questions were intended to evaluate the extent to which these criteria were used and sustained through a change of principal. This information was also necessary in order to select case studies for the next stage of the study.

A lack of a sufficient number of responses to the first mail-out of the questionnaire in November 2011 resulted in a second mail-out early in 2012 to which there was a better response, possibly due to the timing of the request. Despite having a large pool of schools as potential participants in this project, the challenge was to get a sufficient number to participate in the survey. It became a costly and time-intensive exercise, particularly when having to resend all the documentation to schools that either had not received them or reported them ‘lost’. What ideally should have taken two months, took six months. By the time it became evident that no more schools would be participating in the survey, some of the original schools that had agreed to participate in the case study, if selected, had changed their board chair due to the triennial board of trustee elections.
This necessitated further communication to ensure schools were still willing to be part of the next stage of the research. Notwithstanding data-gathering frustrations, the Phase 1 data were important because they:

- surfaced and described the processes schools used when there was a change of principal;
- identified which schools had policies or procedures in place for such an event;
- highlighted in some schools where the requirements for employment as detailed by the Integration Act were/were not being followed; and
- provided sufficient information to use against the criteria in the impact model to be able to select six case study schools for the next phase of the research.

enabled an overview of the key ideas and issues surrounding principal succession. It became evident how the 34 schools which returned questionnaires developed leadership capacity and ensured continuity of their culture, vision and special character. Using the impact model as a basis, the schools were arranged on a continuum, from those using most of the procedures in the impact model (Group A) through to those who reported using the fewest procedures (Group B). Three schools were then identified from each group and were invited to take part in the case study research. This selection was made in order to give a broad perspective of the extent to which principals build leadership capacity and develop succession practices. The characteristics of the schools selected for Phase 2 were that they:

- identified as ‘faith based’ schools with religious affiliation;
- were all co-educational with a roll number greater than 100;
- were integrated schools as defined by the Integration Act 1975; and
- had experienced a change of principal 2005-2011.

These schools were then invited to participate in the case study phase. Three of the selected schools are Catholic schools and three are evangelical Christian schools, and their geographical spread is across the North and South Islands of New Zealand.

Limiting the variables regarding school type (Catholic and Evangelical only) assisted with data gathering and research analysis. It would have been interesting to include some other integrated schools such as Kura Kaupapa, Montessori, Steiner, Jewish and Muslim schools. They were not included in this study because, as indicated, the number of variables would have increased. Also the sample group of new school types would have been small, and distinctive elements of the school would have been too easily identifiable. This might have raised ethical questions.
3.4.2 Phase 2: Case study

As a framework for this research, the case study method offered the capacity for an in-depth analysis of the experiences of faith-based integrated schools in New Zealand, and how they have maintained their culture, vision and special character following a change of principal. Case study is an intensive investigation using multiple sources of evidence of a single entity that is bounded in time and place and usually associated with a location or phenomenon. Case studies collect detailed information by using a variety of data-collection procedures during a sustained period of time (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1989). The ‘case’ may be an organisation, a set of people, a community, an event, a process, issue or a campaign (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1993). Yin (2009) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). In this study, the case is a group of six faith-based integrated schools in New Zealand and the inquiry is an investigation into the succession policies, practices and processes used to ensure the maintenance of culture, vision and special character during a change of principal. Arguably, this research could be considered as a multi-case study; each school with its own unique character and context. However, for the purpose of this study, the schools are viewed as one case study of a group of schools. The case study schools are categorised as faith-based and integrated schools.

The use of the case study method requires the researcher to build a collaborative relationship with the participants in order to facilitate the research process in an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding. Case studies are able to incorporate different theoretical and methodological frameworks. They are detailed and descriptive, and provide a holistic view of exploring relationships and connections which are useful for theory building and theory testing. Lang and Heiss (1990) as cited in McNabb (2002) state the basic rationale for a case study:

...there are processes and interactions which cannot be studied effectively except as they interact and function within the entity itself. Therefore, if we learn how these processes interact in one person or organisation we will know more about how the processes as factors in themselves and be able to apply these to other similar types of persons or organisations. (p. 86)

3.4.3 Case study schools

All six schools invited to participate in the case studies agreed to participate. The schools are described in Table 3.1. Pseudonyms were assigned to each school to ensure anonymity. New Zealand is a small country and there are only 331 state-integrated schools (Education Counts,
To further protect the identity of the schools and participants, the number of students and decile rankings are provided as a range rather than a specific number.

### Table 3.1 Profile of schools selected for case study (C = Catholic; EC = Evangelical Christian)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Decile Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avonlakes College (C)</td>
<td>Years 7-13</td>
<td>800-1000</td>
<td>8-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadfield School (EC)</td>
<td>Years 1-8</td>
<td>100-150</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Angelos College (EC)</td>
<td>Years 1-13</td>
<td>1000-1200</td>
<td>8-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Heritage School (EC)</td>
<td>Years 1-13</td>
<td>300-400</td>
<td>8-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ the King Primary School (C)</td>
<td>Years 1-8</td>
<td>100-150</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanel Downs Primary School (C)</td>
<td>Years 1-8</td>
<td>300-400</td>
<td>8-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 2 occurred over a four-week period in September 2012. It involved a visit to each school during which key participants were interviewed about succession planning and the employment of the new principal. Documentary evidence was also collected in some cases when it was offered and also appropriate to the investigation.

The plan was to conduct a minimum of four interviews in each school and to interview two students in the schools with students over 16 years old. The inclusion of students in schools with senior year levels, gave some student voice to this study. Student outcomes are significantly impacted by the leadership of the principal so their voices added a valuable contribution, particularly when discussing culture, vision and special character. The senior students had been in their schools at the time of the last principal change so could contribute some insights from a student perspective. Furthermore, board chairs were asked if a proprietors’ representative from the board of trustees could be interviewed.

In order to gain insight into the personal experiences of succession by the participants in depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 33 participants. Subsequent to receiving the invitation to participate in Stage 2 (see Appendix 4B), participants were chosen by each school’s principal and invited to be part of the study. Table 3.2 below sets out who was interviewed at each school.
Table 3.2 Participants interviewed in case study schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Board Chair</th>
<th>Proprietors’ Representative</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avonlakes College (AL)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadfield School (BS)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Angelos College (SA)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Heritage School (CH)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ the King Primary School (CK)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanel Downs Primary School (CD)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was not possible to interview all of the intended participants in each of the schools. However, those interviewed included six principals, five board chairs, four proprietors’ representatives, 12 teachers and six students across the combined case study schools. The choice of the participants was to ensure broad coverage across the range of stakeholders. It was particularly useful to interview proprietors’ representatives as they are accountable to the MoE for ensuring that the special character of the school is upheld. Similarly, boards of trustees are accountable to both the MoE and the proprietors to protect the special character. Through interviewing the principal, teachers and students (where possible) in each school, I was able to gain a broad perspective of the process of principal succession through the experiences of those within the school.

3.4.4 Semi-structured interviews

Prior to commencing each interview the research process was explained. This included the ethical aspects of the way the study was conducted (see Appendices 4A & 4B for a sample participant information sheet and consent form). To ensure that the findings of the interviews were credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable (Seidman, 1998), an interview guide was established in order to maintain a semi-structured format. Volunteering participants were then asked a series of prepared questions (see Appendices 5 & 6) that were a mixture of open-ended and closed questions. Sometimes the order of questioning was modified or the questions were reworded based on my perception of what seemed appropriate following previous answers given. Sometimes particular questions were omitted as the interviewee had already addressed the issue in a previous answer. Some general questions, which mirrored those asked in the initial
questionnaire, were utilised as they were non-threatening, easy to answer and enabled an easy relationship to be established between interviewer and interviewee.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), “interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings” (p. 645). In a qualitative study, interviews allow the researcher to develop detailed descriptions and integrate multiple perspectives. Interviews also help to describe processes, and contribute to a holistic description of the situation (Weiss, 1994). The interview can be characterised as a particular kind of conversation, “initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused by him [sic] on content specified by research objections of systematic description, prediction or explanation” (Cohen & Manion, 1989, cited in Robson, 1997, p. 307).

Among the advantages of in-depth, semi-structured interviews is the richness of data obtained and the ability to more clearly ascertain the interviewee’s position on issues (Robson, 2011). Denscombe (2003) notes that a feature of the semi-structured interview is the flexibility of allowing the interviewee to develop ideas and elaborate on points of interest raised by the researcher.

Digital recording of an interview provides a permanent record and allows the interviewer to concentrate on the interviewees’ words. Thirty-two interviews were digitally recorded. One interview was not recorded due to equipment failure, and another participant requested that the interview was not recorded. The reluctance of this participant to have the interview recorded made it more difficult to collect the data; the interview required continuous writing which resulted in a broken flow of conversation. Hence, there was less content recorded and this participant did not elaborate as freely as others did, especially in the open-ended questions. The digitally recorded interviews yielded a great deal of data. Leading questions were avoided to ensure that validity was not compromised. The participants were able to request that the recorder be switched off if they deemed any content was too confidential to be recorded. None chose to do this. Throughout the process of interviewing there was a strong sense that the participants were keen to contribute their knowledge and experiences. These ‘personal experience stories’ are, therefore, narratives of individuals’ personal journeys (Firkin, Dupuis & Meares, 2004; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Yin, 1993). Some participants contributed additional information by way of elaboration of their answers to the original questions. In essence they told a story to exemplify their responses. This proved very helpful and informative.

The issues of sample bias and inaccuracies in self-reporting (Bouma, 2000) are important questions facing researchers using interview data. The purpose of this study was to gain insight
into the processes and practices employed by schools when a new principal is being sought. A key element in conducting semi-structured interviews for both the interviewer and the participant is time. Although each interview was intended to take approximately 30-40 minutes, interviews with students were generally 30 minutes long but with principals, teachers, board chairs and proprietors nearly all exceeded one hour. The dilemma I faced was to decide whether to cut the interview short to honour the time allocation or to allow the interview to continue due to the richness of data being gathered. This matter was addressed by asking each participant if they were happy to continue after 45 minutes had elapsed. All except one participant were willing to commit extra time.

Other issues also occurred during the interviews. One participant was reluctant to answer questions in any depth and did not engage freely. Two participants were highly verbal and inclined to deviate from the question into other non-related matters. Another participant was very critical of many aspects of the school and seemed to be using the process to verbalise discontent. The use of audio recordings ensured that the interviewee’s comments were captured. A professional transcriber, who had signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix 8), was contacted to transcribe the recordings. The recordings were played back and checked against transcripts prior to data analysis. Participants were given the opportunity to read the transcript of their interview and request any amendments they felt necessary. No participants indicated they wished to review their transcript.

3.5 Collection of documents and archival material

Document analysis is often used in qualitative research as a means of triangulation. It enables researchers to use further evidence to support or corroborate information gathered from other data sources and methods. Eisner (1991) states that the researcher provides a “confluence of evidence that breeds credibility” by triangulating data (p. 110). Bowen (2009) outlines five specific functions of documents used in qualitative research:

- to provide the context from which the data is gathered;
- to provide information from which questions can be asked or situations observed;
- to provide additional research data;
- to track change or development over a period of time; and
- to verify or corroborate findings from other sources.

Bowen (2009) considers that gaining data through document analysis is “unobtrusive and nonreactive” (p. 38). Combined with data from interviews and observations, document analysis
provides a means of triangulation. The use of documents in this study provided additional data regarding the context in which the participants operated. Documents also provided some background information (school charter, ERO Report and website) that enabled some understandings of the demographics and history of respective schools. Documents were also able to verify and corroborate evidence gathered from other sources, e.g., school yearbooks and newsletters.

Document-based data included general policy papers regarding staff appointments, principal appointment policies, and staff induction and professional development policies and procedures. The school charter, the most recent report from the Education Review Office, school newsletters, annual yearbooks, websites and other miscellaneous school publications were also gathered from each school and analysed in an attempt to gauge a general understanding of the administration practices, the vision, the culture and the special character of the selected schools.

For all six case study schools a request was made for access to relevant documentation at the time of the interviews. Five schools had the material available that provided information about the appointment processes leading up to the applicant interviews. Since documents and other artefacts are typically produced for reasons other than a research study, they do not have the same limitations as interview data in that the information is not confined to the questions posed by the interviewer, and can be read and reread at leisure. The existence of documents does not intrude upon or alter the setting in the same way the presence of a researcher does. Connections between documents and the research problems depend on the researcher’s flexibility in constructing the research problem and its associated questions. According to Merriam (1998, p. 133):

…such a stance is particularly fitting in qualitative studies, which, by their very nature, are emergent in design and inductive in analysis. Documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem.

Most of the six schools were particularly generous in providing access to documentary material, and supplying past newsletters and yearbooks (see Table 3.3). Where it was more difficult to access documents, additional information was gleaned from school websites. The board chairs of four schools also provided a ‘paper trail’ and accompanying documents that outlined the processes for the most recent principal appointment. This material proved to be very valuable. Four board chairs stated that the documentation of the processes used in the principal
appointment was to be archived and used as the basis for any future principal appointments. It was evident that there was some consideration by these schools being given to future planning for the inevitability of future principal replacement.

The Catholic Education Board publishes resource material for all Catholic Schools. Their manuals provide schools with comprehensive guidelines for the board of trustees to use when appointing staff. Of the three Catholic schools in the study, two said they had used the Catholic Education Board material as a reference. The third school indicated they had not used any additional information but had been in contact with the regional coordinator from the Catholic diocese when undertaking the appointment process of their current principal.

Table 3.3  Documents gathered from case study schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Charter ERO Review</th>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Newsletters</th>
<th>Employment Processes information</th>
<th>Prospectus</th>
<th>Yearbook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avonlakes College</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadfield School</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Angelos College</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Heritage School</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ the King Primary School</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chanel Downs Primary School</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>×</td>
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</table>

The use of document analysis in this study was valuable. It enabled a prior understanding of each school. This was possible through reading the ERO review, school charter and website information. It was also possible to substantiate data collected during the interviews through the use of policy documents and employment information. Much was learnt about the school’s culture, vision and special character through yearbooks, the prospectus, the website, and newsletters. As sources of additional information these documents contributed much to the process and, in some cases, supplied further context to data gathered through the questionnaire and interviews.
3.6 Observations

The visits to each school to conduct the interviews also provided an opportunity to view the school as a visitor/observer. With permission from the principal of each school it was possible to take photos. The focus was on icons and imagery that reflected what schools portrayed and held as important in conveying messages about their vision and special character. Observation can provide rich qualitative data, sometimes described as 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). Observation can also cause potential ethical problems for researchers. “Naturalistic observation is observation carried out in real-world settings: it is an attempt to observe things ‘as they are’, without any intervention or manipulation of the situation itself by the researcher” (University of Strathclyde, 2014). The ability to take photos and reflect on them following the school visits, enabled study and reflection on wider aspects of the environment of the school. In two schools the principals and teachers drew attention to the art/plaques/statues/icons that they felt specifically highlighted their school culture and the religious aspects that they held in high regard. When combined with the archival material, documents and information gathered from the interviews, the anecdotal observations further confirmed what was considered valuable and of significance in understanding the culture and special character of each case study school.

3.7 Data analysis

Stake (1995) states that there is no particular moment when data analysis in case studies actually begins. He says that “… analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations” (p. 71). Yin (2009) suggests that data analysis consists of examining, categorising, tabulating or recombin ing the evidence to address the initial propositions of a study. Hussey and Hussey (1997) state that, “the main challenges when attempting to analyse qualitative data is how to reduce the data, give it structure and use it in a form other than extended text, both in the analysis itself and later when presenting findings” (p. 272).

3.7.1 Analysis of the survey responses (Phase 1)

Questionnaire returns were analysed immediately on receipt. This was necessary to understand the responses in comparison with the criteria in the impact model and then to determine how schools met the criteria so that case study sites could be selected. The information provided regarding the participants’ experiences with principal succession practices also enabled a consideration of the nature of the questions for the semi-structured interviews in Phase 2. The impact model (Appendix 2) determined the components previously established as critical factors in a school’s understanding of principal succession practices. Prior to receiving the questionnaire
returns the questions were converted into categories in line with the impact model criteria in order to provide a framework to analyse the responses in a coherent and logical manner, and elicit the information necessary to make a reliable and informed decision when selecting the schools for the second stage of the research; the case study sites.

A grid was designed to sort the schools into two groups: those schools which demonstrated the use of most of the six criteria from the impact model and those schools which did not appear to have used many of the six criteria. The three schools from each group which had consented to be involved in the case studies were then invited to participate in Phase 2.

3.7.2 Case study data analysis (Phase 2)
The interview transcripts, documents, artefacts and photos were initially scanned to look for the various succession planning strategies, and then again to look for recurring themes. The constant comparative method of data analysis, a feature of grounded theory, was employed. This method is often used within case studies, especially case studies involving multiple data sources (Stake, 2005). The key component of this method of data analysis is for the researcher to begin analysis immediately upon the start of data collection. The analyses are continually reviewed as additional data is collected. As the data is coded and compared, themes within the data are likely to emerge; information can then be confirmed or discounted as important in theory formation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). These steps were employed as thematic analysis (explained below).

3.7.3 Coding and grounded theory
Creswell (2009) describes grounded theory as “a qualitative strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of process, action or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study” (p. 13). Grounded theory has developed mainly as a qualitative approach whereby the data collection and analysis occur as a simultaneous process, with constant comparisons occurring. The usual methods of data collection are through interviewing and observation. Through using multiple stages of data collection, and continually analysing and refining the relationships between the categories of information, theory emerges inductively from the data (Charmez, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This research uses the two primary characteristics of the grounded theory method; the constant comparison of data as categories of information which are studied and evaluated and theoretical sampling of the different schools to maximise the understanding of the differences and similarities amongst the case study schools.
Grounded theory data analysis requires examining the concepts emerging and looking firstly for patterns or codes, then ideas and themes. Strauss and Corbin (1998) recommended coding in three stages:

- open coding – where the text is read reflectively to identify relevant categories;
- axial coding – where categories are refined, developed and related or interconnected; and
- selective coding – where the central category that ties all the other categories in the theory together into a story, is identified and related to other categories.

These stages are not necessarily sequential and they are likely to overlap. In grounded theory the coding is normally done quite informally. Braun and Clarke (2012) define thematic analysis as “a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insights into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (p. 57). Braun and Clarke (2012) further suggest that “analysis produces the answer to a question, even if, as in some qualitative research, the specific question that is being asked only becomes apparent during the analysis” (p. 57). They recommend six phases of thematic analysis:

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data;
2. Generating initial codes;
3. Searching for themes;
4. Reviewing themes;
5. Defining and naming theme;
6. Producing the report. (Braun & Clarke, 2006. p. 35)

There are advantages and disadvantages to using thematic analysis. The advantages, as explained by Braun and Clarke (2006) are shown in Table 3.4. A poorly conducted analysis, an inappropriate research question, too broad a range of codes and criteria, limited interpretative ability if not used within an existing framework, the possibility of lack of continuity and possible contradictions across individual accounts are all potential disadvantages that a researcher must be aware of when conducting thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
Table 3.4: Advantages of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 37)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relatively easy and quick method to learn, and do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results are generally accessible to educated general public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful method for working within participatory research paradigm, with participants as collaborators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can usefully summarise key features of a large body of data, and/or offer a ‘thick description’ of the data set.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can highlight similarities and differences across the data set.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can generate unanticipated insights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be useful for producing qualitative analysis suited to informing policy development</td>
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</table>

During the coding process it was important to notice comments and ideas relevant to succession planning, collect examples of the processes and practices, and analyse them to determine commonalities, differences, patterns and structures. Open coding was used first in this study. Open coding is a mechanism by which similar responses are named and categorised after the identification of possible emerging themes. Next axial coding was undertaken, which is the process of relating codes (categories and concepts) to each other, via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking. The focus here was on generating new theoretical ideas from the data. As these new theories arise out of the data and are supported by the data, they are said to be grounded.

It was evident from the outset that, with the large number of interviews, all of which lasted between 30-90 minutes, there would be a wealth of data to be analysed. Therefore, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis tool was used. NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 10, 2012), software for qualitative analysis was selected as the most suitable tool as it helps users organise and analyse non-numerical or unstructured data. The software allows users to classify, sort and arrange information; examine relationships in the data; and carefully manage the large and complex amounts of text, codes and notes. Using NVivo, a researcher or analyst can test theories, identify trends and cross-examine information in a multitude of ways using its search
engine and query functions. Observations are possible in the software and it is also possible to build a body of evidence to support an argument or project.

In the initial coding, 31 themes were identified that reoccurred through the interviews. These were then carefully considered in light of the wealth of data collected. The most frequent references were grouped into six key elements which became the emerging themes linked to criteria from the impact model: vision, culture, succession planning techniques, leadership preparation, appointment processes and special character considerations. Specifically, the responses to the interview questions were studied within the research framework of identification and development, sustainability and evaluation of succession planning activities to find similarities and differences across the case study schools. Following the collation and analysis of all the data, the emergent themes formed the basis of the final report on the findings of the research. Archival material, documents and interview transcripts were examined carefully for parallel themes and contrasting ideas.

The value of using coding to analyse and compare the data was that it enabled the formulation of ideas, testing and reformulation until a theory about succession planning in integrated schools began to emerge. Comparisons between participants from each school and among participants from all schools provided a means to conduct an in-depth analysis of the qualitative data (Freebody, 2003).

3.8 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research the question of trustworthiness is a key component of understanding the strength and validity of the study. Triangulation ensures a measure of trustworthiness through the use of multiple research methods, investigators, data sources and theoretical perspectives in the process of research. Stake (1995) stated that the protocols to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations use triangulation. Assessing the trustworthiness of any research study involves examining its component parts. The various methods used to gather information; questionnaires, interviews, document analysis, archival material and observation enabled reference to a variety of sources to verify suppositions and themes that were emerging. Merriam (1998) notes that in a qualitative case study the trustworthiness rests in how reliably and validly the interviews were constructed, whether the content of the documents was properly analysed, and whether conclusions can be substantiated by the data.
The tools used in this study for the collection of data provided an opportunity for participant verification of emerging themes. Following the transcribing of the semi-structured interviews, the participants were given the opportunity to read the script of their interview and verify the accuracy of the interview. Secondly, using a range of data facilitated triangulation. This ensured a more comprehensive perspective and strengthened the rigour of the study as the weaknesses of one method can be compensated for by the strengths of other methods.

3.8.1 An ‘insider’s’ perspective
As a principal of a faith-based integrated school, I bring an insider’s perspective to the process of principal succession. ‘Insider research’ is a term used when the researcher “conducts studies with populations, communities and identity groups of which they are also members” (Kanuha, 2000, p. 439). Mutch (2005) states that insider research occurs when “the research question relates to the researcher’s context, interests and worldview and shapes the subsequent research decisions” (p. 14). My knowledge of the school system, the opinions of principal colleagues about succession practices and my experiences with boards of trustees around the issues of succession undoubtedly influenced the study’s methods and analyses.

As a result of my insider knowledge I was aware, throughout the process, of the possible danger of supplementing the information gathered or directing the questions toward a preconceived idea that I may have wished to pursue. To guard against the possibility of such role confusion, I periodically stepped back from the data-collection process and re-evaluated my role as a researcher rather than as a school principal. Frequent discussions with my doctoral supervisors about ethical issues also added an additional form of monitoring to guard against any bias. Being cognisant that conducting research in environments with which I was very familiar could threaten the trustworthiness of this study, I was particularly careful to check I was faithfully drawing from the transcripts. I was particular in cross-checking transcripts from other participants within the school to ensure that I had correctly interpreted the data.

3.9 Ethical considerations
Ethical considerations are critical in the qualitative research process. Ethical issues arise at all stages of the research process, from gaining access to research participants to the publications of the research findings. Confidentiality and the protection of the identity of individuals and the schools selected as research sites have been paramount. Having an insider’s perspective made it even more important that all interviews were recorded because “it reduces the tendency of the interviewer to make an unconscious selection of data favouring (his) biases” (Borg & Gall, 1983,
Recorded interviews allowed a replay of data; this practice enabled a deeper study of intonation, and multiple ‘listenings’ enhanced meanings and understandings.

Creswell (2003) writes, “The researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desire of the informants(s)” (p. 201). Stake (1995) suggests that qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world; their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict. When taking part in research, participants must know that their responses will be kept confidential, their privacy ensured and the avoidance of any harassment guaranteed. In qualitative research it is necessary to develop a high level of rapport with individuals and the group studied. Merriam (1998) says, “because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all observations and analyses are altered through that human being’s worldview, values and perspective” (p. 22). Merriam further suggests that researchers undertaking qualitative research should have a tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity to context and data, and good communication skills. Ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge with regard to the collection of data and the dissemination of findings. The overriding factor is the researcher–participant relationship, how much information is divulged by the researcher, and how privacy and protection is ensured for the participant. When conducting any kind of research, especially research involving human participants, it is crucial to ensure that the research project is carried out in such a way as to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all of those involved, and to ensure participants can give freely derived informed consent.

