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DEVELOPING STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR LEADERS IN VICTORIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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Standards of Practice for Leaders in Catholic Schools

Abstract

In 2003-4, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) undertook a project to develop standards for school leadership. A specific aim of the project was to provide a "bridge" to leadership that would encourage teachers to undertake leadership tasks and to consider moving into formal positions of leadership. This paper reports on the experiences and challenges of developing standards that matched this purpose. It also reviews school leadership standards that have been developed in Australia and overseas over the past decade. A comparison is drawn between standards for teachers and standards for leaders in schools, making the point that, whereas teaching standards are specific to the profession of teaching, leadership extends across many areas and occupations. In accordance with contemporary understandings of distributed leadership, the CECV standards were designed as a generic articulation of what leaders know and do rather than descriptions of school principals' responsibilities. The standards were developed to provide a framework for the assessment of leadership performance and to suggest tasks that teachers may undertake to gain leadership experience. The paper discusses the major challenge of identifying these tasks and articulating them in standards for leaders, within the various areas of the daily work of schools. It describes how this project is being carried forward and the associated work that is now being done in schools.

Introduction

The project of developing a framework of standards for leaders in Victorian Catholic schools began in November 2003, in discussions between researchers from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and senior managers from the Catholic Education Commission. It has resulted in a comprehensive set of standards for leaders in Catholic schools. This paper describes the processes involved in the development of the standards, the various national and international influences involved, and the ways in which the work is currently being carried forward in schools.

A search of the literature showed that, over the past decade, many sets of standards have been developed, nationally and internationally, for principals and for others who occupy formal leadership positions in schools (e.g. heads of subject departments). But most of these standards included or assumed management and administrative functions that were part of a designated *job*. While some standards, such as those produced by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) in the United States, made strong attempts to focus on teaching and learning, we found it difficult to see how even these standards could be demonstrated by a person who did not already occupy a formal leadership position in a school.

Elmore's concept of educational leadership (Elmore, 2000, p.13), which describes leadership as 'the guidance and direction of instructional improvement' became a focus for the work of the project. One important aim, therefore, in developing standards for leaders in Catholic schools, was to ensure that the standards could be demonstrated by any teacher who was exercising educational leadership in a school, whether that person occupied, or did not occupy, a formal leadership role or position.

This is not to say that the Standards for leaders in Catholic Schools have no relevance for principals or for those who already occupy formal leadership positions in schools. On the contrary, it is essential that those people continue to develop their own professional knowledge and skills, and encourage and enable others to be leaders. Effective organisations create opportunities for leadership among their members; and principals and others in school leadership positions should find the standards of great use for this purpose, as well as for reflecting on and improving their own work.

The main target group for these standards, however, is those practising teachers who aspire to senior leadership roles in schools. The standards can be used to validate the work of teachers who are already leading others to improve outcomes for students; they can also be seen as a 'road map' to guide the professional learning and development of aspiring leaders. In the future, the standards may also serve as a basis for programs that award formal recognition and accreditation to leaders whose work focuses on improving teaching and learning.

The following sections of this paper provide:

- an overview of the project and description of the initial consultations with school based reference group
- a discussion of the global context of Catholic schooling
- a discussion of national and international examples of standards for school leadership
- influence of the work of Michael Fullan and Richard Elmore on the development of the *Standards for Leaders in Victorian Catholic Schools*
- a description of continuing work and current progress

Overview of the project

Several drafts of the standards were developed for consultation between November 2003 and March 2004. A school based reference group made up of principals of Catholic schools and other senior Catholic educationists was set up to critique the standards. The plan was that another draft would be given to schools in the Melbourne and Sale Dioceses for further consultation in February 2004.

The first meeting of the reference group was held in December 2003. The draft standards were well received at this meeting, and members of the group provided useful feedback. They approved the basic 'architecture' of the standards, but had reservations about some of the content, on the grounds that it was still too 'job specific.' They questioned, for example, whether any teacher but a Religious Education Co-ordinator could demonstrate the standards in the first area.

Further development of the standards, incorporating the feedback from the December meeting, occurred in close collaboration with the senior CECV officers involved in the process.

On Tuesday 10th February 2004, the reference group met at James Gould House. This was an all day meeting, during which the standards were thoroughly 'workshopped' in a variety of activities that included the preparation of 'vignettes' to illustrate

examples of leadership from the experience of participants. These were then mapped against the standards as a way of providing feedback for the next stage of the consultation.

Our work during this period was enhanced by the generous contribution of Charlotte Danielson, who was making a brief visit to Australia from the United States. Charlotte is an internationally recognised consultant and writer on standards based professional learning for teachers. Since this was an area of great interest to her, she wholeheartedly joined the ACER/CEO team in planning and facilitating the February 10th meeting.

