Statutory Intervention:
Perceptions of New Zealand primary school principals and their experiences

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

Doctor of Education

at

The University of Waikato

by

Sheralyn Fiona Cook

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2021

ABSTRACT

Each year, a small number of New Zealand schools are identified as underperforming and require external leadership assistance, usually from the Ministry of Education. This support is implemented through a statutory intervention mechanism aimed to address underpinning issues such as governance and leadership matters, low student academic achievement, issues of finance, and student and staff wellbeing (Ministry of Education, 2017).

While statutory interventions have been enacted in New Zealand since 1994 as a mechanism to 'turn a school around', there is little research about what this experience is like for educational leaders, or how it affects their professional and personal lives. Within the turnaround school literature, educational leaders are often positioned as heroic leaders who seek to address students' low academic performance by changing the school climate and culture, or as servant leaders who devote their life to the school. There is, however, an omission within this literature on the countervailing pressures school leaders experience while seeking to implement change, and how these pressures affect the professional and personal lives of leaders.

Using Dewey's theory of experiences, I examined the personal and professional experiences of three state primary school principals who were leading a school in statutory intervention. The participating principals' knowledge was lived, contextualised, shaped, and embedded within the professional-knowledge landscape of New Zealand primary schools (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). The stories told by the principals "express their personal understandings" (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007, p. 367) of their experiences of leading and managing a school during a statutory intervention.

The principals provided some key insights into their experiences of leading school change through complex, difficult situations. Working with statutory appointees provided a range of challenges for the principals, which included seeking to find common understandings of the issues within the school and the lack of contextual awareness from some appointees. Complex and challenging issues relating to staff where highlight in the principals narratives. Staff issues included a lack contextual and cultural awareness, deficit thinking with punitive classroom management systems, low teacher engagement with teaching and learning, resistant to change and traumatised staff.

The principals also experienced issues professionally and personally. Working in complex challenging schools resulted in the principals feeling isolated from other leaders. They felt no other principal had experienced nor understood their situation, therefore finding appropriate support and guidance was difficult. Subsequently, the

principals' health and wellbeing began to suffer with significant consequences on their mental health and wellbeing.

The principals involved in this study have been shaped and influenced by their experiences (Dewey, 1938). They are not the same principal who entered into a statutory intervention as the principal who emerged from it. Their experiences, the context of their schools and the interactions they had with their statutory appointee and school stakeholders, have influenced and shaped them personally and professionally.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my supervisors, Doctor Noeline Wright and Associate Professor Rachel McNae for their continual support and guidance throughout this journey. They continually challenged me to consider the deeper issues presented by the participants and the many different ways these findings might be presented. I would also like to thank Professor Chris Branson for his support and guidance during the initial phase of this thesis.

I would especially like to thank the participants. Without your willingness to share your stories and experiences, this thesis would not be possible. You are all strong, capable school leaders who have both shaped and been shaped by your experiences of leading your schools through statutory intervention.

My thanks also to Megan, Jane and Gayleen, my previous office mates for your support, encouragement and faith over the years that we would all eventually complete our doctoral studies. We talked our way through many issues, both thesis related and life in general during our many walks around the campus field.

My thanks also to my colleagues, both past and present. Thank you to Gillian Diprose, Jim Litchwark and Richard Clark for believing that I had the skills and knowledge to turn a school around. You all strongly encouraged and supported my move into doctoral study. To Kara and Karen for you continual support over the many years. I know I have missed a number of gatherings and events; now that my studies are completed, I aim to be a better friend. Thank you also to my current colleagues for your encouragement and 'checking-in' to see how I was progressing, and for lightening my workload at critical times of this thesis.

Finally, my family. Thank you for your continual support and encouragement over the years, particularly during this doctoral journey. Mum, I am finally able to answer your question about how my writing is going - finished!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Key terms used throughout this thesis include:

A**ppointee (statutory appointee)** - is used by the Ministry of Education when collectively discussing the limited statutory manager (LSM) and commissioner.

Board of Trustees (BoT, board) - govern New Zealand schools. Primary school Boards comprise of 3-7 elected parent trustees (depending on size of school), the school principal and a staff trustee elected by the staff. The principal is the only non-elected member of the Board.

Chairperson (chair) - the head of the Board. This person is elected from within the Board of Trustees to lead the Board.

Commissioner - appointed by the Minister of Education when a school Board of Trustees no longer governs the school. A commissioner holds all the powers and authority of the Board of Trustees.

Decile funding (decile) - the funding provided to schools by the New Zealand Government is based on the socioeconomic standing (SES) of the school community. A decile rating of 1 indicates the school is situated in a very low socioeconomic community, while a decile rating of 10 indicates a high socioeconomic community.

Education Review Office (ERO) – the New Zealand government department responsible for evaluating and reporting on the education and care of students in schools and early childhood services.

Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) - refers to the person appointed by the Secretary for Education to work alongside an existing school Board of Trustees and the principal to address governance concerns. The LSM holds specific powers and authority in identified areas of governance.

Low-performing school – the most common definition refers to a school that is not meeting the academic needs of students when compared with similar or 'like' school (Lashway, 2003).

Minister of Education – this is a political appointment by the current government.

Ministry of Education (Ministry, MoE) - the New Zealand government's lead advisory organisation on the New Zealand education system.

New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI) - Founded in 1883 with a focus on education; New Zealand's largest education union, a Treaty based organisation and a powerful advocate for quality primary public education.

New Zealand Principals' Federation (The Federation; NZPF) - first established in 1982; provides support and a professional voice for members throughout New Zealand, also information and professional resources, legal support and advice as well as a number of publications and a helpline.

New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA; STA) – a "membership-based organisation representing the interests of its member boards" (NZSTA, 2019). Membership open to Board of Trustees from state or

state-integrated schools. NZSTA provides a range of free services, including support and training to boards designed to "enhance boards capability in governance and employment" (NZSTA, 2019).

School climate - defined as being the school effect on students, and is viewed as encompassing numerous domains within the fabric of the school (Drago-Severson, 2012; Van Houtte, 2005). For example, these domains include: the overall physical environment of the school; the safety, wellbeing and diversity of people; the interpersonal relationships within and across the school; and the teaching and learning programmes (Barascout, 2015; Bryk, 2010; MacNeil et al., 2009; Ministry of Education, 2008; Moolenaar, 2015; O'Brennan et al., 2014; Robinson et al., 2015).

School culture – predominantly defined as being the way people work together and the shared values, norms, [un]written or hidden rules and curricula, language, customs, traditions, rituals and expectations (Education Review Office & Ministry of Education, 2016; Ministry of Education, 2008; Parker et al., 2011).

School effectiveness (SE; effective school/s) – the most common definition refers to schools that consistently add value to students' academic progress and achievement learning as determined by annual achievement results (Edmonds, 1979).

School decline (declining school) - a school that, for three years or more, is experiencing a decline in students' academic achievement, and an increase in the number of students not achieving or progressing as well as expected (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979).

School improvement (SI) – a school that demonstrates year-on-year improvement in student academic progress and achievement (Hopkins, 2001).

School practices - the processes, policies, procedures and structures within a school. Included within school practices are school-wide expectations, goals, assessment and monitoring practices (Education Review Office, 2016c).

School statistical information (participating principals' schools) - retrieved from the Ministry of Education Te Kete Purangi (referred to as TKI by the New Zealand education community) (Ministry of Education, 2018b) website for each school's profile and student population information. This information includes "gender, ethnic group, funding year level, and age" (Ministry of Education, 2018b). In my research, the community descriptions were obtained from the principals.

School Turnaround (turnaround programme) - a term associated with the government mandated programmes USA schools must implement if their students annual yearly performance (AYP) continues to drop three or more successive years.

School year – in New Zealand the academic school year for primary schools runs from early February to mid-December. There are four school terms with two-week break between each term.

Secretary for Education – this is a professional role. The Secretary for Education reports to the Minister of Education.

Stakeholders – refers to individuals or groups who can affect, or are affected by the school. For instance, students, parents, wider school community, educational authorities.

Statutory intervention (intervention; statutory management) – describes the formal processes undertaken by the Minister of Education to provide external assistance and support to a school. Statutory intervention also describes the work being undertaken by an appointee to support a school, on behalf of the Minister of Education.

Targeted Training and Support (TTaS) - is provided by NZSTA (New Zealand School Trustees Association). The association is contracted by the Ministry of Education to provide targeted training and support for Boards of Trustees to assist them in their governance role (NZSTA, 2019). Boards can apply for ongoing support of a specific nature or they attend regular training sessions provided by NZSTA.

Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (Teaching Council) – New Zealand teachers professional body; oversees teacher registration, conduct and competency complaints, professional code and standards of teaching practice and behaviour etc (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2019).

PROLOGUE

6am Friday morning. I roll out of bed and change into walking gear; two fast-paced laps around the block followed by a quick shower and breakfast. It's athletics day and I want to be at school by 7:30am. I wonder if the senior classroom teacher (who had been teaching at the school for over 10 years) has finally arranged for the field and tracks to be marked or if they were coming in early to do this? Several weeks ago, I'd asked this teacher to organise this, only to be informed they did not know how the field was laid out. I was standing firm to holding the teacher accountable for preparing and running the event – they knew the school and community whereas I had only been principal of the school for four months.

My stomach starts doing flip-flops; I'm nervous about how athletics will go. It's the first whole-school/community event since my appointment. Time to head into school; I need and want to be at school today. It is important the students know I am supporting them and the teachers need to know that they are expected to 'step-up' and fulfil their duties and responsibilities. I open the door and immediately start feeling ill. I close the door, attend to unnecessary tasks and feel better. I open the door again – no, still getting a funny feeling. The cycle is repeated, only this time I go outside to put the rubbish curb-side and feel ok. It is only when I have my school things in my hand and open the door that I begin to feel this way. I need to take notice of my body and while I may be willing myself to go to school, my body is telling me something different. Reluctantly I phone the senior classroom teacher who responds with a very flat, disinterested voice.

I put my school things away and sit in the lounge with a cup of tea. My face is wet – I'm crying - this is really unusual for me. I decide to go back to bed. For the remainder of the day I am either sleeping or sitting in the lounge crying. I need help, but do not know who or what. I cannot call my friend (also a teacher) who lives in the same village – she is eight months pregnant and on bed rest. I have another friend, a new friend who I am really just getting to know; can I trust them, what can they do, how can they help when I do not know what help I need? Besides, they will be at work and have clients who need them more than I do. I could try my homoeopathist, but they work in the city, a 50-minute drive that I am not capable of today. I won't get an appointment today anyway, generally it takes a week to get an appointment. I do not want to walk or drive down to the doctors' surgery – what if I'm put on sick leave for a week or more; what if I am sitting there waiting to see the doctor and I'm

crying - I bet that news would soon make its way back to my school community. Do I call the statutory appointee (the LSM)? What can they do?

My weekend is spent slowly coming out of this emotional turmoil. I return to work on Monday and instantly greeted by a maelstrom of children, parents and teachers. All want to make complaints about each other and about my sick day on Friday. Athletics was a shambles. The field and track were not mown or marked. Children complained they have lunchtime detention for plucking and throwing grass. Teachers complain about children and having to both control and run athletics [there were two teachers, 35 students, and several parents] – really? Was it that difficult? The LSM rings; they had called into the school to watch the athletics and had been told I was sick. They were checking that I was feeling better. I relent and briefly explain that I was physically unable to leave the house; that each time I tried, I became ill.

The following morning, I have an unexpected meeting with a Ministry of Education trauma counsellor [I later found out the LSM had phoned them after speaking with me]. How much do I tell this person? I do not know them; we have never met before. How much can I trust them? Can and will they, keep information to themselves? Can I talk about Friday and the events leading up to it without becoming upset? I cannot let them, the children or the teachers see me upset. I've worked hard to show the children their relentless taunts have no effect on me, and I need to model to the teachers a level of professionalism which I have yet to see from them. All of these questions run through my head within seconds of meeting this person. I give them the glossy version; I had become unwell and needed to take the day off. It was unfortunate that this coincided with our athletics day, but I'm better now; thanks for coming out.

This was the reality of one of my lowest times at Porokaiwhiri School. There were many days where I was managing multiple crisis after another; yet this day, four months into my principalship, was the one that mentally and emotionally impacted on, and hindered my ability to perform. I still wonder if this teacher was attempting to re-assert her informal leadership of the school by deliberately setting me up to fail at my first Porokaiwhiri School-community event.

This prologue is a very brief introduction to my experiences of leading and managing a complex and challenging high-need school (with serious health and safety and wellbeing concerns for students and staff, very poor academic achievement and significant financial concerns) through a statutory intervention

(see Appendix 1 for background information on Porokaiwhiri School's intervention). After five years, Porokaiwhiri School environment had stabilised. I was able to focus on the learning needs of students rather than their behaviours. Rather than being inward focused on the school, I was able to look up and outwards. I started to wonder what the experiences of other principals in comparable situations, were? Had they experienced similar struggles, concerns and frustrations? Did they celebrate finally being able to focus on the academic needs of the students, of being able to purchase quality staff professional development that focused on the needs of the staff and students? Did they rejoice their ability to pay an account without holding other accounts until the following month? Informal discussions at conferences and professional development days with other principals leading schools in statutory intervention suggested that they too experienced many moments of concern. These questions and my concerns for fellow principals in similar situations led me to undertake a Doctorate of Education thesis into principals' experiences of statutory intervention.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents information about the New Zealand education system and the development of statutory intervention in New Zealand schools. Statutory interventions are legislated through the Education Act of 1989. The Education Act 1989 enables the Ministry of Education to intervene and manage a school when concerns about the school's governance and/or management are present. I present a summary of reviews into statutory intervention processes and consider the recommendations made. I conclude this chapter with a discussion on the potential of this research to contribute to the field of New Zealand and international education leadership research on principals' experiences and perceptions of leading schools through statutory interventions.

New Zealand educational context

As my doctoral thesis is situated within the wider context of monitoring the management and leadership of New Zealand schools, it is pertinent to briefly review the structuring and management of schools following the introduction of *Tomorrow's Schools* in 1989 (Lauder, Wylie & Parker-Taunoa, 2012). Tomorrow's Schools introduced a number of changes to the education system which influence how schools are monitored today (for more detail on these changes see Codd, Harker, & Nash, 1990; Court & O'Neill, 2011; Olssen, 1996; O'Neill, 2005; Ranson, 2008). These changes also affected the management structure of schools, which in turn, affected the leadership of schools, especially in schools under statutory management.

In 1989, the New Zealand government introduced the Education Act 1989 (Kelsey, 1997) and implemented *Tomorrow's Schools* (Lauder et al., 2012). Tomorrow's School would be self-managing with a five-member elected Board of Trustees overseeing the governance of a school (New Zealand School Trustees Association [NZSTA], 2010). It was assumed that each Board would "properly reflect the composition of the community" (Codd et al., 1990, p. 18) and that amongst the trustees

there would be members skilled in such areas as administration, finance, and policy making. Each school would be fully bulk-funded annually from the Ministry of Education. The school board would be able to employ, discipline and fire their staff and manage the school's finances which initially included teacher salaries (Lauder et al., 2012). School Boards would also maintain the school property and purchase necessary resources, including staff professional development and training (Kelsey, 1997; New Zealand School Trustees Association, 2010).

Under Section 76 of the Education Act 1989, the school principal is the "board's chief executive in relation to the school's control and management" (Education Act 1989, s.4.3). The roles and responsibilities of a school principal would now include the initial preparation of the school charter, allocating duties amongst staff and the "development of performance objectives and measures to assess that performance" (Taskforce to Review Education Administration, 1988, p. 51). The principal was to ensure parents/whānau (family) were informed about their child's educational progress and achievement. A successful principal would be the

> professional and instructional leader who has coherent vision of the purpose of the institution [school], who is able to articulate that vision to the staff, and who is able to gain their commitment to it (Taskforce to Review Education Administration, 1988, p. 51).

Further, a successful school leader would develop and enhance a collaborative relationship with staff, and the principal, with teachers, would regularly review the quality of the school's educational performance (Taskforce to Review Education Administration, 1988).

Overall, the Board of Trustees and principal were to have "considerable authority and responsibility" (Taskforce to Review Education Administration, 1988, p. 62), including the development of programmes that accounted for the interests of students; staff qualifications; community resources and community wishes.

In the years following the implementation of *Tomorrow's Schools*, the Education Review Office (ERO) and the Ministry of Education recognised that some schools and their boards of trustees were struggling with the demands of running self-managing schools. Despite schools receiving ERO's recommendations for improvement, some schools lacked the capacity, skill, knowledge and experience to act on these recommendations to improve the situation within the school (Wylie, 2012a).

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees the governing body of a school as outline in Schedule 6, Part 2 of the Education Act 1989 (Education Act 1989, s.4.1). As the governing body, Board of Trustees hold specific powers and functions. The board, subject to Parts 8A and 31 of the Education Act 1989, may "appoint, suspend, or dismiss school staff" (Education Act 1989, p.2.s.6), including the principal. In all dismal cases, boards are advised to follow due process in accordance to New Zealand employment laws.

Another function of the board is to ensure the school "is [educationally] a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff" (Education Act 1989, s.5.2). The National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) for schools, under NAG3, also state that Board of Trustees are to "be a good employer" in accordance to the State Sector Act 1988 (The National Administration Guidelines, n.d.). The introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA 2015) broadened the duty of care for Board of Trustees. As a legal entity of a workplace, boards are required to keep all staff and students healthy and safe, where reasonably practical (Ministry of Education & New Zealand School Trustees Association, 2017). Health and safety includes, but is not limited to, noise volume (such as children's noise levels) and workplace bullying (stress-related illnesses). Therefore, board, as employers, are responsible for ensuring that principals work in a healthy and safe environment.

Statutory Intervention in New Zealand Schools

During the early 1990s, the government was still hesitant to become involved with struggling schools, as this was against the ethos of self-governing schools (Wylie, 2013). The Ministry of Education *Schools Monitoring and Support* section provided "safety net interventions" for these schools (Thrupp, 2005b, p. 47). Originally, support was given to individual schools, but increasingly, by the late 1990s, clusters of low-performing schools undertook school improvement initiatives based on identified needs such as student literacy, or addressing student retention in high schools (Thrupp, 2005b). Schools which needed extra support also had common concerns, ranging from the retention of teachers, declining rolls, low levels of community engagement to a lack of assessment pedagogical knowledge and understanding (Wylie, 2009). Many schools struggled to fill positions on school boards, particularly if schools were small,

rural, low decile, or had large numbers of Maori and Pasifika students (Education Review Office, 1999).

The Education Act of 1989, Part 7A, permits the Ministry of Education to intervene at the governance level of the school through, or instead of, the Board of Trustees. The Ministry, through such interventions, says it provides

> prompt, flexible and appropriate response to the varying needs of schools where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the operation of the school, or the welfare or educational performance of their students is at risk (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

The Ministry of Education also says that the overall aim of any intervention is to build Board of Trustees capabilities and capacity so that, in performing "is functions and exercise[ing] its powers". The overall aim of any intervention is to build Board of Trustees capabilities and capacity (Ministry of Education, 2014b, p. 10), all students achieve to the best of their ability.

While the Education Act 1989 has six levels of intervention to preclude more intensive support, the lowest three are not the focus of this thesis. Schools with more severe needs requiring more specific help are the core of my study.

Schools entering into one of the top three levels of a statutory intervention are publicly announced in the *New Zealand Gazette.* A section 78M intervention may focus on a board experiencing difficulties in a "particular aspect or aspects of their role" (Ministry of Education, 2013b) and the Minister of Education will direct the Secretary of Education to appoint a Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) to hold deal with these concerns (for example matters pertaining to finances). Under section 78M, the school Board of Trustees continues to govern all other areas of the school.

Under section 78N(1-2) the Minister of Education will dissolve the Board of Trustees if there are serious concerns for

- the operation of a school (for instance, finances, personal issues, or legislation compliance), and/or
- concerns there is a risk to student welfare (such as high truancy or high suspension rates); and/or
- concerns about the educational performance of students (persistently low levels of achievement, and/or
- staffing issues affecting student learning (for example).

The Minister of Education will direct the Secretary of Education to replace the board with a commissioner who holds all the roles and responsibilities of the board (Ministry of Education, 2015). A board may also be dissolved for a combination of two or all of these concerns.

A section 78N(3) intervention relates directly to the Board of Trustees. An intervention will be implemented if:

3.a. a board has not held a meeting for three months;
3.b. there are more causal vacancies than elected members;
3.c. a school community is unable to form a board;
3.d. an election has not been held as required; or
3.e. the results from the election are not reliable (Education Act 1989; Ministry of Education, 2015).

The Secretary for Education, under section 78N(3) of the 1989 Education Act, will appoint a commissioner to govern the school. One of the commissioner's tasks is to establish the viability of the school and to work with the community to re-establish a Board of Trustees (Ministry of Education, 2013c).

A school may move between levels of intervention, and at all times the aim is for the Ministry of Education to avoid intervening more than necessary and for the school to address the concerns. If a school is under section 78(m) and section 78(n) the overall aim is to address the issues identified in the intervention and return the school back to being self-managing with a fully functioning board (Ministry of Education, 2015). The final, negative outcome for any school is closure. While a school is under statutory intervention section 78(m) and section 78(n) of the Education Act 1989, the school may be removed from the general three-year review cycle by the Education Review Office and placed onto a one-to-two year longitudinal review to monitor the desired improvement (Education Review Office, n.d.).

Role of the statutory appointee

The Education Act 1989, Part 7A enables the Minister or Secretary of Education to approve a school's application for a statutory intervention and confirm an appointee tasked to work with the school. Under the Act, a school is responsible for the "payment of the Appointee's costs [defined as fees and reasonable expenses incurred] except in circumstances where a request for financial assistance has been … approved by the Ministry" (Ministry of Education, 2015, 2017c). The Ministry of Education clearly

state the appointee's role is to work closely with the principal and board (when there is one) and to return the school to self-management. Key priorities include building and maintaining strong working relationships with the board (when one is present) and principal (Ministry of Education, 2013a, 2014b, 2015, 2017c). The appointee is not a Board member, even when holding the role of commissioner. Furthermore, appointees "**are not employees or agents of the Ministry and must act independently when exercising their judgement**" (original emphasis) (Ministry of Education, 2017c, p. i). In effect, the appointee is a self-employed "statutory service provider" (Ministry of Education, 2017c, p. i). If a school or person has a concern about the appointee, the Ministry of Education advises them to raise the complaint directly with the appointee. If the complainant is not happy with the appointee's response, the complainant may contact the local ministry office. The Ministry website advices users they will be contacted within two working days of a complaint being received (Ministry of Education, 2020b).

Reviews of statutory intervention

A 2008 Office of the Auditor-General performance audit noted that the Ministry of Education provided adequate support and training for school boards of trustees, and supported schools identified as being "at risk of poor performance" (Office of the Auditor-General, 2008, p. 2). However, the audit report raised concerns about the lack of consistency for identifying and monitoring these schools across Ministry of Education regional and local offices. The audit further highlighted concerns about the length of time to implement a statutory intervention and found little information on the monitoring and effectiveness of an intervention. The report noted data was not gathered about any long-term impact an intervention had on school boards' governing ability. The Office of the Auditor-General recommended that more "transparent and open processes for appointing" appointees should be considered (Office of the Auditor-General, 2008, p. 6). A follow-up report in 2010 by the Office of the Auditor-General indicated that the Ministry now required appointees to report monthly on their progress towards achieving intervention outcomes (Office of the Auditor-General, 2010). The report also states that the Ministry of Education was still working on addressing 5/9 recommendations (four recommendations having already been

addressed), however the report does not indicate which recommendations were still being addressed.

In 2014, the Minister for Education announced a review of statutory interventions. A Sector Working Group was established to lead the review into the processes for supporting schools during all phases of an intervention. The Working Group consulted with a "small group of Principals, Board Chairs, and Appointees who have experienced a statutory intervention" (Ministry of Education, 2014c). The *Review of Statutory Interventions in State and State-Integrated Schools: Final report and recommendations to the Minister of Education* (Ministry of Education, 2014b) suggested a number of outcomes and recommendations, including:

- holding early discussions with schools experiencing difficult times;
- having intervention processes and practices that were "consistent and transparent";
- having "equitable and transparent" entry criteria for the national pool of statutory appointees;
- having "transparent" processes for selecting the most suitable qualified person" to work with a school (p. 3); and
- ongoing professional development for statutory appointees.

The review also mentions that all interventions should be underpinned by a "detailed, transparent, consultative and robust" needs analysis. The review also argues that the monitoring of an intervention be "transparent and flexible" to allow for "changing dynamics and challenges" (Ministry of Education, 2014b, p. 10). The 2014 Ministry of Education website *A Review of the Statutory Intervention Processes* indicated work on the recommendations would be implemented throughout 2015 and 2016 (Ministry of Education, 2014c).

The New Zealand Initiative's first of three reports on managing school performance (Udahemuka, 2016) notes that while some schools might be temporarily poor performing, other schools were perpetually and chronically poor performers. Udehemuka (2016) suggests that despite the support some schools received to improve their performance, gains were still below acceptable levels of performance. The report indicates that current methods of supporting schools through statutory interventions, tend not to result in long-term positive outcomes for some schools. Udehemuka contends "New Zealand needs to seriously reconsider alternatives to identifying and managing failing schools" (p. 25). She also claims that while the Ministry of

Education requires monthly reporting by the appointee and a final report at the end of an intervention, the Ministry of Education does not "evaluate the effectiveness of interventions" nor does it "formally evaluate the long-term success or otherwise of interventions" (p. 27).

The report noted the difficulty of attracting suitable principals to chronically low-performing schools, which tended to be small, in low socio-economic areas (Udahemuka, 2016). The Ministry of Education, in an effort to tackle the principal recruitment problem, announced a new initiative the *Principal Recruitment Allowance (PRA)*. This provided $50,000 per annum for a fixed period of three years (Ministry of Education, 2020a), intended to encourage "highly effective principals" to apply for high-need schools' position, in schools such as those under statutory intervention or on a ERO 1-2 year review cycle (Ministry of Education, 2014d). The PRA aims to off-set the potential salary drop for principals who take on schools considered to be at risk and exhibiting some or all of:

- significant student underachievement well below the average for similar schools;
- on a one-two year review cycle with ERO;
- history of statutory interventions and/or serious problems with safety and/or wellbeing;
- high principal turnover;
- significant financial concerns;
- extraordinary circumstances.

Schools with these characteristic need a highly skilled principal (Ministry of Education, 2014d).

The aim of my research is to examine the experiences of three New Zealand Primary Principals as they led high-needs schools through statutory management under Part 7A, Sections 78(m) and (n) of the Education Act 1987. My research question is:

> What are the experiences and perceptions of New Zealand primary school principals leading high-need schools in statutory intervention?

Areas of interest arising from this question include:

- The journey of turning around schools;
- Ethic of care and principal hauora (health and wellbeing); and
- Leadership knowledge and skills.

My research will therefore examine how primary school principals lead a high-need school during these extraordinary circumstances, and explore how these experiences affect participant principals.

Thesis structure

The literature review (chapter 2) examines international and national literature relevant to this research. This body of literature includes school leadership, effective schools and turnaround school processes. From the New Zealand perspective, the literature focuses on the external and internal influences on schools. These influences include the school community, the Board of Trustees and the various stakeholders within the school that may indirectly or directly, push a school towards a statutory intervention.

Chapter Three outlines the methodological approach used in this research and argues for framing of the qualitative research through a narrative inquiry lens. I examine the challenges and limitations of using narrative inquiry to gather principals' stories. I discuss the ethical considerations of this research and my position as an insider-researcher.

Chapter Four outlines the methods used to gather information and the processes undertaken to transfer principals' stories into narrative data. The demographic background of the participating principals and their school details is provided for better understanding of the situational context of the principals' professional knowledge landscapes.

Chapter Five presents the research findings relating to the principals' experiences of leading and managing a New Zealand school through a statutory intervention. This chapter has six parts. The first part is contextualised around the principals' professional-knowledge background and examines some of the underpinning factors and influences which lead to the schools being placed in statutory intervention. The second part examines the principals' experiences of navigating the statutory intervention processes. The third part outlines the school-based pressures the principals experienced. Part four presents the professional issues the principals experienced with colleagues. Part five outlines the effects on principals' lives, such as the tensions the principals experienced between managing a school and having a

home- and social-life, - and their struggles to maintain health and wellbeing. This chapter concludes with Part six, where I compare the principals' experiences to my own in a similar context.