In conducting this study a number of strategies were employed to address ethical considerations. First, ethics approval was sought from the Auckland University Ethics Committee (12 August, 2011 Ref 2011/439). Following this, written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the board of trustees of each school that agreed to participate in Phases 1 & 2. The potential participants were well informed about the purpose of the study, and were given an assurance of confidentiality before they agreed to take part. Additionally, participants were able to withdraw from the study at any point up to the commencement of analysis of data. All data gathered (information sheets, recordings of interviews, transcripts and interviewer notes) were coded using NVivo10 and subsequently stored in a secure place to avoid any loss or disclosure of confidential information. Neither the schools nor the participants are identified by name, and pseudonyms were constructed in such a way that no relationship between the pseudonym and the names of the school or participants can be identified.
3.10 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the research. The rationale for the methodology was described and discussed, including the use of the Success Case Method. An explanation and justification was provided for the approach to data gathering. The study used an interpretive, qualitative design. Data collection tools: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, documentary evidence and observations were described which were best able to investigate the research problem. The possible effects of the low response rate for the survey, and the risks of bias and interviewer/insider influence for the semi-structured interviews were noted, and the efforts made to reduce the risks were explained. The steps undertaken to analyse the data were described. Finally ethical considerations, and trustworthiness issues were addressed.

In the following two chapters the findings of Phases 1 and 2 are shared and analysed against the criteria and the framework of the impact model.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The data collected in this study ably addressed the research question and sub-questions presented in Chapter 1. The key research question asks ‘in what ways principals and boards use succession planning in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools towards ensuring the building of leadership capacity and the continuity of vision, culture and special character?’ The three sub-questions investigate the succession planning processes used in faith-based integrated schools, the role of boards of trustees and proprietors in ensuring the continuity of culture, vision and character, and the leadership development opportunities by which schools build leadership capacity for the future. A qualitative interpretive study, examining the preparation for a change of principal in faith-based integrated schools, was conducted.

The two phases of the study inform the structure of this chapter: Phase 1 presents the findings from the questionnaire and Phase 2, the case study findings. Using the criteria of key skills and knowledge from the impact model, the research questions are answered and they provide insight into the phenomenon of succession planning in New Zealand’s faith-based schools.

4.2 The significance of the impact model

The impact model provides a framework from which to guide the study using criteria which could indicate successful principal succession practices. Having analysed the responses to the questionnaire, the schools were sorted into two groups by using a grid which related to questions 1-18 (as described in Chapter 3). Once the responses to the questions were tabulated, the 34 schools were separated into two distinct groups: those schools which had some strong criteria for selecting new principals and processes in place to manage a change of principal (Group A), and those schools which did not have a clear plan or processes in place to easily manage a change of principal in the school (Group B). Using the impact model as a basis for arranging the schools on a continuum from those using most of the procedures specified in the impact model through to those who reported using the fewest procedures, it was not difficult to identify six schools, three from Group A and three from Group B to invite to take part in the case study research. All six schools had already consented to be part of Phase 2 should they be selected.
The significance of the impact model is illustrated through the findings of the two phases in the study as each of the criteria is examined.

4.3 Phase 1: Questionnaire

One of the key advantages of collecting data from a questionnaire is the ability to gather responses in a relatively quick time frame. However, a disadvantage is that return rates are generally low. As mentioned in Chapter 3, participating schools were selected following the collection of statistical information accessed through the New Zealand Catholic Education Office, Adventist Education New Zealand and the New Zealand Association for Christian Schools. All state, integrated, faith-based schools which had experienced a change of principal between 2005 and 2011 were included in the database, and were invited to participate in the questionnaire. Of the 157 schools which matched the criterion of a change of principal during the time frame, 12 were Christian schools, 10 were Seventh Day Adventist schools and the remaining 135 were Catholic schools. When considering the percentage of faith-based schools which had experienced a change of principal it was evident that, in Catholic and Adventist schools, over this time span, more than 50% of schools had a change of principal.

Communications with the proprietors of integrated Catholic, Christian and the Adventist schools in New Zealand that had experienced a change of principal revealed that some schools had experienced a greater percentage of change than others, and this was particularly true of smaller schools in more remote geographical areas in New Zealand. It would have added another element of interest to this study if a school identified through the questionnaire as having multiple changes over the previous 15 years had been one of the case study schools. However, no school with four or more changes was willing to be part of Phase 2. Several board chairs said that the lack of institutional knowledge at the board of trustees’ level as a result of multiple changes of board of trustees’ membership, precluded any further participation in the study. As shown in Figure 4.1 Catholic and Adventist schools had each experienced about 60% turnover of principals while evangelical Christian schools had been more stable with only a 15% turnover. The higher numbers for principal turnover in the Catholic schools reflects the greater number of Catholic schools which exist in New Zealand. Many of these schools are smaller schools, often located in rural areas where principal turnover for all schools is generally higher than in the bigger towns and cities in New Zealand (Brooking, Collins, Court & O’Neill, 2003).
4.3.1 Questionnaire findings

The questionnaire was designed to collect demographic information, and to gain an understanding of the processes used when each school needed to reappoint a principal. During analysis, the key components of the questionnaire were tabled to give a picture of which successful succession practices, as determined by the impact model, had been used (Appendix 7).

Questions 1-2 asked how many changes of principal there had been in the school within the last 15 years, and the year of the most recent principal change. Although the time period of the study was 2005-2011, it was important to determine how many schools had been through the process of appointing of a new principal in the 15 years prior to the date of the questionnaire. The rationale for this question was that, with many changes of principal in some schools, the board of trustees could potentially be more experienced in the principal-appointment process and may have developed a succession plan as a result of their experiences. The time period of 15 years was selected as it equates to five cycles of triennial board of trustees’ elections. This would provide an indication of community involvement that could have occurred during any appointments. Figure 4.2 shows that, of the schools which responded to this question (n=34), over half had each experienced four new principals or more during the 15 years. Most of these were Catholic schools based in small towns and rural areas, with roll numbers of less than 200 students.
Figure 4.2 Percentages of schools ($n=34$) which experienced changes of principal during 1996-2011

Question 3 determined whether the most recent principal appointee was an internal or external applicant. This question was partially in response to literature related to school culture, which suggested that the choice of an applicant based on this criterion could have a significant impact on the future development of the school culture. A total of 11% of schools had made an internal appointment with their most recent principal while 33% of schools indicated that there were no suitable candidates from within the school who could fill the position, and this affected their eventual appointments of outsiders.

Questions 4-6 established whether external consultants were used in the appointment process, and what constituted the selection committee for the new principal. The range of consultants used varied significantly across the country, and appeared to reflect the locally available resources or expertise. Those schools closer to larger towns or cities had greater access to independent employment consultants and human resource specialists. Five of the smaller, rural-based schools indicated that the financial cost of an independent consultant was too prohibitive.

Questions 7-8 queried the use of documented policies or procedures for effective succession planning. Of the 34 schools, 41% indicated that they did have a documented policy for succession planning. However, when some schools listed the policies they had, it was evident that the question had been misunderstood, and the policies that schools referred to were
Appointments Policy or the Personnel Policy. These are mandatory policies required of each school by the Ministry. This became clearer when the responses for Questions 17 and 18 were analysed; it was evident that there was no clear understanding of what a process or policy for effective succession planning might look like. Some schools (41%) shared that during the appointment process they had consulted with the MoE, NZSTA, the Catholic Education Office or Adventist Education New Zealand. For example, some Catholic schools indicated that they followed the procedures outlined in the Catholic Schools’ Handbook which is distributed to all Catholic schools by the Catholic Education Office (Catholic Education Office, 2013).

**Question 9** asked about the involvement of other members of the school community; the stakeholders who would have a vested interest in the appointment of a new principal. Six schools, 17% of respondents, indicated that members of the wider school community had been involved in some way. The schools which had consulted stakeholders or other community members had done so either through a parent meeting (one school), a survey to parents or staff (two schools), meeting with another principal in the local area (two schools) and consultation with students (one school). A total of 68% of schools indicated that they developed a person specification for the principal role. However, only two schools followed the good practice processes listed by the NZSTA. This advises that parents and staff should be involved in defining the person specification for the new principal and, depending on context, deciding what should be in the job description (NZSTA, 2005).

**Questions 10-15** were open-ended; they asked board chairs to articulate the criteria considered by the board when looking for a new principal, and the strategies used to develop within-school leadership potential. Most board chairs did not feel that leadership development was part of the role of the board, and 59% had no knowledge of any leadership development opportunities operating within the school. In faith-based integrated schools there is a legal requirement that the school be led by a principal who actively upholds the special character of the school. Only 21 of 34 schools indicated that this was a priority for consideration when replacing the principal. Qualities such as good communicator, great leader, ‘super’ person, fits the community, good academic record, good references, knowledge, passion, enthusiasm, relational, strategic, competent, experienced, professional and a servant leader were frequently articulated as desirable in a new principal. The board chairs of several smaller schools suggested that there was no point for leadership development for staff other than the principal as there were no other leadership positions available.
Question 16 determined the involvement or non-involvement of the incumbent principal. NZSTA strongly recommends that the incumbent principal has no involvement at all in any of the decisions surrounding principal replacement (NZSTA publications 2005, 2009a, 2009b). However, there is potential for a school to involve the principal in discussions leading up to the point at which only the board (minus the principal) makes a decision. Eight of the 34 schools chose to involve the incumbent principal in the initial stages of the process. These board chairs indicated that the principal was the person in the school with the greatest expertise and knowledge about employment issues and contractual obligations. Therefore, incumbents’ advice had been sought in the early stages of the process. Some board chairs were adamant that there was no involvement of the exiting principal and they considered it inappropriate for the incumbent to be involved.

Questions 17-18, also open-ended, invited the board chair to consider how the processes, policies and procedures for subsequent principal replacements might or might not differ from the ones used for the most recent principal replacement. Seventeen board chairs (50%) indicated that the questionnaire had brought to their attention the whole area of succession planning, and that it may be a matter for future consideration by the board. Comments made by 25% of these board chairs also indicated that the experience of employing a new principal had raised some issues and concerns that would be addressed in any future appointments.

The following grid (Table 4.1) shows the acronym (as listed in Chapter 3) attributed to each of the comments from participants in the case study schools.

### Table 4.1 Acronyms representing case study schools

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Avonlakes College AL</th>
<th>Broadfield School BS</th>
<th>Chanel Downs Primary School CD</th>
<th>Christian Heritage School CH</th>
<th>Christ the King Primary School CK</th>
<th>St Angelos College SA</th>
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Summary of questionnaire responses

Six key findings were detected in the open-ended answers to the questionnaires. The first finding was that no boards of trustees had considered the replacement of the principal prior to the necessity arising. For some, situations arose beyond their control. Responses included:

- Principal resigned at short notice. (BOT/CD)
- Principal had a serious accident rendering her unable to work and eventually led to the necessity to replace her. (BOT/CK)
Secondly, no boards had considered succession planning as an important or even necessary aspect of their role. Several noted that succession planning was not covered in the *School Trustee Handbook* (NZSTA), therefore, it was not something that was to the forefront of their thinking around governance issues.

A third finding was that none of the boards had any written policies or procedures relating to succession planning specifically, although some boards indicated that they had a policy relating to principal appointment. The Catholic Education Office provides all Catholic schools with a comprehensive *Handbook* (Catholic Education Office, 2013), including guidelines for the appointment of principals and teaching staff within the Catholic School network. Adventist schools and evangelical Christian schools do not have the same information as clearly documented as in the Catholic handbook. However, they have access to similar documentation provided by the MoE and the NZSTA. One long-standing board chair lamented the lack of expertise around the board table regarding principal appointment:

Too many trustees are not aware of what a good pedagogical leader needs to be. I have been involved in 4 appointments and seen this too often. (BOT/BS)

Fourthly, as evident in the literature, the importance of organisational culture, the power of vision and mission, and the requirement for integrated schools to maintain their special character were not strong elements in the responses to the questionnaire. As integrated schools exist because they are classified as ‘special character schools’ under the Private Schools’ Conditional Integration Act 1975, it was surprising that these elements did not feature prominently in 40% of the schools. In 25% of the schools where these elements were listed, the mention appeared cursory.

A fifth finding was that a lack of data or archival records in most schools prevented some board chairs from providing accurate responses to many survey questions. One board chair returned the survey blank and commented there had been so much change in his/her school that no one had the institutional knowledge to adequately answer the questions. Other respondents either left questions blank, or commented that no-one knew the answer to questions about some ‘historic’ events.

Finally, multiple changes of board members over time complicated the process of collecting information. The nature of triennial board elections under the model of self-managing schools means that boards frequently change personnel. Of the 34 schools which responded, only five had board chairs who had served on the board of trustees for three or more terms. In most cases,
the board chair completing the survey had been on the board for two terms, although some were serving on the board for the first time and had been appointed to the role of chairperson. One board chairperson had served on the board for 18 years, the past three terms as the chair. Although all schools had board minutes for reference, other documentation regarding previous principal appointments had not been kept in the archives of any of the schools.

4.4 Significance of the questionnaire

Matching the questionnaire responses to the impact model enabled the elicitation of information necessary to make a reliable and informed decision when selecting the schools for the case study phase. The analysis of each question then allowed for a greater understanding of these data which then could better inform the decision about which schools would participate in Phase 2 – the case study. This questionnaire was significant because it:

- provided some important initial findings about the recent change of principal in each school;
- assisted in identifying schools which had policies or procedures in place for such an event;
- demonstrated some areas, matched to findings in the literature review, that indicated schools needed to be better prepared in regarding principal succession; and
- highlighted that some schools had areas of weakness in the consideration of the requirements for employment under the conditions of the PSCI Act (1975).

The most significant factor was that the questionnaire provided sufficient information to select case study schools using the impact model criteria. This was the first test of the criteria being used as the framework to guide this study.

Principal succession is an inevitable event in every school. The results of the questionnaire indicate that documented formal processes of succession planning were not a focus of attention in many of these schools, although there was evidence that informal processes existed. The indication from these results was that when the questionnaire was conducted (2011), the nature of New Zealand self-managing schools did not appear to promote a culture of succession planning by principals or boards of trustees in integrated schools. The results of the questionnaire led to the selection of case study schools for Phase 2 of this study.
4.5 Phase 2: Case study findings

The schools selected provided some variation in school size, decile rating, socio-economic community and special character. All of the people appointed to the position of principal had experience in Catholic or evangelical Christian integrated schools prior to being appointed to their current position. No principals came to their position without some experience in an integrated school. Two schools had kept extensive notes following the most recent principal replacement process and these were made available to me during the case study phase. Interviews were conducted over a six-week period in 2012 in each of the selected schools.

The data from the case studies (interview data, documents and observation notes and photos) were analysed using the grounded theory approach described in Chapter 3. An inductive method was used to look for themes within the data collected during this phase. The 31 initial codes were grouped into seven axial codes, and in turn these codes enabled answers to the three sub-questions guiding Phase 2. These questions, which are previously listed in Chapter 1 are aligned to the criteria in the impact model. The criteria numbers are noted in brackets.

1. What plans, policies, practices and processes are in place for principal succession in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools (Criteria 1, 2, 3, 4)?
2. What role did the Board of Proprietors and Board of Trustees play in ensuring the continuity of culture, vision and special character through the process of a change of principal (Criteria 1, 5)?
3. What opportunities or programmes are offered to teachers within faith-based integrated schools to build leadership capacity and ensure a leadership pipeline exists for the future that will ensure the maintenance of vision, culture and special character at these schools (Criteria 5, 6)?

Each of these questions is addressed below with evidence gathered from the case study interviews, documents and observations.

4.5.1 Question 1: Succession planning processes

As explained in Chapter 2, succession is an ongoing process of planning and management that would best fit as part of a strategic plan that considers the future and prepares for the inevitability of principal replacement in the school. As already noted, the pool of applicants for principals in faith-based integrated schools is often much smaller than for state schools because of the ‘tagged positions’ as required under the conditions of the Integration Act 1975 (see Chapter 1). The
small size of the applicant pool was evidenced in each of the case study schools, all of whom received very few applicants for these advertised positions.

- When we advertised, it wasn’t like we were swamped with applications, in fact, we were quite taken aback. We all like to think we have a high performing school and we thought, wow, they will be falling over themselves to be the principal here. We had four applications. One was not even a goer, was someone who had been a deputy in another country, had not even taught in New Zealand and we ended up with three. When we looked at the CVs one was the stand out and I almost thought that was the person but they pulled out the day before the interview. So we ended up with only two. (BOT Chair/CD)

- We asked our consultant what she would typically see. She typically sees between five and ten applicants in the state system. When we realised we were really only going to get four we said what shall we do now? Shall we stop and re-advertise? Then we decided that we weren’t on quantity, we were on quality. (BOT Chair/CD)

- Four days before the interviews one of them pulled out. We looked at the two applicants and we did point out to both of the applicants before they began the interview that a third one had pulled out and we were not sure how that would affect the creditability of the interview process because we felt … just to give them a warning that if we didn’t feel that we had sufficient to go on that we would not be appointing, and we may have to review and go back again. (BOT Chair/AL)

Table 4.2 illustrates the number of shortlisted applicants for the principal’s role in each school. Avonlakes College and St Angelos College both had more than three applicants. The number shortlisted for each of the other schools equates to the number of applicants.
Table 4.2 Applicants for principal’s position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Shortlisted applicants</th>
<th>Internal Applicants</th>
<th>External Applicants</th>
<th>Applicants interviewed</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Angelos College</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Christian Heritage School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ The King Primary School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanel Downs Primary School</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As already indicated, none of the case study schools reported the existence of any formal succession planning prior to the need arising to find a replacement for the principal. However, four of the six schools had well-documented processes for the appointment of the current principal. In these four schools it was possible to sight the advertisement for the position the job description, the person specification, and the Special Character statement. Two board chairs had kept extensive notes of meetings, discussions, emails to staff, correspondence with the diocese, communication with parents, and minutes of BOT meetings where the appointment process was discussed. For one of these schools an employment consultant was used and the information and documentation used by this consultant had been stored for future reference. An interview schedule was supplied by two of the schools and this clearly indicated the areas of interest for the selection panel.

The board chair of Avonlakes College (which had a year’s notice of the previous principal’s retirement) was able to start the appointment process well in advance, and take time to document the steps as she completed them.

We had a good long three terms to get the whole process underway so we did a lot of work at the end of that first year putting together our advertisement, consulting with our community. We had a parent meeting where we invited parents and we hand-picked them randomly. We picked out people from different ethnic groups or from different social groups, or someone whom we knew may have some valuable input and that was one of the most valuable things that we did. We invited them all to an evening we had in the staffroom and we basically wanted them to tell us what they were looking for, what they wanted us to look for in the new principal. That evening, we had a bit of initial discussion and then they went into little groups and came up with ideas. Each group would pick out
maybe six, I have forgotten what we said, six or ten key things in the order of priorities, and passed it back to us. Then we collaborated from those feedbacks. We used that very much as part of setting out our person specification for the job. As well as their feedback, we also got input from management. It [is] so critical that – for management to get on with the new principal – probably [is] the most critical thing. We also got feedback from our DRS responsible for our religious special character, people in the school, also from our Founding Orders. We wrote to all of those and said we are appointing a new principal. We consulted our contributing primary principals. I think if I have a comment to make it would be the strength of the process was in the initial input. It really gave us a great sense of where the community wanted us to go and that made everybody aware that they were part of the process. It wasn’t something going to be imposed upon them from the outside because you want everyone to buy into a new leadership in the school and this one I have to say was very critical. (BOT Chair/AL)

Publications by the NZSTA (2005, 2009) are able to assist boards in the appointment process but they were not widely used in the case study schools. Additionally, the Catholic Education Board has some excellent resources for schools regarding appointment processes in Catholic schools. The introduction to the resource available to Catholic schools, ‘Guidelines for Appointments: Primary Schools’ states: “The appointment of staff is one of the most important decisions a Board of Trustees ever takes and, therefore, must be undertaken in a highly responsible manner. A systematic approach with thorough preparation will more likely lead to a successful outcome” (Laurenson & Taylor, 2012, p. 5). A similar booklet is available as a guideline for Catholic secondary schools. Despite the availability of these resources, only one of the three case study Catholic schools referred to this information as being part of their appointment processes or planning. Two of the schools did, however, seek input from the local Catholic Education Office, and one employed an external consultant to lead its appointment process.

The findings in the three evangelical Christian schools were similar. The NZSTA material was available for board of trustees to use but only one school used it as a reference to guide them through the process. None of these schools used a consultant or any other external advisors to assist with the process. The board chair of St Angelos College had previous experience with the employment of principals at other local schools, so relied on his own expertise in his school’s appointment. The board chair participants at all six schools had not considered developing a formal succession plan for principal appointment, although one school was actively developing processes for the succession of the board chair.
The board chair of Christ the King Primary School commented:

I guess we have a very stable employment history so the need to have a good system for promoting people or taking employing people with their career and then sort of developing and passing on is quite weak because the upper slots, they’re all full – the ones at the top aren’t being emptied so in all honesty I can’t say we give it any thought.

(BOT Chair/CK)

4.5.2 Question 1: Selection and appointment processes

Most case study school students and teachers felt quite distant from the principal appointment process. Of the six schools only two had a process which encouraged any student involvement. One used a survey, conducted by the school management team, which invited students’ input about what they would like to see in a new school principal. The other was an exercise done by the staff with students. As the latter is a primary school, these students were not involved in contributing to this research. A member of the board of trustees explained:

We actually went out to the children. We gave them massive pieces of paper and said something along the lines of, ‘what skills do you think a good principal should have?’ and that was the bubble in the middle of the page. The kids just brain stormed and wrote things down and when we were setting the criteria for our person profile those were up on the wall in the staffroom, they surrounded the walls in the staffroom. You know kids are incredible, there was everything we were looking for was written by the children. I remember one thing really stuck out, ‘needs to like children’. (BOT/Chair/CD)

St Angelos College sent an online survey to the staff. The survey, which also went to the extended school community, focused almost solely on personal attributes and teaching, management and leadership experience. In reviewing the findings from this survey, it was interesting to note that fewer than 25% of the staff chose to be involved in responding.

The board sent out a survey really just saying, hey here’s all the qualities. They grouped them by about 9 categories and got us to rate them within each category, the importance of that particular attribute of the person. That was how they went about it. It was pretty low key. (Teacher/SA)

A second school sent an email to staff, which the chair discussed:

…the Principal is retiring, we are thinking about the appointment of a new Principal, please give us any feedback that you would like to? We got some very good comments back from the staff about what type of person they would like. (BOT Chair/AL)
There were some teachers amongst the six schools who felt excluded from their appointment process. The choice of the new principal would have a direct influence on teachers and their work, yet half of the teacher participants expressed concern that they knew so little about what was happening. Two teachers were ambivalent about the process and said that they did not expect to be told much as they were just workers, not management. Some had opinions regarding the process and the selection:

The leaving of one principal and the bringing in of a new principal, there was quite a fanfare made of it. (Teacher/AL)

As staff we are as careful as we can be to ensure that the person who becomes principal does have a faith in Christ. Some of those principals who have come from state schools are quite mature Christians, but it is another thing to be a Christian educator. (Teacher/SA)

Because the new principal was an insider it was a nice, easy transition. You knew where his heart was for the school, and you knew his vision already. (Teacher/CH)

They [BOT] looked to see what runs well, and why it runs well, and then they tried to look for a principal who actually matched up with those qualities. (Teacher/CK)

For others, the transition to a new principal was desirable to elicit change:

The principal was absent a lot so we sort of knew he was thinking of leaving. It’s not that he was a bad person or anything but in a sense we were glad we might get someone else in, and might see some changes happen. (Teacher/CH)

I think we have avoided what some schools have done. They have become overly corporate, education has become a business. Some schools are losing sight of what our purpose is. It’s not just about education, not just about curriculum, it’s about educating a whole person. (Teacher/BS)

Since the new principal came there have been changes but it has sort of been evolutionary rather than revolutionary. So we’ve had one revolutionary principal and two evolutionary principals who have managed change at a slower pace. (Teacher/CK).

We had a year of an acting principal, and acting principals by definition don’t do anything – that’s not their role. They are just there to steer the ship from icebergs, rather than plot a new course. (Teacher/CK)
By contrast all of the principal participants felt that the appointment process and their interview for the position had focused quite strongly on aspects of vision, culture and special character. One principal commented that the job description for his role was very detailed and demanding and he thought, “Jesus would be lucky to get this job!” Another principal was put through psychometric testing and met with the proprietors, who focused heavily on the special character of the school and the personal character qualities of the applicants. A third principal said, “very, very high value was given to understanding and being able to express Christian vision, Christian character”. One teacher, who was also a staff representative on the BOT, had a clearer perspective of the appointment process because he had been more involved:

   Twenty years ago it was an hour interview and ring up a few referees. These applicants were put through the hoops. All the time we were looking out for their Biblical knowledge, their vision for the school and how they would integrate that Christian aspect in curriculum and their leadership. (Teacher Representative on BOT/SA)

For all of board chairs and proprietors the inclusion of vision, culture and special character was considered central to the appointment process, the interview, and the final selection of the new principal. This was an interesting discovery as the importance of the special character did not feature as strongly in the questionnaire responses completed by the board chairs of these schools.