Following the February 10th meeting, a revised draft of the standards was distributed for consultation in schools in the Melbourne and Sale Dioceses. School principals critiqued the standards with their staff and leadership teams. Written feedback from these consultations was given to ACER. The final draft of the standards incorporated this feedback.

The global context of Catholic Schooling: *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*

Educational leadership in Catholic schools can only be understood within the context of the values and principles of Catholic education, nationally and globally. The document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997 Congregation for Catholic Education) provides this context.

This document identifies three ‘fundamental characteristics of the Catholic school.’ First is the contribution of Catholic schools to the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church in the world. This includes sharing responsibility for the social and cultural needs of communities and populations, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Second is the contribution of Catholic schools to pedagogical innovation and the commitment of those men and women, religious and laity, to their mission of teaching. Third is the role of the school as an upholder of family values and supporter of parents.

Additionally, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* sets out a view of the Catholic school and its relation to the ‘human person.’

The Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. ... This awareness expresses the centrality of the human person in the educational project of the Catholic school, strengthens its educational endeavour and renders it fit to form strong personalities.’
(Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, p.3.)

The notion of ‘neutrality’ of values is firmly rejected:

To claim neutrality for schools signifies in practice, more times than not, banning all reference to religion from the cultural and educational field, whereas a correct pedagogical approach ought to be open to the more decisive sphere of ultimate objectives, attending not only to ‘how’ but also to ‘why...’
(Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, p.4.)

The values of the Catholic school are found in the Gospel:

With its educational project inspired by the Gospel, the Catholic school is called to take up this challenge and respond to it in the conviction that 'it is only in the mystery of the word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear.' (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, p.4.)

These values are explicitly taught in Catholic schools and are the foundations of Catholic education throughout the world.

Standards Frameworks for Leaders: discussion of some current models

Educational authorities in Australia and overseas have responded to the need to articulate what it is that leaders in schools need to know and be able to do by commissioning the development of standards for principals and other leaders in schools. Seven of these sets of standards are described below. Each is described with regard to:

- Background;
- structure and content;
- Uses/applications.

The standards reviewed are:

1. *A Catholic School Leadership Framework*. Catholic Education Office. Sydney
2. *Standards Framework for Leaders*. Education Queensland
3. *Draft National Standards for Headteachers* (UK)
4. *The Leadership Framework*. Western Australia
5. *The Standard for Headship in Scotland*
6. *The Australian Principals' Centre Leadership Framework*
7. Standards developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) in the USA and the publication:
A Framework for School Leaders: Linking the ISLLC Standards to Practice by Karen Hessel and John Holloway Educational Testing Service (ETS)

***A Catholic School Leadership Framework*. Catholic Education Office. Sydney**

Background

The Catholic Education Office Sydney developed the Catholic School Leadership Framework in 1998 in consultation with school principals and system leaders. Its framers set out 'to identify those core competencies required by school leaders if the school vision, mission, strategic priorities and daily work realities are to be effectively implemented.' (CEO Sydney 2001).

The leadership qualities that are identified in the Framework link to the ‘core purpose of the Catholic school’, which is identified in the vision and mission statements of each Catholic school community in the archdiocese.

The core purpose or reason for being of the Catholic school is the formation, education and development of students in partnership with parents and parish within the evangelising mission of the Church. (CEO Sydney p. 2)

This core purpose is central to the *Towards 2005* Strategic Management Plan for Sydney Catholic schools.

Structure and content

This Framework is underpinned by the following statement of principle:

‘Catholic schools are the spearhead of the Church’s mission to the world....
‘The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ’s teaching.’ The core purpose of the Catholic school is to take forward the mission of Jesus and the Church in partnership with parents and parish for the formation, education and development of the students entrusted to the school.

Six ‘*foundations of leadership*’ are identified:

1. Religious leadership
1. Leadership for learning
2. Human resources leadership
3. Strategic leadership
4. Organisational leadership
5. Personal dimensions of leadership

These become the organising statements under each of which nine ‘core competencies’ are grouped.

Uses/applications

The framework was developed specifically for the purpose of integrating professional development programs. It is also intended as a reference for procedures related to selection, role negotiation, personal development and review of leaders.