Chapter Six discusses the findings from Chapter Five and interprets them in light of the relevant literature. I acknowledge the strengths and limitations of this research. I present my recommendations arising from this research and in the penultimate part acknowledge the potential of this research. The final part of this chapter and thesis, the Conclusion, considers implications for principals leading a school through a statutory intervention, as well as implications for those supporting and working with principals undertaking the complex task of learning and managing New Zealand primary schools.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

This study focuses on the experiences and perceptions of three New Zealand primary school principals as they lead their schools through a Ministry of Education (MoE) statutory intervention. As mentioned in chapter one, statutory interventions are implemented in New Zealand schools when the Minister of Education or the Secretary for Education have reasons to be concerned about issues such as the governance of a school, and/or the academic achievement of students and/or the health and wellbeing of students (Ministry of Education, 2013a). One or more factors may precipitate an intervention.

Before I began this research, each of the participating principals' schools had, for a variety of reasons, been causing concern to the Ministry of Education. Thus, these schools had been placed in a statutory intervention. However, there is little understanding within the New Zealand education community as to why or how, schools end up needing external support and assistance from the Ministry of Education. Literature on how principals in New Zealand lead their schools through and out of an intervention is scarce. Consequently, little is known about school principals experiences in such situations. Thus, understanding why schools decline in the first instance as well as how such schools are identified and sanctioned by government authorities, underpins the basis of my literature review as I seek to understand principals' experiences of leading schools in statutory intervention.

The literature reviewed in this chapter comes from a variety of sources including journal articles and books. Documents from various governments (New Zealand, and abroad, such as United States of America, Britain and Australia) contextualised my research within both the national and global fields of education policy and practice on schools experiencing difficulties.

This chapter has five parts. Within the first part I critique the positioning of school decline research in relation to school effectiveness, school improvement and low-performing school research. Part two focuses on understanding school decline. In this part I consider the contextual factors that may influence a school's ability to meet

the academic needs of students. I also discuss how school decline is identified and sanctioned internationally and in New Zealand (NZ). The role and position of school principals in declining schools is critiqued.

The third part reimagines school turnaround efforts as school recovery. Factors located in the micro (personal), meso (institutional) and macro (societal) context affecting school recovery are considered. I examine how school principals may lead school recovery and discuss the underpinning relational practices that could enable school recovery to be enacted and sustained. I discuss the implications and limitations of school decline leadership research.

Finally, school principals' lived experiences are the focus of the fourth theme, acknowledging the importance of gathering principals' perceptions of their experiences. This is followed by an overall summary of the key ideas raised in this literature review.

The subsequent part examines the different fields of educational decline research, outlining historical and current discourses of school decline. Underpinning measures of school effectiveness such as educators, researchers and governments' reliance on student achievement data provide a framework for identifying [in]effective schools.

Positioning school decline research

Over time, international perceptions of underperforming and/or declining schools have changed, as has the terminology. Prior to 1965, schools serving disadvantaged communities were labelled as *high-need schools* (Duke, 2015). As schools became more accountable for students' academic performance, the focus of educators, researchers and governments then shifted to school performance, which led to an international focus on *school effectiveness and school improvement* (Chapman et al., 2016).

Historical discourses influence educationalist, researcher, and government understandings and knowledge-bases about the positive influence 'effective' schools have on students' academic achievement. Thus, this knowledge guides people's perceptions of ineffective or failing schools. It is therefore important to understand the international commonalities and differences between school effectiveness (SE),

and school improvement (SI) research, which this first section addressed. I consider a field of research within SI research that focuses on low-performing schools as well as the research on school turnarounds. Embedded within this first section is a critique on how these discourses affect New Zealand's education system.

School effectiveness research

Internationally, the field of school effectiveness (SE) research explores "the role of educational experiences and influences" (Sammons & Bakkum, 2011, p. 10) on a student's overall achievement after a range of attributing variables are acknowledged. These variables include students' individual characteristics, family socioeconomic status and cultural background as well as community characteristics. SE research largely studies the quantitative measures of schooling, such as *value-added* learning by identifying the annual academic progress and achievement of students (Edmonds, 1979; V. Robinson et al., 2009; Sammons et al., 1995; Silver, 1994) against set regional/state/national goals, to determine the *effectiveness* of the school (Chapman et al., 2016; Hansen, 2012; Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010; Orr, Berg, Shore, & Meier, 2008). Within New Zealand educational system, student achievement data has become the dominant criterion for deciding the "'quality' of principalship, teaching and governance of a school" (Court & O'Neill, 2011, p. 140). This led me to wonder how deeply ingrained this discourse is within the New Zealand education sector and whether it underpins their understanding and awareness of *effective* schools. I also wonder about the extent to which this discourse underpins the Ministry of Education's decision to implement a statutory intervention in a school.

Historically, international research on SE focuses on deconstructing the common correlative elements of effective practices across schools (Papa & English, 2011; Reynolds et al., 2014). These include an emphasis on teaching basic skills, high expectations, and regular evaluation on student progress and achievement, a safe and orderly environment, and strong school leadership, (Edmonds, 1979; Lezotte, 2001; Reynolds et al., 2014). Over time, these attributes have evolved and grown, with a further two correlates – positive home-school interactions and opportunities for learning and student time on task, added (Lezotte, 2001). Within New Zealand education, these seven correlates are referred to in the following documents:

- *Educational leadership capability framework* (New Zealand Council for Educational Research [NZCER], 2018).
- *The leadership strategy for the teaching profession of Aotearoa New Zealand: Enabling every teacher to develop their leadership capacity* (Education Council Matatū Aotearoa, 2018)
- *New Zealand primary principal's appraisal* document (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2018).
- *Professional standards for primary school principals* (Ministry of Education, 2018a);
- *School evaluation indicators: Effective practice for improvement and learner success* (Education Review Office, 2016b);
- *Kiwi leadership for principals: Principals as educational leaders* document for school leaders (Ministry of Education, 2008).

I look forward to discovering whether these leadership documents, along with the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2019b), *Our Code, Our Standards: Code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession* document, present some pressures and tensions for principals, especially for those working in complex, and often challenging situations.

School improvement research

While school effectiveness (SE) is largely quantitative and focuses on the overall effectiveness of the school to raise student academic achievement, school improvement (SI) research is often qualitative and gathers teacher and student voice to explore concepts such as classroom culture (Chapman et al., 2016). Internationally, SI is defined as an upward trend that is a continuous, cyclical, multifaceted process of no fixed destination, but with an overall aim of enhancing "student outcomes *as well as* strengthening the school's capacity for managing change" (Hopkins, 2001, p. 13). Researchers such as D. Hargreaves (1995), Harris et al. (2006), Leithwood and Louis (2012), Mortimore (1993), and Stoll and Fink (1994) argue SI research is a cousin of SE research. Such authors argue it is uncommon to find an effective school that is not continuously seeking to improve student learning, student achievement and the culture of the school. Across the same group of authors, they suggest SE literature does not tell you how a school came to be successful, whereas SI literature will often "focus on the journey to success and the necessary conditions to support successful change" (Sun et al., 2007, p. 95). This difference is important when educators, researchers and governments deliberate how to best support struggling or declining schools. It is also

important they understand the history of why research literature emphasises student achievement data as the measure of school improvement or decline as this focus continues to influence people's perceptions of effective schools. Other differences between school effectiveness and school improvement research include variations of "methodologies, their values bases, and their general [research] purposes" (Chapman et al., 2016, p. 2).

Commonalities across SE/SI research include the commitment to gather and use educational knowledge and data to "improve educational settings for all children" (Chapman et al., 2016, p. 3); to promote effective school leadership and teaching pedagogy, and equitable educational outcomes for disadvantaged students. Therefore, these fields inform educators, researchers, and government understanding and knowledge of how a school could be led, and the impact effective teachers and schools have on student academic achievement. Those within education are likely to be better informed about good leadership when they are able to access synthesised research on how well schools support positive student outcomes. This research data provides a benchmark for comparing all schools, regardless of individual school context and location.

School turnaround research

Located within the SI research is a growing body of research literature on turnaround schools (for instance P. Clarke, 2005; C. Day & Leithwood, 2007; Duke et al., 2014; Fairchild & DeMary, 2011; Hewitt & Reitzug, 2017; Hitt & Meyers, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2010; Lochmiller & Chesnut, 2017; Meyers & Hitt, 2017; Papa & English, 2011). School turnaround reforms allow education authorities to address and revitalise persistently low-performing schools through site-based interventions (W. Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). Such interventions include "changing staffing, governance, support and/or instruction" (Marsh et al., 2013, p. 501) and aim to achieve significant gains in student academic achievement within one- two-years (Kutash, Nico, Malenfant, et al., 2010; Leithwood et al., 2010; Liu, 2020; Pepper et al., 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Supporters of turnaround reforms promote turnarounds as providing a chance for all school stakeholders to change and improve both the culture of the school and student academic performance (P. Clarke, 2005; Liu, 2018; W. Robinson & Buntrock, 2011).

However, critics of school turnaround reforms claim many of the reforms focus on internal aspects of school management such as school leadership, and forcing "certain desired behaviours" from stakeholders (A. Kelly & Clarke, 2016, p. 369) while ignoring the underlying issues within a school and community (Lynch, 2012; Smarick, 2010; Southworth, 1998; Stotsky & Holzman, 2015b, 2015a).

Regardless of the debate surrounding the long-term benefits of school turnaround reforms, principals undertaking turnaround work still need to "figure out how to improve the [inherent] … conditions in their school" (Leithwood et al., 2013, p. 258). Therefore, any turnaround reforms must be tailored to the individual school, taking into consideration the school context, conditions and needs (Duke, 2008a; A. Kelly & Clarke, 2016; Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Manwaring, 2011; Marsh et al., 2013; Stotsky & Holzman, 2015b). Further evaluation of school turnaround reforms is undertaken in the section *Disrupting school decline with school turnaround*.

Low performing school research

Also situated within the field of SI research is a further body of research focusing on low performing schools. Negative and common deficit positioning of schools in educational research include terms such as *ineffective, having high-needs, at-risk, being in challenging circumstances, in a crisis, low-performing* (chronically or persistently), *under-performing, weak, failing, in need of 'saving',* or *deemed to be past redemption and requiring closure* (P. Clarke, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2010; Papa & English, 2011). With assumptions made about the leadership of these schools, principals are often considered incompetent, ineffective, low performing, having poor attitudes, low aspirations and skill-level, and lacking commitment to lead the school and meet the educational needs of the students (Lashway, 2003; Orr et al., 2005; Reynolds et al., 2016).

Of particular note across New Zealand public media and international research literature on low performing schools is the frequently held view that these schools do not meet the academic needs of their students when comparing student achievement data with similar schools. Within the low performing school literature such as Chapman and Tobia (2012), Muijs (2014), Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2002, 2005), and Reynolds, Teddlie, Chapman, & Stringfield (2016), it is commonly argued that along with low student achievement data, certain characteristics will be present. These relate

to the socioeconomic and population demographics (particularly poverty, transient students plus typically high numbers of ethnic minority students and English as a second language [ESOL]); and include the level of resourcing available within the school (for example insufficient learning materials, few experienced teachers, high staff turnover) (Berry & Rasberry, 2007; Freiberg et al., 1990; Gurr et al., 2014). Equally, the location of the school, such as an inner city school, is considered to be an important factor (Milner, 2013).

This does not mean every school serving low-socioeconomic areas will be low performing, or exhibit ineffective school practices. Duke (2014) suggests low performing schools have "unique problems based on their history, community context and student body" (p. 81). Leithwood et al. (2010) are more specific about the commonalities between low performing schools. They describe these schools "share certain socioeconomic characteristics and face similar external challenges, but this is where the similarity ends" (p. 39). Low performing schools may be experiencing a confluence of factors that work against the school. This suggests any initiatives or programmes implemented to address the issues need to be site-based and individualised to the school.

Within New Zealand, V. Robinson et al. (2009) infer principals in low performing schools lack leadership knowledge, skills and dispositions. These include a principal's inability to ensure "administrative decisions are informed by knowledge about effective pedagogy [and to] analyse and solve complex problems" (p. 46). V. Robinson et al. (2009) indicate it is likely principals of low-performing schools are unable to establish and "build relational trust" (p. 46) within the school and the wider school community, and these principals are unable or perhaps, unwilling to engage in open "learning conversations" (p. 46). These authors infer a range of characteristics within low performing schools. These include a general lack of staff consensus and a lack of emphasis on academic goal setting and alignment of resources, such as school-wide focus on professional development. Additionally, principals of low performing schools are less likely to be personally involved in "planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and teachers" (V. Robinson et al., 2009, p. 41). These principals are perceived as not engaging in, promoting or supporting formal and informal learning and development opportunities for themselves and teachers. In low

performing schools, it is likely that there are significant intrusions to instructional time, a lack of routines and discipline and unresolved conflict. Moreover, relationships throughout the school and with the school community are often fractured (V. Robinson et al., 2009). However, Alton-Lee (2013) cautions researchers and educationists to be aware of a number of factors such as individual school contexts, before considering whether these characteristics are synonymous with all low performing schools in New Zealand. It is also important to consider the context of research such as the sample size, the age of the research, the cultural lens of the research data and whether societal conditions have changed.

When I contemplate the research literature on SI, SE, turn-around and low performing schools, where would a New Zealand school entering a statutory intervention fit? New Zealand schools are unlikely to meet the criteria for effective schools or school improvement. Equally, according to the criteria for low performing schools (Berry & Rasberry, 2007; Freiberg et al., 1990; Gurr et al., 2014; Lashway, 2003; Milner, 2013; V. Robinson et al., 2009), some New Zealand schools entering a statutory intervention may not be considered to be chronically low-performing, although they might be considered to be struggling to address particular issues within the school (Barber, 1998). Likewise, Barber's (1998) contention that struggling and failing schools have limited leadership and governance capacity may not always be correct for a New Zealand school engaged in a statutory intervention. Conversely, Duke's (2008a) statement that negative changes have occurred within the school might not apply to some schools. In all of the definitions and criteria for low performing schools, there is a strong emphasis on the principal's leadership skills, knowledge and dispositions, or rather, the *absence* of certain skills, knowledge and dispositions. However, this emphasis is negative and promotes deficit thinking about principals leading low performing schools. Acknowledgement is emerging within the low-performing school literature regarding some of the broader social, economic and demographic contexts influencing a school, however these are predominantly located within a deficit discourse (Barber, 1998; Berry & Rasberry, 2007; Chapman & Tobia, 2012; Duke, 2008a, 2008b, 2014; Gurr et al., 2014). Little mention is made of the need to contextualise improvement strategies to align with the specific needs of the school and its community.

Would my participating principals identify their school as having some or all of the features of a low performing school as outlined above? Furthermore, would these principals believe they lack the necessary educational leadership knowledge, skills, and dispositions to lead their school. Do the conditions within the participating principal's schools reflect the features outlined by V. Robinson et al. (2009) and would the principals acknowledge the presence of such features. These questions may also assist me to make sense of my research findings. As previously indicated, I am uncertain whether the general low-performing school profile presented in the academic literature 'fits' the profile of a New Zealand school entering a statutory intervention. I am however, drawn to Chapman's et al. (2016) suggestion that a low-performing school is the *end result* of a *declining school*. *School decline* suggests a school may be experiencing a period where internal and external issues are affecting the school; the school is not operating as well as the school, the governing body, the community, and the Ministry of Education would like; perhaps New Zealand schools entering a statutory intervention are actually in a state of decline.

Published Education Review Office (ERO) reports concerning the schools the participating principals are leading indicate these schools have been successfully meeting the educational needs of attending students. Unfortunately, for whatever reasons, these same schools are now experiencing a decline, whether this is operational (governance), academic or because concerns have been raised regarding the safety and welfare of students. Thus, my research into New Zealand primary principals' experiences of leading a school during a statutory intervention is positioned within the field of school decline research.

The following part focuses on school decline research. In this second part, I consider the micro, meso and macro contexts that may cause a school to enter into a period of decline. I review how declining schools are identified and sanctioned across international jurisdictions. Following each of these aspects, the focus will return to New Zealand and consider the conditions that may support a school's decline and thus, the statutory intervention. To conclude the part, I will then review the limitations of school decline measures.

School decline research

School decline research is a developing field of research situated within the field of school improvement research. School decline research is underpinned by the theoretical concept that prior to a school requiring turnaround measures, there is likely to be a period of time in a school's history between being successful and requiring state (government) intervention (Liu, 2020). It is within this space where my research into New Zealand primary school principals' experiences of leading a school under state intervention is located.

I examine current discourses of government-driven educational reforms and subsequent government-imposed school performance- or standards-based measures being used to determine the 'effectiveness' schools. Governments' education department/ministry websites provide the information about their legislation, education acts, education reforms or structures and processes for identifying, supporting or sanctioning declining schools. However, finding a reliable framework for defining and identifying declining schools or turnaround schools in New Zealand is difficult. Therefore, this literature review relies heavily on international literature. Within international SE and SI literature, school decline refers to schools that have demonstrated a steady decrease in student achievement over time. The term is usually associated with a school once considered capable of meeting the academic needs of students but is now no longer able to do so (Reynolds et al., 2016).

Origins of school decline research

Duke and Hochbein (2008) claim one of the earliest studies on identifying improving and declining schools was a three-year study by Brookover and Lezotte in the mid-1970s involving six American primary schools. Standardised annual student achievement assessments measures allowed Brookover and Lezotte (1979) to develop norm-referenced measures to monitor changes in achievement levels. The norm-referenced assessments allow comparisons between schools to be made. According to Brookover and Lezotte (1979) and Duke and Hochbein (2008), there are two key indicators of school decline. Over a three-year period there will simultaneously be a percentage decrease of high-achieving students and a percentage increase of low-achieving students; an increase of low-achieving students by itself "would not qualify [the school] as declining" (Duke & Hochbein, 2008, p. 363). Brookover and

Lezotte's study indicate school decline may be determined when corresponding decreases in student achievement are present alongside a decrease of internal school conditions. Internationally, this study aligns with the increased government accountability measures schools face with government-imposed performance or standards based measures in student achievement (Court & O'Neill, 2011; Papa & English, 2011; Stringfield et al., 2017). As may be seen across the international literature, the most common indicator of school decline is a school's inability to meet the academic needs of students (Duke, 2008a, 2015; Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Marsh, Strunk, & Bush, 2013; Murphy, 2010; Peck & Reitzug, 2014).

However, Duke (2008a) and Murphy (2008) shift the focus of school decline discourse away from student achievement onto the overall ability and organisation of a school. Drawing upon business management studies Murphy (2008) proposes school decline involves a decrease in performance, which then creates additional problems often followed by minor crises within the organisation. Over time, and if left unaddressed, these problems and crises have "critical consequences for the organisation and its members" (Murphy, 2008, p. 76). Likewise Duke (2008a) considers it is a school's inability to address the underlying challenges, and a cycle of negative conditions and consequences that results in school decline. Therefore he defines school decline "as the process by which a school's ability to accomplish its student achievement goals diminishes over time" (Duke, 2008a, p. 49). Literature on organisational decline suggests identifying conditions and potential causes of decline is complex, difficult and multifaceted (Weitzel & Jonsson, 1991). Yet while increased government accountability measures infer schools should be managed like a business (Court & O'Neill, 2011; Papa & English, 2011), schools are more complex and have different purposes than business.

Despite the early findings of Brookover and Lezotte (1979), research on school decline is limited, as is any research directly focusing on how or why a school declines in the first instance. As considered later in this section, using student achievement as the dominant measure of a school's *effectiveness* or *decline* may provide a limited and biased view of a school and hinder efforts to address deeper issues within a declining school (Meyers & Smylie, 2017). The next part considers how or why schools decline and the government sanctions imposed upon such schools.

Understanding school decline

Schools are situated within complex community ecologies, in which the social, cultural, and economic capital of the local community, influences the school (Peck & Reitzug, 2014). Educators, researchers and governments may acknowledge how a community influences a school, but it is often in terms of the social- economic- and cultural-background of the student population. What is not clear within SE/SI and school decline research is the extent to which external factors affect a school's ability to meet the educational needs of all students. Jang et al. (2008) critiqued a range of research articles on schools in challenging circumstances. They illustrate links between various external community factors and the challenging circumstances schools can face: *student at-risk factors* (e.g. poor physical and mental health and low attention span); *family stressors* (e.g. low socioeconomic status and high levels of parental unemployment); and *school and community risk factors* (e.g. student mobility, and community violence) (Jang et al., 2008). Kowal and Hassel (2005) indicate further external factors may include *governance issues* (i.e. district, state or government policies and school support structures, or tighter fiscal constraints); and *environmental factors* (i.e. school location and community).

A school's internal culture is also a factor featuring in literature across countries. This may include *school leadership and organisational factors* (i.e. declining or inadequate leadership ability and direction, staff turnover, continual curriculum re-design and implementation, or inadequate school culture) (Kowal & Hassel, 2005). Other characteristics include disengaged staff holding deficit beliefs of students, declining student academic achievement, and increased student behaviour and student truancy. Furthermore, schools may see an increase in the "percentages of students who were more at-risk when entering the school" (Reynolds et al., 2016, p. 91), such as minority, transient and immigrant students. Goldstein and Woodhouse (2000) suggest parental behaviour, such as their interactions with teachers and their views about a school also needs to be considered. Duke (2008a) suggests a list of 11 early indicators of school decline, although he cautions this list is neither conclusive nor comprehensive, and not all indicators may be present at once. Duke's list identifies factors not already noted above, such as a school not paying enough attention to support individual students or placing them in inappropriate classrooms. Inadequately monitoring student progress is perhaps a result of the first factor. Duke (2008a) also argues poor or absent staff

professional development and lack of focus on academic learning might be other factors. Large class sizes, and overreliance on untrained help (such as teacher aides), and increased rules and punitive punishments for student behaviour also suggest a school is in a downward spiral.

Duke (2008a) argues these triggers, which also include inadequate school finances and loss of key personnel, may have occurred some months or even years before the symptoms were noticeable. Thus, identifying the trigger for a school's decline is problematic and may take considerable time and research. Goldstein and Woodhouse (2000) contend macro and exo-factors such as the cultural (Cavanagh et al., 2012), socio-economic (Ahumada et al., 2016), societal and political considerations and issues (Goldstein & Woodhouse, 2000) can be school stressors, affecting some to greater or lesser extent than others (Muijs, 2014; Nicolaidou & Ainscow, 2005; Reynolds, 1995; Tomlinson, 1997). Leithwood et al. (2010) argues the right combination of "contextual, compositional, cyclical, contingent, and conditional factors" (p. 39) may present a school with a 'perfect storm'.

The difficulty of understanding and acknowledging a school's *perfect storm* as well as the contextual differences and influencing factors between schools, adds to the complexity of defining school decline (Chapman et al., 2016; P. Clarke, 2005; Lashway, 2003; Papa & English, 2011; Thrupp, 2001; Tomlinson, 1997). Regardless of what leads to a school's decline, Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2002) argue that to reverse any decline, it is crucial to address the culture and situational challenges declining schools face. Muijs (2014) asserts labelling schools in low SES communities as anything other than effective is "fundamentally flawed" (p. 78) as these schools face additional complexities not experienced by other schools. It is argued by Leithwood et al. (2010) that imposing "standardised models of school intervention and improvement practices" (p. 27) on schools will make little difference if cultural and situational factors are not accounted for in any recovery plan.

Determining when a school tips into decline is problematic to identify. In my research involving primary school principals who have experienced statutory intervention, I wonder what kinds of factors precipitated intervention, and the extent to which student achievement results have declined. I wonder too if any of the challenges precipitated student academic decline. Furthermore, will the participating principals a) identify

their school as declining, and 2) would they be able to identify when, why and how, their school began to decline. Do any of the schools exhibit common characteristics that might help explain their decline into statutory management? And is it possible to align any identified factors with the "contextual, compositional, cyclical, contingent, and conditional factors" indicated by Leithwood et al (2010, p. 39), or whether there is any alignment with the influencing external and internal factors suggested by Hochbein (2011), Jang, et al. (2008), Kowal and Hassel (2005) or Reynolds et al. (2016). The metaphor of the *perfect storm* by Duke (2008a) and Leithwood et al. (2010) prompts me to consider whether any of the principals and their schools in this research have been caught up in their own perfect storm.

New Zealand schools

Thus far, international literature suggests the social, economic and cultural communities (local and national) schools exist in might deeply affect a school, identifying reasons for school decline may be difficult to isolate. Within New Zealand, Hawk (2008) argues potential predictors for school decline may be viewed across three levels which are:

- *Macro (societal) influences* such as a school's reaction to policy and curriculum changes, societal changes and trends, and community changes and conflict, and the negative influencers or positive effects these have on the school (p. 94);
- *Meso (institutional) influences* including the development of, and responses to internal problems, events and issues such as school organisation, school culture, governance issues, external factors (local schools, consultants, reviews and education agencies), community demographics and economic issues and media attention (p. 107); and
- *Micro (personal) factors* – inadequate and ineffective school leadership, peoples' (staff, students, parents) attitudes, behaviour and responses, and personal agendas, for example (p. 151).

New Zealand research indicates changing community demographics may precipitate a decline in a school's student numbers. This can be worse in communities where families are highly mobile and/or economically disadvantaged (V. Robinson, 1994; Smyth, 2011; Thrupp, 1995; Udahemuka, 2016, 2017). It is possible a declining school roll can detrimentally affect students' educational needs. Declining student rolls, for example, have long-term effects on schools' finances and staffing levels, thus

affecting a school's ability to provide a range of learning opportunities and support for students. Different student intakes may place considerable strain on school resources, particularly low SES schools who are often supporting multiple students with diverse, complex and challenging psychological, psychosocial, behavioural and academic needs (Education Review Office, 2016a, 2017; Thrupp, 1995). Schools serving such complex and diverse student intakes may struggle to offer and deliver challenging academic programmes that meet the learning needs of more 'able' students, regardless of their socio-economic background (Thrupp, 1995). The movement of students from school to school may affect a school's ability to provide long-term support for learners' and links to school decline as defined by Brookover and Lezotte (1979) and Duke and Hochbein (2008). Nevertheless, if students' socio-economic status influences a school's decline, the "different contextual constraints and possibilities faced by schools" (Thrupp, 1995, p. 173) must be acknowledged and addressed.

Geographic and societal inequalities may add further challenges. Geographical isolation may go together with socioeconomic isolation, low employment opportunities, and/or transient life-styles, although these challenges are not limited to rural New Zealand. Notman's (2015) report on New Zealand school leadership in high-need schools suggests school leaders believed their school was high-need if the following four factors were present:

a) insufficient funding,
b) low student achievement in literacy and numeracy,
c) low achievement of Māori students, and
d) high occurrence of behavioural problems.

All these factors affect a school and board's ability to lead and govern the school in ways that satisfy both the community's needs and the school's charter intentions. However, some issues are outside anything a school can properly take responsibility for (Ahumada et al., 2016; Cavanagh et al., 2012). As alluded to earlier, these external issues can include cultural (Biddulph et al., 2003; Cavanagh et al., 2012), socio-economic (Ahumada et al., 2016; Boston, 2013; Boston & Chapple, 2014), societal and political considerations and issues (Goldstein & Woodhouse, 2000).

In summary, identifying and defining how and why a school declined is a complex, contextualised and methodologically challenged process (Duke, 2008a; Hochbein, 2011, 2012a). Perhaps this is why it is hard to pinpoint both reasons for school decline

and the rates of decline (Hochbein, 2012a). As evidenced within international literature and certainly within New Zealand, there are few qualitative and quantitative school decline studies. The limited quantitative research available on school decline predominantly focuses on "declining academic achievement" (Hochbein, 2011, p. 95). Hochbein (2011), Manwaring (2011) and Reynolds et al. (2016) suggest when declining schools are involved in qualitative research projects, it is often to provide a comparison group in school improvement studies. In such studies, 'missing' leadership actions are more often highlighted in declining schools than improving schools. Noticeably, within these studies, little mention is made of school principals and how they may experience and address their school's decline. Comparison studies suggest school decline is varied, complex and specific to each school. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that any strategy or plans to reverse decline, will be individualised to each school context to avoid potentially irreversible damage (Duke, 2008a; Marsh et al., 2013; Weitzel & Jonsson, 1989, 1991; Whetten, 1980).