   It is a no brainer that this is a tagged position. The other candidate was very well known within the Catholic Church. He spends a lot of time ministering in the Catholic faith. We asked our applicants to give a simple 10 minute presentation with a very open ended question: ‘if you were principal here, tell us what your vision would be.’ His presentation was so full of Catholic character at the end of it I thought, ‘I don’t know what teaching and learning would be going on, but man we are going to be holy.’ He didn’t talk anything about teaching and learning or the children. It was so unbalanced it really sent up a big red flag for us. (BOT Chair/CD)

One of the things was the time that was given to ensuring that we were going to get the right person for our school. Whilst there were a few rumblings about the fact that the process was taking too long – the proof is in the pudding, we’ve got somebody fantastic. (Teacher representative on the BOT/CD)

The principal has to be a godly man or godly woman. He has to be able to clearly enunciate the school’s special character. So godliness, the ability to enunciate and to speak out the special character. Special character is one of the two main responsibilities that a proprietor has; to ensure, to maintain – so clearly that’s very high on my list as a
proprietor that the principal is going to ensure that the special character is to the forefront of all of his thinking as he goes about developing, promoting, growing whatever vision he might have for the school. (Proprietor-SA)

Top of our list was someone who professed their Catholic faith in a way that we felt was genuine that was visible leading by example, someone who genuinely … didn’t just pay lip service to their faith … lived their faith and they were an example to others and could lead in that role. (BOT Chair/AL)

In only one appointment, that of an internal applicant, was there any indication that the process was not rigorous. In that situation the appointment process was viewed as a being done to ‘tick a box’ because the person had been acting principal in the school for a lengthy period of time.

I suspect our way of doing employment is like promoting. It is based on seniority so if you have a young promising candidate who you thought really should get on in their career and if you have another person who has done their time and was due it, it would be quite difficult to promote one over the other. With seniority you’re kind of bound by loyalty based on length of service. Tough for young ones if they are looking promising. (BOT Chair/CK)

Although most of the participants did not specifically mention succession planning processes, it was evident the board chairs considered that there were some reasonably rigorous, planned procedures which influenced the appointment of principals. These took various forms including surveys, psychometric testing, separate interviews with the proprietors and in most cases, interviews with the full board. The degree to which the school community was involved varied significantly amongst the schools from very little involvement (information given via school newsletters – two schools), to an ad hoc casual discussion with a few parents (one school), to a general survey sent to the school community (one school), to a formal process led by a consultant where selected community members could participate (one school) to one school which involved a number of stakeholders invited to participate in a forum. Full community involvement in the principal succession process, as indicated in the impact model, means that the board of trustees fulfils its obligation to involve the community in consultation and discussion as required and stipulated in their school charter.

The data gathered during Phase 2 did not indicate the presence of any formal succession planning practices in any schools. The appointment process was guided by the board chair in each school, with only one of the schools employing a consultant to assist with the process, and
two other schools using external advisors who contributed minimally. The impact of developing a succession plan, documenting processes and seeking external input from educational professionals can lay a foundation for future principal succession events and ensure the school appoints a suitable replacement who best fits the special character and educational aspirations of the school community.

4.6 Question 2: The boards’ roles in maintaining vision, culture and special character

The justification for the existence of state integrated schools in New Zealand is because these schools wish to maintain a special character that distinguishes them from state schools. The majority of state-integrated schools have a faith base that determines their special character. There are many practices and expressions of faith within these schools that are clearly aligned to that faith base. As explained in Chapter 1, the key responsibility of the proprietor is to maintain that special character. The proprietor depends on the board of trustees to govern and the principal to manage the school in line with the school’s special character. Interwoven with the special character are the elements of vision and culture that are unique to each organisation (as demonstrated through the literature review). These elements formed part of the interview questions: they asked participants to explain their understanding of their school’s vision and culture, and the relevance of the elements within their school context.

4.6.1 Vision

Throughout the questioning of participants the use of the word ‘mission’ was avoided. Vision and mission are related but distinct. Mission is a general philosophical statement about the objectives of an organisation whereas vision is strategic and gives a specific, detailed statement of direction and uniqueness (Barna, 1992). Instead, the term ‘vision’ was used as this was the notion under consideration. Many participants explained vision in terms that reflected practices rather than conceptual ideas about vision. One board chair recognised this:

We have a mission statement and some foundational values as well. I sometimes feel we are over-endowed with motivational statements, none of which are really a sense of vision for the school, they are just a sense of vision for personal attributes really. We are well endowed with mission statements, but we tend to confuse mission and vision. (BOT Chair/CH)

Some participants drew on aspects of their tenets of faith to explain their school’s vision:
Representing Christ to students and giving them the option to follow Him as their personal Saviour. (Teacher/AL)

Teaching in a Catholic School, in a Catholic way, with Catholic goals and Catholic ideals. (BOT Chair/CK)

Providing an education for pupils, supporting parents where the Biblical truths of Jesus Christ are lived and taught. (Teacher/SA)

A school that promotes and by example lives the values of Christ. (BOT Chair/CD)

Grounded in the faith and supporting the faith. (Teacher/AL)

In contrast, students used aspects of their school motto to articulate their understanding of vision:

Character, service and everything to the glory of God. (Student/SA)

To try to encourage good character. (Student/SA)

It’s our motto – seek to serve. It’s about improving yourself and your Christian character. (Student/CH)

Proprietors and principals were more aspirational in declaring the vision of the school as being its purpose for existence:

Assisting the family in the education of their children. (Principal/SA)

To provide a first rate education with a Christian worldview. (Proprietor/SA)

To provide a holistic Christian education at an affordable price. (Principal/CH)

To make a place for children to develop educationally and particularly spiritually so that they can become great citizens. (Proprietor/CH)

It’s about community, it’s about making people feel at home. We know each other and we care about each other. (Principal/CK)

One principal was concerned to discover that, when he was appointed to the role, key stakeholders frequently asked him to articulate his vision for the school, something that he felt was not his role:

You know…people think it should be my vision…this is not my school. I work for this community so my job is to help them formulate the vision…it’s got to be the community’s vision. (Principal/CD)
The Education Act (1989) requires that each school has a charter which is updated annually and submitted to the Ministry of Education. One of the requirements of such a charter is a section outlining the school’s mission, vision and values. This section requires that there has been community consultation, and that the outcome reflects community expectations. Throughout the interviews it was evident that there was no congruency between the participants of each school in understanding the vision for their organisations. There was also no consensus as to whose responsibility it was to ensure that the vision for the school is understood by all stakeholders as an integral part of the school’s strategic direction.

4.6.2 Culture

This term generally refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions. However, the term also encompasses more tangible issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity. Like the larger social culture, a school culture results from both conscious and unconscious perspectives, values, interactions, and practices, and it is heavily shaped by a school’s particular institutional history. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff members all contribute to their school’s culture, as do other influences such as the community in which the school is located, the policies that govern how the school operates, or the principles upon which the school was founded (Cook, 2007; Garchinsky, 2008; Iselin, 2011; Macmillan, 1996). Most participants articulated their understanding of culture as something that was difficult to define, but understandable to those who experienced it:

I hope people get a sense of feeling that we are a bit different than walking into the school down the road. (Principal/AL)

It is always an intangible quality you try to foster. (Principal/AL)

From the point of view that you walk into the school and the outward signs, like the icons and things that are around are very out there. In the entrance foyer there are visible icons of what it is. You couldn’t walk into the school and not know we are a Catholic school. (Principal/CD)

It goes back to the founding by the Mission Sisters and what they started permeates through, for example, fairness and justice are very much how we treat people, when they come in here they get a fair deal – you want the best for your children and people work really hard for that. (BOT Chair/CK)
Students’ perceptions of culture revolved mostly around nurture, care and the importance of serving others:

The students generally look out for one another, the whole culture like a family vibe. (Student/AL)

Everyone is so nice and friendly and really inclusive. (Student/SA)

A high level of respect, the good character comes under that as well and the desire to be motivated to help others and put others first. (Student/SA)

This school is a safe place to be where we look out for each other. (Student/CH)

The link between culture and relationships was a significant feature for some participants who saw these as synonymous:

I think definitely it’s good relationships between the staff, amongst the staff, and between staff and the students, and there’s some, it seems to me some X-factor, and I would hope that you’ve identified it when you walked in the door but it’s a comment that people often do make who are not associated with the church or with the school, but they’ll come to the office and they’ll say, “oh, it’s such a lovely atmosphere, everybody was nice to each other.” I would like to think that that is the atmosphere that you do sense within the school and relationships are the key. Good relationships and respectful relationships. (BOT Chair/AL)

Anyone who comes here always notes how friendly it is and how well behaved the children are and it’s very family orientated, like the big ones look after the little ones. (Teacher/AL)

It’s a real feeling of a caring community where people are looking out for each another. (Teacher/AL)

It is a community, family school and it’s very important to maintain that. (Principal/BS)

The most important thing is the relationship between the people who are here and to maintain that, there is good communication, good relationships. (Proprietor/BS)

There was a clearer understanding by the participants of the culture of each school than of the vision of their school. Culture is unique to each school although schools may experience similar aspects of culture to other schools. Not unique to integrated schools but evident throughout this study, was the sense of nurturing and care that the majority of participants cited as a key factor when describing their school’s culture.
4.6.3 **Special character**

As with vision and culture, the participants’ understanding of special character was dependent on their experience, understanding and related activities within their school context:

> Everything thing we do here is our special character, like our culture and mission. (Teacher/CD)

> It’s a Christ-centred school; children come from homes with the same beliefs as the school because parents like the special character of the school. (BOT Chair/CH)

> People buy into the special character when they are employed. (Proprietor/BS)

> Our special character is embedded in the school and is woven into everything, to a point where it’s not something we talk of it, it’s something we do as such. (Teacher/CD)

> The special character of the school is determined by biblical principles and practice. (BOT Chair/CH)

> The special character of our school is very much part of what we want our students to take with them because that is why we are here, that’s the reason for our school being. Everything else can be got at any other school because there are great schools there but here, it’s the extra dimension that we provide our students and we want them to be able to take that into life with them. (Teacher/CD)

Other participants described Special Character in religious terminology, including the visibility of icons or aligned it, in the case of Catholic schools, to the charism for that particular school:

> We have a Christ-centred worldview; it’s about our relationship with God. (Proprietor/SA)

> The Catholic character, while it might have a Marion flavour here and we had a Dominican and St Patrick where I was before, it’s still Catholic character and Christ is still up in the centre of that so the special character doesn’t change. It’s still very similar in Catholic schools. (Principal/CD)

> Anything like special character I make sure I have a role in it. I’m present in those things like we have a liturgy every fortnight on a Friday afternoon and so I make sure it’s a priority that I’m there. We have buddy masses during the last term where three classes use the Anglican Church up here, and I make sure that I’m present at those things. Just all the time I am supporting those things and in the newsletter every week there is an
expectation for me to write about gospel readings for the Sunday, so I make sure that I do that. So it’s carrying on those kinds of things. (Principal/CD)

People comment on the visibility of special character around the school – not just in the children’s behaviours and staff behaviours, but in the icons and what’s around the school. When you walk in and you know you are in a Catholic School, and from what we could see, the physical things around but also too in what he said about how the students behaved – the expectations, the liturgies, the assemblies, the everything – there is that special character is infused in everything. (Teacher/CD)

Some participants defined special character by the actions or behaviour of people:

I think standing up to certain principles, not being bullied by parents, or bullied by the priest – not that we are being bullied but you can be so every now then you have to make a stand about something. But it’s an informed sensible stand, and being very supportive of DRS – not just left to your own devices. You know that you’ve always got someone to back you or someone to help you, and being seen in the community. It’s like when the principal tries to go to mass about once a month, just to be a role model really. (Teacher/CK)

The previous principal’s leadership was very top level special character. Just everything about her was special character, and everything she did, everything she said, and she always put the children and special character first. In considering the leader at the time, there was a lot of discussion, the new leader – discussions how would we possibly be able to maintain that high calibre level of special character, so that was top priority in what we were looking for in a new principal. (Proprietor/CD)

Meeting the requirements of the Deed of Integration is essential to the preservation and maintenance of special character within a faith-based integrated school. As shown in Chapters 1 and 2, for faith-based integrated schools, the special character is ideally embedded in all that happens within the school. Evident throughout the interviews was a wide variety of interpretations, both between and within schools, regarding vision, culture and special character. Many participants found it difficult to clearly and concisely articulate these aspects of school life. There were many articulations of vision, culture and special character evident in documents and archival material. Yearbooks and newsletters of all schools highlighted religious observances and occasions where aspects of special character (particularly service and mission) were in action. If Criterion 5 of the impact model is successfully met it will ensure that there is a
continuation of the vision, culture and special character through the appointment of a new principal who would uphold the special character. A much clearer and more consistent message from the boards of these faith-based schools would assist staff and students towards meeting the expectations of the proprietors and ensuring the continued implementation following a principal succession event.

4.7 Question 3: Leadership development opportunities

Leadership preparation – to ensure a future pool of applicants for the role of principal role in a faith-based integrated school – is a practice that is integral to succession planning. Sustainability involves strategies to develop leadership so that successors can emerge more prepared to take over, and the organisation can move into the future and endure over time (Fullan, 2005). The focus in this study was to discover what schools are doing to ensure that leaders are being developed and encouraged to aspire to principalship in the future. In order to increase numbers of applications, and rather than waiting to see who applies, participation in leadership development programmes purposefully recruits talented teachers with leadership potential. The identification and development of teachers with leadership potential is a critical application of the impact model. A range of strategies was used across the six case study schools to prepare teachers for future leadership roles and to offer opportunities to teachers, already in management roles, to follow a pathway towards principalship. Table 4.3 shows the range of leadership development opportunities/roles offered at each of the schools with the specific purpose of developing leaders.

Table 4.3 Leadership development opportunities/roles

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<th>School</th>
<th>Middle management roles</th>
<th>Higher qualifications support</th>
<th>Leadership conferences</th>
<th>Professional courses/workshops/seminars</th>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>Christ The King Primary School</td>
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<td>Chanel Downs Primary School</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Principal and teacher participants discussed the leadership opportunities within their schools as following the generally accepted path to principalship. This happens through teachers first having gained experience in middle management roles. In two schools it was stated that teachers wishing to gain higher qualifications usually initiated discussion with the principal if they wanted support to apply for a place in the Aspiring Principals’ Programme. The principals of Chanel Downs Primary School and Avonlakes College had discussed this pathway to principalship with at least one staff member in the past year. Catholic principal aspirants are required to have Leadership Level Certification from the Catholic Institute of Aotearoa New Zealand, or be committed to seeking this qualification should they be appointed to a principal’s role. In both schools the principals were prepared to support teachers who wished to pursue this course towards future leadership roles. The study required for Catholic principalship includes courses such as Diocesan courses, the Christian Family Life Education course, the Walk by Faith course, the Catechetical Studies course, a Graduate Diploma, a Bachelor of Theology or a Masters in Religious Education. Some teachers also choose to pursue further qualifications at postgraduate level through other tertiary education providers.

We have got a very good institute of Catholic education that just started up as being a change from the Aotearoa Institute of New Zealand – that offers a lot of leadership papers. There are other things as well. Those would be things I talk to people about if they want responsibility – here’s your chance – you need to step up – you need to do extra things if you’re going to do that. Know what the cost is going to be too in terms of the time that is going to take – so you have to think especially where you are in your family life – how much are you prepared to give away for your job because there is a cost to everything. (Principal/CD)

Neither board chairs nor proprietors saw that encouraging leadership development was part of their role, rather they deferred to the principal to ensure that professional learning opportunities were available for staff. Four teachers interviewed said that their principals placed some importance on developing teachers’ strengths so that the teachers could then feel more confident to pick up more responsibility in the future. Three teachers indicated that they observed some intentional targeting of people for leadership roles. ‘Shoulder tapping’ by principals led two teachers to believe they themselves had no opportunity for further advancement. The creation of new leadership opportunities within schools by the MoE was mentioned, but with inadequate funding or few opportunities within their region for training, principals of three schools felt it was not viable to encourage staff development in these roles. Financial constraints generally
meant that there was an emphasis on staff development in curriculum related areas rather than for leadership. Teachers were, however, encouraged to seek out their own leadership development opportunities.

I have been a dean for years and I have given it up – you’re given the job to do and you’re thrown in and there is never training for that. I know there are AP and DP conferences and that sort of thing but I don’t see a lot of other training apart from that. (Teacher/AL)

A comment by all teachers was that not much mentoring was done by the principal – senior staff were usually delegated this role. Some obstacles to leadership preparation were evident:

Some people thought they could well move ahead and some didn’t feel that they would ever get that opportunity. Certainly with the aspiring principals and that … he [principal] always made sure that people put their names forward but again, it was kind of obvious who would get there, it was sensible who would be shoulder-tapped for those. (Teacher/AL)

One finding that emerged from the three Catholic case study schools was a greater concern about finding a good director of religious studies (DRS) than there was about finding a new principal. The DRS requires a Leadership Level Certificate in Catholic Special Character. This is the minimum level required for those holding the positions of principal, DRS and other significant leadership roles in the Catholic Education Service. This additional study requires 75 credit hours in Catholic theology, scripture, spirituality, religious education and three more years (above the mandatory two years for classroom-level certification) teaching the mandated National Religious Education Curriculum or active support of, and leadership in, Catholic Special Character. As one principal noted:

Something I have noticed over years is that people are not always interested in going further – they are happy where they are and the balance they’ve got on their life with their home and work commitment suits them fine. (Principal/CD)

My bigger worry is not so much principalship as it is DRS. Finding a really good DRS with good knowledge of Catholic practices and liturgies and rituals [and] such like, is not so easily come by, so I reckon in Catholic schools, there's more concern around in that area. You can always find someone who wants to be a principal I think. (Principal/CK)
4.8 Conclusion

The key findings from this chapter demonstrate how the two phases of this study provided rich data. The data present a clear understanding of how the criteria of the impact model can identify which faith-based integrated schools use succession practices and offer leadership development opportunities that can be built on in the future as part of a successful strategic succession plan.

Phase 1, the questionnaire, provided data that gave an overall picture of each school, its demographics, succession planning processes, special character considerations and leadership development opportunities. The richer case studies in Phase 2 revealed the variations between the schools that used most of the criteria in the impact model (Group A) and the schools that used few criteria in the impact model (Group B).

Frequent changes in board of trustees’ membership caused discontinuity in processes and practices, and inconsistency with the level of expertise and knowledge necessary to guide a principal appointment process. If the level of expertise necessary is not available on the board, there are other ways through which schools can obtain professional advice and guidance. While five of the six schools had documentation for the most recent change of principal it was evident there was a general lack of understanding of good practice in succession planning. The board chair of the sixth school could not locate any of the documentation related to the most recent principal appointment. Following their involvement in this study, two of the six board chairs intended to pursue the development of a succession plan as part of their strategic thinking.

In selecting a principal for a school the board has a responsibility to ensure that the appointee fulfils all the educational criteria to be a professional leader of teaching and learning. This is true for all schools and plays a significant part in the consideration of qualities of a new principal. Some resources exist (NZSTA, 2005, 2009a, 2009b) that can assist in the process of appointing staff, but the material does not describe the value of schools developing processes for succession planning, nor does it suggest the development of leadership opportunities to encourage teachers to aspire to the role of principal in a faith-based school. This is an area for further consideration by boards of trustees and proprietors. Also, despite the underlying philosophy of self-managing schools to interact strongly with their community and stakeholders, it was apparent that only half of these schools recognised the potential contribution that the wider school community, e.g., parents, staff and students can make in the appointment of a new principal.

The participants’ understanding of the school’s vision, culture and special character varied considerably and while all could articulate aspects of each of these, it was apparent that,
particularly for teachers and students, they did not see how vision, culture and special character requirements translated into the criteria for the appointment of a principal in their school.

The additional nature of tagged positions limits the potential pool of applicants aspiring to these roles.

These findings indicate that few principals prioritised the identification of leadership potential or empowered and resourced staff towards further development leading to greater leadership responsibilities and management roles. There is an emergent argument for building leadership capacity and cultivating succession planning practices. Knowing the school's vision, ensuring cultural practices are intentional and understood, developing a strategic plan for future succession events and meeting the special character requirements are critical to the future leadership of integrated schools.

In the following chapter there is a deeper analysis of the three schools identified as Group A schools: Avonlakes College, St Angelos College and Chanel Downs Primary School. The cameos of these schools trace their last principal succession event through the alignment to the impact model.
CHAPTER 5:
CASE STUDY CAMEOS: UNRAVELLING THE COMPLEXITY
OF SUCCESSION PLANNING

5.1 Introduction

A wealth of data was gathered during Phase 1, the questionnaire and Phase 2. The latter, the case studies, produced data from demographics, interviews, documents, archival material and school observations. Each school had a unique story to tell about the process of their most recent principal appointment. Daiute (2013, p. 5), discussing the appeal of narrative in research says, “Beyond any literal meanings learned over time among members of a community …are the implicit meanings, the words between the words that members of the culture understand as expectations, possibilities and taboos” (citing Labov & Waletzky 1997).

The richness of the data gathered from the three schools in Group A (Avonlakes College, St Angelos College and Chanel Downs Primary School) enables a deep understanding of how those schools managed their successful transitions while, at the same time, aligning (albeit unknowingly) their processes with most of the criteria established for the impact model. While none of these schools had any formal succession plan, they all had informal succession practices which resulted in successful transitions for the new principals and their school communities. In each of these schools it was also evident that the special character was deeply embedded in the school’s daily life and practices. The Group A schools were also the only schools which demonstrated commitment to their community by using at least one means to engage with their stakeholders regarding the new appointment.

Two of the three schools profiled are Catholic schools and the third, St Angelos College, is an evangelical Christian school. These three schools illustrate how processes can differ amongst schools yet still lead to a successful principal appointment as measured against the impact model criteria. The cameos provide a lens through which the succession events in each school can be viewed. Using the impact model framework below (Table 5.1) it is possible to see how these three schools holistically met the criteria of the model. The cameos provide further detail to the criteria covered, and include the participants’ voices as they describe the succession event from their perspectives.
Table 5.1 Ways in which Group A schools featured in the cameos met the criteria of the impact model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Skill &amp; Knowledge (Criteria)</th>
<th>Avonlakes College</th>
<th>Chanel Downs Primary School</th>
<th>St Angelos College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succession Practices</td>
<td>No formal succession plan, but informal processes evident</td>
<td>No formal succession plan, but informal processes evident</td>
<td>No formal succession plan, but informal processes evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Input</td>
<td>Consulted widely, used diocese support, NZSTA, local principals, external HR consultant for interview stage</td>
<td>Employed a consultant, consulted with the community widely, had a diocese co-ordinator to support board</td>
<td>Consulted with community via a survey, used a consultant to perform psychometric tests on short-listed applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment Processes</td>
<td>Very thorough and well documented throughout the process</td>
<td>Led by the consultant, well documented for future reference</td>
<td>Documentation shows sound practices and processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Involvement</td>
<td>Rigorous consultation with a range of people in the school community, held a forum, consulted with local principals</td>
<td>Discussion and consultation with many stakeholders, involvement of students in process considered very important</td>
<td>Consultation via survey, discussion with proprietors mainly through board proprietor representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of the school’s culture, vision and special character</td>
<td>High value placed on these integral aspects of school policies, programme and practices</td>
<td>High value placed on these integral aspects of school policies, programme and practices</td>
<td>High value placed on these integral aspects of school policies, programme and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development opportunities</td>
<td>Evidence of some opportunities offered to individuals but mostly those ‘tapped’ by principal</td>
<td>Active encouragement by principal for people to grow and develop through some opportunities offered</td>
<td>Principal actively encouraged teachers to become involved in a range of leadership development opportunities</td>
</tr>
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</table>

5.2 Cameo 1: Avonlakes College

Context

Avonlakes College, a Year 7-13 co-educational integrated Catholic school, is an amalgamation of several schools. Each of the original schools had a history built around a religious order so the creation of this school saw the joining together of a variety of charisms which reflected the Catholic Orders of the founding schools. As a result of the amalgamation, Avonlakes had to establish its own identity, while at the same time honouring the heritage and legacy of the
various orders. This merger of the various orders was embraced by the founding principal, the proprietors and the board of trustees. The founding principal ably led this school, which is recognised within the wider geographic region as an excellent educational provider for Catholic students. After nearly 20 years of leadership the founding principal signalled his intention to resign from the role. The board chair felt that a generous amount of time had been given to find a suitable replacement. From the time of resignation of the initial principal, to the appointment of the next principal, there was a period of four school terms, the equivalent of one full school year.

**Research interviews**

Six interviews were conducted at Avonlakes College. The proprietor of the school, the local Bishop, was not available for interview. However, having served on the board for eight years with the latter three as chair, the board chair was very familiar with all aspects of school life. She had been associated with the school for nearly the full duration of its existence and had previous experience with one of the founding amalgamated schools. The new principal had over 10 years’ previous experience as a Catholic school principal in other cities in New Zealand. Two teachers participated in the interview phase for this study. One teacher had been on staff for 12 years at Avonlakes and the second teacher had been on staff for 18 years. The two students selected for interview were Year 13 students. These students had both attended Avonlakes College since Year 7.

**Succession planning**

As indicated above, the principal of Avonlakes College signalled to the board of trustees a year prior to his departure that he intended to relinquish his position. This time frame allowed the board to begin to make significant changes to ensure that the imminent process of principal replacement would be well managed by the existing board. There was some concern amongst board members because the triennial board elections were soon to take place and some key members on the board were resigning from the school governance role.

> I was made board chair prior to the principal appointment process because there was going to be an election the following year and it seemed it wasn’t a good idea that the existing board chair appoint a new principal and then leave, so we had a succession planning process actively put in place at that point. I took over as board chair while he was still on the board because we were starting the principal appointment process prior to the elections taking place. (BOT Chair)

With prior knowledge of the principal’s intended departure, the board began the appointment long before the new principal was expected to take up the role.
**Appointment process**

Following the principal’s official announcement of his resignation, the board of trustees was able to start the appointment process and much preliminary work was done within the first term. The position advertisement was designed and community consultation commenced. It was considered essential that there were strong relationships maintained amongst all the stakeholders because the school has a very strong community base. Members of the parent community were invited to be part of the process. Some were randomly chosen, while others were specifically invited because they represented ethnic or social groups within the school. Others were selected because they were known to have expertise and previous experience in human resource management and employment procedures. The selected community members were involved in the process from the early days.