Some other suggested possibilities for use include:

- A source for feedback on performance
- Career advice
- A checklist for self-review
- Background information in choosing a particular course of study
- To design staff development activities for a Leadership team
- To identify teachers with leadership potential
- To request particular leadership experiences

The framers of the standards also envisaged that

Individual school leaders or those with aspirations to leadership positions could use the Framework to identify particular development goals with the view to working towards Recognition and Certification of Learning achievements or to consider applications for promotion positions. (CEO Sydney p.4)

Standards Framework for leaders. Education Queensland 1997

Background

The Framework was developed in 1997 by Education Queensland, which has also developed a comprehensive standards framework for classroom teachers. The document outlines, through a competency approach, the desired knowledge skills and behaviours that Education Queensland expects of leaders in schools, districts, central office and other Education Queensland sites.

Structure and content

The model is based on six leadership 'roles':

- 1 Leadership in Education
1. Management
2. People and Partnerships
3. Change
4. Outcomes
5. Accountability

These roles accord with the priorities of state school education in Queensland.

For each of the key roles there are two types of competencies:

- Best practice competencies
- Personal performance competencies

There are twenty-four best practice competencies. These are exemplified by:

- Collective site-based actions
- Specific underpinning knowledge and understanding
- Context indicators
- Evidence

The twelve 'personal performance competencies' describe the characteristics of leaders. They indicate behaviours in different situations at different times.

The personal performance competencies are exemplified through:

- Performance levels (A description that characterises a leader's performance in relation to the competency)

- Personal actions (Examples of observable work behaviours of an individual leader.

Uses/applications

The competencies were designed to allow leaders in schools to reflect on their performance and for use in professional development, recruitment and selection of leaders. They are intended to guide both the evaluation of leadership and professional learning.

Draft National Standards for Headteachers (Revised Version) (Department for Education and Skills and the National College for School Leadership UK) 2004

Background

National standards for head teachers were introduced in the UK in 1997 through the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). Revised draft versions of the standards were put out for consultation in the second half of 2003 and in February 2004, following thorough and widespread consultation with the profession. These standards were developed by the National College for School Leadership. They are still in the process of development and consultation.

The National Standards for Head teachers were written ‘to address aspiring and serving head teachers and all stakeholders who work with them and capture the challenging role of headship.’ (NCSL 2003) They claim to be research based and mindful of national and international work in the areas of leadership and professional standards.

The standards aim to:

- Articulate the role of effective headship in the 21st century
- Define the components for accountability and specify what is expected by stakeholders, including pupils, staff, governors, parents, local education authorities and the wider community
- Inform challenge and enthuse aspiring and serving head teachers
- Provide a tool for use in day to day work by head teachers and those working with them
- Provide a map for professional development and action
- Develop a common language and consistent approach to headship (NCSL 2003 p.6)

Structure and content

The 2004 ‘update’ of the National Standards for Head teachers sets out the standards in two parts:

1. The core purpose of the head teacher
2. The six key areas of headship

The 'core purpose' of the head teacher is described in a three-paragraph statement. The statement places emphasis on the first paragraph:

The core purpose of the head teacher is to provide professional leadership and management for a school. This will secure success and improvement for the school, ensure high quality education and personalised learning for all its pupils and high standards and achievement in all areas of the school's work. (NCSL 2004, p.3.)

The standards embody three key principles: These are that the work of head teachers should be:

1. learning centred;
2. focused on leadership;
3. professionally oriented.

The standards are set out in six 'key areas' 'These six key areas, when taken together, represent the role of the head-teacher.' (NCSL p.2.) The areas are:

1. Creating the future
2. Leading learning and teaching
3. Developing self and working with others
4. Managing the organisation
5. Promoting professional accountability
6. Building community through collaboration

Within each area, the standards describe what a head teacher needs to know, (*knowledge*), be committed to (*'personal qualities'*), and be able to do (*'actions'*), in order to achieve the core purpose of the head teacher. For example, in the first area: '*Creating the Future*' the seven aspects of '*knowledge*' include knowledge of:

- Local, national and global trends
- Strategic planning processes
- Tools for data collection and analysis

The seven '*personal qualities*' for this area include:

Being committed to

- Setting and achieving ambitious, challenging goals and targets
- The use of appropriate new technologies

Being able to:

- Inspire, challenge, motivate and empower others to carry the vision forward
- Model the values and vision of the school

The seven 'actions' include:

- Ensures the vision for the school is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon effectively by all
- Motivates and works with other to create a shared culture and positive climate

Uses/ applications

The National Standards for Headteachers were developed as a professional development and action framework. The intention was to provide a practical tool for head teachers to reflect on their performance and discover possible areas for further learning. (NCSL 2004, p.2)

The standards were seen as advisory rather than statutory. Some specific examples of how they might be used are:

- Personal review and reflection
- Planning professional learning and development
- Supporting and informing the performance management process
- Informing role specifications, job descriptions, recruitment and selection
- Supporting strategic and operational planning and day to day management
- Planning, providing and evaluating leadership development activities for aspiring and serving headteachers
- Promoting headship to the profession and wider community (NCSL 2003 p.7)

The National Professional qualification for Headship

From the first of April 2004 it became mandatory for all first-time head teachers appointed to a post in the maintained sector of the UK education system to hold the 'National Professional Qualification for Headship' (NPQH) or to have secured a place in the program. The NPQH training focuses on candidates professional development needs. It offers relevant training, including online learning, school based assessment and visits to 'successful' schools. The program takes between four months and two years to complete, depending on candidates' training and development needs. It is underpinned by the National Standards for Head teachers.

The Standard for Headship in Scotland (University of Edinburgh and Scottish Executive) 2001

Background

The Standard was developed to underpin the *Scottish Qualification for Headship* (SQH), which was first offered by a consortium of local authorities in Scotland in 1998.

Structure and content

The Standard identifies 'the key purpose of headship' in a statement that emphasises the head teacher's leadership role in promoting effective teaching and learning.

The head teacher is accountable overall for the quality of education achieved by the school. Within the context of national and local authority frameworks and available resources, s/he must ensure the school is managed in such a way as to support continuous improvement and raise the standards achieved by its pupils. (University of Edinburgh 2001).

It identifies three elements that underpin the professional practice of school leadership and management:

1. *Professional values*
2. *Management functions*
3. *Professional abilities*

Professional values describe the requirement for head teachers to model and articulate 'professionally defensible' values, and to know and understand educational development and relevant management issues. This section then indicates how head teachers:

- 1.1 *should demonstrate commitment to educational values*
- 1.2 *should demonstrate their commitment to their own learning*
- 1.3 *should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of key features such as raising standards of pupil achievement, principles and practice of leadership and the management of change, quality in education, processes and systems for quality assurance. ((nine items).*

The second element: *management functions* outline four Key Functions performed by head teachers:

- 2.1 *Managing teaching and Learning*
- 2.2 *Managing people*
- 2.3 *Managing Policy and Planning*
- 2.4 *Managing Resources and Finance*

The third element: *Professional Abilities* describes the abilities of head teachers in two categories: Interpersonal and Intellectual.

The category of *Interpersonal Abilities* describes six sub categories, the first three of which are:

- 3.1.1 *Demonstrates confidence and courage*
- 3.1.2 *Creates and maintains a positive atmosphere*
- 3.1.3 *Inspires and motivates others*

The category of *Intellectual Abilities* has five sub categories, the first three of which are:

- 3.2.1 *Seeks and uses information*
- 3.2.2 *Thinks strategically*
- 3.2.3 *Judges wisely and decides appropriately*

Uses/practical applications

The Standard for Headship was introduced as the basis of the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH), which began as a pilot program in 1998 and became fully operational in 2000. It is open to teachers who have five or more years of teaching experience and who are registered with the General Teaching Council.

The number of places available to candidates is based on the national requirement for new head teachers.

There are three approved Provider Consortia for the Scottish Qualification for Headship. Each consortium consists of a partnership of one or more Higher Education Institutions (HEI) with a number of Local Authorities. There are six HEIs involved in consortia:

- The University of Aberdeen. Hilton campus
- The University of Edinburgh. Moray House Institute of Education
- The University of Glasgow. Department of Education Studies St. Andrews campus
- The University of Stirling. Institute of Education
- The University of Strathclyde. Department of Educational Studies Jordanhill campus

Candidates are selected for the program by their employers, on the basis that they have shown the potential to develop the competencies required for effective school leadership. After selection they register with the HEI that is part of an approved provider consortium. Candidates also need to have access to a suitable work environment in order to carry out the practical projects associated with the course. This means that they must be able to lead and manage whole school development projects over the two years of the program.

The Australian Principals Centre Leadership Framework (APC Leadership Framework) 2003

Background

The Australian Principal Centre was established to recognise and enhance the professional status of the principalship. The APC Framework serves as a basis for the program for continuing education for principals. It is applied to the certification processes of membership and to the maintenance of membership status. The framework is refined and updated through continuing consultation with principals.