School identification and sanctions

In this part, I examine how various education systems across a small number of Anglophone countries identify declining schools. I also examine the type of sanctions imposed upon such schools, with a particular focus on primary schools. I therefore examine a variety of government education department/ministry websites to gain information about their legislation, education acts, education reforms or structures to identify, sanction and support declining schools.

I discuss governments' practice of using external school review/inspection agencies to monitor school progress and identify declining schools. I also review both the use of student achievement data as a primary indicator of school decline and the dominant discourse of identifying the school leadership, particularly the principal, as the centre of a school's decline. I next draw attention to New Zealand's education authorities' processes for identifying and sanctioning declining schools. Finally, I summarise the commonalities between the reviewed literature and education authorities' practices for identifying and sanctioning declining schools.

There is significant variance between countries when identifying and sanctioning declining schools. Governments tend to use external educational agencies to monitor school progress and improvement. Agencies such as OFSTED (Britain), Estyn

(Wales), Education Scotland (Scotland), and Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in Northern Ireland (NI) and ERO in New Zealand are examples of this trend. In all of these instances, these agencies play a significant role in identifying declining or low-performing schools. While these agencies are not actively involved in addressing any issues or concerns raised during an inspection (Ofsted, 2017), they nevertheless provide follow-up inspections to monitor progress in improving student learning. Western Australia for example, is beginning the process of implementing school inspections to all schools, not just those identified as under-performing (G. Morris, Manager of School Performance in Western Australia, personal communication April 12, 2018). In some instances, Morris says, the inspecting organisation – the Expert Review Group (ERG) brokers support for the school and undertakes follow-up inspections. All of the above listed school review agencies publish school inspection reports on official websites. Some education review agencies, such as ETI, indicate the type of inspection in a school. This is clearly stated underneath the title of a school's report.

Yet, educational researchers such as Sammons (1996) warn that school evaluations are fraught because a range of potentially complicating external factors can affect schools and thus a school's evaluation. She cautions that broader influencing contexts (such as local employment rates and culture) are often omitted in published school evaluations. Other researchers raise concerns about the continual surveillance and monitoring of schools. West et al. (2005) infer continual reviews may impact on the mental image and self-beliefs of the staff and students, particularly as they may view their school and themselves as failing. Once people develop deficit beliefs, negative images block or restrict their ability to consider alternative views. This can then hinder people's abilities to enter into authentic positive change processes (Barber, 1998; Orr et al., 2008; West, 2010). West et al. (2005) believe continually living with the knowledge of failure leads to a sense of helplessness which must be overcome before any positive progress and change can be achieved. Changing this failure mind-set appears to be a crucial but difficult step to take. This mind-set change process might help account for the length of time that positive change takes time.

Internationally, there is a heavy reliance on student achievement data as the primary source for measuring school success, improvement or decline. Individual government

policies and expectations emphasise open and public access to school information. Such information includes the number of students successfully completing compulsory education (Australia) and the percentage of students meeting state expectations such as the USA federal acts *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) and *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) (National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), 2017; Ravitch, 2010; Stotsky & Holzman, 2015b). Student achievement data is published through school and education authorities' online sites such as the Welsh agency Estyn (Estyn, 2018) and the British OFSTED site (Department for Education, 2018; Meredith, 2013). Publication of student achievement data ensures that competition between local schools for new enrolments remains consistent, although it is less clear as to who benefits from competing for students, or why this is deemed a positive attribute. Furthermore, in order for schools to attract new students, these schools continually advertise their latest school improvement initiatives and student achievement. This form of external and internal school surveillance correlates with the panoptical view whereby individuals who believe others continually monitor them, in turn begin to monitor, adapt or subvert their own behaviour accordingly (Azaola, 2012; Eacott, 2015; English & Bolton, 2016; Grenfell & James, 2003). However, continuous panoptical surveillance along with a continual focus on being 'better' (i.e. introducing new initiatives) than neighbouring schools may not allow time for teachers and students to consolidate and sustain new learning and teaching (Davies & Davies, 2012; Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Perryman, 2006; Shulman & Sullivan, 2015; Timperley & Parr, 2005). Thus, a school may quietly slide into decline if too many initiatives compete for teachers' time and focus (Le Floch et al., 2017). Perhaps too many initiatives wears teachers down and this may contribute to the decline found in some New Zealand schools. Several implications arise from this for New Zealand statutory appointees and school principals, including:

a) prior knowledge of the professional development (PD) programmes or courses available for the forthcoming year;
b) developing a planned, sequential approach to PD, which relies on
c) understanding the current and future professional development needs of staff; and
d) knowing when the time is right to introduce a new initiative, or when to hold back and consolidate current professional learning development.

Researchers such as Abrahamsen and Aas (2016), Fullan (2016a), Leithwood et al. (2006), Orr et al. (2005), Reynolds et al. (2016) and Robinson et al. (2015) infer that in a failing/high-need school, a principal may be ill-equipped to cope, lacking relational, financial, motivational and pedagogical skills to adequately identify and address issues. Therefore, many of the school improvement and support programmes, such as school turnaround in the USA, (Calkins et al., 2007; Orr et al., 2005; Scott, 2008) and *Improving Schools Programme* (ISP) in Britain (S. Day & Hackman, 2012; Department for Education, 2009, 2018; Hollingsworth & Foster, 2005; Meredith, 2013), first remove the school principal when initiating efforts to address low school performance (Futernick & Urbanski, 2014; Le Floch et al., 2016; Marsh et al., 2013; Pink, 1985; Stotsky & Holzman, 2015b; U.S. Department of Education, 2017; Wallace Foundation, 2013). This deficit discourse provides validation for governments to impose externally driven "invasive interventions" upon schools (Fullan, 2016a, p. 1). Many of these interventions are imposed upon or 'done to' a school using state authorised and accredited professional education businesses (Futernick & Urbanski, 2014; Le Floch et al., 2016; Scott, 2008). While these are international examples of what happens to declining or high-need schools, it will be important to examine the New Zealand Ministry of Education statutory intervention implementation processes and what happens to New Zealand schools that continually demonstrate little progress, and whether these processes follow international practices.

Internationally, the most common sanctions employed by education departments or ministries to support declining schools is a 'top-down' approach using external educational businesses or organisations and a quick turn-around timeframe (Scott, 2008; Wrigley, 2011). Both the USA and UK expect significant increases in student achievement to be obtained within two years of an intervention (Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), 2013; Fairchild & DeMary, 2011; Futernick & Urbanski, 2014; MacBeath et al., 2005; Ofsted, 2012). The Australian federal government allow schools 3-5 years to recover and implement sustained change; this aligns with the longer timeframes indicated by Kowal and Ableidinger (2011), Fairchild and DeMary (2011), Peck and Reitzug (2014) and the Wallace Foundation (2013). Timeframes are further discussed in the later section *Tensions of time.*

New Zealand

Historically, New Zealand, as a member of the Commonwealth, has looked towards Britain for educational policy and systems (Olssen et al., 2004; Openshaw et al., 1993; Shuker, 1987; Thrupp, 2005a). New Zealand is also influenced by other Anglophone countries such as the United States of America (USA), Canada and Australia. Thus, New Zealand educational policy and practices may show influences from these countries, for example the leadership documents listed earlier in *School Effectiveness*. However, since educational contexts differ across countries, careful analysis is needed when borrowing, developing and implementing educational policy, procedures and practices from other countries even those that appear ideologically similar (Abrahamsen & Aas, 2016; Halpin & Troyna, 1995). Transnational policy borrowing potentially ignores the "political, historical and socio-cultural settings" (Halpin & Troyna, 1995, p. 304) related to the structure of a country's education system (size and structure of schools, the assessment, monitoring and reporting of student academic achievement, and funding and governance models, for example). Therefore, the rhetoric of 'what works' elsewhere does not necessarily ensure the successful adoption and implementation of policies and practices in a new country. Furthermore, transnational borrowing positions the 'lender' as the 'knowledgeable other' whose 'best practices' are more worthy than "'local' solution[s]" (Ball, 1998, p. 124) of the 'borrowing' education systems (Abrahamsen & Aas, 2016; Auld & Morris, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014; Thrupp, 2005c). Incidentally, this also applies when implementing 'borrowed' policies, procedures and practices from neighbouring schools. The local context and culture of each school is unique and as such, policies and procedures within individual schools require unique responses that are culturally and ideologically specific for each school.

New Zealand schools, like counterparts in the UK and Australia are subjected to formal triennial external reviews. In New Zealand, these are undertaken by the Education Review Office (ERO). While ERO visits provide one of the formal means for identifying school decline in New Zealand, general indicators of a declining school may include the analysis of student data. For example, the Ministry of Education, school boards and school leadership teams may separately or together, analyse such data (such as continual declining student enrolments or the number of student stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions issued within an academic year) (Towl,

2016). However, Judge Becroft (2016) cautions relying solely on student data such as stand-downs etc, is not statistically reliable. Instead, Judge Becroft suggests these statistics may indicate that the school has an growing number of students who are struggling socially and psychologically (Becroft, 2016).

Further means of identifying school decline include parent/community complaints about the school to the local Ministry of Education office, or a Board's self-referral to the Ministry for support and assistance (Ministry of Education, 2015) which may result in the school being supported by an external expert or a statutory appointee. Concerns raised by external education authorities and organisations such as teacher unions and NZSTA (New Zealand School Trustees Association) advisors, and parental complaints to the Ministry (Ministry of Education, 2015) may also indicate school decline.

Documents from the Ministry of Education, as well as other literature on school reviews and sanctions in New Zealand, indicate a holistic approach is commonly applied to address any concerns within a school, once a school is deemed to be in serious trouble. Where possible, the school community is involved in this process (Ministry of Education, 2017c). This practice supports one of the eight NZ curriculum (NZC) principles *Community engagement* which encourages the development of strong home-school partnerships (Ministry of Education, 2007). However, I wonder how many school communities actually engage in this process, or whether, by the time external support has arrived, the school community no longer desires any involvement with the school. Regardless of how a declining school is identified within New Zealand, addressing the cause of a school's decline is initially left to the Board and school leadership. In circumstances where ministerial statutory appointees are working with the school, the appointee has the power and authority to implement changes they deem suitable for the school (Ministry of Education, 2017c). Statutory intervention and the role of the appointee are discussed in Chapter 1.

In conclusion, the processes for identifying and sanctioning declining schools illustrate some commonalities between counties, such as school inspections/ reviews (the U.K., Australia and New Zealand), or student achievement data (the USA, UK, and Australia) and government-imposed school reforms (the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand). While all educational and ministerial authorities view student achievement data as the primary indicator of school decline, the common sanction employed by

governments is externally imposed school interventions and turnaround reforms with a particular focus on the school leader (Abrahamsen & Aas, 2016; S. Day & Hackman, 2012; Education Review Office, 2016a; Education Scotland, 2018; Estyn, 2018; ETI, 2015; Fullan, 2016a; Futernick & Urbanski, 2014; Le Floch et al., 2016; Leithwood et al., 2006; Ofsted, 2017; Orr et al., 2005; Reynolds et al., 2016; V. Robinson et al., 2015; Scott, 2008).

Limitations

The reviewed school decline literature highlights the most dominate indicator of school decline is a school's inability to meet the academic needs of students (Duke, 2008a, 2015; Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Marsh, Strunk, & Bush, 2013; Murphy, 2010; Peck & Reitzug, 2014). Student achievement data provides a single snap-shot in time on student's learning. Therefore, longitudinal monitoring of student academic achievement over time is desirable, but even this data requires careful analysis (Hochbein, 2012a, 2012b; Townsend et al., 2016).

Hochbein (2012a) is one of many researchers (such as Brower, 2006; Chapman et al., 2016; Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010; Le Floch et al., 2014, 2017; Meyers & Hitt, 2017; Meyers & Smylie, 2017; Muijs, 2014; Peck & Reitzug, 2014) who argues that while turnaround literature contains case studies or examples of exemplar schools, few schools sustain or continue the accelerated progress or successes of the intervention. Furthermore, these researchers claim a number of declining schools may demonstrate "intermittent, yet temporary, improvements" (Hochbein, 2012a, p. 87), but long term improvement and sustainability are not achieved, despite the array of additional resources and support provided to these schools (Jensen & Sonnemann, 2014). These researchers suggest the issues affecting declining schools are much broader and more complex than just concerns about student achievement. This suggests that when addressing school decline, broader societal issues also require attention, if sustainable, long-term positive change is to occur within the school.

Loughland and Thompson (2016) propose performance-based measures are a "superficial treatment of the complexity of schools and learning" (p. 127) and do not address within school factors, within community and between school differences. Least of all, they suggest performance based measures do not allow for individual

differences in students' levels of achievement. Similarly, Hansen (2012) and Townsend et al. (2016) claim any interpretation of student achievement data is contextual and fraught with difficulties, particularly while countries continue to use different performance measures for analysing student academic achievement. Caution is also required as throughout the world, increasing numbers of students are struggling socially and psychologically (Becroft, 2016). Therefore, before determining whether a school is declining, there is a need for greater awareness of societal issues' schools face (Downey et al., 2008).

With the heavy focus on performance-based measures, other areas of school success such as whether the school is culturally aware and meeting the cultural needs of students are ignored (Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Hansen, 2012; Notman, 2008, 2015; Parker et al., 2011). As indicated by Downey et al. (2008) schools that may be considered low-performing, may be very successful in meeting the physiological, psychological and psychosocial developmental needs of their students.

Internationally, governments and educational authorities rely on school reviews/inspections to identify and monitor declining schools. Galič, Timan, and Koops (2017) and Perryman (2006, 2009) caution that the structure of school inspections or reviews, continually reinforce governments' overall power and control of schools. Furthermore, these same authors indicate some schools, especially those under continual review, may experience "panoptical performativity" (Perryman, 2006, p. 148) whereby staff begin to perform in ways dictated by school reviewers' expectations rather than the learning needs of students. Perryman's (2006, 2009) views align with A. Kelly and Clarke (2016) and Shulman and Sullivan (2015) who agree continual surveillance, either through school turnaround reforms or school reviews, causes stakeholders to behaviour in certain ways. However, these researchers along with Barber (1998), Orr et al. (2008), and West (2010) warn these behaviours are not necessarily embedded within the ethos of the school, but are more seen as stakeholders' efforts to terminate the continual surveillance of the school. I wonder if this behaviour occurs in New Zealand schools under statutory intervention.

In summary, researchers such as Chapman et al. (2016), Duke (2008a, 2008a, 2012), Le Floch et al. (2017), Lui (2020), Meyers et al. (2017), and Meyers and Smylie (2017) suggests school decline is a slow, and steady process and not easily identified, while

Leithwood et al. (2010) draws our attention to the possibility that some schools may experience the *perfect storm*. Educational researchers such as Cavanagh et al. (2012), Duke (2008a), Murphy (2008), Reynolds et al. (2016), and Peck and Reitzug (2014) express school decline as the complex result of multiple factors that particularly impact low-SES communities (Court & O'Neill, 2011; Hawk, 2008; Jang et al., 2008; Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Notman, 2015; Papa & English, 2011). As such, there is growing interest amongst school decline researchers about the influence of the micro, meso and macro school contexts.

However, throughout the literature, the role and position of school leaders both while working in a declining school and while leading a school out of decline, other being held as largely responsible for the decline, is absent. Redding and Morando Rhim (2014) suggest leading and turning around a school or leading a school through a statutory intervention is not without a cost. Just what this cost is to various stakeholders is unknown. For it appears that various stakeholders' personal voices and experiences of an intervention are silenced; within these silence are the missing voices of school principals. My research on school leaders' experiences of leading schools during similar challenging times focuses on this gap.

Disrupting school decline

Within the field of school decline research, numerous publications suggest the trajectory of school decline "can be disrupted" (Meyers et al., 2017, p. 43) thus avoiding the need for turnaround. Despite growing acknowledgement that many school turnaround programmes do not sustain long-term school improvement, turnaround literature continues to support the problematic fallacy of heroic leaders as an "effective turnaround mechanism" (Mann et al., 2017, p. 254). This discourse indicates school recovery can only be achieved when a "heroic, charismatic, inspirational … 'white knight'" (Starr, 2014a, p. 226), or a "'great man' … a 'super head'" (J. T. Goddard, 2003, p. 21) is appointed to single-handedly address and resolve the school's problems (Spillane, 2005). Such expectations reinforce a society's construct that schools require a strong male leader in times of crisis or significant change (Ainscow et al., 2005; Caldwell et al., 2012; Harris, 2003; J. Holmes, 2017;

Shulman & Sullivan, 2015). The heroic discourse fortifies to society, the hierarchical positioning of school leaders and the implicit expectation, especially for principals implementing and leading school turnaround processes, that they will exert authority, power and control over teachers (Abrahamsen & Aas, 2016; Bush, 2020; J. Holmes, 2017).

Furthermore, the limited published narratives of principals undertaking this work positions them as saviours who have "sacrificed everything for the school, including [their] personal life" (Møller, 2012, p. 455). Again, this strengthens society's perceptions of heroic visionary leaders exemplifying particular behaviours and leadership styles. Moreover, the heroic discourse overlooks the contextual, historical and cultural knowledge principals hold about a school and community. It disregards the complex and unpredictable nature of school leadership and fails to acknowledge "leadership practices may be enabled or constrained" (Møller, 2012, p. 455) by daily "structures, functions, routines and roles" (Spillane, 2005, p. 143). I question the extent to which this heroic discourse is present in schools under government intervention. Furthermore, I wonder if any of my participants view themselves in this manner.

Turnaround schools face immense pressure from multiple stakeholders to implement practices and processes resulting in "swift and impacting changes" (Moctezuma, 2017, p. 6) to students' academic performance. Meyers and Smylie (2017) caution many of these processes leverage

> generic programs and practices that may not be relevant to the sources of poor performance, may not be appropriate to context, or may not promote fundamental changes in school organisation and operations that are not likely to result in significant lasting improvement (p. 503).

These generic programmes and practices reflect the invasive nature of interventions (Fullan, 2016a) imposed upon schools by external educational organisations or consultants. Thus, these interventions may constitute a traumatic experience for staff negatively affecting "their morale and self-esteem" (Nicolaidou & Ainscow, 2005, p. 232) thereby perpetuating the inability of a school to acknowledge or internally address existing difficulties (Hewitt & Reitzug, 2017; Stark, 1998). As indicated by Mette and Scribner (2014), and Meyers and Smylie (2017), the particular circumstances of the

school and its wider community contexts, do not feature highly in many turnaround processes, especially those implemented within the USA. In fact, Mette and Scribner (2014) specifically state turnaround reforms do *not* address "deep-rooted issues of race, SES and segregation" (p. 13), yet these significant factors need to be acknowledged and addressed to enable and sustain culturally literate and socially-just school leadership. Conversely, Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2002) note for a number of British schools undergoing external intervention, that problems were "unprecedentedly linked with the schools' internal conditions: their unique culture" (p. 236). Therefore, developing a school culture that acknowledges and represents community demographics, that practices inclusiveness and celebrates diversity for example, may be critical to the overall success of changing practices and relationships within a school. Yet, many externally imposed interventions not only fail to acknowledge the context and circumstances of school decline, they "fail to consider that differences in context and circumstances may call for different change mechanisms" (Meyers & Smylie, 2017, p. 504). Furthermore, a number of externally imposed interventions are solution-focused on 'fixing' student achievement as if it is separate from the complex interplay of factors within a school, and not the deeper and often systemic issues within the school (Marsh et al., 2013; Meyers et al., 2017).

The difficulty in applying international literature and contexts to the New Zealand educational landscape is the application of terms that have a strong connection to a particular time, place and action, such as the term 'school turnaround'. While school turnaround literature and processes may fit the broader contexts within the USA, an increasing number of countries such as the UK, Canada, Turkey, Germany and China are implementing turnaround processes in schools to address students' academic performance. Within NZ education vernacular, *turnaround* is beginning to seep into use with Ministry of Education websites using *turnaround* in relation to statutory interventions (Ministry of Education, 2014a). In 2016, ERO in conjunction with the Ministry began piloting "'school turnaround' evaluation processes" in persistently poor performing schools with the overall aim of providing "a collaborative … response to support improvement and accelerate school turnaround" (Education Review Office, 2016a). Turnaround schools are required to "develop a recovery plan and set termly goals and targets" (Education Review Office, 2017). ERO undertakes ongoing and regular evaluations of schools progress to inform next stages for improvement. If

schools fail to sustain or show sufficient improvement, "further measures and escalation" may result (Education Review Office, 2017).

Re-imagining school turnaround

School turnaround as a label is synonymous with the *No Child Left Behind* (*NCLB)* and *Race to the Top* (*RtT)* policies in the USA and growing in popularity in other countries such as Canada (Leithwood & Strauss, 2008), China (Liu, 2017), and German (Berwick, 2015). School turnarounds are a "response to a political and moral call to remedy the problem of persistently low-performing schools (Meyers & Smylie, 2017, p. 502). Turnaround reforms aim to swiftly and dramatically address student low-academic achievement (Herman, 2012; Hewitt & Reitzug, 2017; Hitt & Meyers, 2018; Meyers & Sadler, 2018). Thus, there are specific educational leadership practices and processes associated with the term 'turnaround'. Hitt and Meyers (2018) acknowledge this view of school turnaround perpetuates the myths and assumptions that declining schools are the result of poor leadership, and as soon as the incumbent principal is replaced with a 'heroic' school leader, school turnaround has been successfully implemented. They contend the term *turnaround* blurs and narrows researchers and educationalists understanding of the work principals undertake to address circumstances within a school.

Contrary to the research literature suggesting swift and dramatic action required to turn around a declining school, my professional educational leadership experiences of leading a school out of statutory intervention suggest that such swift and dramatic action is unsustainable, alienating students and staff. Instead, a school's journey back to full health is more like that of a recuperating patient, suffering relapses. Sometimes, it felt like needing the life-support of an injection of finances from the Ministry of Education to pay historical overdue accounts. Other times the school was in the recuperation ward, with Ministry of Education specialists implementing various recovery programmes. As a result, there were times when we were resting in recovery, or testing new treatments, such as addressing school-wide behaviour and engagement. As a school principal, I sometimes had to remove life support. As a school and as a staff, we were unable to help specific children address their multiple and complex learning and behaviour issues. I also had to help teachers change school when they were unwilling or unable to engage with necessary changes.

Whatever the circumstances, every termination required respect and care, ensuring the mana [honour, influence, authority], of all involved was upheld as much as possible. Broadly, school turnaround processes as outlined earlier, appear to do little to protect the mana of school staff attempting to address issues within a declining school. Turnaround literature often views the school principal and staff as being at fault for allowing the school to decline to a level where external support, such as a statutory intervention is required. However, this is not always a true perception (Dimmock, 2012; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Meyers & Smylie, 2017) as assuming teachers and principals are the cause of issues seldom acknowledges the complexity of school decline.

Hitt and Meyer (2018) metaphorically describe the work undertaken by school principals to address in-school issues within declining schools as *rehabilitation*. This medical metaphor shifts focus from a declining organisation to one that is rebuilding its strength and is recuperating to become a healthy organisation for all those involved. Likewise Stark (1998) argues that educators and society should view this work not as *school turnaround* or *school improvement*, but as *recovery*, explaining the "emergency measures needed to turn around a failing school … differ from the measures that a good school might take to improve itself further" (Stark, 1998, p. 36). He also acknowledges "school recovery and school improvement are two different processes requiring … rather different kinds of change" (Stark, 1998, p. 36).

Using medical terms such as *rehabilitation*, *recovery* and *emergency triage* while discussing the work of principals and various stakeholders to change the circumstances within a school, may better indicate the trajectory of a school. These medical terms imply the development of a holistic perspective of a school being unwell, and in need of support, care and compassion as it recovers, while maintaining the mana [honour, respect, history] of the people involved. Recovery implies patience; it can be a long process with peaks and troughs specific to the individual. Recovery usually means the involvement of others who regularly support the transition to better health. Conversely, if a school is viewed as failing, the negative connotation implies that perhaps the people associated with the school have not tried hard enough to change the school's circumstances (Barber, 1998; Orr et al., 2008; West, 2010; West et al., 2005).

Thus, rather than discuss school leadership practices in turnaround schools, I shall be positioning the following sections as school recovery. I consider how the term '*school recovery*' may re-position peoples' beliefs and approaches towards declining schools into something positive. Further, I consider how re-imagining school turnaround leadership as school recovery leadership offers opportunities for holistic and culturally appropriate responses to addressing school decline in New Zealand.

School recovery

The literature has so far focused on understanding the *why* and *how* of school decline. I have canvassed international processes used to identify and sanction declining schools, and shown how New Zealand education authorities identify and sanction such schools. I have also reviewed a range of school turnaround processes implemented by an increasing number of countries, including New Zealand. I shall now consider alternative approaches to how education authorities, external interventionists such as statutory appointees, and school leaders might address school decline that are inclusive of the context, circumstances and people involved.

Redding and Morando Rhim (2014) decisively express school recovery is not an extension of a school improvement; school recovery, they advocate, "calls for urgent and often disruptive change efforts" (p. 14). They add these efforts "greatly challenge the status quo and significantly impact on a wide variety" (p. 14) of stakeholders, including the principal. Thus, school leaders may be viewed as both the "catalyst [of change] and the agent of support" (Hallinger & Heck, 2011, p. 4) as they implement school recovery.

Re-imagining school turnaround as school recovery leadership acknowledges how the work and the practices that leader seek to embed within a school "may be enabled or constrained" (Møller, 2012, p. 455) by the "structures, functions, routines and roles" (Spillane, 2005, p. 143) of school leadership. Such leaders understand the possibility that efforts to bring about sustainable change may be fraught by continuous challenges, or "*countervailing pressures*" such as "situations, incidents, issues and people" (p. 5), may affect the outcome and timing of a school's recovery journey. These pressures

may exist externally of the school and may "constrain the leaders' influence and direction" of the school (Arar et al., 2019, p. 961).

In the following section, I contextualise school recovery leadership and consider the need for school leaders to understand and acknowledge the school's climate, culture and practise. Furthermore, while developing a school's capabilities and capacity is relational work, it is also context specific. I address this issue and the implementation of school change within the section *contextual leadership*. Finally, I position school recovery leadership as *relational leadership*.

Contextual leadership

Educational leadership is increasingly challenging, complex and multidimensional (Garcia et al., 2014; K. Holmes et al., 2013; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Furthermore, it is context and circumstance specific regarding broader socio-cultural and political settings (S. Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017; Harris & Jones, 2016; Notman et al., 2017). While schools as organisations are similar across the world, they are centred in "myriad demographics and societies … with varying beliefs and value systems. Thus the micro, meso and macro levels of context must be considered" (Angelle, 2017b, p. 308) as school leaders seek to lead school recovery (see page 21 for examples of a school's micro, meso and macro levels). School leaders decision-making is predominantly influenced by the micro-contexts of their school – including teachers, parents, students and the "specific educational circumstances in which they find themselves" (Dempster et al., 2004, p. 165).

The beliefs, values of school leaders and their sense of moral purpose determines the extent to which the micro-contexts influence their decisions (Angelle, 2017b; Fullan, 2003, 2011; New Zealand Council for Educational Research [NZCER], 2018; Notman & Henry, 2011; Parker et al., 2011; P. Smith & Bell, 2011), as does their leadership experiences and knowledge of the context in which the situation occurs (Dempster et al., 2004; Dimmock, 2012; Notman et al., 2017). Therefore, Blackmore (2013), Leithwood et al. (2013), and Meyers and Smylie (2017) contend school leaders professional practice and decision-making processes are set in and shaped by the "conditions that exist in particular locations … at particular moments" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 33), including their conviction that change is needed (Wylie, 2012a).

Therefore, leading a school back to recovery can be emotionally, labour-intensive and time consuming work (Fuller, 2017; A. Hargreaves, 2004; Louis & Murphy, 2017; Poirel & Yvon, 2014; Zembylas, 2013). It would appear then, that *contextually and culturally literate* school principals understand, acknowledge and work within the existing climate, culture and practices of the school (Angelle, 2017c; Bishop et al., 2014; Harris & Jones, 2016; Notman et al., 2017).