> We invited them to an evening in the staffroom and basically we wanted them to tell us what they were looking for, or what they wanted us to look for in a new principal. (BOT Chair)

Following initial discussion as a group, the community members were then split into groups for a brainstorming exercise to determine the key priorities they considered for selecting the new principal. Following this group exercise, all ideas were submitted and further discussion led to the identification of the ten key priorities that reflected the input of the community.

> We used that process very much as part of setting out our criteria for the person best suited to the job. (BOT Chair)

Further input was sought from the Senior Management Team (the deputy principal and faculty leaders), the Director of Religious Studies, people in the school responsible for ensuring the maintenance of the special character, teaching and support staff, students, and also key people from the Catholic founding orders of the school. The board also consulted with the principals of contributing primary schools.

> The strength of the process was in the initial input which really gave us a great sense of where the whole school community wanted us to go. (BOT Chair)

Although the teachers interviewed for this study could not specifically recall being invited to participate in the process of principal appointment, documentation exists that clearly indicates staff were consulted, and had the opportunity to view the proposed person specification for the new principal. Minutes of all public meetings related to the principal appointment process were made available to the school community. The board chair retained an extensive written record of
the process that took place prior to the advertisement of the role in the *Education Gazette*. School newsletters for the period of time between the resignation of the founding principal and the arrival of the new principal also indicate that the school community was kept well informed throughout the year.

External advisors or consultants were not used initially as it was considered that sufficient expertise existed within the board of trustees, local Catholic Education authorities and the school community. The *Catholic School Handbook* (2013) was used as a point of reference for procedural matters, as was the New Zealand School Trustees’ legal advisor. The board established a Human Resources Principal Appointment Committee which comprised a core group of members who met weekly to oversee the process. These meetings were open to other board members if they wished to attend.

Following the closing date for applications for the role, the Appointment Committee met twice with the full board and together the board and committee worked on the shortlisting process. Each applicant was considered on her/his merit against the background of the predetermined selection criteria (based on the comprehensive consultation process). Applicants selected for shortlisting were approved by the full board. Successful shortlisted applicants were advised verbally and in writing, while unsuccessful applicants were advised in writing. The unsuccessful internal applicant was advised in a private meeting with the board chair and another board member.

**Interviews for the new principal**

An interview timeline was confirmed, and travel and accommodation arrangements were made for the shortlisted applicants. At this stage the board invited a Human Resources advisor and a professional education consultant to assist them at the interview stage, although neither had voting rights. Referee checks were made by phone call, and all special character referees were contacted by a proprietor’s representative. There was a predetermined set of questions for referees. Answers were recorded and collated for sharing with the full board prior to the final decision for shortlisting. Four days prior to the interviews, one shortlisted applicant withdrew. The impact this could have on the board’s ability to make a decision was considered at length and it was decided that if the board felt the field had been narrowed to an unacceptable extent, it would defer the appointment. The two remaining applicants were advised of this possibility.

Five members of the board made up the interview panel, although all board members were in attendance at the interviews. Each panellist had a series of set questions, and all board members
were invited to ask questions at the conclusion of the formal interviews by the panel. The two advisors were also able to ask questions at this stage. Following the interviews the full board met to consider the two applicants and each member was asked to complete an assessment sheet, designed by the HR advisor, in order to rank the applicants. The board was asked to vote on whether it felt able to appoint. The vote was unanimously in the affirmative and the preferred candidate was identified by a confidential vote. The position was then offered to the preferred candidate.

**Role of the exiting principal**

The role of the exiting principal is not part of the criteria for the impact model. Much debate surrounds the involvement of a predecessor in the appointment process of a successor to a role. In the Guidelines for School Trustees Principal Appointments booklet it states:

> **What about the Role of the Outgoing Principal?**

It is not recommended that they are directly involved in the interview or selection process. We suggest that their role is primarily to assist the process by ensuring that the board has the resources to make it happen and prepared material and information to assist the incoming appointee as part of the induction process (NZSTA, 2005, p. 12).

However, as these are guidelines only, some schools do involve the exiting principal to a greater or lesser extent, based on the needs of the school and the strength of the expertise around the board table, or the ability to employ consultants or advisors. The board of Avonlakes College used the expertise of the principal to ensure that the process ran smoothly, and that legal and contractual requirements were met:

Procedural support was huge. He advised us about the consultation process and made suggestions. He would have a meeting in his office every week in Term 4, even if it was just a brief meeting, committees could come and go and he made sure we were on track for what needed to be done for the next stage. He left us completely on our own for the appointment and selection. (BOT Chair)

**Strength of the appointment process**

This school was well prepared for the succession of the principal. Two key factors led to this: the long lead-in time once the principal had signalled his intention to resign, and the quality of the processes put in place to ensure the right appointment and a smooth transition to the next principal. Under the employment agreement for principals of integrated secondary schools (NZPPTA, 2013), the principal is only required to give two months’ notice. When a principal
resigns with a significantly longer period of time before departure, it provides the board with more time in which to secure a replacement.

The board chair’s connection with the school over a significant period of time, and her strong identity with the founding principles of the school, enabled her to establish a process that was rigorous and met the criteria for all the stakeholders in the school. When questioned about things that could have been done differently her response was:

I can honestly say ‘no’. I am delighted to be able to say that. I think it really reflects the personality of the previous principal. He guided us and mentored us through that process and that was hugely helpful. (BOT Chair)

The incoming Principal was pleased with the process as he experienced it:

The whole process was very orderly and well-managed … they did a lot of preliminary work looking at the qualities of the next leader they wanted. They knew how to ask some tough questions which is good because you need that challenging. I think they had really thought about it a lot. The board did a lot of groundwork and it was good to get some feedback after my interview. (Principal)

It was clear through the discussion with the research interview participants at this school that all were pleased with the process of replacing the founding principal with the new principal. The board chair, following her participation in this research, intended to raise the concept of succession planning at subsequent board meetings and consider how policies and processes for succession planning could be developed for the future.

**Culture, vision and special character**

One key criterion of the impact model was the consideration of the place and significance of the school’s culture, vision and special character when selecting a new principal. As shown through the literature, and as is embedded in the school’s Deed of Agreement, these are very important elements which go to the heart of the reason these faith-based schools exist. These elements were considered by the board chair to be very important:

This college is an important part of the fabric of the Catholic community in this city. The vision is to promote and by example, live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. The vision is that the faith life of the students should be evident in every aspect of their education at school. (BOT Chair)

The vision of the school is one that is fully grounded it its Catholic roots. (Principal)
The vision is grounded in the faith, supporting the faith and growing with the faith. (Teacher)

Articulations about culture by all interviewees mentioned the four core values of the school which are firmly embedded in the minds of members of the school community, and are rehearsed regularly both orally and through all written communications and school signage. There was not a clear articulation of the school’s vision statement, as it is written in the school charter, by any of the participants. There was also some inconsistency between students and teachers as to what their understanding was of the school’s vision. However, that was understandable as the four gospel values permeated school life and were easily understood and articulated whereas the school’s vision statement featured prominently only on the school prospectus and in the school charter.

One of the ways you see that reflected most is in the fact that we strongly promote our core values and they pretty much underline everything that we try to do in terms of what we are wanting for each of our students. (BOT Chair)

Also evident throughout the interviews, was the shared understanding by all participants that good relationships amongst all groups were essential to the ongoing success of the school. This shared understanding was viewed by the participants as critical to the success experienced by this school and its reputation as an excellent community for all stakeholders:

…good relationships between the staff, and between staff and students, there seems to be some X-factor and I hope you could identify it when you walked in the door. Good relationships are respectful relationships. (BOT Chair)

It’s a very warm, welcoming atmosphere in the school. (Principal)

You can basically talk to anyone, especially the teachers who are always open to tutoring for exams or just for catching up on things. It’s the best school. (Student)

There’s something about the caring that you can’t help but notice. (Teacher)

There is a real acceptance of others in the school. (Teacher)

Through the discussion with the interviewees, the reading of archival material, yearbooks and newsletters as well as the time spent in this school, it was evident, that this was a school which had undergone a successful transition to a new principal. In the process, the school’s culture was maintained and enhanced, in keeping with the special character and vision of this school.
**Special character**

The special character of this school is defined as a community where gospel values are central, where faith is nourished, and where Christian celebration in the Catholic tradition is highly valued. The individual and communal spirituality of the whole school community is promoted and nurtured. The principal and staff provide opportunities, through the curriculum and co-curricular activities, to inspire and nourish the faith of their students. The policy of the board of trustees in areas directly related to the school’s Catholic special character provides a sound basis for promoting and monitoring that character. Other documents including the Charter, Strategic Plan and Annual Plan, clearly articulate the school’s commitment to its Catholic special character with various responsibilities delineated. The tri-annual Special Character Review 2013 endorsed the quality of Catholic education at Avonlakes College and provided useful recommendations to the board of trustees to further enhance the special character of the school.

**Leadership development opportunities**

Opportunities for leadership development were endorsed by the board chair and principal as important to the future of the school. The board chair was able to cite a recent example of an initiative proposed by the principal which would enable an aspiring leader to take leave of absence for a term to pursue some leadership training as preparation for a future senior leadership role within the school. Teachers were encouraged to apply for this opportunity. A formal process of application and selection followed and the successful applicant was granted this opportunity. The principal considered that he actively encouraged staff members to look for opportunities for professional development but acknowledged that, for many teachers, the pressures of work and time meant that it was more difficult to take on the additional study required by the Catholic Education Board in order to become a school principal.

The teacher interviewees at Avonlakes said they were not aware of any leadership opportunities offered to staff. They felt that, with the previous principal, there was more a culture of ‘shoulder tapping’ certain people and suggesting they consider further professional development rather than offering opportunities to a wider range of teaching staff:

I think the principal targeted people that he thought were going to be that way inclined. I remember he said to me, “do you think you think you want to move on to something else?” I guess DP. I said I’ve no desire to do a thing like that so I guess that was kind of asking me. I presumed he asked other people those types of things on various occasions as well. (Teacher)
Some people thought they could well move ahead and some didn’t feel that they would ever get that opportunity. Certainly with the aspiring principals and that … he always made sure that people put their names forward but again it was kind of obvious who would get there, it was sensible who would be shoulder-tapped for those. (Teacher)

The teachers felt that the newly appointed principal was still establishing himself in the role so was not strongly focused yet on professional development for leadership roles. Avonlakes has a culture of rigorous professional development in religious education and the provision of pastoral care is organised in a way which is evident to all members of the school community. Strong leadership by the principal and the DRS (Director of Religious Studies) effectively shapes the faith-based vision, direction, values and outcomes of the school programme in religious education. From the data gathered it was not evident that this same level of commitment by the principal or board was present in the encouragement and development of future leaders.

Summary

Avonlakes College successfully managed the change from one principal to the next. The thoroughness of the process and the strength of the documentation ensured that the leadership was transferred to the new principal in a manner that reflected the core values of the school and the strength of the relationships that exist in this school community. Although succession planning was not clearly identified as such, it was evident that much thought had gone into the principal appointment process over the course of the year, and every step was carefully recorded. The foresight of the board chair was such that a file had been created with all documentation, minutes, correspondence, interview questions and any other relevant material for reference for the next time this school needs to replace the principal.

I made a detailed report and gave a summary of the process we went through so that in future it could be fleshed out. It gives an overview of the process that was involved in the appointment and how the final decision was made. Replacing the principal forces you to focus on what is really valuable for your school. You have to look much deeper and make sure that the things that have been built up for well over 20 years at Avonlakes and way back beyond that, are too valuable to be lost in an appointment that’s not right because it can be devastating for a school. (BOT Chair)

The people charged with the governance of the school, the proprietors and the exiting principal all acknowledged the weight of responsibility to do this process well for the future of all stakeholders. They were committed to ensuring the school’s vision, culture and special character
were not compromised, and equally determined that a new principal needed to embrace these important aspects of the school and take the school to an even higher level. As articulated by the board chair, to do otherwise was not an option.

5.3 Cameo 2: Chanel Downs Primary School

Context

Chanel Downs Primary School was established in the mid-2000s as a Year 1-8 Catholic Primary School within an urban area of a large city. The school provides education to students from a broad geographic area. As a learning community, the school strives to challenge, support and empower students and staff to become confident, competent learners within the context of the Catholic faith and traditions. It promotes itself as a Christ-centred school. The charism is a Catholic school’s mark of distinction and all Catholic schools conceptualise their core values in terms of charisms to strengthen their distinctive and distinctively Catholic identity. The word charism is defined as “a free gift or favour specifically vouchsafed by God, a grace or a talent” (Lydon, 2009, p. 42). Catholicism and gospel values are very broad terms, so when a school adopts a certain charism it becomes a way of having an identity with a sharp and clear focus. It is often aligned to the identity of saints or Catholic heroes from which many schools take their name. “Charism is a faith-based term that motivates schools to think of their core values in religious terms” (Cook, 2004, p. 19). The charism is nurtured at every level as part of the special character of the school.

Chanel Downs was founded on Marian values. All rituals and practices established for Chanel Downs focus on honouring and acknowledging Marian values. These values are modelled on Mary, the mother of God, whose life of service, justice and morality is considered to be the role model for the students at Chanel Downs Primary School. The school’s charism is underpinned by the Gospel and its values. The school is newly established, within a recently developed subdivision of housing. As the only Catholic primary school within a 30 kilometre radius, the school quickly grew to meet its maximum roll cap as set by the MoE, and has subsequently applied for further roll increases.

The founding principal successfully led the school for five years and it surprised the school community and board of trustees when she announced her resignation. The principal gave two terms’ notice and the role was advertised to commence in Term 2 in the following year.
It came as an absolute shock – it came out of the blue. We thought she would just go on and on. There was no succession planning, no nothing. We never even thought about it, we were so ill prepared. (BOT Chair)

Research interviews

At Chanel Downs Primary School there were five participants in the case study interviews. As this is a primary school, students were not interviewed. A proprietor’s representative was available, as were the board chair, principal and two teachers. The board chair had been associated with the school for six years and was a parent of foundation pupils of the school. On the board of trustees were four proprietor’s representatives who were nominated by the principal, in association with the parish priest. This proprietor’s representative was also a parent of foundation students at the school. The new principal was very experienced as a principal and leader, having spent many years in state schools and integrated Catholic schools. Both teacher participants were foundation staff members and were on the senior management team. One had nearly 20 years’ teaching experience in state schools prior to being employed at Chanel Downs, while the other teacher was the Director of Religious Studies who had taught at several Catholic schools prior to this school. She had also served as the staff representative on the board of trustees since the creation of the establishment board for this new school. As in the previous cameo, the criteria from the impact model guide the insights into this school’s experience.

Succession planning

As already indicated, the sudden and unexpected resignation of the founding principal was very unsettling for the school community and a number of parishes. There were no plans or processes in place that even considered a change of principal in the future. As Chanel Downs has a broad geographical reach, many children and staff came from parishes other than the one closely associated with the school. It was widely accepted that the principal had done an excellent job in establishing this new school, despite a number of extreme circumstances that challenged the school in the early years. Well loved and respected, there was an expectation that the founding principal would lead the school for many years to come.

She was an incredible leader and had a lot of mana about her, real charisma and she was very connected with people. She had a real faith in her community and she had a very strong presence. (Proprietor)

I am working with the board quite closely at the moment on board succession because we have an election in 2013. It partially came out of the fact that I realised when the
principal resigned that we were so ill-prepared and we have now talked about it. It’s not like Catholic principals are falling from heaven hitting us on the head. (BOT Chair)

**Appointment process**

The foundation principal had been appointed by the Catholic Education Board and, following the principal’s resignation, the Catholic Diocese Co-ordinator worked closely with the school to establish a process to select the new principal. The school community considered the school really reflected, to a large extent, the vision the founding principal had shaped. The board of trustees wanted to retain the culture and strong sense of community that had been established, but they were pragmatic about the future.

It might look a bit different but ultimately we really want to maintain the school we have. So there was a bit of trepidation and sadness because we had built it together as a team but I have to say, there was also a bit of excitement about somebody new coming in with new ideas, new things to bring to it. It was a bit of everything really. (Teacher)

The board recognised immediately that they considered no-one to be suitably qualified from within the school to run the process. Therefore, an education consultant, who had previously worked with the school, was contracted to lead the process. A thorough evaluation of the school charter and vision and mission statements was undertaken and the consultant led many sessions with the board to consider the criteria for a new appointment, and ensure that the documentation prepared for the appointment process lined up with the special character of the school. There was much discussion and consultation with many stakeholders, an appointments sub-committee was formed and this committee met regularly with the Diocese Co-ordinator and the education consultant.

As part of the community consultation, the primary-aged school students were invited to brainstorm ideas about the qualities they would like to see in their new principal. This discussion occurred at every year level across the school and they addressed the question: ‘what skills does the new principal of Chanel Downs Primary School need to have?’ The Year 7/8 students were able to collate the various feedback into a statement that reflected the ideas of students throughout the school. These ideas were available as data. The essence is outlined in the following summary:

To run the school how [Founding Principal] built it. To be proud of our school when he/she talks to others, to trust students, to be fun, to enjoy praying, encouraging, use the virtues, be positive, kind, fair, respect our school’s way of life, listen with understanding
when kids or staff talk, needs to like kids, ask for our input before doing new things, and be committed to gospel values. (Year 7/8 students)

Two members of the Senior Management Team worked alongside the consultant, and board members were requested to attend every meeting so that they were fully aware of all the criteria when it came to the interview process.

The recruitment process began in Term 1, with the new principal expected to commence in the school at the beginning of Term 3. At the close of applications, only four had been received and some consideration was given to re-advertising the position in the hope of attracting a larger pool of applicants. However, on the advice of the consultant, the number was deemed to be in line with the general trend for integrated schools so it was decided to proceed to the interview stage. One of the four applicants withdrew her/his application after gaining a position elsewhere.

We were down to three and two of the three were high quality – we would have been terribly lucky to get either of them. So we decided it wasn’t about quantity but quality, so rather than abandoning the process and potentially losing these two, we decided to proceed. We decided that if we couldn’t make a decision on the day and we couldn’t appoint then we would call the process quits, wait a period of time and then try again.

(BOT Chair)

**Interviews for the new principal**

In contrast to Avonlakes College where the consultant was only involved in the final interview stage, the Chanel Downs Primary School board of trustees had contracted a consultant for the duration of the principal recruitment and appointment process. From the point at which applicants were shortlisted, the full board became actively involved. All applicants were required to prepare and present around the question, ‘What is your vision for Chanel Downs Primary School?’ The presentations were followed by questions from the board, referee checking, and extensive discussion. After presentations, two of the three applicants were shortlisted and following the interviews the board was confident that one of the applicants was the right person for the role. That person was subsequently appointed.

**Role of the exiting principal**

Following her resignation, the principal was not involved in the process at all, apart from some preliminary advice and guidance given to the board at the commencement of the process. The early decision to employ a consultant and work closely with the Catholic Diocese enabled the
principal to continue to run the school for the duration of her tenure. In her newsletter to the school community the principal wrote:

I have always believed the position of principal to be one of guardianship, not ownership, and to this end it is time to pass the baton on to another. It is important for everyone to know that an excellent process is in place to identify and appoint the new principal. The board has appointed independent consultants to recruit and oversee the appointment process.

**Strength of the appointment process**

The decision to use a consultant meant the board did not have to concern itself with administrative tasks associated with the new principal’s appointment. Working closely with the consultant and the Catholic Diocese Co-ordinator, the board was, therefore, able to focus on community consultation. Regular meetings between the board chair and the consultant ensured that the board stayed in control of the process. The expertise of the consultant was greatly valued by the board chair, particularly through the process of referee checking and the interviews. For any future principal appointment it was decided that following the same process would be very desirable.

I would do exactly the same in the future. We have the building blocks already and we would be able to use the same documentation and process, with some tweaking. I would like an independent person again. She was incredible. She was very thorough and no stones were left unturned. (BOT Chair)

**Culture, vision and special character**

This school was established in the mid-2000s in a new housing subdivision with a predicted high growth rate of primary-school-aged students in the future. Although there is a local Catholic Church with which this school identifies and is connected, the school community draws its students from a wider geographical region than the local parish. Consequently, staff and students at this school belong, not only to the local parish, but to other parishes within a 50 kilometre radius. The establishment of this new Catholic primary school has meant that this school community and culture has grown and evolved over the seven years since establishment. This school community has been based on the importance of an extended family of students, teachers, parents and the local parish; together they form a community committed to the education of the students in their care. The school is not named after a saint or religious hero/heroine, therefore, there was no perceived historical basis for the school’s vision. The statement in documentation, ‘a Christ-centred school’ was commonly accepted as the vision.
Participants in the interviews could not clearly articulate a consistent phrase or statement that could stand as a rallying call for the school community. The vision itself is encapsulated in a series of statements around the charism:

- Because most Catholic schools are set up by a religious order, they have a whole history. Here it is complicated – it’s very much crafted, it’s a literary piece of work. (Principal)
- The vision of the school is about being Christ-centred in everything we do. (Proprietor)
- The vision is really our mission statement that we are a Christ-centred school. (Teacher)
- The vision is about growing our students into learners through a faith journey. (Teacher)
- The principal needs to be guiding us and making sure that we are sticking to the vision or telling us what he thinks his best vision is going to be. (BOT Chair)

The new principal (who had only been in the role for three terms at the time of the research interview) was very aware of the need to clearly articulate a clear vision for the school. He recognised that ‘gospel values’ and ‘Catholic teaching’ are so expansive and all-encompassing that there needed to be a strong focus on the consistent implementation of the charism. He also wanted to ensure that the vision for the Chanel Downs Primary School increased the relevance of the gospel message for the members of the school community.

- I think it’s a little too complicated in things like our vision statement which I can’t recall off the top of my head – no one can and I say if we can’t get up and say what it is and no one can articulate it, then we are not very likely to be living it. It needs to be something short and meaningful that people can understand. (Principal)

All interviewees focused on the importance of the Catholic identity of the school, the faith journey, and the desire for the students to live out the levels of the Catholic faith, and the school’s motto. The founding principal had been viewed as the visionary leader for the school and the expectation was that the new principal needed to continue in the same manner.

- We had a principal who was an absolute visionary who set up the school from nothing. In our case we are physically separated from our parish. We started with nothing and had to make it something. We needed someone who could continue that. (BOT Chair)

The interviewees indicated that culture and vision were synonymous and woven into the fabric of the school.
I can’t separate our culture from the vision. Culture takes a long time to establish and it is ongoing. It was hard to establish the culture starting from nothing, we had founding pupils … there was a clashing of cultures when it was first being created and that took a special style of leadership. There was no clarity about the mission and this was what we were about and how we wanted culture to be. (Proprietor)

The newly appointed principal had previous experience as principal in a Catholic school that had been founded many years ago, and he had a rich history of Catholicism and strong input from the founding order of those schools. He recognised the additional challenges of cultivating a culture within a new established school with only seven years of history.

You could walk into this school and see the outward signs, like the icons and things. In terms of prayers and saying the rosary, sometimes you get 20 people, sometimes you get 5, just depends what was on at the end of the day – so that was something I hadn’t experienced before. There was a different way of doing things here. (Principal)

Teacher interviewees described culture in relation to the support given to people in need and the importance of modelling that to students.

There has been very much a culture of being there to help one another and support each other. (Teacher)

During the data-collection phases it was evident that the founding principal had been a dynamic and charismatic leader who had led and carried much of the understanding of the vision and culture through her leadership style and her community relationships. With her departure, the sense of loss was strongly felt. The board and staff were working hard to establish a common vision that could be clearly articulated throughout the school community and develop the culture of the school in line with the charism, gospel and Marian values.

She [the founding principal] directed the culture quite strongly as she was very aware of the different perspectives of the community, and she was very clear about what it meant to be a Catholic School. (Proprietor)

**Special character**

For all those interviewed, the special character was considered as the strongest driver of all activities in the school. The foundation principal had established procedures and created expectations around the implementation of the special character of the school.
The founding principal’s leadership was very top level special character. In everything she said and everything she did she always put the children and special character first. There was a lot of discussion about the new leader and how could we possibly be able to maintain that high calibre level of special character. (Proprietor)

I think it imperative and foremost that special character sits at the top of everything that happens and is the core essence of what we do. (Teacher)

The new principal is very impressed with how embedded our special character is in the school and how it is woven into everything, to a point where it is not something we talk about, it’s something we do. (Teacher)

The policies and programmes at Chanel Downs Primary School indicate the strong emphasis on the importance of the special character at this school. All documentation sighted reflected a clear articulation of the Catholic special character. The most recent Education Review Office report noted that the special character of the school was evident in all aspects of school life. The fortnightly newsletters contained an editorial message from the principal highlighting a particular aspect of the school’s special character, and linked it to various aspects of curriculum, school activities or parish events. The position of the DRS was considered as important as that of principal, and her role was to ensure that the special character permeated every area of the school. Although some participants could not clearly articulate a school-wide understanding of the special character, all could give examples of aspects of the Catholic special character through the curriculum and religious life of the school.