Structure and content

The APC Leadership Framework has three components:

1. *A code of ethics*
2. *Leadership Dimensions*
3. *Leadership competencies*

The code of ethics articulates the moral imperatives and ethical behaviours that are expected of principals. Fourteen items are described. The first three are:

The principalship:

- Recognises a primary responsibility as being to promote growth in the intellect, well-being and character of students in the school
- Accepts that all students have the capacity and right to learn
- Has a key professional task as the education leader, with final responsibility in the school for the quality of its total curriculum, its aim, its assessment and reporting, its teaching and learning processes

The four Leadership Dimensions describe four general areas of leadership responsibility, and provide a brief description of each. They are:

1. The Educational Dimension of Leadership
2. The Values and Ethics Dimension of Leadership
3. The Leadership Dimension of Personal and Interpersonal Relationships
4. The Strategic (or Management) dimension of Leadership

The leadership competencies are the 'behaviours and characteristics of thinking which lead to effective of superior leadership performance in all the dimensions of leadership. Nineteen leadership competencies are described. They include:

- Educational leadership
Develops plans, policies and programs to support effective learning and teaching
- Communicating
Communicates accurately, effectively and persuasively in a range of settings
- Developing others
Values people and promotes their professional growth and independence

Uses/applications

The APC Leadership Framework is used as the basis for accreditation and certification of principal members of the Association. It also provides a common language and focus for discussion about the principalship in schools. At an individual level, the Framework was designed to be useful for members of the Australian Principals' Centre to gather feedback about their performance and plan professional development activities.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards USA 1996

Background

The interstate school leaders licensure consortium (ISLLC) is a collaboration of state education agencies and professional development organisations committed to raising performance standards for school leaders. It was established in 1994 under the

guidance of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), a non-profit organisation, whose members are the public officials who head the education departments of the states. ISLLC includes a group of thirty-one education agencies and twelve educational administrative associations that have worked cooperatively to establish an education policy framework for school leadership in the USA.

The ISLLC framework has its origins in a series of publications that were disseminated and implemented in the 1980s. Among these are:

- The Performance-Based Preparation of Principals, (1983);
- School Leadership: A Preface to Action, (1988);
- Principals for the Twenty-First Century, (1990)

Immediately following the publication of these documents, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration was created. Its members include: the American Association of colleges for Teacher Education, the American Association of School Administrators, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of secondary School principals, the National council of Professors of Education Administration the National School Boards Association, and the University Council for Educational Administration. This Board unified reform efforts towards the creation of three initiatives:

- Improving the Preparation of School Administrators, the Reform Agenda (1989);
- The new National Council for Accreditation for Teachers Education (NCATE); curriculum guidelines for school administration programs;
- Principals for Our Changing Schools, a document that outlined the knowledge domains for schools leaders, (1993).

The combined experience gained by Consortium members from the implementation of these initiatives led to new perceptions of the roles of leaders in schools. These perceptions, coupled with the research linkage established between educational leadership and productive schools were the basis for the development of the ISLLC standards.

The ISLLC standards are intended to apply to ‘nearly all’ formal leadership positions in education, not only principals:

We acknowledge full well that there are differences in leadership that correspond to roles, but ISLLC members were unanimous in their belief that the central aspects of the role are the same for all school leadership positions. (CCSO 1996 p.7).

The intent, in the design of the ISLLC standards is to prepare all school leaders to focus on teaching and learning for all students. This principle is demonstrated in the wording of the first sentence in each leadership standard: ‘A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students.’

The ISLLC standards are widely used and respected. Over 38 states in the US are using them as they stand, or as a basis to develop their own sets of standards. Examples include the Iowa Standards for School Leaders, the California Professional Standards for School leaders and the New York City Board of Education Standards for Leaders. In some states, including New York City, education authorities are aligning the standards with performance review processes to describe performance objectives and to guide district superintendents in their work with school leaders. The influence of the standards is clearly observable in sets of standards developed in other countries, including the National Standards for Head Teachers, which are currently being developed in the UK by the National College for School Leadership. (See below)

Structure and content:

Seven principles underpin the ISLLC standards

1. Standards should reflect the centrality of student learning
2. Standards should acknowledge the changing role of the school leaders
3. Standards should recognise the collaborative nature of school leadership
4. Standards should be high, upgrading the quality of the profession
5. Standards should inform performance-based systems of assessment and evaluation for school leaders
6. Standards should be integrated and coherent
7. Standards should be predicated on the concepts of access, opportunity, and empowerment for all members of the school community

There are six standards:

1. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
2. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
3. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organisation, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment
4. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilising community resources.
5. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
6. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.

For each standard, there are three indicators:

- Knowledge
- Dispositions
- Performances

For each indicator, there are up to twenty-three sub-indicators. In total, there are about 200 sub indicators.