School climate, culture and practices

Within educational literature, the phrase 'school culture' is often interchanged with school climate (Van Houtte, 2005; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). School culture includes the shared customs, traditions, rituals and expectations that students, parents, staff and community associate with a particular school. Also included are the values, norms, [un]written rules, [hidden] curricula and language noted within a school (Education Review Office & Ministry of Education, 2016; Ministry of Education, 2008; Parker et al., 2011). School climate is considered be the overall school effect on students (Drago-Severson, 2012; Van Houtte, 2005) and includes dimensions such as the physical environment, safety and well-being, relationships and the teaching and learning (Barascout, 2015; Bryk, 2010; MacNeil et al., 2009; Ministry of Education, 2008; Moolenaar, 2015; O'Brennan et al., 2014; V. Robinson et al., 2015). While school practices are the processes, policies, procedures and structures within the school, including school-wide expectations, goals and academic practices (Education Review Office, 2016c).

Schools, as organisations, reflect the community in which they are located (Morrison, 2017; Reeves, 2009). Just as schools influence and are influenced by their community and stakeholders, so too is the work of school leaders (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Kemmis et al., 2014; Sutherland, 2017). Therefore, school principals may seek to acknowledge and understand the cultural identity and practices of the school and community before bringing about change (Branson, 2008; Khalifa, 2012; Nicolaidou, 2005). Garcia et al. (2014), and Sergiovanni (2001) remind us leadership is not only about change and moving the organisation forward, it is also about protecting and intensifying a school's present "structure in a way that enhances meaning and significance" for all stakeholders (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 44). This includes being culturally responsive to the socio-cultural context of the school, and enabling students

to acquire and internalise the "knowledge, skills [and] dispositions … valued by society and access … social networks necessary for creating an equitable life" (Bennett, Ylimaki, Dugan, & Brunderman, 2014, p. 382).

Additionally, school principals may disrupt the silences surrounding countervailing pressures and practices (Theoharis, 2007). This requires leaders to ethically and honestly draw attention to, and address staff relational practices, values, beliefs and assumptions (Holte, 2014). Principals may engage in difficult but critical conversations and to support staff to acknowledge their perceptions of themselves as teachers in a declining school and how these perceptions may influence how they perceive and interact with colleagues and students (Cardno, 1999, 2007). By addressing these countervailing practices, and supporting staff to re-imagine their professional identities, new practices can emerge that are contextually, culturally and professionally appropriate for the school.

Developing culturally literate schools

Re-culturing a declining school to one that is culturally literate requires school principals to lead with empathy as they seek to understand and acknowledge the past. This is particularly important with historical traumatic incidents where there may have been a "clash of embodied knowledges and memories" (Zembylas, 2013, p. 181) impacting relational trust (Augustine-Shaw et al., 2017; Cavanagh et al., 2012; Qian & Walker, 2014).

Thus, school principals may focus on restoring deep relational trust with stakeholders. They will acknowledge the time, effort and level of support required to create, sustain and foster such relationships within and across the school and community (Bishop et al., 2014; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Cavanagh et al., 2012; Kutsyuruba et al., 2010; Lee, 2015; Macfarlane, 2010; McNae with Cook, 2017; Morris, 2014). This includes listening to the silences of people's emotional happenings, the pauses in their conversations or word left unspoken. Developing relational trust requires people to acknowledge mutual vulnerabilities (Kemmis et al., 2014; Zembylas, 2010) which in turn, creates opportunities for staff, students and parents to explore the lived experiences of one another and "the spaces they occupy together, in schools and in each other's minds" (Beatty, 2007a, p. 51). Cardno (2007) advises stakeholders must "acknowledge and confront dilemmas and attempt their resolution" (p. 33). This

includes acknowledgement and owning any broken trust issues, acknowledging people's vulnerabilities and working with others to re-engage with one another and rebuild positive relationships (Beatty, 2007a; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Kutsyuruba et al., 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Principals recognise this may cause difficulties and conflict between various stakeholders (Augustine-Shaw et al., 2017; Branson & Gross, 2014; Mintrop & Charles, 2017). Nevertheless, ignoring people's emotions during recovery stages may drive emotions underground, robbing "the entire organisation of any chance of authenticity" (Beatty, 2007a, p. 51) and fracture emerging acts of empathy, compassion, trust and collaboration.

Addressing deficit behaviours

School principals may also identify, acknowledge and address deficit discourses and "issues of power and authority" (Beatty, 2007b, p. 330) as they seek to re-culture a school. This might include raising concerns over whose culture is valued, shared and seen within the school (Bishop et al., 2014; Cavanagh et al., 2012; Shields, 2014). For example, this might even include re-examining with staff the extent to which a range of voices, ethnicities and cultural practices are represented in classroom textbooks and library books, and then working to redress any identified imbalances (Biddulph et al., 2003; Cavanagh et al., 2012; Li, 2017; Lumby, 2013). A more difficult process might be to address possible deficit views about learners and the wider community, that might result in placing the "locus of blame and responsibility" onto others (Shields, 2014, p. 34). Of more importance, is to offer opportunities for staff to reflect on their own beliefs, actions and teaching practices, and develop ways to mitigate any unconscious biases. Deconstructing these knowledge frameworks can help staff members and other key stakeholders to positively change the trajectory of the school's culture and readdress acts of deficit thinking (Macfarlane, 2010; Shields, 2014). Furthermore, addressing preconceived beliefs, and cultural and power imbalances may help students and their families to feel their home language and cultural traditions are valued and acceptable within the school. R. Goddard et al. (2001) acknowledge that students and their parents, especially those who are culturally, socially and financially disadvantaged, need to be able to trust their school principal and teachers "to help them decode the dominant culture" of the school and society (p. 6). Such actions are likely to increase students' and parents' overall sense of belonging and engagement with their school (Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Macfarlane, 2010; McNae, 2014; Mills &

Gale, 2010; Shields, 2014; Starratt, 2014). These practices enable stakeholders, particularly students and parents, to understand and acquire the "knowledge, skills, dispositions that enable internalisation of norms valued" by society's dominant culture (Bennett et al., 2014, p. 383). Thus, culturally literate school recovery leaders are more likely to negotiate and adopt practices that are socio-culturally pertinent to developing a healthy school community.

Building school capability and capacity

School principals working to re-establish a contextually and culturally responsive school focus on building the school's capabilities and capacity by explicitly building and expanding the professional capital within and beyond it (Fullan, 2016b; A. Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Harris & Jones, 2013; Sergiovanni, 1998). As principals focus on building and expanding schools' capabilities and capacity, they want to grow the collective capabilities of stakeholders to sustain a culture of improvement. As schools' cultures improve, principals empower staff to make decisions and accept leadership responsibilities (Bennett et al., 2014; Glaze, 2018; Jones et al., 2014; McCabe, 2011; Morando Rhim et al., 2007; Notman & Henry, 2011). Principals will support staff to be accountable for their professional practice and become more confident to amend their teaching practices to meet the needs of students and the school community.

School recovery leaders may challenge and support staff to teach in ways that affirm "students' cultural identities" and "meet their cultural and learning needs" (Cavanagh et al., 2012, p. 445). This includes using culturally responsive and socially just practices and support systems to address challenging and disruptive behaviours (Cavanagh et al., 2012; Kosaretsky et al., 2016; Morrison et al., 2015). Attending to student behaviours is important for the overall health and wellbeing of individuals, the school and society. However, changing school-wide entrenched behaviours is a challenging, complex and emotionally draining task.

As positive change becomes established within a school, relationships between leaders and teachers are likely to strengthen, as may the relationships between teacher-student-parent (Fullan, 2016b; Lumby, 2013). At the same time, student behaviour and learning may improve and a sense of learning and progress permeates the school (Augustine-Shaw et al., 2017; Baroody, 2011; Cavanagh et al., 2012; West

et al., 2005). Thus, as "cultural change begins to reshape the environment" (Augustine-Shaw et al., 2017, p. 217), a new atmosphere permeates the school and community. Teachers and students feel safe and empowered to confidently take risks with their teaching and learning (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Drago-Severson, 2012; Habegger, 2008; Wrigley, 2011).

By focusing on re-culturing the school, building school capacity and enhancing people's sense of social and emotional safety (Angelle, 2017a; Beatty, 2007a), school leaders may be in a position to promote a socially cohesive and inclusive school. Such leaders might foster rigorous practices of professional self-reflection as the new norm. As a school's capacity for growth and development extends, shared leadership enables formal and informal leaders to emerge (Drago-Severson, 2012; Li, 2017). In time, these practices and processes are likely to provide an avenue for succession planning within the school while supporting others to step into leadership positions in other schools (Gurr et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2014; Parker et al., 2011).

Initiating change

Educational change is inevitable (Fullan, 2001, 2008). However, many leaders are reluctant to change (Branson & Gross, 2014; Gamage, 2006; Garcia et al., 2014). This can position the complex process of leading school recovery as unpredictable and challenging (Starr, 2014b).

As indicated in the previous section and discussed in *Stakeholders resistance to change*, internal school change may encourage staff to reassess their values, beliefs, actions and views of the school or a cohort of students. Staff beliefs, actions and views may add to the difficulty a principal may experience in bringing about change (Garcia et al., 2014; McNae with Cook, 2017). Perhaps though, the greatest difficulty school recovery leaders may face is "reconciling the views and expectations" of multiple stakeholders (Gamage, 2006, p. 180). In such circumstances, it may be advisable for school leaders to initially set a small number of realistic goals that align with the current needs of the school (Glaze, 2018; J. Holmes, 2017; Kosaretsky et al., 2016; Le Floch et al., 2017).

Principals leading a school's recovery journey will understand and acknowledge they are not just engaging in changing the school, they are working with people, "with all the human drama that accompanies personal pride and identity" (Reeves, 2009, p. 87).

Lee-Corbin (2005), Orr et al. (2008) and West et al. (2005) advise it can take some time before all stakeholders associated with a recovering school overcome the effects of any countervailing deficit notions of failure or blame. Thus, school recovery principals acknowledge and accept that change takes time and is gradual (C. Day et al., 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Li, 2017; Murphy, 2008; Stoll & Fink, 1998). Principals will persevere, focus on building their school's culture and capacity, and attempt multiple strategies to achieve a state of recovery and positive health (Augustine-Shaw et al., 2017). Principals acknowledge that school recovery is important not only for the psychological, psychosocial, behavioural and academic needs of students, but also for everyone associated with the school (Boyce & Bowers, 2016).

School recovery leadership is complex and challenging work. Understanding and acknowledging, and being supported to alter the school's various countervailing pressures experienced, may assist principals to identify and address any negative school culture and practices. Working with stakeholders, principals may identify and re-address emotional, relational and socio-cultural harm, both within the school and the wider community, to develop a positive school culture (Cavanagh et al., 2012; Hickman, 2012). Through such processes of rebuilding, all stakeholders may better engage with, and develop deep, trusting relationships with one another (Augustine-Shaw et al., 2017; Fullan, 2008; Harvey & Broyles, 2010; J. Holmes, 2017; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Spiro, 2018). Leading a school towards positive change takes time, effort, and awareness of the multifaceted factors affecting the school. Obtaining and sustaining long-term change involves all stakeholders and is achieved through positive relationships. This highlights the highly relational nature of school recovery leadership.

Relational leadership

School recovery leadership can be emotionally and relationally labour-intensive work (Fuller, 2017; A. Hargreaves, 2004; Louis & Murphy, 2017; Nicolaidou & Ainscow, 2005; Poirel & Yvon, 2014; Zembylas, 2013). A principal's ability to work with, and alongside, various stakeholders, both inside and outside of the school, relies on many factors and influences. One of these factors is the principal's professional and social positioning within the school and beyond in the community (Angelle, 2017c; Hadfield & Jopling, 2012; Mintrop & Charles, 2017; Moolenaar & Sleegers, 2015; Price, 2015).

This may mean that principals, consciously or otherwise, will consider how peoples' "perceptions, evaluations and relationships" of them as leaders (Angelle, 2017c, p. 69), may influence their own behaviour. This may leave some leaders feeling vulnerable. Showing vulnerability, however, may strengthen people's trust in them (F. Meyer et al., 2017).

Fullan (2016a) argues that improved relationships throughout a school and its stakeholders are a key indicator of successful school recovery. A culture of care throughout a school not only requires people to establish relationships with one another, but also to continually model, discuss, and engage in caring actions that are culturally and contextually appropriate (Angelle, 2017; Cavanagh et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2014; Lumby, 2013; McNae with Cook, 2017; Noddings, 2013; Notman et al., 2017; Starratt, 2014; West et al., 2005). This is unlikely to be easy or straightforward, but rather messy and complex.

Principals undertaking the work of leading a school's recovery, therefore need not only inner resilience but also a "sense of optimism and a balanced perspective" about their work (Gurr et al., 2014, p. 89). Ideally, they will lead with moral courage and purpose, and invest a sense of hope in all stakeholders (Branson, 2010; McNae with Cook, 2017; Shields, 2014; Tuana, 2014). Working with stakeholders, principals will be intent on developing a cohesive school culture and practices. Stakeholders (such as teachers and students), through this process, need to feel safe enough to confidently take risks with their teaching and learning (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Drago-Severson, 2012; Glaze, 2018; Habegger, 2008; Wrigley, 2011). As the overall school climate improves, levels of communication increase. Staff may exhibit increased levels of trust in one another, resulting in strengthened relational and professional confidence (Carpenter, 2015). In turn, this positive, confident school climate is likely to engender improved educational and social outcomes for all (Gurr, 2014; Kemmis et al., 2014; P. Smith & Bell, 2011; Wrigley, 2011).

It is perhaps both a moral and a social imperative that factors contributing to school decline are identified. Addressing school decline factors and engaging in school recovery practices is complex, challenging and emotional work.

The following section considers some implications and limitations in school decline research. To end the chapter, I discuss the notion of principal's lived experiences.

Implications and limitations

Finding research literature on school decline is difficult. Duke (2008a, 2008b), Hochbein (2011, 2012b) and Reynolds et al. (2016) suggest this is likely because school decline research is problematic, complex and methodologically challenging. These authors suggest this is partially due to the slow rate of a school's decline that may make it impossible to truly identify and/or understand the nature of the original decline triggers. Furthermore, researching school decline relies on people's memories and stories of the past, both of which change and evolve over time (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Relying on people's memories is problematic, both in terms of accuracy and reliability of memory, but also as some people may be unwilling or unable to assess their actions (Josselson, 2013; Polkinghorne, 2007), especially as the consequences of any past [in]action is now publicly known. I will address the implications of relying on people's memory in Chapter 3.

Schools decline for a variety of reasons. A combination of events, time, personnel and social, cultural and economic influences are likely to have played their part in negatively affecting a school. These influences may have significant long-term effects. While school decline needs to be addressed, it is important for principals, researchers and governments to identify and fully diagnose "how and why decline occurs" (Hochbein, 2012a, p. 87). It is equally important, Duke advises (2012), that once a declining school has been identified, any externally imposed interventions are uniquely contextualised to it.

However, there is a scarcity of information relating to specific, ongoing and targeted support for individual schools emerging from the recovery period (Sun et al., 2007). As suggested by researchers such as Redding and Morando Rhim (2014), Reynolds (1995), Stark (1998), school recovery and turnaround programmes are not the same as school improvement programmes. Schools involved with recovery processes such as statutory intervention have entered these because the school was in a state of decline or because it was identified as being perpetually low-performing. Therefore, the conditions and issues within a school may require significantly different levels of intervention, support, guidance and care before it can focus on long-term improvement programmes. It will be important for my research to delve into understanding the kinds of conditions and issues that underpin participating principals' experiences. Such

background knowledge might help examine the school's trajectory from decline to recovery.

Therefore, understanding how schools decline is important in my research. While my focus is on the perceptions and experiences of primary school principals leading a school during a statutory intervention, understanding the influencing factors that lead to a school intervention is essential. With this background knowledge and understanding of school decline, it may be possible to view the principals' work, their experiences and their perceptions through various lenses. Understanding a school's history may enable us to see whether the actions of the current principals mirror the decline of the schools or are undertaken in reversed sequence, or whether the actions of the principals might only indirectly relate to the original declining influences.

Principals' lived experiences

Schools are multifaceted and diverse organisations situated in complex educational ecologies (Notman & Henry, 2011; Peck & Reitzug, 2014). School principals are in a unique position, having a social identity signalling to others their membership to an organisation and identifying them as the leader of a school (Bolden et al., 2011). They are likely to be pivotal to a school's recovery journey, while community, cultural, social and political issues are likely to influence recovery conditions (Ahumada et al., 2016; Cavanagh et al., 2012; Goldstein & Woodhouse, 2000; Notman, 2011). It is therefore important principals understand and respond to the various micro, meso and macro influences and countervailing pressures on school environments as they implement and lead school recovery processes (Hallinger, 2005; P. Smith & Bell, 2011; Theoharis, 2007). Principals, along with key stakeholders, will both shape and be shaped by the processes and changes within the school (Angelle, 2017c; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Kemmis et al., 2014). Yet, little is known or understood about how principals are shaped by their lived experiences, especially those in the middle of complex challenging contextual situations, such as statutory intervention (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Eagly, 2005; Hassel & Hassel, 2009; Hickey, 2010; Ilies et al., 2005; Meyers & Murphy, 2007; Morando Rhim et al., 2007; Riley & Langan-Fox, 2013; Sparrowe, 2005).

As indicated in Riley's (2017) 2016 NZEI principals health and wellbeing survey, school leaders are expected to demonstrate high emotional skills while working and supporting various stakeholders. However, the report also found that school leaders experienced increased burnout and stress symptoms such as difficulty sleeping, cognitive stress symptoms, obesity and depression, and somatic symptoms. There was increased reliance on alcohol and/or medication to manage stress levels. Riley's (2017) report indicated a significant number of school leaders experienced "high work-family conflict" (p. 47) for their time, and physical/mental energy decreased. Overall, the report indicated that because of the complexity and demanding nature of school leadership work and the demands of the role, occupational stress has steadily increased.

These New Zealand findings are similar to earlier research into Australian primary principals health and wellbeing (Riley, 2015; Riley & Langan-Fox, 2013) and some smaller New Zealand studies on primary principals (Cubitt & Burt, 2002; Hodgen & Wylie, 2005; Wylie, 2008, 2017). Likewise, McNae's (2017) work with socially just leaders indicates some principals lead with "significant personal costs, physically and emotionally" (p. 266). While the aforementioned researchers do not specifically consider those leading schools during complex situations such as statutory intervention, uncovering the extent to which my participating principals report similar health and wellbeing concerns will be part of my research. Beatty (2007a) suggests for most school leaders, "the personal self is 'buried' under other roles and expectations. [Furthermore], emotional honesty [is] a 'luxury' that most leaders … simply [can]not afford, not even with themselves" (p. 56). This causes me to wonder how, where, or even if, the principals involved in my research accessed support for themselves, and the extent of their honesty about the situation within their school and the effects on their overall health and wellbeing.

Burbach and Butler (2005) claim school recovery principalship is a "higher order of moral calling" (p. 1) to address factors that inhibit students' academic and social success (Hewitt & Reitzug, 2017). School turnaround research indicates principals moral calling often transcended "both the religious and social domains" (Burbach & Butler, 2005, p. 1). However, Burbach and Butler (2005) caution principals to give serious thought "as to what they consider to be the right reasons" for undertaking this work (p. 1). These authors also note that principals who choose to work in challenging

schools do so not for the financial reward or the kudos, but because they have an "abiding sensitivity to the unique challenges of children with a history of poor academic success in school" (Burbach & Butler, 2005, p. 1). These principals work to develop a school culture that ensures every child experiences success and achievement while attending that school. Furthermore, the literature relating to principals leading in challenging contexts suggest they possess a "unique and rare talent for leading" (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, p. 30), have "unusual supplies of optimism and persistence" (Murphy, 2008, p. 91), assertiveness and tenacity, flexibility, commitment, hope, self-believe and thrive in challenging situations (Gurr et al., 2014; Meyers & Hitt, 2017). Moreover, these leaders have a strong sense of moral purpose (Burbach & Butler, 2005; Gurr et al., 2014; Hewitt & Reitzug, 2017) and "*deep coping*" skills (Firestone, 1991, p. 7).

While these statements may be particularly relevant to incoming principals working in high-need schools, how might they apply to principals who were leading a school prior to an intervention? Do these principals still have this reservoir of skills and inner characteristics to call upon, or have these been exhausted due to a school's situation? This is a limitation of school turnaround literature, and it is perhaps due to the generic approach of removing current school principals when a school enters into an intervention.

Nevertheless, there is an omission amongst school leadership literature on information pertaining to the professional struggles and difficulties school recovery may experience such as the *countervailing pressures* indicated on pages 36-40. Furthermore, silence often surrounds any admission from school leaders, least of all school recovery leaders, about the personal impact of leading in such challenging and complex situations and environment.

Conclusion

School decline may occur in any school; it may be a slow unobservable process or it may occur rapidly following a significant event (Weitzel & Jonsson, 1991). Regardless of how or when the decline began to occur, it is important to address areas of concern immediately before decline spirals and causes irreversible damage (Duke,

2008a; Weitzel & Jonsson, 1989, 1991; Whetten, 1980). However, no two schools are alike, even those of similar size, student population, and cultural, social and environmental backgrounds. Morrison (2017) claims the "lived experiences of school principals cannot be divorced from the social, cultural, political, and historical milieu in which they are situated and narrated" (p. 44). When I interview New Zealand primary principals who are leading schools in statutory intervention – I wonder to what extent the school context influences their leadership and any organisational changes they are introducing and implementing in their schools? Furthermore, how do the broader contexts within which these principals live and work, affect their actions and leadership practices. More importantly, what are the lived experiences of these principals whose schools are under statutory intervention and how do they make sense of their "highly personal, contextually and culturally specific" experiences (McNae, 2017, p. 251).

Implementing change requires school recovery leaders to be morally convinced change is required (Branson, 2010). Principals must establish the conditions for change implementation, the re-establishment of trusting relationships and the school's re-culturing in an emotionally and socially safe manner. Furthermore, school recovery leaders need inner resilience to recover quickly from set-backs, have high mental focus and emotional energy to manage their own emotions as well as supporting others to manage their own emotions (Lochmiller & Chesnut, 2017; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). Above all, these leaders need to be personally and professionally resilient and persistent, and have deep moral courage to act (Burbach & Butler, 2005; Gurr et al., 2014; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Peck & Reitzug, 2014; Shields, 2014).

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the underpinning theoretical framework of my research and my position as an insider researcher. Firstly, my philosophical beliefs are identified within the research paradigm. I then focus on narrative research and in particular, the relational aspect of narrative inquiry and the ethical considerations embedded in this methodology.

Qualitative research

The field of educational research draws upon and adapts a range of theoretical, methodological or philosophical research understandings from other disciplines, such as sociology and the sciences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, 2013b; Hartas, 2010). Lichtman (2013) asserts qualitative research relies on "non-numerical data, particularly words or visual images" to answer questions (p. 4). Stake (2010) considers a different angle, and says "qualitative studies are best at … examining the actual, ongoing ways that personal or organisations are doing their thing" (p. 2). Therefore, educational researchers studying the behaviour of a small number of school leaders for instance, are likely to select qualitative research as their methodology of choice (Hartas, 2010; Lichtman, 2013; Seidman, 2006).

Qualitative research may include researchers studying the thoughts and actions of participants in their settings, thus requiring the researcher "to connect with people in an authentic way and to truly perceive the realities of a situation" (Stevahn & King, 2014, p. 161). In order for me to successfully complete my research project, I needed to connect with the participating New Zealand primary principals authentically if I was to truly understand their lived experiences, their realities, of leading a high-need school through a statutory intervention.

Dilthey (1860s-70s, cited in Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014) believes people's lived experiences "occur within a particular historical, social" (p. 11) and cultural context. The historical context of my research was two-fold. One historical

position is within New Zealand's 'Tomorrow's School' contextual framework of self-governing schools. The second historical positioning is the immediate past (and current) history of the participating principals' school being placed in a Ministry of Education statutory intervention. The social and cultural positioning of this research is contextualised within the "professional-knowledge landscape" of New Zealand primary school principalship (Clandinin et al., 2009; Connelly & Clandinin, 1995b). Connelly and Clandinin (1995b) describe professional-knowledge landscapes as a metaphor encompassing the "interface of theory … [and] teachers' personal practical knowledge" (p. 4). The professional knowledge of teachers consists of, and is influenced by, a variety of interconnecting relationships with people, places, time and things (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995b). I have applied Connelly and Clandinin's (1995b) professional knowledge description to the participating principals' professional-knowledge landscape, encompassing their principalship of a high-need school placed in statutory intervention.

Narrative research paradigm

A research paradigm refers to the beliefs or sets of assumptions a researcher holds about what should be studied (phenomena), how a phenomenon is studied and how the results are analysed (Henn et al., 2009). The research paradigm incorporates a researcher's ontological and epistemological views and is reflected in methodological choice. Therefore, a researcher's philosophical position is interwoven throughout their research.

I was interested in understanding New Zealand primary principals' experiences of leading a high-need school during a statutory intervention. As I was using narrative inquiry to gather principals' stories, my ontological and epistemological position viewed participants as being able to independently gain knowledge and understanding about their world through their own experiences and learning. However, both the participants and my understanding and knowledge was enhanced when we shared and constructed our experiences and learning together. As we interacted and related with one another, we developed and built upon our existing knowledge which may then influence how we interact with future experiences (Dewey, 1938). Through our

interactions, the participants and myself co-constructed new knowledge and understandings. We were able to further enhance, to define, to challenge, and perhaps alter, our understanding of the world. Dewey (1938) states "all human experience is ultimately social: that it involves contact and communication" (p. 38), he believes with "every experience enacted and undergone" (Dewey, 1938, p. 35), people are changed in some way; the person who emerges from an experience, is seldom the same as the one who enters it. Clandinin (2013) suggests this ontological view should be considered as "transactional or relational" – and that this perspective is "fundamental to narrative inquiry" (p. 16).

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) draw upon their understanding of Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and its two criterion – interaction and continuity enacting with a situation, to suggest Dewey's ontology is transactional. They suggest narrative researchers who use Dewey's (1938) theory of experience, will understand and situate the ontological commitments of narrative inquiry as a transactional ontology. Narrative researchers acknowledge both the phenomenon under study, and its contextual location. They see people's interactions with phenomena as temporal, forever changing and shifting.

A narrative ontology involves a researcher's relational commitment to their participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000); a commitment which views experience as "knowledge for living" (Caine, Estefan, & Clandinin, 2013, p. 576). One way of establishing and maintaining relationships with the participants is through storytelling. People live storied lives, both as individuals and as members of a community and of society – as individuals, we are the main character of our personal story and by sharing our lived stories or an experience with others, we are retelling and reliving our lives as it was at that particular moment in time (Clandinin, 2013). As we continually experience new events, ideas and knowledge in our lives, our lived stories continue to evolve. When we share our experiences with others, we begin to subconsciously reflect on what we have learnt and how we have changed as a result of the initial experience. We integrate this new self-knowledge and understanding, while also drawing upon the knowledge and experiences of others involved (i.e. family members or class members) to deepen our cognition. We each have our own understanding of the world and we interact differently with our surroundings, while at the same time, we co-construct and negotiate knowledge with others through our actions and words.

We continually develop and renegotiate our relationship with each other. Waring (2012) proposes that this transactional paradigm is one which dissolves the "conventional distinction between ontology and epistemology" (p. 18). Connelly and Clandinin (2006) concede "narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story … is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience" (p. 477), and experience is "relational, continual, and social" - all of which are fundamental to narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2013, p. 17).