**Leadership development opportunities**

This school was newly established and had only been operating for five years when there was a change of principal. Those interviewed explained that, for the first three to four years, a considerable amount of time had been spent developing the school’s programme and profile, and building a strong school community and culture. The bulk of any time spent on professional development had centred on curriculum areas and only in the fourth year of operation had a new leadership structure been put in place.

We started the beginning of last year, with team leaders. We identified people and invited them to be learning leaders for their area. Previous to that, the associate principals were responsible but by having the next step of management with these learning leader appointees, they are responsible for leading and working with their team. (Teacher)
Another teacher, explaining the situation added:

For us to get from here to there, we had to experience how it works and it is evolving – the position is evolving but it has created that senior position that wasn’t there before.

(Teacher)

The board chair considered that leadership development was solely the responsibility of the principal.

We ask what they are up to, they have said we are doing this and this and we’ve approved it. We are constantly asking what their professional development needs are because that is always a big budget item, my goodness, where are we going to find the money for that?

(BOT Chair)

The new principal had considerable experience as a principal and in senior educational advisory roles. His approach was more pragmatic:

One of the things I have always done in past is say to people, you know where do you see yourself in five years or where would you like to be? Then I say, if this is what you want to do then these are things that you need to do and talking to them and making sure if they are doing papers that they are going to be geared towards leadership. If they want responsibility I say – here’s your chance – you need to step up – you need to do extra things if you want to do that. (Principal)

Exposing the senior leaders to speakers, workshops and seminars through attendance at the Catholic Schools’ Annual Convention, and being part of the local Associate Principals and Deputy Principal’s Group, were also ways the principal felt he promoted leadership opportunities. In contrast to the findings of the literature, he saw no need to be overly concerned about an adequate leadership pipeline for future principals:

I think small schools struggle more to get principals to work in the country areas than in towns. At the Catholic School Convention, there were 900 people who were there. There are 240 Catholic Schools in New Zealand, there’s quite a large network of people and I don’t really think that we will ever be desperate but I’m kind of the ‘she’ll be right Jack’ person and I think there will always be people who will want to lead Catholic schools.

(Principal)

However, the proprietors’ representative considered leadership development to be a very important part of a five-year leadership pathways plan within the school:
We need to ask how we doing things within the school, apart from creating different leadership pathways, how are we doing things, so, if we do need to change the leader, what would facilitate that process more readily. I think a lot of the responsibility lies on the leaders within the school to be mindful of identifying leaders and giving opportunities to step up for those people. If they are not identifying within the school then they are not going to get that growth that they need for them to become the leaders of the future.

(Proprietor)

Summary

Unlike Avonlakes College, this school was not prepared for the sudden resignation of the founding principal. As the school was relatively young, replacing the principal was not even vaguely in the minds of the board or the school community. The unexpected need to change the principal highlighted to the board the necessity of being prepared. Consequently the board has now established some succession planning processes. The board chair feels the school will be better prepared for any future principal replacement as the systems and documentation developed during this principal replacement process has established a model for the next time a principal resigns. For some schools there is the luxury of a long lead-in time when a principal resigns, for others it can be very distressing if the event is unexpected. The sudden departure of a principal (through resignation, illness or death) can traumatisate a school community so having a succession plan can alleviate some of the stress associated with the level of change management that principal replacement requires. Chanel Downs Primary School will be better prepared for the future, having now established a system to deal with this inevitable event.

5.4 Cameo 3: St Angelos College

Context

Unlike the previous two schools, St Angelos College is not a Catholic school. St Angelos, a well-established school catering for students from Years 1-13, is an inter-denominational school. It was founded to educate children from families who subscribe to biblical truth and practice, as recognised by adherents to the evangelical Christian faith. The principal was appointed to the position two years prior to the 2012 case study research. Of the three schools highlighted in these cameos, this was the only school where the new principal was appointed from within the school. He had a long association as a senior leader in the school. The previous principal had signalled his intention to resign seven months prior to his departure so the board of trustees was able to start the appointment process for the new principal with a good lead-in time (as in the previous two cameos).
Research interviews
The board chair was not available for interview but supplied a paper trail of documentation, with some covering notes detailing the appointment process and a timeline from November to April. A proprietor’s representative was available, along with the principal, two Year 13 students and two teachers. At the beginning of one teacher’s interview she indicated that she no longer wanted to be involved so the interview was terminated and no data were gathered. The second teacher had over 20 years of association with the school as did the proprietor’s representative. Both students interviewed had spent the entire 13 years of their schooling at St Angelos, commencing as new entrants in 1999. This added a different dimension to the case study as these students had much to contribute to the understanding of change over a long period of school time.

Succession planning
The board chair had been made aware, prior to the principal’s resignation, that the principal’s departure from the school was imminent. Consequently, some preliminary discussion had been held, and some documentation prepared in advance to be circulated to the staff and school community the day following the principal’s announcement at the monthly board meeting. Although there had been three previous changes of principal over the past 30 years, there was no documentation or archival material from previous principal appointment processes. Formalised succession planning had not been a board focus during the time of the current board chair who had a long association with the school. Following the appointment of the new principal at the last succession event, documentation has been retained in the board’s records, for future reference.

Appointment process
The board chair led the appointment process. His rationale was that he felt best qualified to do so and he felt he needed to ensure the process was robust. Also it was expected that there would be a strong internal applicant applying for the role:

I took the managing role in the process instead of using a consultant which I had heard often did not add much to the process except excess cost. (BOT Chair)

A Principal Appointment Committee was established and, following the advertising of the position in a wide variety of publications, community consultation began. All school parents had been informed of the principal’s resignation by email and letter, and stakeholders were invited to participate in an online community survey. There was a low response rate with only 120 people participating in the survey (teachers 25, parents 82, students 1, past-students 8, friends of the school 4). The survey was distributed to all families connected with the school and it was available via a web link for all past students and friends of the school. Questions were sorted into
eight groups; using a Likert scale they invited respondents to rate their answers from most important to least important. Two of the eight groups asked respondents to rate the importance of aspects of Christian life, special character and church background in the choice of a new principal, while the remaining groups of questions related to qualifications, training, management, leadership, relational and communication skills. A generous budget was allocated to cover expenses from advertising through to the interview stage. A consultant was engaged to conduct psychometric tests with the shortlisted candidates prior to the interview stage.

**Interviews for the new principal**

Of the six case study schools, unique to this school was the inclusion of the partners of the shortlisted applicants in some aspects of the interview and selection process.

There were three separate interviews; one with the combined board of trustees and proprietors, one with the senior leadership team and one with the board of trustees. There was also a social function where all candidates and their partners and a number of staff and board members came together. The candidates were asked to give speeches and do performances – a whole lot of interesting things. I would call it a pretty rigorous process of interviews for each of the candidates, along with the psychometric testing. We had in-depth opportunities to hear and evaluate the potential candidates for the job. (Proprietor)

Each of the interview sessions had a different focus. The partners of the applicants were invited to the first interview which was a combined interview with the other applicants and focused on personal background and special character. The focus for the second interview with the senior leadership team was on leadership and management, and the third interview with the board of trustees considered the roles of management and governance. The last two interviews were held individually with the candidates (without partners). Of the 10 applicants for the position, four were shortlisted. There was one internal applicant.

**Role of the exiting principal**

The exiting principal played very little part in the appointment process. There were a number of people on the board with educational and human resource management expertise. The process was being led by the board chair who had a background in education and management.

**Strength of the appointment process**

Three of the interviewees, the proprietor, the teacher and the principal felt that the process was very rigorous. They all described in detail, certain aspects which they felt reflected the rigour throughout the time of the appointment process. The teacher who participated in the case study
interview was a senior leader in the school and he had also been selected by the board of trustees to be part of the Principal Appointment Committee.

I thought the process there was fantastically rigorous. It was very thorough. They had to present their vision for the school which is natural. We saw them over two or three days so it was very rigorous I thought. I agreed to it all. I think previously, it was an hour or so interview – 20 years ago, ring up a few referees. But these guys were put through the hoops and all that of course you are eyeing out what’s their biblical knowledge, what’s their vision for the school, how would they integrate that Christian aspect in curriculum and their leadership? We were watching them the whole time. (Teacher)

There was definitely rigour in the psychometric testing and in the interviews. They were well organised and very clear as to expectations. During the process they gave us a written questionnaire as part of the application. They gave us five or six scenarios and asked how we would respond to that. You had to write how you would respond, so they got a good insight as to how, in theory, we actually might deal with a range of circumstances. (Principal)

The proprietor had a long association with the school and he also acknowledged the rigour and strength of the process.

I haven’t in my career been involved with a lot of interviews – many more recently being on the board and proprietor rep on the board of trustees. Up to that time, very little. I saw it as being extremely rigorous. I think the result and the choice that was made has proven to be an extremely good outcome. The principal is a very good leader, he’s a very good people person – I rate him very highly. (Proprietor)

Culture, vision and special character
The successful applicant for the principal’s role was already in a senior leadership role within the school and was well known to the community and the board. Highly rated by staff and students for being a visionary and a culture builder, there was an inherent belief and understanding that in this role he would work to further enhance the culture, vision and special character of the school.

Everyone I have talked to at this school loves him and we are also thankful to have him, Everything he does is what I think makes a good principal – just especially the way that everyone feels like they know him and he knows us, like being able to talk to all the students by name which I find amazing that he remembers every one of us. (Student)
First and foremost the principal has to be a mature Christian or you wouldn't appoint him/her. And then of course comes the education aspect, you want them to have fantastic records in terms of their teaching backgrounds and what other leadership roles they have done. They need vision and passion and humility. Those are all the qualities that you look for and they need to relate to people well? You are asking a lot really. (Teacher)

**Special character**

For the board of trustees and proprietor, this was a critical area of focus through the documentation required of applicants, the community survey and the interviews with the shortlisted applicants. As indicated in the impact model, the success of this critical application will have significant impact on the school as the new principal upholds the special character and ensures its continued implementation.

Every one of the Proprietors has got firmly focused in their minds the need to work hard at keeping that Christian special character focus for the school, knowing how easy it is for things to change, it only takes one generation for things to radically change. (Proprietor)

The first thing I think is important in a Christian school – is the life of it, it is its special character. If the senior leadership people are not passionate about God and they are not passionate about the way that they can serve Him then it’s not going to flow through to the rest of the staff. The language of a leader in a school in a Christian school – it’s got that pastoral, theological and Christian aspect to it. (Principal)

**Leadership development opportunities**

The unavailability of the board chair for an interview meant that it was not possible to explore the importance of leadership development from a board perspective, however, the new principal was able to articulate a number of initiatives for leadership development that he indicated had been funded generously by the board over a number of years. The principal considered himself to be very proactive in identifying talent and leadership potential, and empowering teachers to take up leadership roles:

Within the senior leadership team, where I see leadership opportunity, then I tend to give them things that are according to their gifting and their talent. We have one who is very good in teaching and learning, so has picked up that portfolio of professional development and is already showing some rigour in developing the classroom observations. (Principal)
In addition to providing specific opportunities to selected staff, the new principal also encouraged people to attend conferences, read widely, be involved in mentoring roles such as looking after provisionally registered teachers, and apply for a place in the Aspiring Principals’ Programme. He also made himself available for staff to discuss with him their career goals and aspirations, and he looked for opportunities to guide staff in their areas of interest. The teacher interviewee endorsed the new principal’s methods of leadership development.

When we appoint people we consider where in a year or two this person is going to be. We are on the lookout. The principal wants the best – so he is the guy who is sharp and looking around for the next leaders. That’s something that just happens in our school both externally and internally. We are looking to develop people and give them the opportunity. (Teacher)

**Summary**

St Angelos College successfully managed the process of appointment and transition from one principal to the next. As the eventual appointment was internal they had the advantage of having observed the successful applicant over a number of years. The board members were confident of his ability to lead the school and meet their requirements in relation to the special character of the school. Nevertheless, the appointment process was rigorous, and the community had the opportunity to be involved through the survey and through the parent and student representation on the board of trustees. St Angelos was also fortunate to have a number of people involved in the appointment process who had expertise in education, human resource management or had a long association with the school and understood what would be important to all stakeholders in the appointment of a new principal. Using the process they developed, and embedding it into a well-developed succession plan could prove very useful for the future, should the same level of expertise not be available for the next succession event.

**5.5 Conclusion**

The boards of these three schools successfully transitioned their schools from one principal to the next, and considered that their succession events were well conducted with very satisfying results. These school processes provide real examples of how the impact model may inform other schools when they are going about the process of principal replacement. The Group A schools did not have the impact model to follow. However, these cameos illustrate how the schools addressed the criteria. The cameos provide valuable insights into the strengths and
challenges the three boards of trustees faced when dealing with each of their principal succession
events.

In the next chapter, the impact model criteria are discussed in light of the literature reviewed and
the findings from Phases 1 and 2 of this study.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

Many of New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools, when they are required to replace their principal through retirement or resignation, appear to be facing an uncertain and challenging future. The growing number of principal vacancies in such schools, and the dearth of suitably qualified applicants, is a cause for concern. This thesis investigated the process of succession planning at a selection of these schools in New Zealand. The findings show that, while formalised succession planning was not a guiding philosophy or practice for the total of 34 state-integrated schools, there were some practices that provide insights for guiding the principal appointment process. Many existing practices could be further developed to even better meet the key skills and knowledge identified in the criteria of the impact model.

Surprisingly, those interviewed had little understanding of what the process of succession planning entailed. This assumption was challenged when it became clear, through the interviews, that some of the participants did not know or understand what can be, or is, involved in the process of succession planning. During the interviews, the board chairs and principals of four of the six case study schools were able to clearly articulate a variety of succession planning strategies which were implemented in their school at the time of principal change. These schools had, perhaps subconsciously, used some of the recommended practices suggested in implementing succession planning (Schoonover, 2011). However, these practices were followed for the specific task of replacing one principal with another, rather than as part of an on-going process for future succession events.

This chapter presents and discusses the six key criteria identified in the impact model, as they relate to all the participating schools: the use of succession planning knowledge and processes; the use of expertise and guidance when employing a new principal; the place of documented processes and systems as part of school policies; the involvement of the school community in the appointment process; the consideration of the importance of the school’s culture, vision and special character; and the leadership development opportunities that were offered within each school. The findings provide important insights into the topic of principal succession in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools. This is an area of research that has only been given limited attention in New Zealand educational literature. The six subheadings in this chapter
mirror the criteria outlined above; they follow the success criteria established by the impact model.

6.1.1 The use of succession planning knowledge and practices

The development of formal succession planning can provide a level of confidence for the board, proprietors and staff that due consideration has been given to the replacement of the principal, arguably one of the most important decisions that a school board will ever make (Davies, Davies, & Ellison, 2005; Thompson, 2010). Succession planning is a critical and strategic component of the principal change process. A significant discovery during Phases 1 and 2 was that no participants had thought about succession planning in relation to strategic planning for their school. It became evident that succession practices ranged from *ad hoc* at Christ the King Primary School, to a more systematic and structured process at Chanel Downs Primary School. In the questions asked of the board chairs, proprietors and principals during the case study phase, each was queried about any succession planning strategies that were in place prior to the time when their principal was replaced. No participants from the case study schools identified any formal succession plan, although some identified informal processes. None of the board chairs of the participating schools was able to produce any documentation that outlined strategies, or a prepared plan for the future replacement of any key school leaders.

Literature findings support the merit of planning leadership succession, rather than any *laissez faire* approach. Succession planning helps ensure organisational sustainability, partly through having the ways and means to create leadership capacity (Mansour, 2011; Matte, 2012). As evidence shows (D’Arbon & Dorman, 2004; Lacey, 2002b; Leibman et al., 1996), a large part of succession planning strategy is to develop employees to ensure the organisation has the right people with appropriate skills, in the right places at the right time. In a school, the development of teachers may not ultimately result in future leaders for that school, but the skills acquired may be of benefit to other schools where those teachers may be employed in the future. Thus the value of professional development can be viewed as significant for the greater good of education. This becomes even more critically important for faith-based integrated schools where the requirement for faith-based new leaders has been demonstrated to outweigh the quantity and quality of people aspiring to principalships. In order to prepare teachers for leadership roles in these schools for the future, a more strategic and determined approach is arguably necessary for the continuity of the faith element that underpins the ethos of the faith-based integrated schools. The significance of investing in leadership development to ‘grow your own’ (Christie, 2005; Gronn & Lacey, 2006; Independent Schools Queensland, 2009; NCSL, 2006; Nixon, 2008) is
one way of ensuring that those already working these faith-based schools, and who fulfil the special character requirements, are being mentored and developed in areas of leadership.

The role of the school board of trustees is central to principal replacement. The principal is the board’s chief executive, professional advisor and educational leader (MoE, 2012). In addition to meeting the professional standards to lead and manage the school, the principal advises and is also accountable to the board. The importance of this symbiotic responsibility cannot be underestimated. It is essential that every school board is able to employ a new principal from a significant number of applicants, in order to determine the best candidate for the advertised role. As has been seen through the literature, and evidenced by the results of the questionnaire and case study, there appear to be very few applicants for principalship in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools. For the six principal roles advertised at the six case study schools, there were only 18 applicants in total. Three of the schools had two applicants or fewer.

As seen in Chapter 4, there can be an assumption at board level that there is a queue of people lining up to apply for the principal’s role. The reality is, in the six case study schools, very few applicants were attracted. For two of the schools, the principal’s position was also advertised in Australia. The greatest number shortlisted in any of the case study schools was at St Angelos College where four of the seven who applied for the principal’s role were shortlisted for the interview stage. Two schools shortlisted three people, one of which withdrew prior to interview in both schools. Two schools shortlisted two people and one school had only one applicant who subsequently was given the position. The lack of applicants was a cause of great surprise to four of the board chair participants. The other two board chairs explained the absence of applicants in a manner consistent with their faith and belief structure, in which they felt God directed people to apply if they felt prompted to do so. This was somewhat surprising as both schools have experienced instability as a result of frequent principal changes over the past 15 years. There appeared to be no connection in the minds of the board chairs between the frequency of changes, and the ongoing lack of applicants each time a new principal was required.

A literature search did not reveal any previous studies that reported ‘divine appointment’ when selecting a new principal. However, in a parallel vein, Iselin (2011), when exploring how principals in Christian schools cultivate sustainable school cultures, discussed the importance for principals of “embodying and exemplifying the core ideology being promoted in their schools” (p. 29). Smith (2012) investigated the ‘Special Character of New Zealand Protestant Integrated Evangelical Schools’ in which he referenced Burtchaell (1998) and noted that, in order to preserve special character, schools must “be resolute in permeating their school with the core
credenda of the Christian faith” (p. 213). Similarly, the guidelines of the Catholic Education Office for the appointment of principals require that a principal recognises how Catholic Character permeates every aspect of school life, decisions and relationships (Catholic Education Board, 2013). Attracting suitable applicants to principal roles in faith-based schools is imperative if the special character is to be maintained. Also critical to the equation is the appointment of a leader who not only meets these requirements, but also is a competent leader and manager of teaching and learning. Knowledge and the development of key skills and succession practices, as per the first of the criteria in the impact model, leads to boards being well prepared for the inevitability of a change of principal. The value of succession planning in schools, using best practices, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Schoonover, 2011), empowers boards to be better prepared for the inevitability of a change of principal. This ensures that the board can appoint a suitable replacement who best fits the needs of the school community.

In New Zealand there is no mandatory requirement by the MoE for schools to include succession planning in their annual strategic plans. Over the last seven years there has been an increased focus on the importance of sustainability for schools, but this has not translated to required action by boards in any key governance or management areas. If schools were supported by the MoE, NZSTA or API S to develop succession plans, this arguably could lead to very positive outcomes for all schools (not just faith-based integrated) in the future. The MoE Statement of Intent 2008-2013 (2007b) merely refers to a desire that “education agencies work effectively and efficiently to achieve education outcomes through building leadership, accountability, relationships, competence and confidence” (p. 3). In order for change to occur and boards to consider the inclusion of succession plans for future leadership in schools, the evidence in this study’s findings suggests that succession planning ideally needs to become a requirement, and be included in each school’s annual strategic plan. In preparation for the triennial Board of Trustees’ elections in 2013 there was a focus from the Ministry on the importance of a succession plan and induction programme for new trustees, but that did not further translate to any training or recommendations about succession planning for principals (MoE Webinar, 2013).

As indicated in the literature (Hargreaves, 2009; NCSL, 2010) succession planning combines many activities and has the aim of retaining effective leaders, recruiting talented leaders, inducting leaders, identifying leaders with ability, and developing leaders who will best fit the needs of the school. Such planning is not a one-time event but rather a sustained practice that will regularly need reviewing and revising (Davies, 2007; Earley, 2013; Hargreaves & Fink, 2007). The findings herein indicate that formalised succession planning is not a guiding
philosophy or practice for faith-based integrated schools in New Zealand. The value of having a prepared succession plan lies in the fact that an organisation will have considered the implications of replacing a principal prior to the event, and will be strategically prepared for that event, whenever it may occur. The process of changing a principal in a school consumes much time and energy. Being well prepared through having developed a succession plan for principal replacement is a strategic move that can only improve succession processes and practices in schools.

6.1.2 The use of expertise and guidance when employing a new principal

The second criterion in the impact model is seeking advice and input from external advisors or professional agencies. As explained in Chapter 1, school boards in New Zealand are comprised mainly of elected parent volunteers, many of whom may lack understanding of the complexity of a principal’s leadership role, professional developmental processes within a school, and the staff selection process. Integrated schools also have proprietor representatives, who may or may not, have knowledge of educational processes and practices. Without this knowledge, a BOT may depend heavily on the incumbent principal, or seek further advice from an employment consultant, or a governing authority, such as the Catholic Education Board, or they may depend on assistance from the Ministry. There is a marked difference between leadership succession planning, and leadership replacement that just meets an immediate need. Frequently the role of the principal is viewed by board members as managerial and not educational, and this can undermine the role’s complexity (Watson, 2007).

A key task for any board is to appoint the principal. For the majority of schools in New Zealand this is a task that does not happen regularly, therefore, many boards of trustees seek advice and guidance from various sources. The ERO National Report on recruiting and managing staff (ERO, 2014), discussed an online survey of a sample of board chairs who had appointed a principal in 2011-2012 (148 respondents, 68% response rate). According to the responses, 80% sought external input when appointing a principal. This external support included input from parents, whānau, a retired principal, MoE personnel, kaumatua, Catholic schools’ advisors and proprietors’ representatives. External professionals were engaged by 46% of the ERO survey schools, and 30% of these schools involved another principal (ERO, 2014).

Enlisting support from those outside of the school who have the necessary professional experience or knowledge of employment processes can strengthen the process, and enrich the outcome. Parent-elected trustees on the board with the degree of expertise required for the principal appointment process can be rare. Proprietors’ representatives on the board will have
knowledge of special character requirements which they bring to the process. Of the six schools in Phase 2, only one school employed a consultant to guide the whole process. The board chair of Chanel Downs Primary School recognised immediately that there was no-one on the board with the level of expertise required, and an educational consultant was contracted to lead the process. To ensure the special character requirements were met, additional support came from the regional Catholic Diocese which provided a co-ordinator from the regional office to participate in the process, and work alongside the board and the consultant. The consultant worked with the board and two senior staff members who were also co-opted to assist with the appointment process. The external support from the consultant and diocese co-ordinator included preparing job descriptions, making a shortlist of applicants, interviewing, setting questions, background checks, and giving feedback on applicants’ strengths and weaknesses.

As detailed in Chapter 4, and shared through the cameos in Chapter 5, Avonlakes College, Chanel Downs Primary School and St Angelos College were three schools which demonstrated successful practices throughout the process of replacing their principal, as indicated through the criteria of the impact model. The employment and transition of a new principal into the role requires much work and support from the board. Avonlakes College and Chanel Downs Primary School referred closely to the guidelines produced by the Catholic Education Office, and worked with the local priest and proprietors to ensure there was ample representation of the stakeholder groups for their school. The board chair of Avonlakes College had been connected with the school and was on the board for many years. She was confident that the board knew what sort of person they were looking for and what skills were required to lead the school. The departing principal was also able to guide the board through the mechanics of the process up to the point just before the applicants were shortlisted. At this stage the principal was no longer involved. Informal conversations were had with the principals of contributing schools; a proprietor’s representative from the regional diocese was also invited to contribute to the process.

At St Angelos College the process was led by the board chair who considered he had the professional knowledge and expertise in education and employment matters to navigate the process confidently. The board chair engaged a consultant to conduct psychometric tests with the four short-listed applicants. These tests were designed to ascertain each applicant’s suitability for the role of principal. The test results were then reviewed by the Appointments Committee. The consultant was not required for the remainder of the process. The board chair was confident that the time spent by the board consulting and getting input from proprietors, staff and parents meant there was a good alignment between the documentation, the special character requirements, and
the decision making process. In the case of St Angelos, the board chair did have the level of expertise required to lead this process. The board chair employed a consultant to conduct psychometric testing, which was an area of expertise the board chair did not possess, and which the board members wanted to include in this appointment process.

For the majority of faith-based integrated schools, the importance of engaging external advice and guidance for the appointment of the principal cannot be underestimated. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, the parent-elected representatives and proprietor-selected representatives on the BOT are volunteers who serve on the board for a three-year term. They represent a very broad range of occupations, and usually come with very little experience of governance within a school context. There would be very few boards who would be able to successfully conduct a process as important as the employment of a principal, without engaging professional advice and expertise. The main advantage of seeking advice and input from external organisations or professional agencies, as shown in the impact model, is that the board members can make decisions founded on sound advice from experts in educational leadership and human resource management.