***A Framework for School Leaders: Linking the ISLLC Standards to Practice* by
Karen Hessel and John Holloway Educational Testing Service (ETS) 2002**

Background

This Framework was developed in 2002 by Karen Hessel and John Holloway for the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Princeton New Jersey. ETS is the world's largest private educational testing and measurement organisation and a leader in educational research. Karen Hessel was the Principal in Residence at ETS. John Holloway was the project director for the School Leadership Series of licensure assessment in the Teaching and Learning Division at ETS.

The authors acknowledged Charlotte Danielson's contribution to teaching standards in her publication '*Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*' (Danielson 1996) Recognising the value of Danielson's work in providing a clear, practical and research based definition of good teaching, together with practical ways of putting the standards into practice, they set out to develop a comparable *Framework* for school leaders.

The Framework, as its title says, links the ISLLC standards to the practice of leadership in schools. It claims to be a tool for:

- Preparing the next generation of administrators
- Mentoring new administrators
- Professional development of practicing administrators
- Administrator evaluation

The stated intention of the Framework is to be of practical use in terms of what school leaders actually *do*:

The great contribution of this book is that it translates these somewhat global (ISLLC) standards to the specific responsibilities of school leaders. (ETS 2002).

Structure and content

The Framework developers identified four 'broad central themes' that are central to the standards. These are:

1. A vision for success

2. A focus on teaching and learning
3. An involvement of all stakeholders
4. A demonstration of ethical behaviour

The Framework restates the six ISLLC organising statements as:

1. The vision of learning
2. The culture of teaching and learning
3. The management of learning
4. Relationships with the broader community to foster learning
5. Integrity, fairness and ethics in learning
6. The political, social, economic, legal and cultural context of learning

For each of the six standards statements it designates four 'components' that are 'nested' within that statement, e.g.

Standard 1: the vision for learning:

- 1a. Developing the vision
- 1b. Communicating the vision
- 1c. Implementing the vision
- 1d. Monitoring and evaluating the vision

Each of the 24 components is the focus of a 'component performance table' that can be used to evaluate school leaders. The tables are organised around the *central themes* and four levels of performance: 'rudimentary,' 'developing,' 'proficient' and 'accomplished'.

The Leadership Framework. Western Australian Leadership Centre 2003

Background

The Leadership Framework was designed as a tool for school leaders to reflect on their practice, enhance their continuing professional development and assist them in designing professional learning plans based on individual needs.

The Framework follows research completed by Professor Bill Louden and Dr Helen Wildy of Edith Cowan University and by Murdoch University, data collected in the field by the Western Australia Leadership Centre and a final draft completed by Middle Swan Primary School Principal, Kim Dullard. The development of the leadership framework involved wide consultation with the profession. Department of Education and Training (DOE) funds were used to refine the process to ensure that the competency component was accessible, manageable and meaningful to administrators.

Structure and content

The Leadership Centre conceived the Framework in terms of 'competencies' and 'standards'. Competencies are described as the values, attributes, skills understandings and knowledge that are integral to a leader's performance. Standards

show what the competencies look like in practice, in a range of contexts, at different levels of performance.

So far, the Leadership Centre has developed only the competency component of the Leadership Framework. The description of the competencies is in two parts:

1. Characteristics of School Leaders (attributes, values, knowledge);
2. Competencies of School Leadership

Characteristics of School Leaders
Attributes, values, knowledge

The *attributes* cover what research shows to be the key personal characteristics that leaders need to demonstrate in decision-making, discussions and actions. Leaders are:

- Fair
- Supportive
- Collaborative
- Decisive
- Flexible
- Tactful
- Innovative
- Persistent

Values underpin the competencies. They are concerned with:

- Learning
- Care
- Excellence
- Equity

Knowledge in this context means the body of understandings that leaders need to have in order to make sound decisions about educating students. It comprises knowledge of:

- Pedagogy
- Curriculum
- Legislation
- Policies
- Change management
- Technologies
- Stakeholders

The competencies of School Leadership are:

- Policy and Direction
- Teaching and Learning
- Staff
- Partnerships
- Resources

Each competency has up to six ‘*critical elements*’ that are further explicated in descriptive ‘*indicators*.’ For example:

Policy and Direction (competency)

Critical elements

- Sharing vision
- Working collaboratively
- Confronting complexity
- Promoting change
- Ensuring fairness
- Maintaining direction

In all there are twenty-four ‘critical elements’ in this framework, which is still under development.

The influence of the work of Richard Elmore and Michael Fullan on the development of the *Standards of Practice for Leaders in Victorian Catholic Schools*

The sets of standards described above provided valuable models for the project of developing the *Standards of Practice for Leaders in Victorian Catholic Schools*. All described aspects of leadership in schools within defined categories. Common to most was the category of ‘vision’ – the notion of a school leader as a person who collaboratively develops strategic plans on the basis of ideals, beliefs and notions about the future directions of the school. Other ‘popular’ categories included curriculum, resources, and professional development of staff.