Narrative research

Using a narrative approach in research has usually been associated with the social sciences, although more recently, narrative research has experienced resurgence within educational research (Barkuizen et al., 2014; Creswell, 2012; Ormston et al., 2014; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Barkuizen et al. (2014) suggests the main strength of narrative inquiry is the use of people's stories to "make sense of their experiences … it is important to understand phenomena from the perspectives of those who experience them" (p. 2). These stories provide differing perspectives of an event and "often uncover issues that had not previously been visible" (Barkuizen et al., 2014, p. 5). For my doctoral research, I was researching the experiences of New Zealand primary principals who have led or are currently leading, a school under statutory intervention. The only way to experience and explore this was through their stories. While statutory interventions have been implemented since the early 1990's (Thrupp, 1995; Wylie, 2012a, 2013), narratives from principals' about their experiences, have been scarce. I aimed to make visible the experiences of New Zealand primary principals as they led their school through the intervention process.

Narrative researchers Connelly and Clandinin (1990), suggest there are significant differences between the terms 'story' and 'narrative'. They advocate the phenomenon being studied – that is the "construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2) about people's experiences, is the 'story' and that the inquiry into the phenomenon is the 'narrative'. They explain this further, saying "people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative inquirers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). The interweaving of

narrative inquiry and narrative as phenomena make this a unique method within the field of qualitative research (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007).

Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2013) suggest narrative research enables researchers to "see the different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with each other, and to understand more about individual and social change" (p. 2). Narrative research helps educational researchers understand not just the stories, but also the social and cultural landscapes of teachers' professional knowledge in which the stories have been situated.

I drew upon Connelly and Clandinin (1990) view that story and narrative inquiry are both phenomena and methodology; as I framed my research into the perceptions of New Zealand primary school principals and their experiences while leading and managing schools under statutory intervention. I sought the participants stories "as data and the narrative as analysis which involves interpreting the story, placing it in context, and comparing it with other [participants] stories" (Patton, 2015, p. 128). It was important I understood the context of the stories being shared, how each principal positioned their social and cultural landscapes, and how these may have influenced or affected their leadership experiences. This helped me present the principals narratives authentically.

People's experiences

The essence of a narrative inquiry study is to understand people's lives through their storied experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Narrative inquiry is a way of "understanding and inquiring" into a phenomenon "situated in relationships and community, and it (narrative inquiry) attends to notions of expertise and knowing in relational and participatory ways" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 13). Narrative researchers must listen to, and hear, the stories embedded within people's experiences, and how these stories have been relationally and contextually situated. It requires researchers to acknowledge silences, and uncomfortable uncertainties, along with the back-tracking and rewinding of stories, as people sift through their memories and recall actions, words and emotions they associate with the phenomenon under study.

Dewey (1938) states that every experience is a transaction between the person and their environment, as it is at that specific time. He suggests with every experience, people are changed in some way; they are different from when they first entered the

experience to when they exited the experience. Along the way, the person has acquired new knowledge, skills and understanding, as well as extending and growing those with which they first entered the experience. These in turn, will affect how the person interacts with subsequent experiences and so on. Dewey (1938) clarifies:

> we always live at the time we live and not some other time, and only by extracting at each present time that full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future (p. 94).

Clandinin (2013) suggests our knowledge is generated through our experiences which are contextually situated and biased from the storytellers perspective. This had important implications for my study - the principals' stories were contextualised within their professional-knowledge landscape of leading a school. They told their lived stories - their experiences of leading and managing a school under statutory intervention. By returning to these experiences, the principals may be validating their knowledge and understanding gained from the experience. However, it is unlikely I will know the extent to which they were being selective in their retelling.

The principals in my research shared stories of their experiences of leading and managing a school under statutory intervention. These stories were embedded with the social and cultural landscapes of each principal's workplace. These stories are founded on values and contribute to important aspects the principal's personal and professional history.

Narrative inquiry is relational

Narrative researchers draw the concepts of continuity, places and sociality together to frame narrative inquiry as a relational approach to research. In narrative inquiry, its relational approach to social research places 'others' as the knowledgeable and experienced 'experts' of their storied lives and experiences (Clandinin, 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Narrative researchers consider the context of the phenomenon under study and how people interact with it. Clandinin (2013) describes narrative inquiry as a "relational methodology" (p. 135) in which people's narrative accounts of experiences which are "relational across time, places and relationships" are made visible (Clandinin, 2013, p. 19). These experiences are continuously changing and

interacting on a person's world – their personal, social and material environment (Dewey, 1938).

Narrative research is also relational in the way in which a narrative inquiry is undertaken. As narrative inquiry involves a researcher studying the way in which a phenomenon has influenced a person's thoughts and their world, narrative inquirers require access to people (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Consequently, narrative researchers must firstly negotiate and establish, and then continually maintain, a relationship with those they are seeking to understand. Without an inquirer/participant relationship, the researcher may be denied full access to the phenomena being studied. It is the participant who holds the key to allowing the researcher full access to the history, the contextual background and the current situation, as well as access to key narrators, of the phenomena. Without this access, the researcher may not confidently claim that they have studied the phenomena in detail. As my research is focused on New Zealand primary school principals and their experiences of leading and managing complex situations, I needed to interview principals undergoing statutory intervention.

I therefore needed to gather and interpret their stories within the social and cultural context of their schools and compare individual principals' stories (Patton, 2015). I cannot rely only on my own professional experiences. When moving my research from the field-to-field text and into research text, I needed to retain contextual connections between principals and their experiences. I needed to keep the principal's stories located within their professional-knowledge landscape of their individual schools as located within the larger field of education in New Zealand.

Josselson (2013) strengthens the argument for the development of a relationship between the researcher and the participant, stating that if there is an "emotional and psychological interaction" between the researcher and the participant, the more meaningful and deeper the "contextualised account of the participants' experience" will be (p. 5). Josselson's (2013) statement may be particularly relevant to my research as not only are my participants experienced in leading schools under statutory management, of potentially working with the uncomfortable uncertainties associated with this phenomenon, so was I. Therefore, I may have had a deeper, more emotional and empathetic relationship with these principals than a researcher who has not experienced this phenomenon themselves. I needed be cognisant of the interactions,

the continuity of time and experience, and the contextual landscapes within which this research and the participants' stories was located and how these converged to shape the realities of this research.

Challenges and limitations

Using a relational methodology, a researcher has to consider the ethics involved, the problematic position of 'insider researcher' and researcher influence, (Munn-Giddings, 2012) and address issues of reflexivity. Because narrative researchers aim "to understand the experiences of participants" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 165) they will scrutinize their researchers' voice to ensure they are thinking and scripting their writing narratively and maintaining the first-person voice of their participants and their experiences.

The focus of my research was on the 'telling' of stories – the past, rather than on the 'living' as life or school events unfold (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Drawing upon my own experiences of leading a school through the statutory intervention process, I was able to empathise with, and support the principals to delve deeper into some of the complex issues that they may have dealt with, in order for them to understand how these interactions and experiences have affected them today. The act of participating in an interview that asks them to reflect on their leadership situation and experiences, may have served in some ways as therapeutic, for the interview asks them to recall actions, emotions, events and relationships in a neutral setting. My understanding of the phenomenon under study enabled me to present the findings through a lens from which to view a principal's reality of leading a school under statutory intervention.

Relying on memory

Statutory intervention may take years. Thus, calling on principals' memories of their actions, experiences, thoughts, facts or opinions about events is necessary. However, relying on participants' memories can be problematic and limiting as memories are not always verifiable. Josselson (2013) states our experiences are stored in our "memory in the form of stories" (p. 5) which when retold and shared with others, are shared as a narrative. Polkinghorne (1995) also suggests peoples' storied narratives are "autobiographical accounts" (p. 7) of their experiences, however, these recounts may only be partial due to memory flaws, and by the storyteller perceiving the interest of

the listener (the researcher). As such, the storyteller may adapt what they are saying, omitting or expanding events they consider interesting and worthy of sharing (Josselson, 2013). As the storyteller of this thesis, I endeavoured to remain true to the participants' stories when identifying and presenting key points of interests.

Tensions and borderlands

Tensions can exist between "people, events or things" (Clandinin et al., 2009, p. 82) and if used positively, they can create the space for reflection, for new learning or gaining new understanding. (Clandinin et al., 2009, p. 82) They suggest tensions or 'bumps' within a research project are not necessarily a "negative valence … something to be avoided or smoothed over" (p. 82). Instead, the tensions may indicate a problem within the research or within the research field. Clandinin et al. (2009) indicate tensions provide an opportunity for the researcher to "self-face". Turning the research lens back on themselves may enable researchers to see how they had "learned to deny or cover over the tensions [they themselves] had experienced" (Clandinin et al., 2009, p. 82).

Thus, narrative researchers "intentionally attend to the tensions to identify bumping places" (Clandinin et al., 2009, p. 83) and they acknowledge that people are shaped and influenced by "different social, cultural, linguistic, and institutional narratives" and experiences. These experiences position people in "different ways within the professional knowledge landscape" (Clandinin et al., 2009, p. 83). It is important to note in my research, that while the participants were from the professional-knowledge landscape of being a New Zealand primary school principal; their experiences and their stories were different, therefore tensions existed within this professional-knowledge landscape. I needed to be open to the possibility of tensions and identify whether the participants were avoiding or silencing their experiences in an effort to provide a smoother story of their professional, social and cultural landscape, or whether their silence was a time of reflection, of gathering their thoughts before sharing these with me (Clandinin et al., 2009).

Narrative researchers may find themselves in conflict between the tensions of their own histories, and those of their participants, and as such, they "need to be alert to [these] possible tensions" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 46). Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) call these tensions 'borderlands'. Borderlands are spaces where a researcher

may “encounter both deep similarities and profound differences between their own experience and those with whom they … [are researching], neither of which can be reduced for the other” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 59). When interviewing the New Zealand primary school principals, I needed to be alert to the possibility of tensions developing between what I was told and what I believed I wanted to hear. Just because I have particular experiences of leading a school under statutory management, it does not necessarily follow that all other principals in similar situations will have similar experiences. Each participating principal provided a different perspective of the reality of leading a school under statutory management (Patton, 2015). I needed to be cognisant of tensions developing and be a reflexive researcher; I had to identify and attend to these tensions, and I acknowledge these tensions for the readers of this thesis.

Ethical considerations

Narrative inquiry is underpinned by a relational methodology, therefore Clandinin (2013) states it is “deeply ethical” (p. 30). When a researcher is undertaking narrative inquiry research, they are behaving in a relational and ethical way, as they are often unable to separate their personal ethics with those required within the research methodology. She adds researchers have a “commitment to relationships” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 30), which in turn, allows access to the storied lives of their participants. A positive relationship between a researcher and participant helps a researcher understand how the context of the participant’s narrative influences their experiences, actions and identity. The ethical commitments of narrative inquiry have huge implications for my research. If I was gifted access to principals’ stories of their experiences, and fully understand these experiences and the social and cultural landscapes in which they are situated, I needed to establish and maintain a relationship built upon an ‘ethic of care’ with my research participants.

Narrative inquiry researchers may nurture the possibility of a relationship with their participants that may only be temporary and exists for the duration of the research project. Noddings (2013) cautions that “an ethic of caring implies a limit on our obligation” (p. 86). For example, a participant may share their pain or unhappiness while recalling the uncomfortable uncertainties of their situations. Accordingly, I was not compelled to act on this; I may reject my impulse to respond to their pain (Noddings, 2013). Although Noddings (2013) clarifies, if I were acting morally, I

would not reject this impulse; implying that when I was interviewing my participants, I could demonstrate my ethic of care towards them as they relive their memories of uncomfortable uncertainties.

Authenticity and trustworthiness

My research was designed to gather the stories of New Zealand primary school principals leading and managing a school under unique and often difficult circumstances. The individualised and contextualised recounts of these principals were vitally important to this research. As these accounts were highly individualised, it is unlikely there will be other New Zealand primary principals who have exactly the same experiences of leading and managing a school under statutory intervention. As Dewey (1938) reminds us, experiences develop and evolve, and they change people along the way; thus making them what they are because of the interaction between the person and their environment at that particular moment in time. Therefore, in using Dewey's (1938) theory of experience to underpin how experiences are viewed in this research project, the criteria of reliability and validity are unable to be used, and as such, they need replacing with different criteria – authenticity and trustworthiness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a).

Authenticity is an important consideration for social researchers; it enables other social researchers to assess the quality of research undertaken, and it assists them to understand the research approach and methodology used by others (Bush, 2012). Bush (2012) states authenticity is "particularly important for research on school leadership and management" as there is a "temptation for researchers to place the best possible gloss on their findings" (p. 76). In an effort for their research to be considered by others, some researchers may be tempted to publish the positive aspects of their research while ignoring the negative findings. I needed to be aware of this temptation. From my personal and professional experience of leading such a school, I know that it is far from glossy – some very hard and difficult times are experienced. I was cognisant of principals' stories and of the possibility they may have been selective in retelling one particular aspect of school leadership – the positive side. I shared some of my less positive experiences with the principals in an effort to show empathy and support for hearing about *all* their experiences.

Authenticity and trustworthiness also applies to the principals' narratives. Authenticity and trustworthiness was achieved by asking the principals in my study to read through the transcripts of their interviews; to amend or delete any statements they felt necessary to ensure their stories were represented in the manner intended, or to clarify any questions rising from their interview (Dimmock & Lam, 2012; Josselson, 2013; Patton, 2015; Polkinghorne, 1995). I discuss the authenticating of principals interviews in detail in the following chapter – *validity of interviews*. Trustworthiness may arise around the questioning of whether a research report says what it really claims to say (Bassey, 2012). I heeded this by asking myself if my research report was sufficiently detailed to give the reader confidence in the claims made (Bassey, 2012). Trustworthiness also applies to the relationship between researcher/participant; without trust, neither party will fully engage in the research process, thereby reducing the likelihood of obtaining rich, deeply-contextual and personal participant recounts

Reflexivity

Researcher reflexivity is vitally important for a narrative inquirer, and Clandinin (2013) suggests this begins as soon as a narrative inquirer starts to contemplate a new narrative research project. Ali and Kelly (2012) define reflexivity as the "ability to reflect and learn from experience and [to] use that learning during the research process" (p. 59). Guba and Lincoln (2005) suggest reflexivity occurs when the researcher critically reflects on themselves, their role as a researcher and the multiple selves they bring to the research and create along the way.

By turning the research lens back onto myself, I questioned not only my research questions, and my interpretations of the research data, but the "values and assumptions" I conveyed and possibly embedded into the research project (Henn et al., 2009, p. 210). As a reflexive researcher, I considered these questions throughout the research process and questioned the way I might have guided the research towards a certain direction, instead of being open to the research guiding itself; of being open to both the expected and unexpected results (White, 2013). I contemplated what I learnt about the research problem, what I might learnt about myself in the process and how the situational context of the research field was determining which 'self' was coming to the fore and influencing how I interacted with my research participants, the setting and the data being gathered (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011).

Participant voice

When a study involves the gathering of participant voices – their thoughts, opinions, knowledge and understandings of the phenomena under study, the researcher is in a position of power – I was the one who predominantly "asked the questions and the interviewee who answered" (Kvale, 2007, p. 2). It was my responsibility to make it "possible for the person being interviewed to bring the interviewer into his or her world" (Patton, 2015, p. 427). I was the one who decided what and whose 'voices' to include, exclude or even interpret in a manner not intended by the participant (Olesen, 2013). However, my research participants hold an element of power with regard to sharing; deciding what to share and how they will retell their experiences. I could enter my participant's world without their invitation; they are gatekeepers to their own personal knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon. The principals will gate-keep their stories, their knowledge and understanding, their experiences of dealing with the uncomfortable uncertainties surrounding their work, and the impact which their position has had on their personal- and professional-knowledge landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 2007).

Stake (1995) asserts in order for me to allow my readers to hear the participants' voice, I needed to "develop *vicarious experiences* for the reader, to give them a sense of 'being there'" (p. 63). He claims this enables readers to better deal with similar situations themselves, and to do this, I needed to "know the particularity of a case, its situationality, and its social context" (Stake, 2010, p. 195). Bold (2012) cautions about the possibility of misrepresenting participants' stories and suggests I might mitigate this in several ways such as participants checking the transcript of their interviews and by remaining true to the contextualisation of participants' experiences and their retold stories. She warns of the "unpredictability of people's [participants and others] reactions to stories", suggesting if I consider the research from a range of perspectives, I may be able to "predict how others might react to it" (Bold, 2012, p. 63), thereby mitigating any adverse reactions.

Insider researcher

As leaders in educational settings, principals' professional practices are enhanced by their personal experiences and their "professional view is enriched" through shared understandings and knowledge of human behaviour (Stake, 2010, p. 198), and by the

numerous contextual situations which they continuously navigate. As a principal, I relied not only on my own personal experiences within the school setting, but also on the experiences of fellow principals. My interpretation of other principals' actions largely depend on my own understanding and experiences in similar situations (Stake, 2010). While I will never fully understand other people's (or principals) experiences, I can cultivate greater awareness of their experiences. I can improve and deepen my understanding of their contextual settings and situations and the implications these may have on my own personal experiences and professional view.

As a principal, I led and managed a complex, challenging high-need school through five years of statutory intervention. As an insider-researcher, my professional background highlights my need to be aware of the possibilities of borderlands existing within the similarities and differences of my own experiences and those of the participating principals. These borderlands may be more prevalent if the participants' stories, their experiences, emotions and views do not resonate with my experiences and knowledge (Bold, 2012). It was essential I remain respectful to the narrated histories of each participant's perceptions and uniquely contextualised experiences, while acknowledging the possibility of the tensions and conflict in the stories they shared (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). For some of my research participants, I may have become the metaphorical 'stranger on the train' (Josselson, 2013, p. 5); someone whom the principals could talk to without any immediate or personal consequences (Josselson, 2013).

As an educational leader undertaking doctoral research, I needed to be reflexive of the duality of my position; of being an "insider-researcher" (Munn-Giddings, 2012). I had a responsibility, not only to my research participants, but also to the integrity of my research project, to be aware of the possibility that my dual identity may influence the manner in which the participating principals responded to my questions (Busher & James, 2012; Pelias, 2011). I was aware that as an insider-researcher, I had a much deeper, lived understanding of the phenomenon under study than a researcher who has not experienced this. Therefore, I needed to be reflexive about not projecting my experiences or imposing my perceptions and understandings onto the participants nor to dilute their voices as I represent their narratives (Lincoln et al., 2011).

Furthermore, I had a responsibility to rigorously scrutinize my researcher's voice, ensuring that I was not subconsciously adapting the participants narratives and removing their voice and experiences (Clandinin, 2013). Consequently, I acknowledge that I may be inclined towards only hearing and identifying specific words, phrases, tone of voice or events that are a reflection of my knowledge and experiences, and not those of the participant. By remaining true and authentic to participants' voices, their experiences and their feelings, and by being reflexive of my insider-researcher position in this research, these concerns may be mitigated.

I selected a narrative approach for my research to allow the participating New Zealand primary school principals the space to reflect on and share their journey of leading and managing a school out of statutory intervention. Through this process, the principals may also begin to make sense of, and learn from, their own perceptions and experiences of their journey to lead a school out of statutory intervention. A journey which, in time, may help those stepping forward to take up similar principal positions (Cannella & Lincoln, 2013).

Further ethical considerations

Ethical considerations in social research, such as narrative inquiry, places the "research participants … at the centre of the research design" (Henn et al., 2009, p. 78). Ethical considerations prompt a researcher to study their behaviour, and the obligations and responsibilities embedded within their research, as well as any potential consequences of the research (Henn et al., 2009). These obligations and responsibilities include considering the effects of being truthful in their representation of the research to both their participants and the wider community (Ali & Kelly, 2012).

Ali and Kelly (2012) suggest "ethical practice is akin to a form of professional practice" (p. 59) with similar constraints and expectations for behaviour like those imposed upon professional bodies such as teaching and medicine. Litchman (2013) defines ethical behaviour as a "set of moral principles, rules, or standards governing a person or a profession" (p. 51). These codes outline to members and the general public the expected manner which members of the organisation or professional body are to uphold. In the case of this research, ethical approval was sought and granted by the University of Waikato, Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. Furthermore, while

undertaking this research project and being answerable to the University of Waikato, Faculty of Education Human Research Ethics Regulations, I continued to be a practicing, registered teacher and remained in my professional role within the education community of leading and managing a school. Therefore, I considered myself to also be accountable for upholding the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (formerly the New Zealand Teachers Council) code (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2019b).

However, while educational researchers are bound by the ethics of their research centre, we also hold individual values and ethics that govern how we interact with others. These are the values and ethics we have learnt and acquired throughout our lives. Stake (2010) suggests it is possible "our perceptions and values from any part of our lives may influence the interpretations we make in writing a final report" (p. 202). I remained true to my own code of ethics and the ethics embedded within this research while ensuring I maintained the integrity of participants' experiences.

Bryman (2012) adds ethical issues may occur at any stage of research and these cannot be left undressed. He expresses concern over ethical issues that may arise between research participants and researchers, stating they are usually, but not limited to, transgressions involving four areas. These areas, which have also been identified by a number of researchers such as (Bryman, 2012; Christians, 2013; Diener & Crandall, 1978) are: 'do no harm', gaining informed consent, protecting confidentiality and ensuring that the research is presented honestly. These four areas are embedded within the design and structure of my research.

There is one further area within the ethical considerations I will specifically address in this thesis – the concept of reciprocity. Patton (2015) suggests "participants in research provide us with something of great value – their stories and their perspectives of the world," (p. 501) therefore researchers should show they value this exchange by offering something in return. I hope that I have been able to reciprocate with the principals in two ways:

- providing the principals with some time, space and the opportunity to reflect and share with another colleague the joys, frustrations, challenges and rewards of leading and managing a complex, challenging, high-need school; and

- Through the reading of their interview transcripts, each principal has had the opportunity to see the multifaceted roles and challenging complexities they navigated as they lead their school through the statutory intervention process.

Further, there was the possible reciprocity of new professional networks and friendships being formed, and of valuing the time to sit down with another colleague and discuss a wide range of principalship topics that fell outside the parameter of my research project. An additional aspect of reciprocity from the participating principals' may be the act of 'passing it forward'; of passing on their knowledge and experience to other primary school principals who may, in the future, become leaders of other high-need schools in New Zealand.

This chapter has presented the theoretical underpinnings of my research. Chapter Four explains the methods used to collect the data and describes how the data was analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter outlines the methods of the research, the processes involved to identify potential participants and to gather the stories of their experiences. I identify some of the deliberations and challenges of data analysis and explain how key themes were identified which provide the structure for Chapter Five - Findings.

For the purposes of my research, New Zealand primary principals who had experienced leading a school under statutory intervention were the target group. The following section discusses the identification and selection of these principals.

Purposeful Sampling

The participating principals were identified through purposeful sampling. Patton (2002) claims participants can be "selected purposefully to permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomena in depth" (p. 46); in this instance, New Zealand state primary school principals experienced in leading and managing a school under statutory intervention were purposefully selected due to the potential of their "information-rich" (Patton, 2002, p. 46) knowledge of the phenomena under investigation. Purposive sampling is sometimes referred to as criterion-based sampling as participants or cases are selected for their particular knowledge, experience or characteristics which will enable researchers to investigate in detail the "central themes and questions" of the study (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 113). However Bryman (2012) suggests criterion sampling involves using all the participants or cases which meet the specified criterion, and not just selecting a few participants to participate.

Selection criteria

Due to the constraints of distance, time and the design of this thesis, I limited the number of participants to six New Zealand primary school principals leading in high-need schools such as those under statutory intervention. The following criteria were designed to identify principals who potentially had experience leading such schools.

- State primary school - contributing (Year 1-6) or full (Year 1-8) (Table 1)
- School decile rating - Decile 1-3 schools serving low socioeconomic communities (but not limited to) (Table 2)
- Primary school size - U1-U3 (up to 150 students)
- School location – across New Zealand preferred
- Gender – an even mix of participating principals is desirable to avoid possible gender-biasness of comments
- Schools placed in Statutory Intervention 78(M) or 78(N)(1-3) of the 1989 Education Act from 2012 onwards
- Principal to have lead the school during some or all of this process

Table 1: Total full and contributing state primary schools <150 students

School type	Number with a roll under 150	% with a roll under 150	Total number of schools of this type
Full primary school	620	58.1%	1068
Contributing primary school	183	23.8%	768
Total full + contributing state primary schools	**803**	**43.7%**	**1836**

(Ministry of Education, 2017b)

Table 2: Total decile1-3 full and contributing state primary schools <150 students

School type	Decile	Number with a roll < 150	% with a roll under 150	Total number of schools of this type and decile
Full primary school	1	68	64.8%	105
	2	77	70.0%	110
	3	58	58.0%	100
Contributing primary school	1	26	30.2%	86
	2	17	24.6%	69
	3	18	25.4%	71
Total decile 1-3 full and contributing state primary schools		**264**	**48.8%**	**541**

(Ministry of Education, 2017b)

Wylie (2012a) suggests that within the New Zealand education system, small schools along with schools serving low socioeconomic communities, schools with a high percentage of Maori students, and rural schools, are more likely to evolve into a high-

need school. Such factors may ultimately result in some of these schools being placed in statutory intervention. These criteria informed my list.

A location criterion meant schools throughout the country might fit the criteria. New Zealand is a small country, and as a result, has a very small group of statutory appointees to call upon. While my research does not focus on an appointee's role, I wanted to ensure any potential repetition of an appointee's involvement was mitigated in the research design.

Because the *New Zealand Gazette* (commonly referred to as '*The Gazette*') lists schools placed under Statutory Intervention 78(M) or 78(N)(1-3) of the 1989 Education Act (Education Act 1989, n.d.), this document helped identify 38 potential schools to approach.

Principal Selection

This group of 38 (10% of schools) was refined to a possible 26 once other factors were confirmed, such as whether the principal had changed or the school had closed, or if the school needed to appoint a principal. The identified schools were tracked through their school website to confirm more recent changes in principal, leaving 22 (8.3%) principals as potential research participants.

I contacted randomly selected principals across New Zealand by phone rather than through written correspondence. Because my research project traverses sensitive territory, I felt it was best to phone the principals to explain the research. Several potential participants were hesitant about joining the research because, broadly, they were unsure of whether someone else would understand the nature of their work environment, or might pass judgement on their actions and decisions.

Josselson (2007) suggests self-disclosure may help develop a "sense of collaboration and build rapport" (p. 547) between a researcher and participants. I used this idea to share a quick overview of my own experiences of leading a school through statutory intervention. By doing so, participants' concerns and hesitation were addressed. Within nine phone calls to potential principals, the participant group was full and details for the first interview (date, time and location) were negotiated. Follow-up emails to the principals confirmed interview details. Attached to this email were participant information letters (appendix 1), the initial interview schedule (appendix 2) and consent forms (appendix 3). Formal consent was obtained at the beginning of the

first interview. At the end of each interview, subsequent interview times were negotiated and later confirmed by email.

The six participating principals fell to three quite quickly. Two principals left the project due to medical, or family, or work demands. One participant did not respond to emails or phone messages prior to our second interview. Their data was subsequently deleted.

The names of the participants and schools were changed to reduce the likelihood of any person, school or community being identified.

Principals' professional-knowledge landscapes

Professional-knowledge landscapes is a metaphor devised by Clandinin and Connelly in 1995 to acknowledge the "wider contexts – social, cultural, political, and historical" (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007, p. 366) from within which teacher knowledge is situated, shaped, embedded and passed down. This section introduces the participating principals and provides background information of their personal lives and their journey to become a primary school principal. Table 3 provides some demographic information about Phillip, Susan and Grace.

Table 3: Principal information

Pseudonym (principal and school)	**Gender**	**Age**	**Total years Teaching Experience**	**Total years Principal Experience**	**Principal length of service at school (in years)**	**Initial Teacher Training**	**Principal development**
Phillip Kōtukutuku School	M	45-55	20+	6	4	Overseas	First-time Principals course
Susan Matai School	F	45-55	19	9	9	New Zealand	First-time Principals course
Grace Pohutukawa School	F	45-55	20+	7	2	New Zealand	First-time Principals course

These primary school principals (two female, one male) were located in different regions throughout New Zealand. All were experienced teachers. They had been teaching for about two decades, while their principalship experiences ranged from six to nine years. All three had working in more than one school; some in multiple schools. All principals had some experience working in schools as a deputy principal, with two principals having some experience in other middle-senior management positions such

as curriculum leaders or team leaders. They had participated in the 18month First-time Principals (FTP) course run by the Centre for Educational Leadership, The University of Auckland in conjunction with the Ministry of Education (The University of Auckland, 2017). One principal had overseas initial teacher education plus experience teaching in several countries, while the other two principals are New Zealand-educated teachers. Two principals are married with dependent children; one principal is single with no children.