In the three other case study schools it was evident that there was a very insular attitude towards seeking any external advice regarding their appointments. At Broadfield School there appeared to be a more casual approach to the whole concept of principal succession. The board chair was on the teaching staff at another local school, and he felt he had a good understanding of how schools operate. He was confident that appointing a new principal was not a difficult task and, as had happened in the past, “a good person will come along to fill the gap”. An appointments committee was established. A parent representative from the board was selected to talk to parents and find out what qualities and skills they would like to see in a new principal. This was an informal process and was considered by the board to be adequate, given that it was a small school with a close community. The school newsletter was used to communicate some information regarding the resignation of the principal and the appointment of the new principal. There were no checks and balances against the processes specific to principal appointment.

The absence of a clearly defined and well-articulated process led to misunderstandings and confusion, particularly for the teaching staff. There was an assumption amongst the teachers of Broadfield School that the internal applicant would be appointed to the position. Lack of communication from the board, apart from the staff representative on the board, led to this assumption becoming embedded and a sense of shock when an external applicant was appointed. When asked to evaluate the process the board had gone through to select the new principal, the
board chair was confident that, given the same circumstances in future, there would still be no need to engage external input for the appointment process. Succession planning would not be featuring on the board’s work plan as the board chair hoped the new principal would stay for a few years.

A similar situation occurred at Christian Heritage School which had experienced three changes of principal in the past 15 years and was, at the time of interview, facing a possible fourth change of principal. The board chair had been connected with the school for a long period of time and had been involved in the appointment of two of the previous principals. The board chair felt that the process of the board developing the job description and working through that documentation with the Selection Committee was adequate. The job description was aligned to the Professional Standards for teachers, and there was considerable discussion and input from the proprietors regarding the type of person they desired to fulfil the principal’s role. There was no inclination to seek any external advice. The board chair stated that he had been advised to employ a consultant but he considered that to be ‘the spirit of fear at work’ and an unnecessary expense. The board chair delegated the role of checking the documentation to a sub-committee of the board. No contact was made with NZSTA for advice or guidance.

The sixth school in the case study schools had taken a much longer time than usual to appoint the principal. The acting principal was officially appointed to the role 12 months after the departure of the previous principal. The lengthy serious illness of the previous principal had led to this delay, and the board was required to work through a process of medical retirement for the previous principal before a permanent appointment could be made. External input and advice was sought from the regional Catholic diocese because of the difficulties that had been experienced as a result of the previous principal’s illness. The acting principal was awarded the principal’s position after it had been advertised. She was aware that she was the preferred applicant for the principal’s role, having been the acting principal for six months. There were no other applicants and the acting principal knew of people who chose not to apply as they were confident that she would be given the position. The board still went through the process because some board members wanted to follow the correct process as required by law, and outlined in the Catholic Handbook (2013).

The impact model proposes that a key skill and knowledge for a principal succession process is taking the opportunity to seek advice and input from external advisors or professional agencies. New Zealand literature on boards of trustees involved in principal appointment (Brooking, 2004; Morrison, 2006) notes the importance and complexity of this process. External input can ensure
that the new principal has been appointed in line with legal requirements, employment law, and any special character requirements established by the proprietor. The final decision on the selection of the principal will always rest with the BOT. The ERO National Report on Recruiting and Managing Staff (ERO, 2014) found that most boards sought advice and support when they appointed a principal. The report cited Robertson (2011) who found that 90% of board chairs surveyed said the advice they received was either essential or very useful to their appointment process. In addition to obtaining advice and guidance through the process of principal appointment, it is also important to have policies and processes well documented. Clarity of the process is essential for all stakeholders, and adherence to legal requirements is mandatory when employing a new principal.

6.1.3 The value of well-developed and documented appointment policies and processes

A third key finding that emerged from the study showed that, despite having no formal succession planning in place, it was possible for the process of employing a new principal to be successful. However, some key elements have to be present. In the schools where the process of principal succession related strongly to the criteria of the impact model, the process was well driven, well managed within the school, and supported by external or internal advice and guidance. Avonlakes College and Chanel Downs Primary School both replaced foundation principals, and school personnel documented the processes they followed for future reference. While neither school had considered the value of succession planning prior to replacing their principals, the two board chairs recognised the wisdom of detailing the process throughout the journey, and evaluating it at the completion of the task. All documentation relating to the principal appointment process was collated and archived for the next principal succession event, whenever that might occur. In doing this the board chairs have the basis for developing the ‘front end’ of a succession planning strategy, knowing that they have a strong process outlined for the end stage of a succession plan; the appointment of the principal. Ip and Jacobs (2006) highlight the uniqueness of each succession event. There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’, therefore, the development of a succession plan and related documentation will be aligned to the vision, values, culture and special character of each school. Clutterbuck (2012), when discussing why succession planning can fail, emphasised the importance of succession planning as a continuous, dynamic process, “linked firmly to the business values and integrated into other strategic processes” (p. 19).

As already signalled in the Literature Review, the problem of principal replacement is not unique to integrated schools; it has become a global problem for education (D’Arbon et al., 2002; Lacey
The added requirement of tagged positions appears to reduce the potential applicant pool and further reduce the number of people likely to apply. In Phase 1 it was not possible to accurately report how many applicants there were for each advertised principal’s role in integrated schools. Forty percent of the schools that responded to the questionnaire had experienced four or more changes of principal over a 15-year time span. Three schools had long-serving BOT chairs. Two board chairs had documents supporting only the most recent process. The lack of archival material within many of the 157 schools contacted meant that an accurate number of historical applicants could not be confirmed. However, anecdotal comments made by board chairs nationwide, responding to the questionnaire, indicated that to their knowledge, there were very few applicants for the principal’s role in urban integrated schools, and even fewer in rural schools. This raises serious concerns about the leadership pipeline supplying potential applicants for the future. Written processes for ensuring effective and timely leadership succession principles and practices were not evident in this study’s findings. While the importance of leadership succession practices has been raised in studies of secular schools (Brooking, 2008; Fink, 2011a; Gronn & Lacey, 2004, 2005; Mansour, 2011; Taylor, 2012), there are no similar studies for faith-based integrated schools in New Zealand.

Succession planning is crucial to ensuring that an organisation continues to achieve its mission, sustain initiative, and meet performance goals in the face of leadership transition (Wilkerson, 2007). However, the ageing population of school principals, the changing nature of their roles and responsibilities, which has discouraged potential school leaders from seeking the role (Canavan, 1998; Cranston, 2002, 2007; Draper & McMichael, 2003) and the continued shortage of qualified applicants for principal roles (Myung et al., 2011) may mean that a formal succession plan would not resolve any principal shortage in the immediate future. It is possible for schools to plan and prepare for leadership development and principal succession without having formal plans in place. However, this exposes the school to the potential risk of not being able to secure a suitable principal replacement when necessary, and possibly having no other staff available who have been professionally developed and empowered to lead the school.

Succession planning should ideally be based on agreed principles, to ensure that future organisational needs are met. Some researchers indicate that, when the recruitment process is left to incumbents, they tend to groom successors who resemble themselves in appearance, background and values (Loughlin 2000, as cited in Lacey, 2003b). This is one reason why it is essential that there are clear policies developed which are grounded in the special character requirements of the school, prior to the principal succession event occurring. There are many examples of succession planning and preparation that can assist boards in developing policies.
and appropriate documentation (Baldwin, 2001; Bell, 2012; Clutterbuck, 2012; Dorman & D’Arbon, 2003; Fink, 2010).

The frequent changes on a school board in a trusteeship model suggests that it is critical to document policies and have processes which provide immediate guidance and a framework to which the board and principal can refer. Without policies being developed which can guide the succession in advance of being needed, the event can supersede the rationale and underpinning principles which are important to the school’s vision, culture and special character. The pressure of time, the influence of personalities around the board table, and the possibility of limited expertise to guide the process are factors that are likely to take precedence in the absence of a carefully considered and well developed succession planning model. A potential problem, in the absence of any succession planning and documentation being embedded in the school’s policy and processes, is that no or little thought or consideration will be given to future principal replacement until the principal resigns, retires or dies, thereby necessitating immediate action.

6.1.4 The involvement of the school community

As discussed in Chapter 1, integral to the education changes of the late 1980s, was the intention to allow parents and communities far greater involvement in the governance of their local schools. The Tomorrow’s Schools reforms (1988) led to the establishment of boards of trustees which required elected parent representation at governance level. The notion of parent–school partnership was strongly advocated in the reforms. Parent representatives on the BOT are given equal status with all other members of the board. In 2008, a position paper presented at the PPTA Annual Conference highlighted that “one of the strongest arguments for Tomorrow’s Schools was the persuasive view that active parental involvement in schools would enhance democratic participation” (NZPPTA, 2008, p. 9). The Ministry of Education states:

the board works with its local community to make sure that the school or kura works in a way that is appropriate for the students, families and wider community that it serves. This is what schools and kura mean when they talk about ‘the needs and aspirations of the local community’. (MoE, 2014)

The role of the board is to provide sound governance in the best interests of the students and the community, therefore, good communication between the board, parents and wider community is essential.

The findings from the questionnaire in Phase 1, the interviews in Phase 2 and data from the collection of archival material revealed that, in many schools, community consultation is rhetoric
rather than reality. As established through the impact model and confirmed in the literature review, the importance of the involvement of key stakeholders, through consultation and discussion, cannot be underestimated. Done well, consultation can lead to community satisfaction with the appointment process and outcome. Done poorly, the repercussions for the whole school community can lead to a loss of trust in the board, and general dissatisfaction. The role of parent trustees can be misunderstood when such a role is described as parent representation. The NZSTA *Trusteeship Handbook* clarifies the position of parent elected representatives on the board:

Parent trustees, whether they are actually parents of students at the school or not, are there to bring a parent perspective to the board table. This does not necessarily mean they need to vote the way the parent community would like them to vote, as they are privy to far more information than parents, and need to base any decisions on all the information at hand. (NZSTA, 2013, p. 15)

The data collected from the board chairs of the 34 schools who responded to the questionnaire in Phase 1, indicate that only six of these school boards had consulted the community and invited input to the process when a new principal was to be selected. Some board chairs mentioned that the parent trustees were at the board table to contribute to the process, therefore, they felt these people represented the community. During the interviews in Phase 2, it was apparent that the idea of community representation being mainly at the BOT level was generally acceptable. Avonlakes College engaged the wider school community by selecting parents and members of the diocese to participate in a discussion and brainstorming exercise that allowed for input from a broader range of stakeholders. St Angelos conducted an online survey in which parents, teachers, students, ex-students and friends of the school could participate through identifying the attributes they desired in a new principal. Chanel Downs Primary School consulted widely with their stakeholders, including parishioners from the local parish in which the school is located. The Selection Committee of Chanel Downs Primary School also invited Year 7 and 8 students to brainstorm ideas about the qualities they would like to see in their new principal. In sharp contrast, the other three schools in Phase 2 were more *ad hoc* in their approach to community involvement. Teachers at the Group B schools (Christian Heritage School, Christ the King Primary School and Broadfield School) recall being sent an email inviting comments and suggestions related to the desirable qualities of a new principal, but they indicated that they felt quite removed from the whole process. While the inclusion of links to the community is inherent in the New Zealand Board of Trustees model (NZSTA, 2013) and through the curriculum
paradigm for all New Zealand schools (MoE, 2007a), the emphasis on community involvement is not a practice that is evident in international literature. Intentionally involving the school community becomes, therefore, another challenging factor for faith-based integrated schools to consider in order to make the practice match the rhetoric. The archival material collected in the three Group B schools, in particular the newsletters produced at the time of the appointment process, indicate that information was disseminated to the school community about the resignation of one principal and the appointment of the next. In these cases there was no opportunity given, or invitation extended, for the community to contribute to a consultation process.

It appears from the data collected through the questionnaire in Phase 1 that community consultation was considered important and essential in six schools, but was not a key feature for the other 28 schools. This is a key requirement of self-managing schools and to ignore it does not allow stakeholders to participate in sharing their desires and aspirations. The BOT has the responsibility to make the final decision regarding the most suitable appointment for the role of principal, but it is critical to the process that the community also be given opportunities to participate and contribute to a decision that will influence the direction of teaching, learning and student outcomes. The impact model suggests that the time to work closely and effectively with the school community is not when the school board is under time pressure or at a time of important decision making. Community consultation and involvement should ideally occur consistently as part of the school’s culture, and be integrated into everyday practices.

6.1.5 The importance of the school’s culture, vision and special character

An important aspect of this research was to investigate how integrated schools ensure that culture, vision and special character are maintained when there is a change of principal. As the study progressed, tensions between the strengths required to meet the special character requirements and the qualities of leadership, became evident in data collection. As identified in the impact model, ensuring that there is continuity of culture, vision and special character are key to a successful transition from one principal to another, in a faith-based integrated school. When considering the vision and culture of the school it is important to consider the implications of these for everyday practice. Sergiovanni (2000) describes culture meaning and significance as “parts of the ‘lifeworld’ of the school” (p. 4). He distinguishes these from the ‘lifesystems’ which are used to ensure that the school is well managed and runs efficiently. “When things are working the way they should in a school, the lifeworld and systemsworld engage each other in a symbiotic relationship” (p. 4). Culture and vision are integral parts of the lifeworld of a faith-
based school. Vision and culture are of paramount importance to any school, but in an integrated school they are intricately intertwined with the layers of meaning attributed to the special character of the school.

**Vision and culture**

The findings from Phase 1 did not present a clear picture of most of the participants’ understanding of school vision. Had I chosen to reference key words from the participants’ comments about vision it would have jeopardised the anonymity of the schools, but the findings would have demonstrated the gap between the vision statements and the ways they were outworked daily in school life. Although each school had a documented vision statement, very few respondents to the questionnaire could articulate theirs. The motto statements for all the schools in Phase 2 were clearly displayed throughout their school, and participants could easily recite these. Some referred to these as the vision statement for the school.

It is the role of the board and principal to be good stewards of the vision and culture, and to ensure that these aspects of school life continue in a responsible direction during the transition from one leader to another. Whenever a new leader takes up a role, he or she brings beliefs, actions, expectations, requirements, and practices that may challenge the organisation’s vision and culture. Sustaining vision and culture through leadership succession is one of the major challenges facing integrated schools today. Literature supports the importance of new principals being able to align their beliefs with the culture of the school and character of the school if these were to remain stable during the succession event. Garchinsky (2008) demonstrated through a study of 25 principals in the USA that the principals considered the impact of principal succession events on the vision and culture of their schools, and intentionally began building leadership capacity from the time they commenced their role as principal. Iselin’s study (2011) investigated how six principals of Christian schools in Queensland, Australia sought to cultivate and sustain the distinctive Christian culture of the school, amidst the social, economic, educational and political changes that affect schools. Both of these studies highlight the importance of the maintenance of vision and culture in ensuring that the ethos of the school is preserved.

For many of the participants (Phases 1 and 2) there was not a clear understanding of what was meant when they were asked to articulate the school’s vision. Clarity about each school’s vision appears to have diluted in importance since the beginning of Tomorrow’s Schools, while the understanding of special character in faith-based integrated schools has gained prominence. It became obvious very quickly that other terms such as ‘values’, ‘motto’, ‘mission’ and ‘tenets of
faith’ were substituted by participants when discussing vision. The MoE (2013, webinar) is very clear in the explanation of the requirements of the charter, submitted to the Ministry annually as part of the school’s planning and review cycle. Vision is seen as being future focused, and schools are expected to develop a vivid description of what that vision looks like, and how the school will achieve it. Within the evangelical Christian schools movement the term ‘vision’ is more aligned to the understanding of the reason that the school was established. Founders of schools were often said to have had a vision (desire, dream, revelation) to start a Christian school. Norsworthy (2014) clarifies this concept:

Before 1976 most endeavours to establish Christian schools were quite local. In contrast in Dunedin the Association for the Promotion of Christian Schools had a broader vision. Although they did not directly establish a school, they were involved in producing valuable literature that promoted the idea of Christian schools and the principles of thought underpinning it. (p. 21)

When it became evident that the meaning of vision was unclear and not widely used, it became circumspect to encourage participants to discuss special character considerations.

**Special character**

An integrated school exists because it has a designated special character. There were some commonalities amongst the case study schools at the time of their last principal succession event. The six schools all advertised a principal’s position tagged with the requirement to maintain and uphold the school’s special character. In New Zealand there is a smaller population from which to draw potential applicants for principal roles than in many other western countries. The problem of attracting suitable applicants to principalship, as mentioned in Chapter 1, is compounded when the role is tagged, as such action further reduces the pool of potential applicants. To discuss the special character it is necessary to look separately at the group of three evangelical Christian schools, and the group of three Catholic schools. It became obvious that, from the participants’ experience, there were distinct factors for these groups of schools, related to their faith base, which drove the decision-making processes concerning each school’s special character.

As the literature shows (Cook, 2004; Cook, 2007; Miller, 2006), Catholic schools are central to the mission of the Catholic Church. With the decrease in the number of clergy leading the schools, the spiritual capital lay people brought with them to the leadership role is not as strong as it was when priests and nuns were school leaders. Lay principals are now required to sustain
the distinctively Catholic character and authentic Catholic school culture in their schools. This is especially important in integrated schools where the additional requirement for applicants to meet the special character criteria is essential. Faith leadership includes a broad range of responsibilities that encompass the role of a school principal in an integrated school. O’Donnell (2001) states, “values, beliefs and basic worldview of each applicant are as important as their professional qualifications and skills in terms of their suitability for membership of the Catholic school culture” (p. 226). Historically, principals of Catholic schools have been expected to, not only be professional leaders, but also leaders of the faith and proponents of the charism. Sullivan (2000) has argued that contemporary conditions have made the role of head teachers as faith leaders even more important than it has been in the past.

The findings from the data gathered during Phase 2, and the literature reviewed (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007; Dorman & D’Arbon, 2003; D’Arbon et al., 2002), show there is concern at the lack of sufficient numbers of lay people coming through the Catholic school system who could fill the future vacancies for principals, senior leaders and directors of religious studies. Many candidates for leadership positions are capable and proficient in areas of teaching, learning and management, but are less confident in their ability to articulate the spiritual purposes of faith-based schools (NCSL, 2010). For the Catholic schools in the study it was very important that the new principal was able to do more than be a professional educational leader. There was the professed desire that, as a Catholic school leader, the principal would be an active Catholic, spiritually prepared, and willing to lead a Christian community. The key requirement was that the principal must be demonstrably Catholic, and know and model their faith. This was evident from sighting a number of documents; these outlined the requirements for principal appointment and provided guidelines for the Catholic educational leadership qualifications that must be held by those who apply for the role. Grace (2012) notes that the success of Catholic school leadership appears to be highly influenced by the cultural and spiritual capital that a principal brings to the school. This sentiment is echoed by previous studies which support the notion that the most important part of a Catholic school principal’s role is to support and promote the charism of the special character of the school (Canavan, 2001; Cook, 2007).

For the three evangelical Christian schools in Phase 2, there was an emphasis on the importance of special character, but it was not as clearly defined by board chairs and proprietors as it was in the Catholic schools. A possible reason for this is that evangelical Christian schools draw their students from a wide range of denominations, and there is no clear-cut definition of exactly what special character means, although many participants in these schools could give examples of
how they felt it is woven through school life and culture. As Smith (2012) notes, “special character is something of an enigmatic phenomenon” (p. 3). Board and proprietor participants talked about the importance of the preservation of core values, beliefs and special character. They all talked of these being embedded in school culture and practices, and upheld throughout the school. Similarly, the principals, teachers and students from these schools used the term ‘special character’ quite liberally in their comments, but it proved to be difficult for them to give an accurate interpretation of what that meant within their school contexts. Some examples given of how special character was defined in the school embodied words such as ‘vision’ and ‘culture’, and some referred to specific events that happened at school that, for them, demonstrated special character at work.

Unlike the Catholic schools, no national organisation exists that provides support and guidance for boards and proprietors in this group of evangelical schools. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the majority of evangelical Christian schools were established independent of any national or international organisation, or any particular religious denomination. As such, there are no overriding principles or educational mandates that are common to all these schools. There is no governing organisation, apart from the MoE, to which these schools must be accountable. The New Zealand Association for Christian Schools is an organisation that can offer advice, but membership is voluntary. The Catholic Education Office can issue directives to the Catholic schools whereas the NZACS has no power to direct or enforce any requirements or conditions that give a collective meaning to boards employing new principals.

In two of the case study evangelical Christian schools, it was indicated by the board chair that appointment to the principal’s role was strongly influenced by the desire of the board and proprietor to have a ‘safe’ person at the helm. This was explained as someone who would steer the ship in a manner that would not destabilise the school, and would satisfy the community’s desires for the maintenance of special character. This appeared to override the importance of leadership qualities and curriculum knowledge, although the board chairs hoped that the applicants for the role would also have the expertise to lead the school effectively, and improve the outcomes for teaching and learning. There was evidence of tension between some board members who desired a good educational leader, and others representing the proprietors, whose main priority was that the incoming principal was an active Christian who fitted in with the Christian philosophy and practices underpinning that school.
The role of the proprietor

As signalled in Chapter 1, within integrated schools the proprietor plays an important role on the appointments committee. Through interviews with proprietors of the schools, it was evident that they viewed their role as totally aligned to the maintenance and preservation of special character, and not aligned to any involvement with policies and procedures. This was unusual as each board of an integrated school may have up to four proprietor representatives who function as school trustees. Within that capacity these proprietor representatives have the right and responsibility to contribute to the strategic planning and foci for the future. Given that preservation of the special character is paramount for proprietors, it stands to reason that the appointment of future principals would be an issue of major concern. This was articulated strongly by some of the proprietors of Catholic schools, who recognised that it was becoming more difficult to attract quality applicants who also met the special character requirements. O’Donnell (2001) indicated this 15 years ago when the shortage of suitably qualified applicants was initially recognised:

A shortage of trained committed Catholic teachers impacts on the selection and appointment of principals and other senior management staff...not only must an aspiring school leader develop sound management skills and leadership qualities, but in a Catholic school must also demonstrate a visible commitment to the Catholic Church and to the special character of the school. Applicants for senior management positions may be attractive in terms of their professional experience and qualifications, but if the spiritual element is lacking, the consequences for the Catholic school can be devastating. (O’Donnell, 2001, p. 67)

This shortage of applicants able to demonstrate commitment to the Catholic Church is supported by the findings of this study where, in each of the three Catholic schools, the overriding determinant in the employment of the principal and staff was to ensure the effective transmission of the school’s charism. This is also well supported by the literature in Chapter 2 where it is evident that the defining characteristics of Catholic schools come directly from documents that underpin the practice of faith in Catholic schools (Pope Benedict XVI, 2008; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Miller, 2006).

The careful hiring of men and women who enthusiastically endorse a Catholic ethos is the primary way to foster a school’s catholicity. The reason for such concern about teachers is straightforward. Catholic education is strengthened by its “martyrs”. (Miller, 2006, p. 10)
The three proprietors of the evangelical Christian schools in the study were equally strong in their assertions that the maintenance of Christian special character was of paramount importance when employing a new principal. The onus for the maintenance of special character rests solely with the proprietors who, through the deed signed upon integration, must be able to assure the Ministry of Education that they are fulfilling this role. The only reference to the principal in the Deed of Integration (this section is common to all deeds for faith-based integrated schools) states:

An advertisement for the position of Principal of the school shall, in accordance with Section 65 (1) (a) of the Act state that a willingness and ability to take part in religious instruction appropriate to the School shall be a condition of appointment. Such an advertisement shall also state that a willingness to uphold the Special Character shall be a condition of the appointment.

The PSCI Act (1975) does not give the proprietor a right to intervene directly in staffing appointments, except through the proprietor’s representatives on the BOT. However, it is a statutory obligation in the PSCI Act (Section 63, Part 2) that at least one proprietor’s representative must be a member of any staffing committee set up by the board to make or recommend appointments. It was evident through discussion with the proprietors of the three evangelical Christian schools in Phase 2 of this study that the qualities they were looking for in a new principal aligned very closely with their understanding and implementation of the school’s special character. Expressions such as ‘godly man or woman’ were frequently used to explain the character and qualities most desirable in applicants for the principal’s role. In two of the evangelical Christian schools there was some emphasis placed on educational qualifications and leadership training. The board chair of one of these schools, while acknowledging the need to employ “someone who is professional”, stated that the overriding criteria was the ability to meet the special character qualities stipulated by the proprietor.

In a faith-based integrated school there is the added responsibility for the principal to ensure the special character is woven through all aspects of school life. Although not directly accountable to the proprietors, there is a responsibility to report regularly to the BOT about the ways in which the special character is being implemented. The common thread that ran through the interviews with all the participants in Phase 2 was the strong commitment to adhere to the school’s special character. There appeared to be almost a religious fervour about the use and meaning of the words ‘special character’. The special character of a faith-based integrated school is easier to
articulate than vision and culture, largely because it is enshrined in a document as part of the Deed of Integration.

6.1.6 Leadership development opportunities offered within each school

The final criterion from the impact model is the importance of proactively identifying and developing teachers with leadership potential to ensure an on-going supply of teachers who could become principals or senior leaders in faith-based integrated schools. The data from the questionnaire and the interviews indicate that the subject of leadership development was not a priority, particularly for boards and proprietors. In the six case study schools, as for succession planning, the boards considered the responsibility for leadership development to be the sole domain of the principal. Principals in the study recognised leadership development as one of their roles, but did not necessarily see themselves as responsible for developing potential leaders to replace themselves.