The descriptions of leaders’ work in *The Standards of Practice for Leaders in Victorian Catholic Schools* are arranged, similarly to these models, within appropriate categories that describe the *areas* in which leadership is exercised in a Catholic school. We felt, however, that, since this was to be a model designed more for the encouragement and professional development of aspiring leaders than as a description of a job, it should be underpinned by more explicit understandings of what it *means* to be a leader in a school. The understandings of educational leadership that inform this standards framework were drawn mostly from the work of Richard Elmore and Michael Fullan.

Elmore (2000 pp 20-21) sets out five principles for ‘a model of leadership that focuses on large scale improvement.’ They are:

1. The purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role

Elmore cites various theories of leadership: ‘institutional,’ ‘political,’ ‘managerial,’ and ‘cultural.’ He points out that none of these can satisfy the educational needs of schools, and that leadership needs to relate directly to the core work of schools:

None of these theories captures the imperative for large-scale improvement, since none of them posits a direct relationship between the work that leaders should be doing and the core functions of the organisation. One can be adept at any of these types of leadership and never touch the instructional core of schooling. ... If the purpose of leadership is the improvement of teaching practice and performance, then the skills and knowledge that matter are those that bear on the creation of settings for learning focused on clear expectations for instruction. (Elmore 2000, p. 20)

2. Instructional improvement requires continuous learning.

Since schools are most effective when teachers work and learn collaboratively, school leaders need to create conditions in that enable teachers to be continuous learners:

Leadership must create conditions that value learning as both an individual and collective good. Leaders must create environments in which individuals expect to have their personal ideas and practices subjected to the scrutiny of their colleagues, and in which groups expect to have their shared conceptions of practice s subjected to the scrutiny of individuals. (Elmore 2000, p. 20)

3. Learning requires modelling

Leaders should share and demonstrate the values and attributes they expect of others:

Role-based theories of leadership wrongly envision leaders who are empowered to ask or require others to do things they may not be able or willing to do. But as learning, individual and collective, is the central responsibility of leaders, then they must be able to model the learning they expect of others. (Elmore 2000, p. 20)

4. The roles and activities of leadership flow from the expertise required for learning and improvement, not from the formal dictates of the institution.

Learning and improvement flow, not from formal authority, but from shared knowledge and expertise:

If collective learning is the goal, my authority to command you to do something doesn't mean much if it is not complemented by some level of knowledge and skill which, when joined with yours, makes us both more effective.

5. The exercise of authority requires reciprocity of accountability and capacity

Similarly to Elmore, Fullan (2001, 2004) conceives of leadership as a part of a *collective* endeavour to improve the core work of organisations, based on deep, shared understandings of 'internal purposes':

Individual commitment leads, above all, to collective mobilization... collective action by itself can be short-lived if it is not based on or does not lead to a deep sense of internal purpose among organizational members. Generating

internal over external commitment and external over blind commitment is the sign of effective leadership. (Fullan 2004, p. 7)

He notes, (2001, p. xii-xiii) notes that 'leadership is key to large scale improvement yet must be radically different than it has been.' This, he says, is because, as Chesterton pointed out long ago, the world is not as logical, 'as mathematical and regular' as it appears. Conditions in schools, like those of organizations in the business world, are complex and sometimes chaotic. For leaders to effect improvement, they will need to have whatever it takes to make meaning and sense, in these conditions, in order to mobilize the collective capacity of individuals to move forward.

The notion that educational *leaders are people who mobilise others* to work towards and achieve improvement is fundamental to Fullan's conception of leadership. He argues that five components of effective leadership, taken together, provide mutually reinforcing and powerful forces to bring about positive change. These are:

1. Moral purpose

Increasingly, organisations are realising that moral purpose is at the centre of effective leadership. This involves both ends and means. The chief end of education, as Fullan, in agreement with Elmore, sees it, is to improve the lives of students. But this also involves such moral and ethical considerations as treating people fairly and well.

2. Understanding change

Moral purpose without an understanding of change, says Fullan, will lead to 'moral martyrdom.' Leaders need to learn that understanding change does not mean innovating for innovation's sake, or only having the best ideas. It does involve appreciating the early differences of trying something new ('the implementation dip'.) It also involves learning to redefine resistance as something positive, acknowledging complexity, and recognising that 'reculturing is the name of the game.' (Fullan, 2001, p.5)

3. Relationship Building

In his own research, Fullan found that a common factor in all successful change initiatives was improved relationships:

If relationships improve, things get better. If they remain the same or get worse, ground is lost. Thus, leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups – especially with people different than themselves.' (Fullan 2001, p. 5)

4. Knowledge creation and sharing

This aspect is closely linked to the first three. Turning information into knowledge is a social process. And knowledge can only be shared in sound relationships, where there is moral commitment to sharing and an understanding of how improvement can best be achieved.