Understanding the schools' contexts

In this section, a description of the individual schools is provided to develop an understanding of the contextual nature of each school. The student roll and population of each school demonstrates the multicultural nature of many New Zealand schools, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: School information

Pseudonym	**School Type** (Year level)	**Size** (number of students)	**Funding Decile**	**Student population**	**General description of community**
Kōtukutuku	Contributing primary (Year 1-6)	U3 (100-150)	1 Very low SES community	59 % Māori 27% Pasifika 27 % European/Pākehā 7% Other nationalities	Semi-rural/urban Housing estates
Matai	Full primary (Year 1-8)	U1 (<50)	7 Mid-high SES community	23% Māori 9% Asian 68% European/ Pākehā	Semi-isolated, rural village: farming
Pohutukawa	Full primary (Year 1-8)	U3 (100-150)	3 Low SES community	66% Māori 3% Pasifika 1% Asian 30% European/Pākehā	Small town: farming, other industries and commuters

The size of a school and its geographical location may impact on and influence a principal's leadership of their school and their relationship with the community. The participating principals were all leading primary schools. Two of the schools are classified as full-primary; students range in age from 5-13 years, or from Year 1 to Year 8. One school is classified as a contributing school with students attending from 5-11 years-old, (Year 1 to Year 6). The students from this school transfer to their local intermediate school for Years 7 and 8.

No school had more than 150 students, with one school having fewer than 50 students. Two schools had a senior leadership team with a deputy principal. One of these had

an associate deputy principal, while Matai School, the third one, had neither. Student numbers at Pohutukawa and Kōtukutuku Schools were high enough that the principals did not undertake any regular classroom teaching. Susan (Matai School), taught a class 2½ days per week, and fulfilled principal duties.

Two schools were situated in low-SES communities while one school was from a medium-high SES community. The two low-SES schools had a significant percentage of students identified as Māori with 30% or fewer students identified as European/Pākehā, while the mid-high SES school had a significantly higher percentage of European/Pākehā students than Māori. One of the schools was located in an urban area with a significant number of state housing homes while the other two were located in small regional farming towns or communities. The two rural schools were the only schools within their district, while the urban school straddled the edge of suburban and rural communities. This school's physical location was at the end of a dead-end street with no signposting from the main road. Other neighbouring schools attracted students from mid- high- socioeconomic families and communities.

Statutory appointee's information

The appointees' background and their level of experience of leading and supporting a school through an intervention is outline below (Table 5). Also outlined is each school's level of statutory intervention and the length of intervention at the time of this research.

Table 5: School statutory intervention information

School	Length of time in intervention @ December 2016	Level of appointee intervention	Statutory appointees background
Kōtukutuku School	18 months	Section 78M Limited Statutory Manager (LSM)	Previously NZ primary principal Experienced appointee
Matai School	Two years	Section 78N(3b) Commissioner	A. Previously NZ secondary principal Experienced appointee B. Business background. NZSTA background First position as a statutory appointee
Pohutukawa School	Two ¾ years	Section 78N(1) Commissioner	Previously NZ primary principal Experienced appointee

The *New Zealand Gazette* (New Zealand Government, n.d.) provides statutory intervention information. All notices in *The Gazette* are published directly online each

day. Two schools had commissioners appointed following the resignation of their school Board of Trustees. The other school had a limited statutory manager (LSM) appointed to work alongside the Board of Trustees to address concerns within the school. Two appointees have previously been NZ primary principals, with one of them working in a very low SES school. The third appointee had been a NZ secondary principal. One appointee had no prior educational leadership experience. The appointees' prior experiences of leading a statutory intervention ranged from first appointment to multiple experiences working with school boards of trustees. The background information for the statutory appointees was obtained from the principals. This information has not been confirmed by the appointees.

The participating principals were experienced principals. They were familiar with the role, associated expectations and workload of school leadership. Various internal and external school factors precipitated each school's statutory intervention are discussed in more detail in the Findings.

The following section discusses the research method I used to gather participants' perceptions of their experiences of leading a New Zealand primary school through a statutory intervention.

Semi-Structured Interviews

I selected semi-structured interviews as my research method as it enabled me to pose questions to the participants, while allowing them the space to discuss other issues associated with the research question.

Semi-structured interviews are defined by Kvale (2007) as being an "interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena" (p. 8). He explains by using semi-structured interviews, a researcher is attempting to understand the phenomena under study from the participant's perspective – what were their experiences and how have they made sense of these experiences and their world. The participant principals were approached on the assumption that as leaders of schools under statutory intervention, they may have specific knowledge, skills and dispositions which were acquired through their unique contextually situated experiences (Dewey, 1938). I hold personal and professional experiences, knowledge and understandings of what it is like

to lead and manage a school through statutory intervention. However, I do not know what this experience is like for other principals, nor how they make sense of their journey and experiences of leading a school under statutory intervention. I do not know the situation/s that lead their school's placement under statutory intervention. The only way I will be able to develop meaningful understanding and knowledge of their experiences is to hear their professional stories and frame this within their contextual setting. Therefore, the best method for enabling me to collect the principal's stories and narratives of their perceptions and experiences of leading schools in statutory intervention is through a series of face-to-face interviews, using semi-structured questions.

Interviews undertaken during the course of research projects are a socially constructed event which have been "deliberately created [to provide the] opportunity to talk about something that the researcher is interested in" (Dingwall, 1997, p. 57). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) add a research interview is a "professional conversation; it is an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee" (p. 2). They explain that rather than an interview simply being an interaction between two people; an inter-view focuses on the personal interrelationship, and the subsequent knowledge each person contributes to and gains from the inter-view.

When interviews are conducted in social research, researchers are interested in other people's "experiences [and] interactions … in their natural context" (Kvale, 2007, p. xi); they want to understand the phenomenon under study from another person's perspective. As a narrative researcher, my objective is to gain an understanding of how other people make sense of their statutory intervention experiences; how those experiences are contextually located and whether any of the experiences have influenced or affected their lives. I am interested in learning whether a principal has acquired new understandings, knowledge or skills, or if the experiences has led to individual or social change (Clandinin, 2013; Dewey, 1938; Kvale, 2007; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Squire et al., 2014). Thus, interviews help me understand the world from another principal's perspective. However, Kvale (2007) cautions that the knowledge acquired through an interview depends on the social relationship between a researcher and participants, saying it:

> rests on the interviewer's ability to create a stage where the subject is free and safe to talk of private events for later public use. This again requires a delicate balance between the interviewer's concern of pursuing interesting knowledge and ethical respect for the integrity of the interview subject (Kvale, 2007, p. 8).

Accordingly, interviewing involves skilful questioning and careful listening to 'hear' not only what the participants are saying, but also to hear what they are not saying - to listen to the silences and interludes in their narratives, as well as being open to hearing what the participant is alluding to, but may be uncomfortable sharing (Chase, 2003). Mazzei (2008) describes the listening of silences and interludes as listening to the "cracks into which voice slips (or escapes)" (p. 47), explaining that like a fissure in a rock face, the crack into which the voice may slip, opens or closes without accord. She further suggests that as a researcher, I must give myself "permission to tumble into the uncomfortable uncertainty that it [the crack] creates" (Mazzei, 2008, p. 48). While this may cause me some discomfort, the biggest challenge I may face may be listening to the silences – of not jumping in to 'rescue' the conversation, but to let the silences build; to provide time for both my participant and myself to reflect upon, to think, to recall incidents and events (Mazzei, 2008; White, 2013). That within the busyness of being school principals, we may saviour the moments of companionable silence and peace.

Josselson (2013) similarly explains in a good interview there will be an "emotional and psychological interaction between research and participant" (p. 5). She metaphorically calls this relationship the "'stranger on the train' phenomenon" (p. 5) where you can speak your mind to someone else who has no long-lasting connection to your life – the 'stranger on the train' is "someone to whom one can disclose without consequences" (Josselson, 2013, p. 5). My research traverses sensitive territory and for some of my participants, this may be the first time they have openly shared personal information such as whether the experience of leading a school under statutory intervention has impacted on their psychological and physical health. The principals may share with me moments of uncomfortable uncertainties of managing the demands of being a school principal, while meeting the needs of their school and those of the statutory appointee. The principals may view my unbiased position as an opportunity to speak their mind without worrying about personal or professional consequences.

Benefits

Kvale (2007) suggests semi-structured interviews acknowledge the possibility of the interview digressing into other areas of interest. For example, there may be topics that were perhaps not considered as being important by the researcher, but are consistently being revisited by the interviewee. In such circumstances, and in an effort to keep the interview on topic, a researcher may use a semi-structured interview guide – which will enable both parties to focus on particular contexts which the researcher is interested in (Barkuizen et al., 2014).

A semi-structured guide allows researchers to interview a number of people "more systematic[ally] and comprehensive[ly] by delimiting in advance the issues to be explored" (Patton, 2015, p. 439). The guide outlines questions or themes to be explored during the interview and allows the same questions to be asked of each participant; while allowing room for the interviewer "to explore, probe, and ask questions which will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject" (Patton, 2015, p. 439). A guide allows participants the freedom to say what they need to say, without being constrained by predetermined structured research questions. Sparrowe (2005) suggests semi-structured interviews allow participants to speak using an authentic voice – that is, they are able to "speak in one's own voice" (p. 421). This enables the researcher to analyse and disseminate participants' experiences, thoughts, opinions and knowledge as first-hand accounts in the area of research interest. Tedder and Beista (2009) suggest each time someone is narrating their story, they are not only constructing a particular version of events, they are constructing "a particular version of the self" (Tedder, 2012, p. 327).

My semi-structured interview guide contains a number of core questions with possible follow-up questions to clarify the participants' experiences and meaning (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). As each interview progresses, I had the flexibility to explore issues or contexts which a participant raised during the interview, or to seek clarification or elaboration on particular comments (Barkuizen et al., 2014). It was also important the participant had the freedom to respond in their own way (Bryman, 2012). McCracken (1988) metaphorically refers to an interview guide as being a "rough travel itinerary … establish[ing] a clear sense of the direction the journey and the ground it will eventually cover" (Patton, 2015, p. 439). The pre-planned structure and sequence of

my interview questions enabled the participants and myself to engage in a flowing conversation similar to one that naturally occurs between people with the same interests and experiences. Although Chase (2011) argues a semi-structured interview guide is just that – "a guide that may or may not be useful when one follows the narrator's [participant's] story" (p. 423).

Limitations

In any interview situation, researchers hold a significant amount of the power – they determine the phenomenon to be studied and the areas of focus within the research interview. Although, as addressed in *Chapter 3, Participant voice,* without the consent and willingness of my participants to share their stories, and establishing a positive working relationship, I was unlikely to gain full, open access to the information I sought.

I was mindful I was asking participants to recall and retell lived experiences that might be troubling (see *Chapter 3, Challenges and limitations of narrative inquiry* of this thesis). Similarly, just as some research questions will yield more information than others; some participants will provide more in-depth information. I likewise accepted the possibility that interview conversations will diverge into other areas, some research-related and others not; especially as I held an insider-researcher position of being a New Zealand primary school principal. It was inevitable we ended up discussing other issues relating to school principalship.

Equally, I was mindful each time a participant reached back into their memories and accessed a particular event or story to share, its retelling may have changed. Other issues might become highlighted while previous key issues might fade into the background. People's memories of events and situations leading up to the events, fade and merge with other similar events in a person's life (Josselson, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1995b). Time and distance from an experience can alter a person's perceptions of an experience and how the experience affected and had an impact on them (Josselson, 2013). Josselson (2013) believes that the story a person retells will depend on what is happening in the actual interview situation, the contextual nature of the interview and the rapport between myself and the participant. I needed to be alert to the possibility of tensions or borderlands existing between my own narrative history of leading a school under statutory intervention, and the narratives of my participants (Clandinin

& Connelly, 2000). Therefore, I was aware that I must consciously expect the unexpected. White (2013) elaborates, suggesting not only should I be open to hearing what I have anticipated hearing, but I "must be open to the possibility of their [my] research producing unexpected (and even 'undesirable') results". It was important I treated these "findings in the same manner as any other research outcomes – critically but fairly" (White, 2013, p. 216).

Finally, I needed to consider the time involved to conduct nine interviews (i.e. three people x three interviews) over 36 weeks. On average, the time between each participant's interviews was six weeks. While most interviews lasted between 60 – 90 minutes, some interviews took three hours. As a novice transcriber, the amount of time required to transcribe each interview verbatim was approximately two week (Bryman, 2012).

Polkinghorne (2007) suggests that the validity of narrative research relates to two areas – "the differences in people's experienced meaning and the stories they tell about this meaning and the connections between storied text and the interpretations of the text" (p. 471). He clarifies this by stating that when people tell stories of their experiences, the stories may not reflect a true account of the experience; the "language descriptions given by participants of their experienced meaning is not a mirrored reflection of this meaning" (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 480). As stated earlier in this thesis, people's storied experiences are relationally and contextually situated; that with the passing of time, with reflection and understanding, people will interpret and reinterpret their own and others relationships, actions and responses. Dewey (1938) reminds us experiences develop and evolve over time, and they [the experiences] change people along the way. Therefore, Polkinghorne (2007) claims, the validity of participants' experiences rests not on whether others have experienced the phenomenon in the same way, but on how well people are able to "express the actual meaning experienced". People's experiences are richer, "more complex and layered", and "permeate through the[ir] body and psyche" (p. 471) more than we are able to communicate to others.

The second area raised by Polkinghorne (2007) concerns the validity between the stories gathered and how the narrative researcher has interpreted them. He suggests the "texts generated by interviews" is a "creation of an interaction between interviewers and participants" (p. 471). Participants not only respond orally to a

researcher's questions, they will consider, perhaps unconsciously, a researcher's body language and their oral responses. If participants do not feel at ease with a researcher, or if they feel their responses are not valued, participants may not be as open about their experiences and the meaning they have attached to those experiences. This may affect the validity of a researcher's interpretation of individual participants' responses (Polkinghorne, 2007). A researcher can address this concern by returning the analysed text to each participant for validation of their words. This is to "gain clarification and further exploration of questions that arise" while interpreting the interview (Polkinghorne, 2007) – a process which is often referred to as "member checking" (Dimmock & Lam, 2012; Josselson, 2013; Patton, 2015).

The implications of these validity concerns for my research meant I needed to keep in mind that principal's perspectives of their storied experiences may change and evolve over time. That with time, distance and reflection, the storied experiences that they shared with me, may be different if I were to return to interview them in five or even ten years' time. I needed to be aware that the actual physical and psychological short- and long-term effects and influences of principals' experiences might never be able to be fully voiced. The principals may not be able to verbalise the true nature of their experiences as they may not have the appropriate words or because they are unable to revisit some of their experiences.

To summarise, I interviewed three New Zealand primary school principals who were experiencing a certain phenomenon within the educational landscape of school leadership. These principals had experience leading and managing a school that was under statutory intervention. Each principal will have experienced this phenomenon in different ways; the events and situations within their school context were different, different people were involved, and the causes, impact and outcomes of these events and situations were likely to be different (Clandinin, 2013; Dewey, 1938; Kvale, 2007; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Squire et al., 2014). The principals may have responded to these situations and events differently. It is likely they had positioned any impact and effect of these experiences within their professional-knowledge landscape of their school and community, as well as within the social-cultural landscape of their personal lives (Clandinin et al., 2009). It is possible I became, for the duration of my research, the "stranger on the train" (Josselson, 2013, p. 5) - someone whom these principals

can talk to and share their professional experiences of leading and managing a school under statutory management, without consequences.

Semi-structured interviews enabled me to gather similar data from the participants over a period of 36 weeks. This allowed me to undertake an inductive analysis of data between participants in the topic of interest, strengthening the reliability of the questions asked and the participant's responses (Bold, 2012; Seidman, 2006).

Data analysis

This section describes the process of moving from interview recordings to data analysis and the emergence of hierarchical themes. The hierarchical themes led to the structure of the Findings chapter.

At the beginning of the initial interview, the information I had obtained through public-access sites, for instance *TKI* for school information (Ministry of Education, 2018b) and *The Gazette* for the statutory information (New Zealand Government, n.d.), was confirmed by the principal. Background details of the principal's professional journey to becoming the principal of their school was noted (see Appendix 1, initial interview).

When transcribing recorded oral stories to narrated text, I needed to stay focused on the participants' words in order to present their experiences honestly and in their voice (Josselson, 2013). The interviews were spaced over 36 weeks, with an average of six weeks between each participant's interviews. Audio recordings of the interviews were listened to many times. As I am a novice transcriber, most interviews took two weeks to transcribe verbatim. If a word or phrase was unclear, this was highlighted for the participants to respond to. After each transcript was checked against the recording to ensure authenticity of participant voice, transcripts were emailed to respective principal for validation (Dimmock & Lam, 2012; Josselson, 2013; Patton, 2015). In addition, I made notes for either follow-up questions or possible themes to explore during subsequent interviews (Henn et al., 2009; Knox & Burkard, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Participants could amend, comment on or delete parts of the transcript using track changes.

Once the transcripts were approved, I read each participant's transcripts again. At each reading, I focused on identifying themes relevant to my research questions. As possible overarching issues, concerns or common threads emerged, key words and

phrases were highlighted and notes marginalised. After several readings, I noted that participants' stories often diverged away from the semi-structured interview questions and a number of unanticipated themes emerged.

Using the transcripts and notes, key words/phrases were brainstormed onto large A1 sheets of paper. Using coloured pens, words/phrases were connected with lines to indicate common themes or focus. This quickly produced a tangled web – solid lines indicated possible firm connections, dashed lines showed weaker links. From this initial brainstorm, the process was repeated. This time, grouping linked information together. Comments were added about the context of the words or events. This brainstorm was reviewed and links were again made between words or comments. This process was repeated several times for all participants. Several different variants of brainstorms were produced and later discarded.

As it became unwieldy to continually move between and across nine transcripts and the large brainstorms, each participant was then allocated an individual code/theme book (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Participants' personal details, school statistical information and any statutory intervention information was noted. Information pertaining to, for instance students, was recorded in the book and the pages labelled using post-it® tabs. At this particular stage of data analysis, the coded tabs were "acting as collection points for significant data" (Lewins et al., 2010).

The individual codebooks brought each principal's information together. However, while there were some instances across the three codebooks where this could be undertaken more easily (the information pertaining to students for example), other codes relating to school-based or community issues did not fit as readily. Drawing on Ryan and Bernard's (2003) article which outlined a variety of ways data coding/thematic work could be undertaken, I returned back to each principal's original transcripts and again, looked for repeated themes. Ryan and Bernard (2003) explain repeated themes are present when "the more the same concept occurs in a text, the more likely it is a theme" (p. 89). Inductive coding process provided an emerging overview of the themes or comments that repeatedly occurred across individual participant's transcripts. Connected and interrelated themes were merged, or sub-grouped.

This inductive process of coding data and using multiple codes is called 'open coding' which (Glaser, 1978) explains as the process of "coding to the data in everyway possible" (p. 56). Inductive, open coding allowed me to code data in ways that maximised the best fit before I became selective about which codes to focus on. This process is similar to Glaser's suggestion that inductive open coding can force the researcher to "generate codes that *relate* to other codes" (Glaser, 1978).

During this stage, I also considered whether there were any over-arching themes, which other themes might sit under. Ryan and Bernard (2003) state this process is the "building [of] hierarchies of themes or codes" (p. 85). A hierarchical diagram was drawn for each principal using this information. I re-examined each principals' themes to see if there were any connections between and across the principals, as well as looking for the gaps, for the differences and the silences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process allowed me to interact with, and move "inward and outward, backwards and forward" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50) between the text and the three-dimensional space (continuity of time, place, and social conditions) of the principals experiences.

After several different hierarchies were developed, refined and discarded, a new hierarchical structure using continuity of time (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey, 1938) was constructed. This involved revisiting the principals' individual and collective hierarchy of themes to identify and chronologically sequence events (Coulter, 2009; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002), as the principals' revisited experiences were often disrupted with "flash-forwards or flashbacks" (Bresler, 2006, p. 22). From this, the structure of the findings chapter was developed. Chapter Five shares the research findings through six overarching parts – *Part 1: School context Part 2: Navigating the intervention process*; *Part 3: Addressing school-based pressures; Part 4: Professional issues; Part 5: Effect on personal life;* and *Part 6: Insider-researcher's borderlands*.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS

Principals' professional knowledge landscapes

This chapter identifies key findings, including descriptions of the uncertain and often complex, ongoing situations that the principals faced. Pseudonyms protect the identities of all concerned. *Part One: School context* introduces two principals, Phillip and Susan, who were leading their individual schools prior to and during the statutory intervention, therefore these findings are presented together in the first theme - *A declining situation*. Phillip had been the principal of Kōtukutuku School for three years before events resulted in Kōtukutuku School being placed in a statutory intervention Section 78(M) – limited statutory appointee to work with the school Board of Trustees. Susan had nine years' experience of leading Matai School before external factors began to affect the school, resulting in the Board of Trustees' resignation. The Board's actions placed Matai School in a statutory intervention Section 78N(3c) and a commissioner was appointed to govern the school. Part One's second theme *Stepping into an intervention* focuses on Grace, the third principal. Grace was an experienced principal who had been appointed to lead Pohutukawa School following the school's placement in a statutory intervention Section 78N(1-2) with a commissioner governing the school.

The participating principals led their schools during trying times, when internal and external issues negatively and deeply affected their school's ability to function efficiently. Thus, my interview questions are framed to capture the "specific social, historical, and cultural contexts" (Barkuizen et al., 2014, p. 11) of their professional and personal experiences of leading schools under statutory intervention. The principals share dilemmas, challenges, frustrations and rewards in leading high-need schools. Their experiences provide insights into the realities of their complex contexts. While the cultural, socio-economic and geographical settings of the schools differ, the telling and re-telling of the principals' stories and experiences contextualise periods of both complexity and uncertainty.

I must note that just as each school context differs, so too did the principals' perceptions about their school's issues. During data collection, it was clear that the schools were at different phases of the intervention process. The findings are presented chronologically and explore the principals' perceptions and experiences in leading a statutory intervention.

When presenting individual's findings, I refer to the statutory appointee by their role title - Limited Statutory Manager (LSM who works alongside Boards of Trustees) or Commissioner (who replaces Boards of Trustees); the term *appointee/s* is used when I collectively discuss the LSM and commissioner – the Ministry of Education's designated person supporting each school.

The findings coalesce into five overarching parts. Within each of these five parts, sections and themes outline key participant experiences. *Part One School Context*, introduces the participant principals and their schools' context. *Part Two* begins to draw together the three principals' narratives and focuses on their perceptions and experiences of gaining support for their school, of navigating the intervention processes, and their subsequent interactions with the statutory appointee.

Part Three Addressing school-based pressures has four main themes. This theme considers the pressures the principals experienced as they led and supported staff, students and parents to not only reimagine themselves and the school, but also reframe the relationships within and beyond the school.

Part Four presents some issues with colleagues, while Part Five focuses on the principal' health and wellness.

Lastly, my own experiences as a principal in a school under statutory intervention are shared in *Part Six*. The borderlands between my experiences and those of my participants are examined and acknowledged in order to assist with outlining commonalities and differences.

Part 1: School Context

This part acknowledges the influences and tensions experienced by two participant principals as they work within the specific social and cultural landscapes of their

school and community. The principals' individual professional-knowledge landscapes are contextualised within their respective schools and are influenced by their prior leadership experiences. The tensions within the principals' stories highlight the nature of the complex issues leading to the statutory intervention.

A declining situation

When principals are first appointed to a declining school they may not know the school's context nor the full extent of the school's situation. Two of the participating principals - Phillip and Susan, realised soon after their arrival that various aspects of their school were dysfunctional. Initial key symptoms were minimal parental and community engagement. Other symptoms across the two schools included low levels of student engagement and academic achievement and student behaviour. While both principals believed they were addressing such issues, it was not long before their school's issues reached crisis points. Unable to address the issues by themselves, the principals contacted the Ministry of Education for support and guidance.

The next two sections introduce Phillip and Susan and their respective schools. I explain not only the situations that Phillip then Susan faced, but also their experiences in managing these emerging situations. Through the lens of these experiences, we can view the principals' professional landscapes, and gain an understanding of the complex social and cultural landscape of their schools.

Phillip and Kōtukutuku School

Phillip had both completed initial teacher training education overseas, and taught in several countries before migrating with his family to New Zealand. Phillip's previous educational leadership experiences included curriculum leader and advisory roles, plus senior management positions. He had about 22 years' teaching experience before becoming a principal.

Phillip was a sole-charge principal when the interim principal encouraged him encouraged to apply for Kōtukutuku School. He felt Phillip would "do a really good job" of leading the school. The interim principal had told Phillip that the school was a 'hard school'; there was no money but the staff were "alright". Phillip, knowing little about the school applied.

Phillip found out that between accepting the role and his appointment and actual start date the deputy principal, who had sought the principal role, had left, leaving Kōtukutuku School without anyone in the senior management team. There were few teachers capable of stepping into this role.

Kōtukutuku School, a contributing primary school (ages 5-11 years) is situated at the edge of suburbia. A significant percentage of the students identified Māori or Pasifika and lived in extremely low socio-economic households. A high percentage of the students were transient.

On his arrival at Kōtukutuku School, Phillip realised that the school had a poor reputation compared with other local schools, suffering a continual staff turnover. Teaching quality appeared to be poor. Teachers struggled to manage unruly, disengaged student behaviour. Student violence regularly occurred, and the school suffered from the weight of a significant deficit of funds, plus a number of long-term time payment plans for school resources such as IT and property maintenance.

After three years of hard work at Kōtukutuku School, Phillip began to feel "things were starting to be done properly and everything started falling together nicely". The large inherited financial deficit was addressed. Students were engaging in their learning and staff turnover had ceased. For the first time in three years, Kōtukutuku School began a new school year without any staff turnover. However, after the appointment of a new Board of Trustees' chairperson tensions grew. The chairperson's actions began to adversely affect the day-to-day management and leadership of the school. Such actions included initiating board committee meetings without Phillip's knowledge. In addition, items were added ad hoc to circulated meeting agendas and policies were amended without consideration of the impact on the leadership and/or the day-to-day management of Kōtukutuku School. As Phillip said, "that's when everything hit the fan really because they [the new board chairperson] did not understand the difference between governance and management or that I ran and managed the school".

Phillip believed the more stable school environment he had created was eroded when staff members became caught up in issues with the board chairperson, resulting in effects such as staff turnover and conflict between the formal and informal leadership

of the school. In the end, Phillip was "wiped out by all the backstabbing and toxicity" among the staff and Board.

Following an internal investigation of an unfounded parental complaint, the board chairperson went against the board vote and brought in external investigators. Phillip knew then that the board chairperson was "out to get him" and from that moment, Phillip's relationship with the chair deteriorated significantly. During this time, Phillip and the deputy principal leaned on each other. Phillip described their approach to interacting with the board chairperson as "battening down the hatches", claiming they developed an "us versus them" mentality as a survival mechanism: "… we just both supported each other. Apart from that there was nothing else you could do – I felt hopeless, that's what I did".

While he was able to phone his First-Time Principal (FTP) mentor and another trusted, experienced school principal, his mentor had little contextual understanding of the situation and experience in dealing with similar situations. He explained:

> …because they hadn't been through this themselves, it's really difficult for them to give advice … while you're on the phone and they're listening, it's great, but as soon as you put the phone down, you're back to being on your own again. … because they haven't been there, there's just no advice they can give you.

Phillip continually tried to get others to understand the issues or concerns he had with his board chairperson. He felt his leadership abilities were continually being questioned by the board chairperson, external appraisers, mediators and the New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI).

The relationship between Phillip and the chairperson deteriorated to the point of becoming unworkable. After spending eight months trying to work with them, Phillip called upon the Ministry of Education (Ministry) for support and assistance. The advice he received from his local Ministry advisor was "not very helpful" and that this person "[was] completely the wrong person" for the role as the advisor had no experience working in primary schools or with very low socioeconomic communities. Phillip believed the advisor's insufficient contextual knowledge was exemplified through their lack of understanding about the issues he was dealing with. Overtime, Phillip persuaded the Ministry of Education to initiate a Section 78M statutory

intervention and a Limited Statutory Manager was appointed to work with the school Board of Trustees.