Herein lies a tension as the question becomes, ‘whose responsibility is it to ensure a future supply of potential principal applicants?’ A standard performance agreement for a New Zealand principal contains the directive, ‘To lead, encourage and professionally stimulate and equip the staff’. This very broad and general directive does not give any clear indication of what that means, or how a principal should achieve this outcome. The professional development of the staff as discovered in Phases 1 and 2, therefore, appears to rest entirely on the ability of the principal to recognise, encourage and empower teachers with leadership potential to learn to lead.

While the principal participants acknowledged the importance of professional development for aspiring leaders, they also noted the constraints that exist in schools, the most notable being lack of time and finance to support targeted leadership development. The onus falls to the principal to intentionally create pathways of leadership for middle managers that lead towards future principalship, in a manner that is sustainable for both the principal and the aspiring leader. Through developing structures that encourage and support leadership roles rather than allocating more managerial tasks, a principal can foster and develop staff who can learn and embrace the joys and challenges of school leadership. With the reluctance of many middle managers to aspire to leadership positions (Cranston, 2007; Fink, 2010; Mulford, 2008), this further compounds the shortage of suitable applicants for the role of principal.

The importance of attracting and appointing suitable applicants to the principal role is arguably paramount for school boards, yet with four of the case study schools it was not considered to be a
key function of the board. Hargreaves (2005a) notes that “one of the most significant factors affecting the life of a school and sustainability of improvement efforts is leadership succession” (p. 164). In the case study schools it was evident that there was no sense of any responsibility for leadership development by anyone, apart from the principal. Board chairs and proprietor interviewees did not regard this as their role, nor did they see any need to be involved. All board chairs suggested that the role of building leadership capacity was more aligned to the principal’s duties than to those of the board. Related literature shows that many organisations do not consider the process of leadership succession as key to ensuring school stability, cultural sustainability and leadership development (Garchinsky, 2008; Hargreaves, 2005b; Weindling, 2000). The process and staged planning of leadership succession is of critical importance to an organisation’s culture (Iselin, 2011) yet in the six schools there appeared to be no intentionality about leadership succession, or building leadership capacity to sustain culture, vision and special character.

A key responsibility for leaders is to develop the leadership skills of other people within the organisation (Lovely, 2004b). For some principals, letting go of leadership roles may be difficult and this reluctance may prove a barrier to developing and empowering others. Teachers participating in this study who were already in leadership roles felt well supported within their roles, and all indicated they were content to stay in that role and not seek a principal’s position. Other teacher participants were not aware of any professional development opportunities that could lead to higher leadership roles, either within their schools or beyond. As reported in Chapters 4 and 5, principals either shoulder-tapped specific people for professional development opportunities, or offered more generic courses outside of the school that were curriculum related. Teachers in four of the case study schools felt that principals were shoulder tapping for professional development in leadership, rather than there being democratic process that offered opportunities to all teaching staff. Myung et al. (2011) found that tapping was an approach used by some schools in the absence of any formal leadership development or recruitment processes. “…in the absence of a succession management system, principals and others often identify and encourage teachers whom they think should become school leaders” (Myung et al., 2011. p. 700). This practice of tapping can be positive or negative, depending on the ability of principals to skilfully identify teachers who have the potential to become successful leaders.

The work of Lovely (2004a, 2004b) and Hartle and Thomas (2003), as noted in Chapter 2, highlights the importance of schools growing their own leaders. Creating a ‘talent pool’ within the school and providing opportunities to take on leadership opportunities allows aspiring leaders
to learn the required knowledge, skills and attributes needed in leadership roles. For integrated
schools struggling to fill principal vacancies and other senior leadership roles tagged to special
character, developing suitable leaders from within the school is likely to be of benefit to the
school when new leaders are required. Developing leaders who can fulfil leadership roles in any
school is of benefit to education in general. Of the principals interviewed, only two felt they had
anyone on staff with the leadership potential to become a principal in the future. If integrated
schools are to thrive and survive, those people in leadership functions, i.e., board, proprietors,
principal and senior management team have a responsibility to develop practices that build the
capacity at senior management level in order to prepare potential principals to fulfil future
leadership roles. This requires collaboration, and a sense of participation in, and ownership of,
the future success of the integrated school movement.

Leadership skills are not developed overnight (Lovely, 2004b; NCSL, 2010; Normore, 2004a) so
succession planning ideally needs to be part of continuous leadership development and principal
preparation in faith-based schools (Belmonte, Cranston, & Limerick, 2006; Bush & Jackson,
2002). That said, there is an inherent danger in developing internal successors who have not been
exposed to professional development opportunities beyond the school. As discussed in Chapter
2, there are advantages and disadvantages to appointing an internal applicant to the role of
principal. Of the case study schools, three had made internal appointments for their most recent
principal replacement, and only one of the new principals had com-
pletes any leadership
professional development opportunities offered outside of the school. Principalship is complex
and requires ongoing commitment to growth as an educational leader (Buchanan & Cotter, 2009;
Carlin & Neidhart, 2004), and such growth can happen in a variety of ways. Inman (2009) states
that “the majority of what leaders do is learnt, self-taught and acquired throughout their life
history” (p. 421). However, with education programmes and practices in a continual state of
change, it is required that principals, and those aspiring to become principals, engage in a wide
range of development opportunities in the key areas of their responsibility: curriculum and
leadership, culture and vision, management and partnerships (MoE, 2014). In the case of
teachers aspiring to principalship in an integrated faith-based school, there are the additional
requirements and preparations necessary to be able to effectively lead and maintain the special
character of a school. A lack of willingness to help develop others, or to engage in succession
planning and leadership development, is arguably not a mark of a forward-thinking, future-
foccussed school.
There is a growing recognition in education of the importance of leadership development being intentional, rather than left to chance (Davies, 2007; Davies et al., 2005; Fink, 2010). This requires a greater emphasis on the importance of a strategic approach to leadership development where the responsibility does not just rest with the principal, but is integrated effectively across all levels of school leadership. This position is evident in theories of sustainable leadership published in the past 10 years. Hargreaves and Fink (2006), in outlining their principles of sustainability, argue that leadership development should be a shared responsibility. Providing a supportive environment for leadership development, and allowing teachers and middle managers to take risks in a safe environment, is integral to developing leadership capacity. This was evident to a certain extent in the Group A case study schools. Within the Group B case study schools it appeared that such opportunities and risks were offered randomly, and were not part of any strategic leadership development plan. The transfer of leadership and institutional knowledge may have been happening in an ad hoc manner but there was no clear evidence of the importance of leadership development through any discussions with participants, or in any activities mentioned by the principal, board or proprietors.

Leadership development is critical to sustain student achievement and ensure the continued improvement and development of a school. A key finding from this study is the absence of well-structured processes and systems for developing leadership capacity in any of the six case study schools. The concept of building leadership capacity has been prevalent globally in schools for nearly 20 years. Lambert (1998) defined leadership capacity as the breadth of participation in leadership, and the depth of skill that all stakeholders bring to the school community. Other educators and writers (Davies, 2007; Fullan, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006), expand on this concept to include the processes required to ensure sustainable leadership through intentional succession planning. Building leadership capacity is an institutional imperative, requiring shared responsibility and collaboration within the school community. Capacity building is not just about building individuals, but is also about school development. While capacity building through a distributed leadership model is an effective method of school development and improvement (McBeth, 2009), it does not necessarily follow that future principals will emerge from the teachers in these leadership roles. The board chair participants in the questionnaire and case study phases did not acknowledge or discuss the importance of identifying and empowering potential leaders in their schools who could, given the appropriate opportunities and professional development, become future principals.
As was evident in the study, the boards of trustees at the six case study schools applied succession management techniques to address the immediate need for principal replacement, but had no plan in place prior to the necessity arising. To ensure a leadership pipeline exists in faith-based integrated schools, it is necessary to identify and nurture potential leaders to aspire to principalship. This may be a responsibility delegated to the principal, but at board and proprietor level it can be developed as part of the strategic plan with the principal and staff resourced adequately to focus on leadership development. At a time when there is increasing pressure on the principal to be an ‘instructional leader’ (Fullan, 2007; Marzano, Walters, & McNutty, 2005) the school board needs to give more attention to how it can support the principal and the future needs of the school. This can be achieved through an intentional focus on leadership development as part of a comprehensive succession plan.

Appointing a new principal is one of the most important roles a board will undertake, and all school boards will be required to do this many times throughout each school’s history. As the proprietor of an integrated school has a vested interest in the maintenance of the special character, and the board has a responsibility to uphold the special character, principal appointment is a shared responsibility. In order to support the need for future leaders in integrated schools, leadership development should ideally be part of strategy that supports succession planning. It cannot be just left to the principal.

6.2 A model for the future

The positive outcomes were evident in the Group A case study schools when the process of principal replacement was well led and well managed. It is for this reason that the impact model identifies these six areas of key skills and knowledge as criteria against which future principal succession events can be measured. Each one of the critical components is important as part of a comprehensive outline that can provide boards of trustees, proprietors and school senior management teams with a guide from which they can establish a succession management plan that can sit alongside the school’s charter, annual plan and strategic plan. The development of such a plan will ensure that policies, processes and practices are embedded in documentation that is readily available for the next principal succession event. This would then be reviewed regularly as part of the annual self-review process required of every school board in New Zealand by the Ministry of Education.
6.3 Conclusion

The process of changing a principal can be daunting on one hand, yet exciting on the other. As the literature indicates (Davies et al., 2005; NZSTA, 2005, 2009a, 2009b), this is one of the most important tasks a board will ever undertake in the life of the school. Principal change can be a time of great excitement and anticipation as a new appointment can bring fresh, innovative ideas to the school and a different approach to enhancing teaching and learning. The magnitude of the task for the board in appointing a new principal could cause angst for a board that is not well prepared. Succession planning well in advance of the next principal succession event would place the BOT in a much stronger position from which to conduct the principal appointment process.

It became evident through discussion with the board chairs and principals of the case study schools that participation in this research motivated some of them to seriously consider the possibility of succession planning for the future, through the development of a strategic plan. The challenge for those who govern, manage or lead integrated schools leaders is to prepare leaders. This is necessary if there is to be a pipeline for the future leadership positions in these schools. As Buchanan and Cotter (2009), Fink (2010), and Macpherson (2010) indicate, without some forward thinking and planning around leadership development, the crisis of lack of senior leaders in schools will escalate. It is the responsibility of principals to develop and empower teachers to become senior leaders. They also can assist boards and proprietors in developing succession plans and recommending resourcing that will enable the staff to engage in development opportunities that could potentially lead to principalship. Using the impact model to guide this study has demonstrated how key skills and knowledge can be used as criteria to establish and guide principal succession processes in schools and to further enhance vision, culture and special character. The combined power of these elements being brought together to facilitate a complete succession planning model is likely to lead to ongoing development of the culture, vision and special character in faith-based integrated schools. It will also strengthen the pool from which new, emerging leaders will be identified.

Succession planning must be intentional and regularly evaluated against the needs of the organisation. It may not address all the challenges that a school will face when needing to replace a principal or other senior leaders, but it will provide some hope and assurance for the future if capable and passionate educators are being prepared.
In brief, this thesis argues that succession planning and leadership development are critical to ensuring that there are suitably qualified applicants for the principal’s role in faith-based integrated schools in the future. In the final chapter, which follows, concluding statements and recommendations are made. The significance of this study is highlighted and some recommendations are made for further research.
CHAPTER 7:
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This thesis examined how New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools carried out principal appointments: it has revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the succession processes used in these schools. The thesis essentially set out to discover what succession planning practices were being used by principals and boards of trustees in these schools towards ensuring the building of leadership capacity and the continuity of vision, culture and special character.

The research was conducted in two phases: Phase 1 used a questionnaire distributed to 157 schools which had a change of principal between 2005 and 2011 while Phase 2 was an in-depth study of six case study schools selected from those who participated in Phase 1. Using a purposefully created impact model, following the design method from Brinkerhoff’s Success Case Method (2003), both phases of the study were guided by key skills and knowledge to form six criteria considered critical to the success of schools which are experiencing a principal succession event. This thesis offers the first study of succession planning in integrated schools, and is one of the first comprehensive case studies on succession planning in New Zealand schools.

The key focus was on investigating the presence of succession planning practices that would ensure the continuity of culture, vision and special character in faith-based integrated schools, in preparation for the time when the principal would either resign or retire and need to be replaced. The research findings indicate that these integrated schools have not prioritised succession planning. Such planning does not, therefore, feature as part of any board’s strategic planning, or as part of the principal’s leadership development programme.

This chapter begins by considering the consequences for a school when there is a change of principal. Following this, the significance of the research findings is shared, including the implication of the findings for future practice in integrated schools. The strengths and the limitations of the research are then discussed. This study’s contribution to knowledge and literature about succession planning in integrated schools in New Zealand is discussed. Some recommendations are shared, concerning succession planning for principals, school boards and school systems. Further research possibilities are considered.
7.2 The consequence of principal change

Whenever a school undergoes a change of principal there is a range of consequences that will affect the school. In addition to the loss of a principal from a leadership managerial role, there is also a loss to the school of the human element and the institutional and cultural knowledge, often gained over a lengthy period of service in the school. This is an element of school life that often cannot be completely defined as it generally resides in the nature and character of the leader. This institutional and cultural knowledge also reflects and embodies special character, history and community life. Although new leaders can bring specialist skills and abilities to the role, it can take many years to fully understand the culture and character of a school. Principal succession is an inevitable occurrence in every school, thus the planning and strategic management for this event should ideally be prioritised in every school.

There are three key elements that merge to highlight the importance of succession planning in a faith-based school. Firstly, the replacement of a principal is the most important task that a board of trustees will undertake (NZSTA, 2005, 2009a, 2009b). Succession planning is a strategy that can support boards through this process. Secondly, the impact and influence of a school principal cannot be underestimated. As Hargreaves (2005a) states, “principals’ impact on their schools is often influenced greatly by their predecessors and successors. Whether or not they are aware of it, principals stand on the shoulders of those who went before them and lay the foundation for those who will follow (p. 164). Therefore, in laying the foundation for the future, the importance of building leadership capacity becomes an integral part of a succession plan. Finally, as faith-based integrated schools have a clearly defined special character, it is essential that this is maintained in line with the religious ethos, beliefs and practices of the school. Not only is the special character mandated through a legally binding document, it is also the responsibility of the proprietor, board of trustees and the principal to ensure that the school remains faithful to the school’s vision and culture. Vision and culture are inextricably linked to the special character in an integrated faith-based school.

7.3 Significance of this research

There is much evidence that the role of school principals has changed quite markedly over the last 30 years (Barty et al., 2005; Belmonte & Cranston, 2007; Brooking et al., 2003; Cosgrove, 1986; Dorman & D’Arbon, 2003a; Gronn & Lacey, 2005; Jones, 1999; Watson, 2007). In New Zealand, the introduction of self-managing schools in 1989 meant that responsibility was firmly placed on schools, and their communities, for school administration and governance. The
inevitable increased expectations on principals to include management tasks in their key roles, as leaders of teaching and learning and cultural/social organisation of the school, has made the role of principal more demanding. Many principals struggle to sustain the workload plus the expectations of boards, parents, the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders (Brooking, 2007, 2008; Macpherson, 2010).

The study findings expand the body of literature relating to state-integrated schools in New Zealand, and the value of succession planning and leadership development for the future. As noted in the literature, there is concern that the shortage of applicants for the role of principal in schools will continue to escalate as a result of predicted ‘baby boomer’ retirements and fewer teachers aspiring to the position (D’Arbon et al., 2002; Hargreaves et al., 2008; Watson, 2007). Principal replacement is exacerbated in a faith-based integrated school as there is the additional requirement of appointees to be the ‘faith’ leader and manager of a school which has an espoused special character.

There is very little literature which focuses on evangelical Christian schools in New Zealand. There was evidence of tension between some board members who desired a good educational leader, and others representing the proprietors, whose priority was that the incoming principal was an active Christian who fitted in with the Christian philosophy and practices underpinning that school. There is the potential for these issues to become highly charged with emotion when such an important decision is to be made, particularly if the time frame does not allow for lengthy discussion and debate. Developing a succession plan that is inclusive of leadership development opportunities is best undertaken when there is time for reasoned and rational discussion. This is one reason why this study makes a significant contribution to the fields of succession planning and leadership studies in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools.

This study is significant because communities need exemplary principals, with professional knowledge and leadership skills, to lead their schools. The principal is the pedagogical leader, and the manager responsible for ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning, policy and operational matters will enhance and improve student outcomes (MoE, 2008). Unless boards of trustees and management teams consciously encourage and develop leaders within their schools, there is likely to be a shortage of suitably qualified principals to lead integrated faith-based schools. The literature on succession planning, combined with the findings of this study, indicate that this issue is not attracting the attention it needs at a time when there is a potential crisis of leadership looming (Fink, 2011; Johnston, 2015; Wylie, 2011).
All schools, when needing to appoint a new principal, seek to attract a pool of high quality applicants. This study therefore is likely to be of interest to BOTs, proprietors, principals, faith-based school communities, as well as policy makers (MoE, NZSTA and ERO). In countries with similar education systems to New Zealand (Australia and the UK in particular) it is likely the findings and recommendations will have some relevance.

The findings and the recommendations arguably contribute to a greater understanding of the importance of strategically planning to develop leaders within a school, to ensure a leadership pipeline for the future. This becomes even more critical in faith-based, state-integrated schools which have an additional employment component, related to their religious convictions. For these schools the applicant pool is much smaller and, therefore, requires a custom made succession plan which focuses on leadership development. This will ensure the continuity of principals who can lead the school as educational professionals, as well as leaders of the faith element.

Succession planning for principal replacement in schools has not been given enough attention by the Ministry of Education or the New Zealand School Trustees Association. The Ministry’s website features four articles about succession planning, all written between 2005 and 2007 and succession planning does not form any of the mandatory reporting requirements schools must provide each year to the Ministry of Education. Succession planning was addressed by the New Zealand School Trustees for the first time in 2013, during the triennial board elections, and training was offered in succession planning practices for school boards of trustees.

Discussion with the board chairs of Avonlakes College and Chanel Downs Primary School indicates that the experience of employing a new principal had raised some issues and concerns that will be addressed in future appointments. Their participation in this study heightened for them the potential value of incorporating succession planning into school strategic plans. As a result of this study, three school principal participants indicated that they would probably be more intentional and proactive in promoting and offering leadership development opportunities to their teaching staff and middle-management leaders.

7.4 Contributions of this research

A major contribution of this research is that it is the first study to investigate the place of succession planning in integrated schools. It established the dearth of formal planning for succession across the schools surveyed, revealed how six case study schools specifically carried
out principal appointments, and discovered strengths and weaknesses in contemporary employment processes. Integrated schools are unique to New Zealand and the majority of them have been established out of a foundation of faith aligned to Christianity. Against a global decline of interest and desire by educators to pursue principalship, these faith-based schools have additional selection criteria which make the search for new principals more challenging than for their state school counterparts.

The construction and use of an impact model against which to evaluate succession practices in faith-based schools is a unique strength of this research. Synthesising the literature to create the model, and using it as a framework for key skills and understanding meant that the processes in each school, in both Phases 1 and 2, were considered and critiqued using the same criteria. For me as an ‘insider’, with considerable knowledge about the structure and operational administration in an integrated school, the model ensured I followed set criteria. This minimalized any potential bias and, therefore, strengthened the findings; there was a consistency in the manner in which questions were asked, and data were recorded.

The SCM can be used as a framework by schools and school systems to guide succession planning, not just for principal appointments but for all levels of leadership. The criteria of the model can be adapted to fit a wide range of age groups: early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary.

Another strength of this research is that it highlights the need for succession planning to become a key focus of strategic planning for leadership development. Processes for identifying and developing potential leaders should ideally form part of any school’s strategic and annual plan. In order to address the challenges schools face in attracting suitable leaders who meet the special character requirements for employment, serious consideration must be given to potential ‘in-house’ applicants who have the necessary qualities for principalship, and could be empowered to grow in leadership. Helm (2000) states:

> effective leadership and a ‘comfort level’ with the spiritual dimension of the principal’s role cannot be developed simply through reading, theology and religious certification programs, even though all of these measures will be useful. Formation occurs within the community of faith. (p. 13)

The processes of leadership development, described by the participants in the case study schools, were mostly informal such as shoulder tapping. This action was generally interspersed with some more formal elements such as attendance at conferences, workshops and seminars. There was
some dissonance between the principals who felt they actively provided advice and support to potential leaders, and the perceptions of teachers who felt that some people were tapped for roles. Not all current leaders have the aptitudes and competencies to mentor and empower others. The development of a leadership programme within or between schools, that identifies potential leaders and supports and empowers them in leadership, is essential. Such programmes would benefit from the input of professional organisations beyond the school, who could develop and encourage best leadership succession practices through working in conjunction with the senior management team, board of trustees and board of proprietors. In the past, the preparation towards principalship has been largely based on gaining experience working through the ranks of hierarchy in the school. There is now a greater awareness of the need for a more comprehensive approach to recruitment and leadership development (Bolman & Deal, 2010; Buchanan & Cotter, 2009; Fink, 2011a). Some of the social, cultural and institutional knowledge critical to developing leaders can be conveyed through mentoring relationships, reflective practice, apprenticeship and situational learning. In tandem with purposeful, leadership development such as the Aspiring Principals’ Programme or leadership qualification at tertiary level, the pathway to principalship will enable aspiring leaders to be well prepared for a principal’s role in the future.

On-going opportunities need to be offered subsequent to a new principal being appointed. Leadership development should ideally be continuous for new leaders, with aspiring leaders and future leaders working across the school. In the area of building leadership capacity, this study’s findings highlight that there is insufficient attention given to the strategic development of leaders. The findings also suggests a need for greater leadership development support from within the school, and also from within the wider education system through the MoE, NZSTA or independent providers of leadership training courses.

This research identifies the need for greater support from a range of stakeholders and agencies at the time of principal replacement. Two schools identified in Chapter 5, Avonlakes College and Chanel Downs Primary School, recognised the need to employ a range of strategies to provide them with the support they felt necessary as they went through the processes of replacing their principals. These schools sought assistance from within their school communities, and from external agencies. While the ‘best person for the job’ should always be appointed, the literature shows that there is much to be gained from schools ‘growing their own leaders’. Greater support could also come from the board of trustees by way of providing a strategic framework, and annual plans which support and resource the development of leadership within the school. The
board of proprietors can also support the development of faith-based leadership programmes that enable teachers to grow in areas that meet the requirements of the special character of the school.

Those aspiring to leadership in a Catholic school study for the mandatory certification in leadership programme that qualifies them to apply for principal roles. A similar programme does not currently exist for evangelical Christian schools. There is arguably an opportunity for the proprietors of these schools to pursue a similar path. However, time, energy and the cost of higher education can be prohibitive for many teachers. There is some validity in principals developing robust leadership programmes within their schools, which are then made accessible to teachers from other, similar, schools.

Greater support could also be garnered from the agencies that exist to support schools. The Ministry of Education and New Zealand School Trustees Association have advisors in human resource management, and there are independent educational consultants whose expertise can also be enlisted, either in the development of succession plans, leadership programmes or recruitment of personnel. The Catholic School Handbook, compiled by the proprietors of Catholic schools provides current guidelines and policies and reminds all boards, principals and senior management teams of their responsibilities for the maintenance of their special character through the Integration Agreement’s contractual responsibilities (Catholic Education Office, 2013). Additionally, handbooks exist containing guidelines for staff appointments in Catholic schools (Catholic Schools’ Office, 2012). In considering succession planning there is a need for schools to revisit the handbooks and guidelines as they specifically address this group of integrated schools.

### 7.5 Limitations

Three limitations are evident. The first is the size of the sample. Although 157 faith-based integrated schools were identified as having a change of principal from 2005 to 2011, only 34 responded to the questionnaire. Only 14 of these 34 schools indicated a willingness to be involved in Phase 2 of the study. When a sample size is small, generalisability can be a problem. The full range of participants was not available in each school and, for the three Catholic schools, only one proprietor’s representative for one school was available. This meant that a wider perspective of proprietors’ views was not available.

A second limitation occurred as a result of the range of integrated schools that could be included without the possibility of them being identifiable. The goal of this study was to provide insight,
explanations and implications for boards, proprietors and principals of faith-based integrated schools. There are other faith-based integrated schools in New Zealand e.g. Muslim and Jewish schools. While it would have been very interesting to investigate succession planning in these schools, it would have been difficult to do so while maintaining participant anonymity. The findings of this study will not necessarily be valid for all other integrated schools, however, the results may provide insights and an understanding of the policies and processes surrounding succession planning, and the benefits of strategic planning in developing school leaders for the future.

The third limitation, which also has positive connotations, was that I was an ‘insider’ working within the integrated school system. I have a great deal of institutional knowledge gained through personal experience and this knowledge undoubtedly influenced my perceptions of the data retrieved. Every effort was made to set aside personal bias and opinions when analysing participant responses. As I was known to some of the participants there was the possibility that some were more guarded in their responses in order to present their school in the best way possible. Conversely, I was also aware that some participants were more open and generous with their time and comments as they felt connected to me as a colleague in another faith-based integrated school. Assurances were given at the start of every interview and through the participant information sheets that all information would be treated confidentially, and with sensitivity.