5. *Coherence making*

Creativity, says Fullan, lives at the edge of chaos, but anarchy 'lurks' there as well:

All this complexity keeps people on the edge of chaos. It is important to be on that edge because that is where creativity resides, but anarchy lurks there too. (Fullan 2001, p. 6)

So a leader must be able to make coherence, to 'forge patterns of coherence' that make change sustainable:

Coherence making is a perennial pursuit. Leadership is difficult in a culture of change because disequilibrium is common (and valuable, provided that patterns of coherence can be fostered. (Fullan, 2001, p. 6)

The point essential to the framework provided by these five components of leadership is that leaders *mobilise* others, to actively and collectively work towards improvement:

The litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilises people's commitment to putting their energy into action to improve things. It is individual commitment, but above all, collective mobilisation. (Fullan, 2001, p.9)

Both Elmore and Fullan reject the 'romanticised' view of the leader as a 'hero' or charismatic personality. Trait theories of success, says Elmore (2000 p.14), have at least two major flaws: first the supply of character traits is limited, and shared between relatively few lucky individuals, second, character traits are much less likely to be influenced by education and training than are knowledge and skill. Framing notions of effective educational leadership around improvement in teaching and learning means that, as leaders assume their proper responsibility for improving student learning, they will need to develop the knowledge and skills required to lead others in collaborative efforts to reach this collective goal:

Why not focus leadership on instructional improvement, and define everything else as instrumental to it? The skills and knowledge that matter in leadership, under this definition, are those that can be connected to, or lead directly to, the improvement of instruction and student performance. (Elmore, 2000, p. 14)

Charismatic leaders inadvertently often do more harm than good because, at best, they provide episodic improvement followed by frustrated or despondent dependency. Superhuman leaders also do us another disservice: they are role models who can never be emulated by large numbers. Deep and sustained reform depends on many of us, not just on the very few who are destined to be extraordinary. (Fullan, 2001, pp 1-2)

In line with these views, the *Standards of Practice for Leaders in Victorian Catholic Schools* assume a view of educational leadership that is non trait-based, non role-specific, shared, moral, collaborative, and focussed on improving educational outcomes for students.

The project in Stage 2: The work continues

In 2004, the standards are still being trialled. They have already received a positive reception in schools. Already, some schools are using the standards to identify avenues for professional learning, as well as encouraging teachers to use the document to identify areas for professional growth and goal setting within their *Annual Review Meeting*.¹

Of great interest to both ACER and the Catholic Education Office is the enthusiasm expressed for the standards by those in leadership positions in schools. In October/November 2004, two leadership networks, Primary Deputy Principals in Melbourne and Secondary Curriculum Coordinators in Gippsland have determined that the Leadership Standards will shape the focus and professional formation of members for the next three years. In both groups, emphasis is on individual formation and professional growth, the building of a culture of leadership within the network, and on providing formation and skills for brining others on in their leadership development.

Stage 2 of the project has its focus on developing appropriate standards-based tasks with supporting documentation to provide evidence of teacher growth. Teachers are encouraged to be clear in documenting exactly what they *did* and what knowledge and resources they drew upon when they led a project in which they developed their leadership skills and ability.

In 2004, a working party of both principals and teachers in Catholic primary and secondary schools across Victoria has been assisting ACER and the CEO in the development of suitable materials for leaders and aspiring leaders to provide evidence of professional learning and growth. Schools have provided feedback regarding layout, language and evidence of the links between the task and the Standards. This feedback has enabled the first draft of the task document to be developed. In February 2005, teachers and leadership teams from pilot schools will use this document to verify leadership activities and projects within their schools and to provide more feedback.

The interest and enthusiasm expressed by schools for the Leadership Standards is evidence of their usefulness – always the litmus test for materials of this nature. It also shows that schools and the teaching profession are seeking and welcoming support in building quality teaching and leadership. This support needs to be developed and provided in ways that affirm the professional values of teachers and connect with the core purposes of schools.

¹ The Annual Review Meeting is a formal meeting conducted in all Victorian Catholic schools at the end of the school year. Teachers meet with the Principal or Principal Nominee to provide evidence of professional growth over the year and to identify and set goals for the coming year. Documentation and other evidence of professional activities are encouraged.

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