Susan and Matai School

Susan, a New Zealand-educated teacher, had nearly two decades of teaching experience, including begin a deputy principal in a small rural school. This school had merged with a state-integrated school, creating conflict across the community and led to a turnover of principals. Susan had therefore become experienced as an acting principal, but was unsuccessful in obtaining the role permanently.

Once she was appointed as principal, Susan had to address inherited issues such as student behaviour and low academic achievement. She re-established positive relationships between the school and community, leading to roll growth over the seven years (47 students). However, some minor issues and relational disputes within the wider community slowly eroded its relationship with the school and soon adversely affected the boards' ability to govern. Within a year, the roll plummeted to 25 students.

More recently, Susan discovered that a group of parents was using the school's name to obtain financial discounts when purchasing goods and services from a number of district and regional organisations and businesses. For example, this group used the school's name when booking private out-of-school outings without Matai School's Board of Trustees' permission, and to which they were not entitled. These actions damaged the school's trust in this group. The board were unaware of some trips until it received invoices for the group's outings.

One incident in particular increased the level of disharmony. Wanting to encourage student participation in after-school sport, she initiated a Touch Rugby team for the district after-school competition. However, with insufficient interest from the children and parents, she withdrew Matai School. However, she soon learned that the same parent group had "gone behind my back and got a group of kids for the team, and invited anyone onto the team, including 'outsiders'". Susan challenged these parents for using the school name and sports uniforms, as the team was not representing the school. "Up went the ante. It all went downhill from there! They decided they were not going to be told what to do". Further ongoing actions of this parent group fractured an already unstable relationship, leading to deeper rifts and divisions within the school and wider community.

A deciding factor in Susan contacting the Ministry of Education for support occurred when the problematic parent group arranged for the appointment of a community member to join the school Board to 'sort out' the board. However, the newly appointed board person did not see a need to 'sort out' the board and resigned after losing the group's support. "They backed off when he wouldn't report back to them … then it became really volatile". Matai School's Board of Trustees' membership then decreased to three. No one was willing to step into the casual vacancies because of the community divide. After much debate, the remaining board members asked Susan to approach the Ministry of Education for support and guidance. Board members decided it was "in the best interests of the school for them to resign", feeling ill-equipped to handle the ongoing community-school relationship issues. The board's resignation placed Matai School in a Section 78N(3) statutory intervention and the Ministry of Education appointed a commissioner to govern the school. Susan realised the ongoing conflict with the problematic group of parents, as well as declining board membership had affected her feelings for Matai School. She had "fallen out of love with the school. I've loved it with a passion, but the last two years …"

The theme *A declining situation,* has outlined the experiences and perceptions of two principals and events that led to their individual school's statutory intervention. The experiences of Phillip and Susan suggest that underpinning causes of school decline can be historical, complex, multifaceted and difficult to identify. These findings highlight a range of institutional influences and personal factors that precipitated statutory intervention. However, intervention did not necessarily mean the issues did not persist. The effects of the interventions are addressed later.

It is important to note here that while key relationships within each school declined, they had <u>not</u> unduly influenced or affected the two schools' ability to meet the academic needs of students.

Stepping into an intervention

This second theme, *Stepping into intervention* provides a different perspective of leading a school under statutory intervention. In this part of the thesis, the perceptions and experiences of a principal who applied for the principalship of a school, knowing it was under statutory intervention are studied.

There are times when a principal may be appointed to a school that is already under a statutory intervention. In these instances, the vacancy advertisement will often stipulate that all enquiries about the school and the position go to the statutory appointee. This indicates to applicants that the school is currently of concern to the Ministry of Education and processes are in place to help address issues. Grace knew there had been difficulties at Pohutukawa School before applying for the principal role. She felt she had the experience, knowledge and skills to lead Pohutukawa School as she had previously worked in a school that had been in an intervention.

Grace and Pohutukawa School

Grace, an experienced New Zealand-educated teacher, had two decades' of experience across a range of schools, including leadership and principal positions. She was a deputy principal at a rural school that had previously been in a statutory intervention with a Limited Statutory Manager. Grace felt she had a reasonable understanding of the intervention processes.

Pohutukawa School, a rural full-primary school (aged 5-13 years), is situated in a community village serving the local farming community. A significant percentage of the students identified as Māori. Despite being the only school in the community, some local children by-passed it to attend other primary schools. The school traditionally 'lost' some senior students (aged 11-13years) to the larger intermediate school in the neighbouring town.

Pohutukawa School was Grace's third principalship. She had been principal at Pohutukawa School for 18 months when I first interviewed her. At that point, she was still unsure about the specific reasons for the school's statutory intervention. She knew repeated attempts by the local Ministry of Education office to work with the previous permanent principal and the Board of Trustees had been unsuccessful. When the Board of Trustees' resignation followed the principal's resignation, the Ministry of Education contracted a commissioner to govern the school and appoint a permanent principal.

Grace identified issues including significant financial debt mainly incurred through overspending support staff hours. A number of teaching and learning resources had not been opened, suggesting that not only were the teaching staff unaware of these resources and that communication channels within the school had been poor, but there

had been little leadership oversight on resource purchases. Grace also noticed that staff appeared to view their students' abilities and skills negatively. For example, teachers commonly blamed students for their behaviour, rather than accepting their responsibility for shaping classroom behaviour and leading learning. "There was a sort of mentality that it was actually someone else's job to sort all this stuff [the naughty kids] out and I'll do what I just need to do". Consequences for misbehaviour were punitive and, in classrooms, the negativity was expressed in classroom rules. Rules were 'Do not …' rather than positive statements. Grace exclaimed, "that's what stood out the most – the negativity. That's what struck me. The negative vibe … had affected a lot of people in a lot of different ways". She recalled that there was no laughter in the staffroom "it was a cold, very negative space".

Grace thought the staff and community needed a lot of support, care and compassion to address historical issues. She learned of past instances where teachers were called into the principal's office during breaks, yelled at or belittled and then had to go out into the playground for duty or return to class to teach. Parents had told her "horrific" stories of things that had happened and the hurt the parents felt over the treatment of their children. The apparent lack of professionalism and leadership from the previous principal and board, the lack of care and the demoralising nature of the school's physical and emotional environment painted a very bleak picture of Pohutukawa School that Grace had to address.

Grace's story highlights some of the situations that an incoming principal may face. An initial job for a new principal is to identify current circumstances and identify causes, before initiating changes. This is what Grace was still doing when I interviewed her, 18-months after she took on the role. This suggests that long-term, deep-seated school problems have no easy, quick fixes.

Together, the three principals' stories offered insights into the professional landscapes. Two principals' stories were positioned in the period of time leading up to an intervention. While Grace's narrative sits outside of this timeframe, it was important to understand Pohutukawa School's context to make sense of Grace's perceptions of her experiences. The following part continues the principals' narratives of their experiences as they navigated the statutory intervention process.

Part 2: Navigating the intervention process

This part shares the findings related to the participant principals professional knowledge and understanding of statutory intervention and the processes involved in gaining Ministerial approval for the intervention. From the start, each principal had various levels of knowledge and expectations of the intervention processes and the role and function of their school's appointee. This influenced their ability to navigate the statutory intervention process.

Many of the issues the principals experienced were connected and multifarious in nature. For clarity, I have presented the findings chronologically. At times, this is not possible because so many issues are complex, requiring considerable time and effort, demonstrating the difficulties the principals have in making sense of this process.

The next part *Accessing professional and institutional support* outlines two principals' (Phillip and Susan) experiences of gaining support for their school prior to, and during, the initial stages of the intervention. The principals' knowledge and understanding of statutory intervention processes is presented.

Professional and institutional support

As professional leaders of primary schools, principals have access to a variety of professional and institutional support organisations such as the New Zealand Principal Federation (NZPF), New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI - the primary sector principals and teachers union), their local principal association and their Ministry of Education school advisor. However, in my study, the participant principals did not find these support networks sufficient. They felt these organisations were unable to help them as individual principals, both school prior to and during the initial stages of statutory intervention. This lack of early, meaningful support, adversely affected the principals' abilities to make substantive and positive changes to their school.

Phillip had sought support and advice from NZEI and NZPF regarding the Board chairperson's behaviour. However, Phillip felt the NZPF principal advisors he contacted had little knowledge of his school's context. Phillip was concerned NZPF "weren't taking into account the contextual situation of the school, or the mental and emotional impact" the issues were having on him. He felt that NZEI was unable to assist him due to a conflict of interest as the union was supporting several teachers

within the school on separate matters. As noted earlier, Phillip also had difficulty in gaining support and understanding from his principal mentor, other trusted experienced principals, and Kōtukutuku School's Ministry of Education advisor.

Six months after our first interview, Phillip was still struggling to understand why trusted colleagues appeared to have questioned his leadership of the situation:

> I felt so angry and frustrated that people weren't listening to me. It was so frustrating that people who knew me, weren't taking my word for it, but believing others and then coming back to me, it was really annoying. That's what annoyed me the most.
>
> … by the time I asked for help [from the Ministry], I had exhausted everything I had.

Phillip's experiences illuminate the frustrations principals may experience when seeking professional support for internal school issues. Phillip's difficulties in accessing professional support for himself and his school mirrored the challenges he faced when requesting and formally initiating institutional support from the Ministry of Education (see *Part 1, Phillip and Kōtukutuku School*).

Similarly, Susan had sought support and advice from two of New Zealand's educational professional organisations - the NZEI and NZPF. She believed NZEI "were not particularly helpful or supportive", claiming the advice she received was "shut-up or leave the school". This was in contrast to the support she had received from NZPF, stating "they're always there, there's always someone you can contact". Throughout the first year of Matai School's intervention, Susan received many supportive phone calls from the NZPF president. The NZPF president was "amazing, excellent" and Susan reported they had even drafted letters for her to send to the Ministry of Education. The contrasting experiences of Phillip and Susan potentially indicates unevenness in professional organisations' processes for dealing with principals who seek help. It is difficult to identify whether this unevenness is due to regional differences, gender, or a lack of clear guidelines nationally for supporting principals.

Understanding the process

While the Ministry of Education has processes in place for identifying and sanctioning declining schools, Phillip and Susan admitted they did not really understand what an intervention meant, or what the process entailed. Nor had they considered the

possibility of an intervention affecting their ability to lead and manage their school. Their limited knowledge and understanding of the statutory intervention process affected their ability to make informed decisions before and during the intervention.

A further example of the principals' lack of clarity and understanding of the intervention processes arose when an official letter from the Minister of Education caused some concern and confusion for the principals. When schools are placed under an intervention invoking sections 78M, 78N(1-3) of the 1989 Education Act, the school is notified that the official Gazetted notice will be published in the next issue (*The New Zealand Gazette*, the official government newspaper). The principals instead had looked for these notices in the [New Zealand] *Education Gazette,* not understanding that the two Gazettes served different purposes. By not seeing their schools mentioned in the *Education Gazette*, both felt relieved that their school's circumstances had not been made public. Both principals mentioned they had not wanted their colleagues to be aware of the intervention for fear judgement. Further, they did not want neighbouring schools to use the intervention as a reason for poaching current and potential students.

It is interesting that even Grace, who had previously worked in a school where a LSM was present, was unable to find Pohutukawa School's official statutory intervention notice. She stated that she had looked through past issues of the *Education Gazette*, but was unable to find the notice. Like the other principals, Grace thought that this lack of publicity would be good for the school.

The following theme *Working with a statutory appointe*e focuses on the principals' experiences and perceptions of working with their respective appointee. As Phillip and Susan had actively sought an intervention on behalf of their schools, this part focuses predominantly on their insights.

Working with the statutory appointee

As professional leaders in schools, principals are tasked with the daily running of the school and are expected to "actively foster professional relationships with, and between colleagues, and with government agencies and others with expertise …" (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2019b). Thus, when the participant principals heard their statutory intervention application had been successful, they had

expected to maintain their principal role in full, actively working with the appointee to address, manage and resolve the identified issues. However, their subsequent experiences of working with their appointees suggests otherwise.

Suitability of the statutory appointee

My participants also lacked awareness of how appointees were assigned to a school. While Phillip and Susan acknowledged they were responsible for calling in the Ministry of Education, they repeatedly voiced concern over the suitability and selection of the appointee. The principals questioned whether someone with a non-principalship background would be able to fully support a principal and a school community to address a school's issues. They also wondered whether appointees needed experience in similar educational settings to truly understand potentially important contextual factors, such as the nature of the local community and the school.

When meeting someone new, first impressions can influence how the relationship will develop. Phillip and Susan had requested Ministry of Education assistance and they knew they needed to be open about their individual school's situation. Phillip was pleased Kōtukutuku School's Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) had prior principalship experience of leading and managing a large, low decile primary school. He had already heard many different stories about the LSM - which indicated the LSM was either the best thing to happen for a school facing challenging times, or that a principal's position was likely to be in immediate jeopardy. Phillip addressed the differing stories with the appointee who confirmed both views were correct. Phillip felt reassured that as long as he was doing his job well, he should have no concerns about his position.

Susan on the other hand, felt Matai School's Commissioner A had caused further problems for the school. In her view, even though Commissioner A had prior principalship experience, this experience was in secondary schools and not in small, isolated teaching-principal primary schools. Further, this commissioner was known within the region as someone who removed principals from schools rather than taking the time to fully assess and address the situation. Prior to Commissioner A's tenure at Matai School, other principals had warned Susan that her job was on the line. Thus, the commissioner's reputation preceded his arrival at Matai School.

During research interviews, Susan admitted continuously feeling fearful that her position as principal of Matai School was at risk during Commissioner A's tenure. She struggled to establish a working relationship with the commissioner and believed her tenure was fully dependent on this person's perceptions about the cause of Matai School's issues, rather than her ability to lead and manage the school. She felt that Commissioner A obstructed her management of Matai School: "I lost even the ability to manage – that this was taken from me; he did everything - micro-managed – but from afar". Susan felt as though she had compromised her leadership and control of Matai School "quite a bit" by calling for a Ministry of Education statutory intervention.

It is important to remember that even when a board requests and intervention, the board has no influence over who an appointee may be. In Phillip's case, he established a working relationship with Kōtukutuku School's LSM, while Susan struggled to establish a similar relationship with Commissioner A. This suggests the Ministry's appointment processes are not as "consistent and transparent" for principals and board of trustees as the Ministry asserts (Ministry of Education, 2014c, p. 3). Perhaps this area needs further examination.

Ambiguity of role

Just as Phillip and Susan lacked knowledge and understanding about the Ministry of Education's appointment process for statutory appointees, they also lacked clarity around the appointees' roles and planned actions during the intervention period. For example, both Phillip and Susan were unfamiliar with the requirement for, and purpose of, a scoping report within the first four weeks of an intervention. Neither principal saw the scoping report, nor was there an opportunity to discuss the findings and the proposed actions contained within the report with the appointee before it was sent to the Ministry. Perhaps if the principals had known about the findings of the scoping report, and had helped shape the proposed actions, they may have felt better empowered to support their schools.

Furthermore, both principals, particularly Susan, were concerned that appointees did not appear to have to account for their time or expenses (travel, phone calls, and meetings for example) while working with a school.

> … they are not accountable for their invoices … I questioned this with the Ministry, telling them that there was no itemisation or details! 'What has A done, who has A spoken too, what have they achieved …?

Susan was particularly concerned about Commissioner A invoicing Matai School for work that was unsubstantiated. Despite the Ministry of Education ordering her to sign the expense claims, Susan refused to. Susan was adamant in her belief that the whole statutory intervention process was unfair, especially "if you've got the wrong commissioner [appointee]".

Grace also experienced a conflict of roles and responsibilities between herself and Pohutukawa School commissioner. Grace felt this was largely due to the commissioner's background and experience as a primary school principal. There were times when the commissioner was trying to achieve a "balance of focusing on governance, and not wearing a principal's hat". They approached this role ambiguity by checking which 'hat' the commissioner was wearing, depending on the situation they were dealing with. Grace acknowledged the benefit of working with an ex-principal and enjoyed the opportunities to discuss leadership issues that sat outside of the intervention.

Diminished principal agency

As professional leaders of schools, New Zealand principals are accustomed to considerable professional agency and autonomy. Each of the participant principals already had at least four years principalship experience. They were familiar and comfortable with making on-the-spot decisions, and could offer guidance and advice to their Boards on operational and educational matters. While they had not expected that these aspects of their roles would change during the intervention, they experienced moments with their appointees of loss: of agency and voice. Losing agency and voice led to moments of self-doubt and helplessness. Both Phillip and Susan indicated that there were many occasions when they believed their professional identity and leadership skills were being scrutinised and interrogated by the appointee and institutions such as ERO.

The principals shared how they were often unable to make in-the-moment decisions because they were required to consult the statutory appointee, justifying their actions and decisions. Their responses indicated a diminished sense of professional autonomy.

For example, at one public meeting during the tenure of Commissioner A at Matai School, Commissioner A when responding to a statement Susan made, said, "I don't care what you and the teachers think; you'll all do as we say". Faced with this continual exercise of authoritative power, Matai School staff began to question their professional ability to make decisions and judgements. Susan reported that staff became anxious, tense and unsure of themselves and their teaching abilities "we were experienced teachers, yet we had lost confidence in our knowledge and experience". This led to self-doubt about common teaching decision-making around students' next steps for learning. She also doubted herself and her own ability to make right decisions when planning the term curriculum. Commissioner A, Susan felt, had undermined both staff and hers professional agency.

Moments of self-doubt

Both Phillip and Susan doubted their own abilities to lead and manage their schools once appointees took control. For example, Susan continually used negative emotive words such as "horrific", "difficult year", "threatened", "turmoil" "frightened", "worthless" and "hell" to describe the first year of the intervention. Underpinning these emotions were her fears of letting her staff, family and friends, down, saying "I contacted them to say the school was going to be in the newspaper and it wouldn't be good. I didn't want to let them down". Phillip was tired of continually defending his decisions such as teaching several mathematics groups each week. He stated mathematics was his area of expertise; the students were learning, retaining and applying their learning to everyday situations, "so why wouldn't I do it?" He questioned both the Ministry of Education advisor and the appointee, asking, "You want me to be the principal, to be the leader of learning, but not be in the classroom and not teaching, because it cuts into the time I'm a principal?"

Unlike Phillip and Susan who were unable to select the statutory appointee working with their individual schools, Grace had a degree of choice, having met Pohutukawa School's commissioner at her application interview. However, once appointed, she had not anticipated she would feel more pressured to justify her actions, pedagogical beliefs and her leadership. She felt this was mainly due to the commissioner's prior experiences of being a primary school principal. Grace compared her Pohutukawa School experiences to her previous one of working with an appointee. In the earlier

context, she had been acknowledged as a professional leader of the school and was trusted to make the right decisions, saying "I definitely feel a lot more pressure in this position from the commissioner to meet the expectations in a timely fashion, which is not always practical".

The principals' perceptions of diminished agency were indicated through their continuous need to justify their decisions to appointees. This in turn, led the principals to experience moments of doubt about their abilities to lead and manage their schools. The principals questioned their relationship and standing with the appointee, and whether they could trust them.

A critical relationship

When a school is under an intervention, it is reasonable to assume that the precipitating issues are serious. Therefore, it would seem logical that principals and appointees trust one another. Susan for example, did not trust Commissioner A. A year into Matai School's intervention, Commissioner A resigned from the role, necessitating a change of commissioner. When Commissioner B arrived, Susan experienced heightened anxiety, given her experience with Commissioner A. Susan felt that while the second commissioner lacked day-to-day knowledge about school leadership and principal appraisal systems, the commissioner knew how to run a business and how to approach people. She recognised that Commissioner B primarily focused on working with the school community to heal the relational rift that had originally driven the school into crisis mode. She was relieved this commissioner had taken the time to identify some of the issues. Susan found this reassuring: "automatically I knew that they knew what was happening in the school and I knew that they were starting out on the right foot". Commissioner B's actions, such as taking time to understand the situation, and meet staff and the local community, enabled Susan to develop her respect for Commissioner B.

Susan respected this commissioner's decision-making and relational processes, and was therefore more willing to accept Commissioner B's decisions and guidance. Being heard seemed to be an important factor in Susan's ability to work with the commissioner, and perhaps listening might be an important skill for appointees to apply to similar school interventions.

Unlike Susan's experiences with Matai School's Commissioner A, Phillip quickly recognised he could trust his school's LSM. Shortly after the LSM started working at Kōtukutuku School, Phillip received the validation he was seeking about his principalship. The LSM confirmed to Phillip that she did not need to assist Phillip with curriculum development or financial planning even though the Ministry had indicated this was required. Instead, the LSM focus was on governance purposes. Phillip, like Grace, relished the opportunities to discuss a wide range of topics. A key factor in Phillip's response was his comment that "it helps though, that they're like me – not afraid to tell the truth". It appears that for Phillip, 'telling the truth' is about honesty, and clarity – about roles, relationships and listening. Phillip and his school's LSM were able to agree upon areas within the school that required the LSM's expertise. This enabled Phillip to engage more deeply with the statutory intervention process and the aims and direction of the LSM's strategic plan for his school.

A problem of distance

As indicated, Grace knowingly took on the role of principal in a school that was already under an intervention and lacked a functioning Board of Trustees. However, she had not anticipated that there would be limited support at the school level. Not having on-the-ground support that incoming principals usually receive, concerned her.

In addition, the appointee for Pohutukawa School lived three hours away, which was a source of frustration for Grace. Without a functioning Board, there was no one local at the governance level to introduce her to the community. At her previous principal appointments, Grace relied on Board members to know people in the community. "They know who is related to whom; they know what has happened in the community over the weekend and how it might possibly affect the students and school". Without this ground-level support at Pohutukawa School, Grace found it took longer to make connections with whanau and the community and to work out who the key people were. She instead relied on her school office manager for this connection.

The added complexity of not having a Board of Trustees had a negative impact on Grace professionally and personally. For example, the lack of local support to assist with the numerous out-of-school tasks affected her personal time:

> … the thing about not having a Board or a caretaker is there is no one else to come into school to meet the electrician, or to deal with governance stuff at the local level. I don't have that! You're it! You're being and doing all! It's inherently wrong! But you do it for the kids, because at the ground level, we are here for the kids.
>
> ... As a principal, you're often left – because while you can say 'as a principal, Yep, I'll look out for the kids and support the staff and I can help the community' – who looks after you? Who recognises that actually the job we're in is so big?

For Grace, taking on governance roles that included property management, security and managing contractors, compromised her family time. As indicated above, the demand of being a principal without an operating Board of Trustees, negatively affected Grace's family time and her ability to relax as a private person.

These findings indicated the importance of the appointee's ability to establish a working relationship with the school principal is essential. Equally important is the need for principals to understand the nature of statutory intervention and the various roles appointee's may have with a school. Once an intervention is implemented in a school, it is vital principals know the appointees' proposed strategies and goals. For all the principals, having an open and trusting relationship with an appointee was a crucial starting point for creating positive school change.

Part 3: Addressing school-based pressures

While the principals encountered various pressures prior to and during implementation stages of the interventions, they also experienced multiple countervailing pressures during the school recovery process. These countervailing pressures, manifested as time, staff, students, and community. Importantly, they are context specific to individual schools and principals. These competing and countervailing pressures illustrate something of the nature of school recovery leadership, and suggest the uniqueness of schools' experiences. Generic school recovery programmes and practices may not be helpful given the complexity of some of these pressures, which may be entirely localised given the nature of the school's community. As indicated throughout the findings, issues relating to time were a common reoccurrence throughout the interviews with principals. Time, therefore, is the first focus.

Time

Issues of time are a common experience - often presenting as countervailing pressures or constraints on people's lives. For instance, the completion of a task may require a person to stay longer at work; this then imposes on that person's time to spend with family and friends. Throughout a school year, there are numerous time-bound jobs and processes; these include for example, reporting to parents on student achievement; submitting the school's charter, or audited accounts to the Ministry of Education. These and other tasks can constrain principals' focus on other duties, even as they are mindful of the Ministry of Education's demands on prioritising some requirements above others. Given such external demands placed on principals, Phillip imagined that when he needed urgent assistance, his needs might be priorities too. Although the following theme relates to the statutory process, the lengthy delays Phillip experienced affected a variety of issues within the school.

Delays in gaining Ministry support

Even though Phillip acknowledged that the local Ministry of Education office had to undertake due diligence, he was concerned about the time it took. This delay affected not only his morale, but also his trust in the school board's ability to govern and address issues fairly. Ultimately, the delay affected Phillip's trust in the Ministry. After submitting the request for assistance, Phillip was impatient for the help to come, saying:

> I thought I was doing something, that I was making a difference. I was actively trying to get an intervention in place; I was trying to sort the problem out. It just took far longer than I thought it would and when I look back on the situation, it took a long time; too long.

From submission to the arrival of the LSM at Kōtukutuku School, the process took seven months. It was several months more any actions to address issues commenced. This was because the LSM took time to delve into and fully understand the nature of the issues in the school. While Phillip was frustrated by these delays, he would have appreciated communication from the Ministry of Education about when the intervention was likely to occur. This may have allayed his fears and anxiety about fixing the problems.

While Phillip's issues were mostly with the board chairperson, the Kōtukutuku School Board of Trustees was still operational. For Susan's school, there was no functioning Board once all members resigned. Perhaps this led to a faster response for the Ministry

of Education for Matai School, resulting in a counter-productive tenure of statutory appointee. Less speed in Susan's instance may have resulted in a better match of appointee for Susan and Matai School.

Time can also be viewed in the following ways: to learn and make sense of the context; and time to act, to embed and sustain change. The principals were aware that tensions related to time were neither linear nor sequential, but often chaotic and messy, and persistently present throughout the statutory intervention process.

Understanding the situation

The principals acknowledged the statutory appointee required time to learn and make sense of the situation. As a result, there was a considerable period before initial issues were addressed. As Phillip observed, "you need time to sort issues, plan changes and implement and consolidate these changes. It doesn't happen quickly and it doesn't happen without hard work and buy-in from everyone".

Phillip acknowledged that during the early years of his tenure at Kōtukutuku School, it took time to alter and sustain the school's climate, culture and practices. The need for incoming principals to take the time to learn a school's context, climate, culture and practices was echoed by Grace.

During one interview, Grace reiterated the importance of newly appointed principals taking time to understand the historical context of the school and identify potential or actual issues. She was concerned that the pressure from the appointee to act or achieve goals within a certain period was sometimes unrealistic and detrimental to the school's recovery.

> To unpack everything about a school and the underlying issues and you have to be actually in the space and take the time to observe, to listen. … for me that was the key; taking the time to listen.

Grace felt that above all else, she needed to unpack the underlying issues within Pohutukawa School and community, and develop positive relationships with staff and community. She believed that as the incoming principal, she also needed time to establish herself as the school's leader: "as a principal, you have to be physically and mentally present and in the space". She said that:

> You need to take the time to get to know your staff and to listen to their stories; especially if your school has an intervention … we forget that the staff has often been through a lot too. They need to know that you are there for them too. … Establishing relationships takes time and they [relationships] are vital.

Rebuilding relationships

Not only did Grace require time to establish relationships with staff, but she also needed time to establish and rebuild trusting relationships with parents. One method she used to develop this was by texting to parents, the positive things their child had done. She also texted parents information about the positive changes in the school. She believed by building up the parent/school "positive bank" over the previous 18-month period, there was now enough 'capital' in the bank to have the "difficult conversations without the wheels falling off the relationship".

Staff

For any positive, long-term change to be implemented and embedded within a school, having involved and engaged staff is important. As illustrated by following the principals' narratives, a number of situations centred on staff.

Resistance

For Phillip and Grace to achieve change in their schools' culture, climate and practice, they firstly needed to address staff resistance, which presented a number of countervailing pressures. These included teachers' resistance to address their own teaching practices, to accept responsibility for classroom management and student behaviour. Staff were resistant to addressing their belief and opinions of students, whanau/families and community. Furthermore, in an effort to address playground behaviour, both principals looked to increase the number of staff on playground duty. However, this was met with resistance by staff. Phillip observed that, "I would be talking about an issue in staff meetings. All the staff would nod their heads, but nothing would change. They still continued doing what they had always done".