7.6 Implications

Succession planning and leadership development involves many players: teachers, students, parents, boards, and communities, all of whom have a vested interest. Principal succession events occur regularly in some schools and rarely in other schools, but it is unrealistic to think that this event does not have a lasting effect, either positive or negative, on all stakeholders. School boards and principals can be proactive in the process of principal replacement.

The findings have implications for future practice in schools, for principals, for boards of proprietors and for the organisations that own and support faith-based integrated schools. Incorporating succession planning and leadership development as a priority in schools at all levels of administrative, managerial, organisational and instructional leadership would begin the process of incorporating succession planning into everyday organisational work. Succession planning is dependent on leaders at every stage of the process, therefore it is prudent to develop leaders throughout the school. “Effective organisations do not passively wait for the future; they
create it by investing their time, thoughts and planning to ensure the continuity of their talent, both their leaders and their front-line employees” (Ibarra, 2005, p. 19). Empowering others and aligning leadership professional development with the strategic direction of the school sends positive messages to staff. Promoting teachers from within the school is good for morale and contributes to positive organisational culture.

7.7 Further research

This research focused on discovering leadership development processes and succession planning practices, not evaluating them. Evaluating the effectiveness of these succession-planning practices, including levels of awareness and perceptions of the value of these practices, are areas for further study. Further research is needed to investigate how opportunities for individual advancement can be provided to develop leadership within integrated faith-based schools to ensure there is a leadership pipeline for the future. Finally, it is recommended that succession planning programmes be based on a common framework at the national level, and became a feature of every school’s charter and annual strategic plan.

With an ageing workforce and a decline in motivation and interest to take on a principalship, unless succession planning becomes mandated at national level by the Ministry of Education, it is unlikely to assume a position of importance in the minds and actions of boards and principals who already carry great responsibility for the governance and management of the school.

7.8 Recommendations for principals, boards of trustees and proprietors

The purpose of this study is to explore leadership, and in particular, principal succession planning in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools towards ensuring the building of leadership capacity and the continuity of vision, culture and special character. The findings in Phases 1 and 2 in this research offer a number of recommendations that pertain to boards of trustees, proprietors and principals. Recommendations are that:

1. Boards of trustees develop a succession plan that is linked to the school’s strategic plan, annual plan and forms part of the charter goals. Succession planning requires a well-thought-out process and commitment from all the key stakeholders. This is best done during a time when there is not an urgency to work through an immediate principal appointment process, and when the school community can be consulted fully and given the opportunity to participate in the development of a succession plan. The succession plan could also be extended to include succession planning for other
leadership roles in the school, and for the triennial board elections. Succession planning would then become an integral part of the school’s policies, processes and strategic planning.

2. The impact model used for this study could be used or adapted to fit any school, state, integrated or private. This could form part of a ready checklist of the key skills and understandings that need to be considered wherever and whenever there is a need to replace or appoint a new leader. In a faith-based school, the criterion related to special character can be further modified to meet the specific faith or ethos requirements of the integrated school. This means the model could be used in any integrated school including Jewish, Montessori, Steiner, Adventist and Muslim.

3. Proprietors of integrated schools have specific functions that relate to their responsibilities, as stipulated in the PSCI Act (1975). Proprietor representatives also serve on the school’s board of trustees. They are there to represent a proprietor’s perspective on all matters related to the school, and proprietors are full members of the board with full responsibility and accountability requirements. As full members, the proprietor’s representatives have much they can contribute to the succession planning process. Their contribution would ensure that there are very clear guidelines regarding the special character requirements for principal appointment, and all tagged positions embedded in the succession planning documentation ahead of the time when it will be required. This would help militate against any possible areas of tension or contention regarding special character appointment criteria when staff appointments are to be made.

4. Advice and guidance from educational consultants and professional advisors should be encouraged and welcomed when a new principal is to be appointed. Relevant employment advice, guidance and policy knowledge, sought as a matter of good practice and good sense, would protect a board from making errors of judgement or lack of experience in the employment of a new principal. The Ministry of Education and the New Zealand School Trustees Association offer this support; there is no financial cost in using these services. This would not preclude a board from also contracting an educational employment consultant.

5. Talent identification and providing opportunities for leadership development within the school are the responsibilities of the principal. A succession planning strategy which highlights the importance of the provision of leadership opportunities to potential leaders in the school, will build capacity in a myriad of ways – both
personal, and within the wider school system. Adequate funding and resourcing by way of time allowance for staff will provide greater incentives for aspiring leaders to commit themselves to further professional development. The building of leadership capacity can occur in a variety of ways, through leadership development courses such as the Aspiring Principals’ Programme, conferences, workshops, tertiary study courses or through ‘in-house’ strategies such as allocating higher duties to emerging leaders, or mentoring and guiding them through various leadership tasks. Mentoring emerging leaders is an effective way for principals to transfer institutional knowledge and allow potential leaders to grow and develop. Not only does mentoring allow emerging leaders to increase their skills, but it also provides regular opportunities for the transfer of knowledge and understanding about vision, culture and special character.

7.9 Recommendations for further research

This study focused on succession planning practices in faith-based integrated schools. The findings indicate that there is much more research that could occur that would benefit not only other integrated schools, but also state and private schools nationally and internationally. Recommendations are that:

1. A broader longitudinal study be undertaken, examining the results of succession planning in schools in the UK and the USA where succession planning has been incorporated into school governance in some regions over the past 10 years. This would highlight areas of strength and weakness in succession planning which could better inform the boards and principals of schools beginning to design and implement succession plans.

2. Further investigation be undertaken into the involvement of school communities in the development of strategic plans for their schools. This would indicate what gap, if any, exists between the rhetoric of community involvement in New Zealand’s self-managed schools, and the reality of how much influence and input stakeholders have. This investigation could also include student voice, which is frequently missing from school-based research.

3. A research study investigating the impact of strategic and intentional leadership training by the principal towards developing a pool of internal applicants for principalship would be of interest and value. This could be conducted as part of a
study comparing the effectiveness of internal and external applicants who are appointed to a principal’s role.

7.10 Conclusion

This research draws attention to the fact that boards, proprietors and principals in New Zealand’s faith-based schools, in general, do not recognise the need to be intentional and strategic in preparing a succession plan for developing future school leaders. Lack of succession planning and leadership development, along with a decreased number of applicants for the role of principal, is a serious problem. Consideration and planning for leadership development in faith-based integrated schools is critical to the future of these schools. This is very important if the culture, vision and special character of these schools is to survive, and the schools are to continue to meet the needs of their stakeholders and wider communities.

This study contributes to research as no other studies of succession planning in faith-based integrated schools in New Zealand exist. As noted by one of the participants, “it’s not like Catholic principals are falling from heaven and hitting us on the head”. If action is not taken, strategically and intentionally, to address the problem of having sufficient leaders equipped to be principals, faith-based schools will struggle to fulfil their mission in maintaining their special character for future generations of students. It is hoped that the findings of this study provide insight into the way in which proprietors, boards of trustees and principals can strategically plan to ensure that aspiring leaders are well prepared and enthusiastic to lead these faith-based integrated schools in the future.
APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1A:
SPECIAL CHARACTER STATEMENT EVANGELICAL
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL - SAMPLE

1. Living Waters School (pseudonym) is a non-denominational Christian Composite School established in 1985 by The Living Waters Trust. The School was founded to work in partnership with Christian parents to fulfil their responsibility for the education of their children by providing a Christ centred learning environment based on Biblical truth and practice as recognised by adherents of the evangelical Christian faith.

2. These Biblical truths and practices which are summarised in the School’s Statement of Faith recognise:
   - God’s purposes as revealed in the Scriptures and in the risen Lord Jesus Christ;
   - that all truth finds its meaning and centre in God;
   - that God gives purpose and hope to individuals as well as to His creation by virtue of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ;
   - a mission perspective involving a radical, personal commitment to seeing the Kingdom of God extended;
   - prayer as a key tool in learning, inviting the Holy Spirit into every learning situation.

3. These Biblical beliefs encompass all aspects of the School and permeate the curriculum, including all of the National Curriculum statements which are presented within this Christian world view. It is expected that all members of the School community will demonstrate commitment to these Biblical beliefs and be role models of these.

4. The purpose of the School, in partnership with parents, is to develop the abilities and character of young people who:
   - will develop a Christ like character as taught in the Bible;
   - recognise that God calls His people to claim the whole of human life for Jesus Christ as they spread the good news of His saving grace;
   - have a Christian vision and are equipped to become godly leaders in the fields of their givings and abilities;
   - will live virtuous lives and exemplify Biblical values in every area of life, personal, family and in the pursuit of social peace, just government, responsible citizenship, compassionate neighbourliness, wise parenting and a responsible attitude to creation.
   - will develop their academic abilities in balance with their other abilities and character.
APPENDIX 1B:
SPECIAL CHARACTER STATEMENT CATHOLIC SCHOOL - SAMPLE

1.0 This statement is to be read in association with the School Charter, a copy of which is available from the school.

2.0 The Catholic Church has developed an international network of schools because it believes the Church has a pivotal single intention: “that God’s kingdom may come, and that the salvation of the whole human race may come to pass.” (Gaudium et Spes, 45a: Second Vatican Council.)

3.0 The Special Character of a Catholic school is defined in the school’s Integration Agreement as follows:

“The school is a Roman Catholic School in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and in its religious instructions and observances, exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. These values are as expressed in the Scriptures and in the practices, worship and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, as determined from time to time by the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese.”

3.1 Most schools also have a particular charism, which may be specified in the school’s Integration Agreement.

4.0 A person applying for a position in a Catholic school needs to understand the commitment this involves.

4.1 All staff, whether Catholic or not, are part of the whole school community. Each staff member is therefore expected to use his or her specific strengths and skills to support the mission of the school.

4.2 A Catholic school shares the mission of the Church by developing students with knowledge, faith and values, all of which are in harmony. It is expected that teaching will be infused with a Catholic world view.

4.3 The curriculum and specific subjects are taught for their own value and with their own objectives. Seeking truth, wherever it is found, is fundamental to a Catholic school.
4.4 The Religious Education programme is an integral part of the curriculum. The principles, truths and ethics of this programme permeate the whole life of the school. The students are taught that:
  • God is creator
  • Jesus Christ is God-made-man
  • Humankind’s ultimate goal is heaven
  • Authority to teach and interpret God’s revelation was entrusted to the Church by Christ, and is exercised by the Pope and Bishops.

4.5 The school as a whole subscribes to the Apostles’ Creed which is the oldest of the formulas used by the Christians to express their faith. It accepts the two-fold commandment of Christ, love of God and neighbour and the other values expressed by Christ as norms for living. The focal point of the whole school is Christ.

5.0 No staff member will be required to act against their own conscience or personal philosophy of life. Such a requirement would not be in keeping with Catholicism and is contrary to the aims of the school.

6.0 However, in accepting a position in a Catholic school it is assumed that staff members realise that:
  • Staff work as a team. Therefore all staff are expected to contribute, according to their individual strengths and within their personal convictions, to the total purpose of the school. No school can operate successfully if any staff member undermines the positive efforts of others.
  • Staff are expected to support, uphold and be actively involved in the total life of the school and its special character irrespective of their personal beliefs.
  • Staff are role models for students, colleagues and parents/caregivers in living the mission and values of the school.
  • Staff who do not profess Catholicism are expected to promote the Catholic Character of the school, and to refrain from doing or saying anything that would be antithetical to the school’s Catholic Character.
  • Staff are expected to abide by the Code of Ethics for Staff and Boards of New Zealand Catholic Schools, a copy of which can be found at Appendix 9 of the Handbook.
  • In schools with a particular charism staff are also expected to uphold that charism.
New staff will find others who are willing to assist them in gaining a fuller understanding of the school and its Catholic Character, and in solving any difficulties that may arise in the course of their work. In addition the following resources which can be obtained from your School’s Diocesan Catholic Education Office will be helpful:

- **Sharing the Gospel Today: NZ Catechetical Directory** (NZ Catholic Bishops Conference, 2012)
- **The Catholic School** (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977)
- **Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith** (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982)
- **The Church’s Confession of Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults** (German Bishops’ Conference, St Ignatius Press, 1987, San Francisco)
- **Understanding Faith Religious Education curriculum for Catholic Secondary Schools Year 9-13 Aotearoa New Zealand** (NCRS, revised 2010)
- **Catechism of the Catholic Church** (June 1994)
- **Religious Education Curriculum Statement for Catholic Primary Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand** (NCRS, 1996)
- **The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium** (Congregation for Catholic Education, July 1998)
- **The Declaration** (New Zealand Council of Proprietors of Catholic Integrated Schools, 1997, revised 2007)

http://www.nzceo.org.nz/pages/resources/resources_teachers_bot.html
# APPENDIX 2:
## IMPACT MODEL FOR PRINCIPAL SUCCESSION PROCESSES
### IN SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Skill &amp; Knowledge (Criteria)</th>
<th>Critical Application</th>
<th>Key Results</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Succession practices</td>
<td>Planning using key elements of succession planning</td>
<td>Boards should be well prepared for the inevitability of a change of principal</td>
<td>Board appoints suitable replacement who best fits the needs of the school community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. External input</td>
<td>Seeking advice and input from external advisors or professional agencies</td>
<td>Boards are well advised from those with experience in principal appointments processes</td>
<td>Decisions made are founded on sound advice from experts in this field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Appointment processes with documented evidence of policies and procedures</td>
<td>Discussion and planning by Board of Trustees with strategic future focus</td>
<td>Successive changes in Board members will not hinder or affect the process and there is a basis from which to begin</td>
<td>Ability to access information that will assist the process and lay a foundation for further input and discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Community involvement</td>
<td>Involvement of key stakeholders through consultation and discussion</td>
<td>Fulfils the importance of community involvement in strategic planning and development in NZ schools</td>
<td>Community satisfaction with the process and outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Consideration of the importance of the school’s culture, vision and special character</td>
<td>Ensuring that there is a continuation of the culture, vision and special character elements important to the school</td>
<td>Meeting the requirements of the Deed of Integration</td>
<td>New principal upholds the special character of the school and ensures its continued implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Leadership development opportunities, building leadership capacity</td>
<td>Identification and development of teachers with leadership potential</td>
<td>There is an on-going supply of educators within the school who understand and maintain the practices essential for the continuity of culture, vision and special character</td>
<td>Successful changes of principal within a faith-based integrated school either through internal/external appointment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 3:

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Project Title:** Principal Succession: Planning for continuity of vision, culture and special character following a change of principal in a New Zealand faith-based integrated school.

**Name of school:**

**Location of school:**

**Size of school:** (U1 – 12)

**Year levels taught in school:**

**Type of school:** (Primary/Secondary/Composite/Area/Co-ed/Single sex)

**Your Designation:** BOT Chair/Deputy Chair/ Parent rep/Proprietors’ rep (please circle)

**SURVEY QUESTIONS**

1. **How many changes of principal have there been in your school in the last 15 years?** (please circle)
   
   1  2  3  4  5 or more

2. **In what year was your last change of principal?**
   
   Year …………………………

3. **Was the new principal an internal (existing staff member) or external (from another school) appointment?** (please circle)
   
   Internal  External

4. **Was an employment consultant used in the process?** (please circle)
   
   Yes  No
5. Was there a selection committee established to select and appoint the new principal?
   Yes  No

6. If YES, who was involved on this committee? (Positions not names e.g. BOT Chair, Parent Rep etc.):
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

7. Does the school have a documented policy or procedures for the succession of the principal? (please circle)
   Yes  No

8. If YES, do you know how the policy was established?
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

9. Were other members of the school community involved in the process for the replacement of the principal e.g. parents, staff, students, other stakeholders? If so, to what extent were they involved?
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

10. Whose role is it to take responsibility for the effectiveness of succession policy/procedures?
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………

11. If you do not have documented policy or procedures for succession, what planning took place at Board level to prepare for the most recent change of principal at your school?
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
12. What criteria are considered by the BOT when looking to appoint a new principal?

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.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................

13. Do you have any written process (formalized) to identify future leaders amongst the teaching staff in your school?
   Yes  No

14. Are you aware of potential future principals within the current staff? (please circle)
   Yes  No

15. What, if any, strategies are being used to nurture their leadership potential?

.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................

16. Thinking about the most recent principal appointment; was the previous principal involved in any way? (please circle)
   Yes  No

   If you answered yes, please explain how this occurred?

.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................

17. Thinking about future principal appointments; how involved, if at all, do you feel the current principal should be in the appointment of his/her successor? Please explain your answer.

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.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................

18. Putting aside what you have noted above, what do you believe schools need to be aware of and implement regarding principal succession in the future?

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.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................
THANK YOU for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please return to the researcher in the stamped addressed envelope supplied no later than ..................

Francine Bennett
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR PRINCIPAL

CASE STUDY

**Project Title:** Principal Succession: Planning for continuity of vision, culture and special character following a change of principal in a New Zealand faith-based integrated school.

**Researcher:** Francine Bennett, Doctoral Candidate, School of Critical Studies in Education, University of Auckland.

My name is Francine Bennett. I am an experienced teacher, principal of a state integrated school and a doctoral student in the School of Critical Studies in Education at the University of Auckland (UoA), conducting a research project for my Doctor of Education thesis.

**Project Description and invitation:** The main purpose of this research project is to determine how New Zealand faith-based integrated schools with a designated special character plan for a change of principal in the life of the school. This valuable information has the potential to deepen our collective educational understanding of what it means to lead a school through a change of principal, while ensuring that the core elements of vision, culture and special character are retained.

As the Principal of a faith-based integrated school I would like to invite you to participate in this project. You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. However, if you do choose to give your consent, the information gathered from you will help me to gain important answers to the following question:
In what ways do principals and boards use succession planning in New Zealand’s faith-based integrated schools to ensure the building of leadership capacity and the continuity of vision, culture and special character?

Project Procedure: Your school has been selected to take part in this research as you have had a change of principal since 2005. Phase 1 of my research was to survey integrated schools which have had a change of principal and to request the Board Chair or a member of the Board of Trustees to complete a survey. The responses to the questionnaires have allowed me to select a range of integrated schools for Phase 2 in which to carry out the remainder of the case study research.

The procedure for schools involved in the case studies is as follows:

- An introductory meeting with you – to review procedures and organise timetabling.
- Document collection – I would like to read through some school documents and request that I be able to read your school charter, strategic plan, any curriculum documents that relate to ‘special character’ and any newsletters or promotional literature that you may have in the school that relate to the appointment of a new principal.
- Semi-structured interviews – I would like to interview members of your school community as detailed below. Preferably they will have had at least 4 years association with the school and will be able to articulate the vision, culture and special character of your school.
  - A member of the Board of Proprietors
  - A member of the Board of Trustees
  - You - the principal
  - Two teachers, randomly selected by you
  - Two senior students over the age of 16, selected by you (in Area or Composite schools)

The interview with you will take place at your school at a time mutually agreed upon. The estimated time required for this interview will be one hour. You will be offered the opportunity to review your comments after the interview has been transcribed.

To ensure complete transparency, between myself and your school, an electronic copy of the complete research proposal will be available on request. Prior to my arrival you will also be given ample time to review the content of the research programme, including the interview questions. If there are significant changes in the research programme I will update you.
**Right to withdraw from participation:** Participation in this study is voluntary, which means that you do not have to participate. Participants have the right to withdraw from participation at any stage up to the time of my data analysis in November 2012.

**Data storage and destruction:** Consent forms, documentary evidence, interview notes, transcriptions of interviews, observation forms and completed survey forms will be kept in a locked cabinet at Auckland University for six years, after which time all paper material will be shredded and tapes of recorded interviews will be destroyed.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Your identity will remain confidential at all times. If the information you provide is reported or published, this will be done in such a way that does not identify your school or any of the participants as its source. Direct quotes or descriptive passages that could reveal your identity will be omitted from any published data. Every attempt will be made to maintain confidentiality; however, it may be possible for participants within a school to recognize the school or the input of other participants from within the same school. On the completion of the thesis you will be contacted and offered a free copy of the document in a convenient electronic format.

**Contact Details:** If you have queries about this project or wish to discuss it further, please call me on xxxxxx or contact me via email at xxxxxx

If you are willing for your school to be included in this research, please complete the attached consent form and give it to me when we meet.

My supervisors are Dr Vicki Carpenter (Critical Studies in Education) and Dr Mary Hill (School of Teacher Education Practice). The Head of School for CRSTIE is Dr Airini.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns please contact:

The Chair  
The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland 1142  
Ph.: (09) 373 7599 ext. 83711

**APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 16/8/11 for (3) years, Reference Number 2011/439**
APPENDIX 4B:
PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project Title: Principal Succession: Planning for continuity of vision, culture and special character following a change of principal in a New Zealand faith-based integrated school.

Researcher: Francine Bennett, Doctoral Candidate, School of Critical Studies in Education, University of Auckland

I have read the Participant Information Sheet; have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

• I agree to take part in this research project.
• I understand that all data collected from the school will be anonymous, so that all names and other identifying information will be removed from any data published in the thesis or subsequent publications.
• I understand that the researcher will take all steps possible to maintain confidentiality; however, it may be possible for people within my school to recognise my school or my input.
• I understand that I am free to withdraw participation at any time and to withdraw any data relating to myself or the school up to July 2012.
• I agree / do not agree to be audio taped.
• I understand that a third party who has signed a confidentiality agreement will transcribe the tapes.
• I understand that the data will be kept securely for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
Name: ____________________________________________________________ (please print)

Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________________

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
ETHICS COMMITTEE ON ....................... for (3) years,
Reference Number ....../......
APPENDIX 5:
INDICATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR BOARD OF PROPRIETORS/BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The vision of the school
• How would you describe the vision of your school?
• How was that vision developed?
• What activities or practices have you employed to ensure that the established vision is sustained?
• What expectation do you have of your principal regarding the implementation of your vision for the school?

The culture and special character of the school
• How would you characterize the culture of this school?
• What guidelines exist between the Board of Proprietors, the Board of Trustees and the Principal regarding the implementation of the school’s special character as detailed in the Integration Deed?
• One challenge to culture is sustainability, particularly after a succession event. What policies and procedures do you have in place for continuing the culture, vision and special character following a change of principal?

Leadership capacity
• Tell me about the strategies that you employ as a Board to offer leadership opportunities for potential leaders?

Principal Succession
• How do you ensure the aspects of culture, vision and special character are understood when a new principal is employed?
• What role have the Board of Proprietors, Board of Trustees and principal played in the succession of a new principal?
APPENDIX 6:
INDICATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

Background Information
• Tell me about your background in teaching leading up to your appointment to this position.
• Describe the process you followed for preparing for the role of principal at this school. What did you do and why?

The vision of the school
• How would you describe the vision of your school?
• How was that vision developed?
• What activities or practices have you employed to ensure that the established vision is sustained?
• What challenges do you foresee your successor facing regarding the vision of the school and what advice would you give him or her regarding vision?

The culture and special character of the school
• How would you characterize the culture of this school?
• What relationship exists between you and the Board of Proprietors as guardians of the school’s special character under the terms of the Integration Act?
• On what types of activities do you spend most of your time?
• Is this different from the way in which you spent your time in your previous school or as a senior manager in this school?
• In what ways do you promote the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture conducive to the special character requirements, student learning and staff professional growth?
• One challenge to culture is sustainability, particularly after a succession event. What advice would you give your successor for continuing the culture of learning after you leave?

Leadership capacity
• How do you identify leadership potential in your senior staff?
• In what ways do you see this leadership potential leading to a principal role at some point?
• What strategies do you use to develop staff as aspiring principals?
• Have you coached an aspiring principal? If so what aspects of the principal role did you coach them in?
• What do you consider are the benefits of coaching (for a potential leader)?
• Are there any other methods you employ to grow leadership capabilities in potential leaders?
• What specific strategies have you tried so that many people experience leadership and its responsibilities?
• What sort of responsibilities do you think should and should not be shared with future leaders? What responsibilities have you shared with teacher leaders?

Principal Succession
• How do you ensure the aspects of culture, vision and special character are understood and implemented?
• How do you ensure that each aspect is maintained by people in varying roles (e.g. BOT, senior staff, teaching staff) in your role as principal?
• What is your overall assessment of your succession to this role? What’s been positive? What’s been negative? Or has it been neither? Why?
• Would you do anything differently? If so, what would you do and why?
• What role(s) have the Board of Proprietors, Board of Trustees or teacher leaders played in your succession to this role?
## APPENDIX 7:
### KEY COMPONENTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

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<th>Internal/External Appointment</th>
<th>Use of consultant/external advice</th>
<th>Advice sought from other agencies</th>
<th>Community involvement</th>
<th>Documented policy or guidelines exist</th>
<th>Use of ST&amp;I MOE/LTEF</th>
<th>Development of person specification</th>
<th>Identifies leaders within school community</th>
<th>Notes the need to uphold Special Character</th>
<th>Changes of Principal over past 15 years</th>
<th>Retiring Principal involved</th>
<th>Ideas about succession planning evident</th>
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APPENDIX 8:

TRANSCRIBER’S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

TRANSCRIBER’S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Project Title: Principal Succession: Planning for continuity of vision, culture and special character following a change of principal in a New Zealand faith-based integrated school.

Researcher: Francine Bennett, Doctoral Candidate, School of Critical Studies in Education, University of Auckland

I ________________________________ (Full Name - printed) agree to transcribe the tapes provided to me.

I agree to keep confidential all the information provided to me.

I will not make any copies of the transcripts or keep any record of them, other than those required for the project.

Signature: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________
REFERENCES


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