Achieving change required teachers to accept the need for change, to implement the change, and then to continue with new practices. Phillip commented, "teachers have to be willing to embrace change", adding, "if teachers refused or hindered that process, then a principal's job was much harder". He encouraged staff to leave if they were unable or unwilling to change, stating, "the kids know when teachers don't have their

heart in the job and they respond accordingly". Phillip noted decreased levels of student engagement and progress, and increased levels of behavioural incidents such as physical aggression in the classroom and playground at such times.

Staff at Pohutukawa School presented a number of countervailing pressures for Grace. She faced resistance from long-standing staff when she proposed altering behaviour management systems. She wanted to remove punitive consequences on students such as withdrawals from class or stand-downs from school. Although Grace was conscious that staff "needed to experience and receive ethical care themselves before being able to demonstrate this one another and to the children", she expected all staff to respond to and accept responsibility for student behaviour. Initial efforts to get teachers to shift their perspective of "thinking only about 'my students' or 'your students' to 'our students'" were met with resistance, partly, Grace thought, because the staff "were not in a[n emotional] space to support the children to heal".

Guidance and care

Focusing on teacher practices such as classroom routines and behaviours, students' learning, and student overall safety and wellbeing was a priority. The principals worked with staff to address teaching and learning issues. These included positively changing classroom behaviour and addressing staff deficit thinking about students and their whanau/family.

Phillip commented:

> The teachers were unable to deal with the needs of students. I'm trying to get the kids to change their behaviours, when I realised that the teachers were not doing anything. No wonder the kids were still acting like nutters.

Grace was concerned about her own ability to guide and help members of Pohutukawa School to overcome their traumatic experiences of the previous principal and Board of Trustees. She felt helpless to adequately support the teachers and support staff she inherited at Pohutukawa School, saying:

> [The staff were] very damaged from the experience [of the actions of the former principal] – they themselves were bullied and their self-esteem was really, really knocked … it's getting to me; it's getting the balance of being able to pull people out of that while making sure they are still teaching and doing their job.

Staff at Pohutukawa School not only needed support and guidance to change their pedagogical approaches and deficit thinking, but also needed support to address deeper issues. This required a lot of time and emotional effort on Grace's part. She acknowledged that the staff had "been through a lot. They are very traumatised and they have often had very negative experiences with the Board or parents and they have often felt unsupported".

While Phillip and Grace were able to embed new changes and develop a more positive staff culture, some teachers still caused concern.

Teacher competency

New Zealand teachers and principals are required to renew their teacher registration every three years, to attest to their fitness for teaching and upholding professional standards (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2019b).

Grace was conflicted by her desire to provide support and guidance to the teachers, and the need to ensure they were meeting the professional standards. She argued:

> Where does competency and conduct and all that stuff fit in when you know that these people are damaged. It makes it really, really hard! … I've still got the last couple of teachers who are not moving – in any direction!

She felt a number of teachers did not trust their own professional judgement or each other, nor had they worked together or supported each other. They were hesitant to take risks with their teaching, and Grace felt this was partially because they still did not 'know' her and partially due to their historical experiences. She found she was continually encouraging staff to take risks and repeatedly telling them that she trusted their professional judgement and they did not need to run every idea past her. She also wanted to know when teachers were "doing something fun, so I can come and watch". Even 18-months into her tenure, a number of staff continued to need support to take risks.

Dealing with teacher competency provided additional pressures for both Phillip and Grace during the early stages of their principal tenure. Being able to identify when a teacher was struggling, but willing to change their practice or was resistant to change; presented some challenging moments for these principals.

Turnover

Any school experiencing staff turnover will notice that periods of transition may bring uncertainty for both existing and new staff. Staff in schools under intervention may experience these uncertainties more deeply. On the other hand, new staff can bring opportunities for 'resetting' the focus of the school, and thus, staff turnover can be a useful mechanism for change.

For participating principals, staff turnover both supported and impeded the intervention progress. For example, staff turnover enabled old beliefs and practices to change as new staff arrived. While at the same time, staff turnover hindered the embedment of new practices as principals' focused on inducting new teachers to their schools.

Susan found staff changes difficult even when the changes were related to Matai School's geographical location and size, than any issues it had. She believed that being a teaching-principal affected her ability to be readily available during school hours to support and induct new staff, especially beginning teachers who "left as soon as they were qualified".

She also believed that the ongoing effect of Commissioner A's actions and the associated stress of coping with the situation, led to staff turnover during the second year of intervention that was unrelated to geographical or school size.

On the other hand, Phillip embraced staff turnover early in his tenure. Phillip commented that staff turnover enabled him to gain "locus of control over staff, over the situation" and this allowed him to rebuild the staff and culture of the school. Thus, staff turnover at Kōtukutuku School not only made it easier for Phillip to restructure jobs and job descriptions, but it enabled everyone to focus on the future. Phillip believed he could not have achieved the necessary changes to his schools' culture if all the original staff had stayed. Staff turnover he felt, was the biggest, most effective means of implementing large-scale change.

Like Phillip, Grace noted staff turnover was a critical mechanism for change. When some key influential staff members left Pohutukawa School, Grace noticed there had been a "huge difference with staff turnover; a lot of people had been holding onto the past and this was starting to hold us back from moving forward". The remaining staff along with the children began to embrace her focus on a positive, holistic approach to

behaviour. Staff also began creating a child-focused, play-based learning curriculum. For Grace, "staff turnover has made a huge difference. Losing the negative staff, that negative leadership, has enabled other staff to grow".

The findings show that staff turnover had both a positive and a negative effect on the principals' ability to address and change school climate, culture and practices.

Trust and support from staff

The principals acknowledged the need for trust to exist between the staff and principal, and between teachers. During Matai School's intervention process, Susan observed the staff emotionally supported and protected one another. For example, when particular parents entered the school grounds to speak to a staff member, other staff members found reasons to be in the vicinity. The staff would interrupt a parent meeting with Susan if the situation looked to be getting out of Susan's control. As Susan put it, "we were all experiencing the same turmoil and anxieties".

The staff at Pohutukawa School required time to know and trust Grace. The first person Grace trusted at the school was the office manager. Grace knew no one when she first arrived, and no-one introduced her around to the community. She needed to understand the inter-relationships embedded in the small community. Believing that good office managers are invaluable to principals, particularly if a principal is new to an area, she sought out the school's office manager to help her with these tasks. She said

> We can't pay them enough. Especially if they are local and you're new. They know whose who; who's related to whom; which families have a long-standing feud. They are able to help you understand why a parent responded in a certain way, or which business is supportive of the school or who the 'main' families, or the key players in the community, are.

Through this relationship, Grace was able to gain a deeper awareness of the broader school context and the associated whānau/family and community relationships and issues, such as family break-down, community fights or arguments over the weekends.

The principals' experiences indicate that support and trust amongst the staff was a vital component for developing a positive and safe school climate, culture and practices. The principals found some staff required more care, attention and guidance to address issues. In some circumstances, the principals struggled with the dilemma of continuing

to support a teacher, or whether the issue had become one of teacher competency and proficiency, and therefore required formal disciplinary processes. These findings also show the importance of staff demonstrating care towards the principal. Having a supportive and caring staff member appeared to have made a difference for all the principals.

Students

Students' wellbeing and their academic achievement was important to the principals during the school recovery process. Susan was concerned Commissioner A's actions were negatively affecting staff, and consequently, the students. She was so concerned about the students' wellbeing that she commissioned an external person to run a health and wellbeing survey with the students. Results from this survey indicated that students were happy and settled. Susan believed this was testimony of the teachers' professionalism that they could "hold things together in the classroom, while crying in the staffroom during breaks". She felt this demonstrated the huge amount of strength and commitment the staff had to the school and students while also coping with enormous stresses within the school dynamics of change.

Phillip noticed that during his tenure at Kōtukutuku School, students had changed from shying away from him to coming up for hugs. The students' initial responses were, he felt, because they "didn't trust anyone, [and] kept expecting me to leave". Over time, students began to trust Phillip, he was then able to support staff and students to take ownership of their behaviour and accept consequences when needed. Phillip believed that for a number of Kōtukutuku School students, school was their safety-net; the stability of the staff and routine of the school day and year was something the students had come to trust. With "teachers teaching, and kids learning, [inappropriate] behaviour went down and achievement started going up, but first we had to teach the kids how to learn", he asserted. As previously illustrated by Phillip, teachers' behaviour and attitudes are often reflected in student behaviour. Positive, stable relationships across Kōtukutuku School positively influenced student engagement with their learning and ability to self-manage their behaviours.

Grace had stepped into a school where the students, just like the staff, were in need of care and support to address historical and current issues. One of her first actions was

to gain students' trust. She recognised that their behaviour at school was "a sign that they are not coping". She was adamant that teachers and principals

> need to be able to 'read' the behaviour, understand circumstances of behaviour (for example working at inappropriate level or turmoil in children's home lives) and support and guide children to acknowledge when things are not going well, and help them to develop skills, strategies to manage their behaviour during these times.

By prioritising students' needs, and focusing on how to develop their behaviour in positive ways, she made it easier for students to acknowledge when they need help and support, with both their learning and their behaviour. Over time, students began to monitor their own behaviours. Students also began to approach Grace with ideas such as removing designated playground zones for different year groups and having 'wheel-days' (scooters, skateboards) every day. However, Grace was cautious that her relationship with students was "not detrimental to the teacher/student relationship". She maintained, "before you can help a student address their behaviour, you need to have a strong relationship with them to have those tough, in-depth discussions, so it's about finding that balance".

The participant principals' concerns for student wellbeing and safety underpinned their interactions and relationships with students. The principals noticed that when students felt safe and secure with their teachers and the school, the number of behavioural incidents decreased.

Community

For a number of communities, especially rural communities, the school is the centre point. It is the place where many parents interact with one another, acting as a community conduit for both formal and informal information. Therefore, sustaining a positive relationship between the school and wider community is important. It is also important to note that this relationship can be fragile, with a number of factors influencing the school/community functionality and tone of the relationships. As illustrated through Susan's narrative of the issues leading to Matai School's intervention, communities have the power to disrupt the school's governing body, and affect the day-to-day management of the school.

The principals acknowledged there were times when the school/community relationship was not strong. A community's lack of trust or willingness to enter the school grounds or engage with the teachers and the principals was an example shared by all three principals. Phillip continually sought ways to engage the community and to keep them informed on school events. Phillip believed that with perseverance, "parents will come on board. Ask what they want from their school, what's important for them, what do they want changed. Continually look for ways to engage them".

However, both Phillip and Susan acknowledged that at times their own perception of the community may have hindered the wider school's relationship with the community. For example, Susan noticed how tense she would become when members of the problematic parent group entered the school grounds. She realised she was continually waiting for them to "have a go at me or one of the staff". All interactions with these parents were short and held in public spaces such as the playground. She also felt that other community members were "acting like scared little rabbits hiding in their burrows" instead of supporting the school during Commissioner A's tenure. However, reflecting later in the interview, she commented, "perhaps that's because they've not been told enough about what was happening".

The relationship between Pohutukawa School and community also needed work. Altering the relationship meant that Grace was able to change the community's perceptions of the school. She did not want the community to continue thinking that the school was an emotionally unsafe place for parents/community members, and that acknowledgement of historical hurts and acts of mistrust were not important. She commented that in her first 18-months, she had "learnt how important these relationships are for the community". She began by establishing a relationship with the early learning centres in the community. She initiated programmes for New Entrant students so they saw school as an extension of their learning centres. Furthermore, the staff of the learning centres and the junior school staff members undertook regular professional development together, including observing each other's teaching practice. These actions were designed to focus on helping young children transition into school. Overall, Grace affirmed that "building relationships, changing people's perceptions of the school, and raising expectations – teachers of children, parents of the school, and children of self, takes time. And it is hard work.

Really, really, hard work!" Adding, "it's like trying to swing a whole ship around; it takes time, planning and space".

The findings show that leading from and working within a statutory intervention, is fraught with complex difficulties. Through the process of bringing about change, the principals had to negotiate, navigate and address deficit thinking, disenfranchised and disengaged staff, students and community members.

In summary, the principals were aware that the success or failure of an intervention relied on the willingness and ability of all stakeholders to work together for the future of the school. Staff turnover proved both a blessing and a burden as the principals struggled to find suitable staff for their schools. Yet these times also enabled the principals to initiate change. The principals were aware of the need to work with and alongside their staff, the students and school community. The nature of these issues (historical and current) presented some unique countervailing pressures. This suggests that school principals recognise that countervailing pressures, such as people, events and situations, may affect the outcome and timing of a school's recovery journey.

Part 4: Professional issues

The principals were working in schools under difficult situations. The professional implications and pressures of working in such conditions were unexpected and arose from unanticipated quarters. Rebuilding relationships within their individual schools' professional community were challenging and complex. Developing professional and personal relationships outside the school were more difficult.

This section focuses on the *professional issues* raised by the principals. The matter of support, collegial trust and integrity is examined. This is followed by the principals' perceptions and experiences of feeling isolated which over time, had a detrimental effect on them.

Collegial support, trust and integrity

New Zealand principals have a degree of autonomy to decide when, how, and from whom they access support and guidance. Support from colleagues is important for principals experiencing difficult situations. Access to support, prior to and during an

intervention impacted on the principal's ability to turn their school around. As previously indicated, Phillip and Susan struggled to find professional support for themselves during the period leading up to their schools intervention. They both believed that had they been able to access appropriate support early, the intervention might not have been necessary.

The three principals needed someone to talk to about their situation; however, they all expressed their hesitation to trust principals from local schools. Through prior experience with the local principals' network, Phillip was aware of confidential information being shared within the wider school and educational communities and had decided "I wouldn't trust them to keep their mouths shut!"

Phillip countered his comments about the lack of appropriate support for principals, by stating:

> We need some sort of support, even someone to talk to … There needs to be somewhere principals can go to try to get some kind of peace of mind, or for somebody to come out, assess the situation and go 'Ok, they've got a point', or 'Yeah, I can see what's going on and this is the support you need'.

In contrast, Susan, who had previously lacked contact and support from her local colleagues, had unexpectedly received support from principals across her region, particularly during the first year of Matai School's intervention. She shared that some of this support was subtle, such as text messages to her cell phone, as some principals were concerned of backlash from Commissioner A, who was also contracted by the Ministry of Education to support their schools. Unlike Phillip and Grace, Susan's regional principal association was providing on-the-ground support and advice, including accompanying her to meetings with the Ministry and Commissioner A where Susan tried to present her concerns about the commissioner's actions.

During the second year of Matai School's intervention, Commissioner B arranged for the Rural Principal Advisor (RPA) to mentor Susan. Through her interactions with both Commissioner B and the RPA mentorship, she had "become an effective leader. I learnt how to <u>be</u> a principal, a manager and not do everything including governance".

Grace's need for support was centred more on needing 'local' others who were able to bridge the gap between school and community. As such, she was extremely concerned about the lack of support for principals who, like her, were stepping into a school where

a commissioner was fulfilling the role of the school Board. Grace also felt the loss of not having a strong local group of principals that she could trust. This differed markedly from her previous position in another region. Grave felt unable to share her thoughts and needs with local principals because of the kinds of comments they made such as openly disparaging their communities. She firmly believed that sharing problems and issues with members of this group could potentially be more damaging to the school and to her professionally if certain information made its way back to the community. She could not rely on their confidentiality.

> I'm very protective of this school and this community. You need a certain level of professionalism in people and if you don't hear that, then…

Grace decided that with this group of principals, she would only focus on future aspirations for Pohutukawa School. This, she felt, would better protect her school and community and its reputation. Conversations with this group of principals therefore focused on educational and leadership matters, as well as her plans and dreams for the school.

Although Grace admitted to being relatively self-sufficient, she had professional networks outside of the region to rely on. For professional advice, she also turned to her extended family who worked in education, stating, "They're far enough away, but they get it". Nevertheless, Grace was particularly concerned about the lack of on-ground support for principals:

> We are working in very tough, challenging high-need schools. These kids take up a lot of time and resources, and they are emotionally draining; we deal with some heavy things with these kids and we're there supporting them, their families and their teachers, but who is supporting us? It's very demanding work which other principals don't really see or understand.

She argued that perhaps this lack of understanding relates to this: "unless you've also taken on a school that is actually as bad as it can get, and you've been there, I don't think you really can understand". Grace, like Phillip, felt that it was difficult for other principals to grasp the complexity of the situation. She pondered how much harder things must be for principals working in small schools to establish social relationships, especially if they were not a 'local'.

In summary, the participating principals frequently felt unsupported throughout the intervention process. Finding local colleagues to trust prior to and during their individual school's intervention proved difficult for the principals. Primarily, one of their concerns was neighbouring schools using the information to increase their schools' student roll by telling parents the other school was unsafe and facing some difficulties. The participating principals had to make decisions about which colleagues they could trust with school information, the level of information they were willing and able to share, as well as maintaining others' trust.

More importantly, the principals' central concerns centred on the lack of understanding and empathy from other principals, largely as other principals had not experienced similar situations themselves. They found themselves needing someone to talk to about their situation, but who could they trust with sensitive school information. Thus, the challenge of finding colleagues they could trust was intertwined with the principals feeling there was a lack of support for those who, like them, were working in complex situations, leading to their sense of isolation.

Isolation

Isolation is considered to be a person's separation and removal from the formal networks and structures of their work (Bakkenes et al., 1999). The more isolated a principal is from formal networks, the less involvement and influence they will have in the school's informal networks (Nias, 2005; Stone-Johnson, 2016). Therefore, feelings of isolation may be present in principals' professional landscapes in a variety of ways. The principal's position, role and responsibilities as the head leader of the school may create a sense of professional and social isolation. This may be exacerbated when principals implement significant change in a school. Geographical isolation, especially in rural New Zealand, where a small primary school may be the only school in the district, may intensify personal and professional isolation.

The notion of isolation was a critical factor in the principals' experiences of turning a school around. Each principal experienced isolation differently and this was not solely associated with geographical location, but also included professional, philosophical and social isolation.

Phillip's feelings of professional isolation were interconnected with his sense of geographical and socio-economic isolation and affected him psychologically. His professional isolation increased following the resignation of his DP. He contemplated "I dealt with it really badly I think…I had no one to turn to…everywhere I turned, there was kind of nobody". Phillip felt that other than the DP, no one else really understood the context of Kōtukutuku School and the issues he was dealing with. Overtime, the lack of engagement with others who understood his situation affected Phillip psychologically. His decision not to attend local principal's meetings further compounded his sense of professional isolation.

Kōtukutuku School, while geographically located at the edge of suburbia, was also isolated from neighbouring schools. The school's location at the end of a dead-end road, and with no signs at the top of the road indicating the school's presence, heightened the sense of geographical separation and Phillip's professional isolation. As Phillip did not associate with the local principals, the school was not involved in local events and the socio-economic differences between the various schools in the community contributed to the overall isolation his school experienced. Phillip felt the principals of these mid-to-high socioeconomic schools did not understand the social and financial difficulties Kōtukutuku's families experienced. Therefore, he seldom attended local principal meetings, preferring to meet with other principals from across the region who were leading similar low socio-economic schools and held some understanding and awareness of the socio-economic issues he was dealing with. Towards the end of one interview, Phillip reflected, "It's been good to sit here and think about things and discuss where I've been and what I've been through".

While Phillip's professional, psychological and geographical isolation were interconnected with the socio-economic differences between local schools, by contrast, Susan's isolation was a culmination of a number of factors. The geographical location of Matai School and its distance from main roads or townships affected the school and community. For example, getting touring performers or other groups to visit the school was expensive and difficult for families to fund.

Susan believed Matai School had become professionally and socially isolated due to differing opinions of the "right to access bus routes" amongst neighbouring schools and the principals of those schools kept hold of "historical issues". In New Zealand,

the Ministry of Education determines rural school bus routes, and therefore school zones. Neighbouring rural schools are required to obtain a school's approval if they wanted buses to travel within a neighbouring school's zone to collect similar-aged students. Conflicts between schools over shared roads may cause conflict among principals. In such circumstances, the very system used to ensure students' rights to access their local school, may create social and professional isolation for schools. Susan indicated she had refused to grant a school such access at the beginning of her tenure, almost nine years before. During those nine years, Susan had not been invited to another school, nor had any other principal visited her.

Employing relieving teachers meant it was difficult and costly for Susan to attend at regional principal meetings each term. She was not involved in any other professional networks or groups, contributing to Susan's geographical, social and professional isolated from peers. She and the school were starved of professional learning and development, curriculum development, and strategic planning opportunities. For Susan, leading a geographically isolated school also affected her ability to socialise and network with people.

However, even socialising with people other than educators presented countervailing pressures for Susan. Compounding Susan's feelings of professional isolation was her internal conflict of being a professional in the community and being a community member. She expressed her internal conflict of being a professional in the community and being a community member.

> … the need to negotiate being the 'boss' of your staff, but also having a social need to establish and maintain friendships is hard … You're always mindful what's being said.

Susan struggled with her personal dilemma of developing friendships with staff members outside of school. While she was conflicted over her need for friendship, she was aware that within the school and community, she held a position of authority: "but I would have no friends; that's not right either". While discussing the professional/personal borderlands which she was struggling to navigate, Susan voiced concern over principals moving into small schools and rural communities where they were the 'outsider', asking:

> Are we meant to be socially isolated because of our role and position within the community, or do you become involved with the community, but then you're too close. It's hard. … You've got to live, you've got to have friends and socialise, but where's the line? I don't know.

Susan worked around this conflict by joining clubs and organisations within the local and extended community. However, even though these groups extended her network, she firmly believed stated "they are not my friends".

Grace also experienced professional isolation. Although she had established a professional relationship with the town principal group, which enabled her to participate in professional development, discussions and trips, Grace believed her views of education and theirs did not align. This led her to feeling philosophically isolated. She acknowledged there were times when she thought "it would be easier to just flag all that we're doing and return to traditional approaches; it would be easier, but not necessarily the best, the right thing for the kids." Grace believed that a play-based learning curriculum was best suited to the students at her school. Thus, despite not having any local principals to discuss this teaching and learning approach with, Grace maintained her philosophically different views.

However, Grace was able to participate in a professional leadership group with principals from across three regions led by her school's commissioner. The geographical distances between the principals engaged in this professional development group provided some freedom to discuss their schools and any issues or concerns. "You can have those conversations and know that they're not going to have any impact at all on your community because they are that much more removed from your area". While Grace enjoyed this professional group, she acknowledged she was "probably quite self-sufficient and I've still got my networks out of the region".

This section has highlighted the multiple ways in which isolation was experienced by the principals. While Phillip and Susan were unable to mitigate their sense of geographical, professional, psychological and social isolation, Grace was able to use geographical distancing favourably and mitigated the professional and philosophical isolation she felt in relation to the local principal groups. The principals' experiences highlight the importance of principals establishing and maintaining reciprocal relationships with other like-minded principals. The burden of isolation began to

weigh heavily on the principals' personal lives and their health and wellbeing. These are the focus themes for Part 5 – *impact on personal life.*

Part 5: Impact on personal life

A school principal may find it difficult to distinguish and separate their professional values, beliefs and ethos from their personal ones (Begley, 2012; Branson, 2008; Shields, 2014). It can also be difficult for the principal to separate their professional life from their personal life. The participant principals were aware of the need to traverse borderlands and tensions between their professional and personal lives. They acknowledged the public's perception of them as a person was often considered a reflection of the school and how it was led and managed. Phillip and Grace were aware that these perceptions often extended to their interactions with their own children in public spaces.

Invasion on family life

The participants were aware that as a school principal, there were times when the borderland between their roles affected their family life. This included times when they could not leave their 'professional' persona at work. This often involved bringing school-related paper work home or returning to school in the evenings for meetings. Even when they were enjoying family time, they were still perceived to be 'the principal' and therefore, available to members of their school community.

Spending time after-hours on school-related events negatively affected Phillip's time with his own children, family and friends, for he felt unable to step away from the external investigation during the school summer break and relax:

> … I just can't explain how I felt, but I feel helpless would be the right word, because when you're … [meant to be sleeping] and you just can't go to sleep at night, and your family is suffering. I had investigators hounding me on the phone during the summer break when it's meant to be a time of recharging, of spending it with your family, and I've got someone hounding me, taking school [financial] resources.

The unrelenting nature of the investigation suggests little awareness of the emotional needs of the principal, and his need to have time out and have at least a small break from the tensions of the intervention.

Similarly, Susan gave a lot of personal time to Matai School and she contemplated the cost of this:

> I've given my life to the school. I've devoted myself to the school 24:7 and I've allowed it to embroil my life. I haven't given time for me. But the ability to step back is hard!

Throughout the first year of Matai School's intervention Susan felt she was over-reliant on her family and friends for support, although she believed "it wasn't right to place this burden on them" especially when they were not in a position to help her. Withdrawing from social gatherings and friends were further indicators of Susan's stress, "if I didn't have friends and family here, I definitely wouldn't be here. It was that critical".

The invasion on family life coupled with the work required to turn their schools around, placed an emotional burden on the principals. Eventually, giving so much of their time and themselves to their individual schools and the strain of continually working in complex and challenging schools had significant effects on the principals' mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing. This is the focus on the following section.

Tensions and tolls on health and wellbeing

Leading a school through an intervention had a significant impact on each principal's personal health and wellbeing. They expressed their concerns about the toll the intervention process had on their health.

Phillip experienced a physical toll on his health. During the months when Phillip was trying to cope with the situation at Kōtukutuku School by himself, he lost 10kg in weight, became really ill and did not sleep well. It was a time when things were "really, really bad". During one of his interviews, he referred again to that period, "I felt I had no one to turn to. [My health] suffered really, really badly". Phillip recognised he was becoming far too stressed and over-relied on alcohol as a relaxant, saying, "It's an easy habit to fall into". Recognising the need to stop this behaviour, Phillip stopped drinking completely, commenting "I'm a stubborn bastard and I can

do that – just stop". He reiterated the months of trying to work with the Board chair and trying to get help "…was hard. But I survived!"

Similarly, Susan suffered some serious physical health issues; many related to the stress she was experiencing. During the first year of the statutory intervention, she was aware of the physical signals her body was sending her. Her weight increased and as did her pre-diabetic status. She felt physically older, affecting her physical movement and mobility. Following a fall at school, Susan realised she had become unsure of her footing and was "beginning to doubt myself physically".

More concerning, Susan's physical and mental wellbeing indicated her mounting psychological health issues such as depression. She had trouble sleeping, continually "rehashing things" in her mind. Compounding her sleeping problems was the tiredness she experienced throughout the day, even if she had slept the night before. It was not long before she noticed that during her drive to work, she began feeling sick, her stomach would tighten and she would feel extremely tired. These feelings often lasted until she returned home. She said there were times during the first year when "life was unbearable. But I made it!"

Susan fought her depression through acupuncture and by taking strong vitamin D tablets, proclaiming, "I will not take anti-depressant pills, refuse too". She felt she had become angrier, which she contributed to continually fighting for her position and her school. However, Susan saw this as a positive sign: "I think if I hadn't done that, I wouldn't have been here".

Several times throughout that first year, she admitted she contemplated committing suicide. She had got to one point where she felt that this "was the best option". With the support of her GP Susan fought her mental health concerns. She believed that the unhealthy relationship with Appointee A had contributed largely to this situation of extreme mental distress. She claimed the first year of intervention, "mentally, it's been huge".

Even Grace, who was able to maintain her health and wellbeing, became ill shortly before the end of winter term. She questioned why she continued to work while ill, acknowledging the main reason was to keep the school as settled as possible toward the end of term. Partly because a number of staff had been on sick leave that winter.

The principals' narratives paint a dark picture of the physical and emotional impact and personal cost their school's statutory intervention had on them. This hidden cost is seldom mentioned within educational leadership literature; however, it is one that requires further exploration. The principals were very aware of the cost on their health and ultimately, health and emotional well-being, but had great difficulty in finding ways to support themselves initially. It took great strength to change their own circumstances.

The principals' perceptions of their experiences indicate that in order to achieve the required changes, the principals felt compelled to be physically present, even to the point of being at school while ill or spending their weekends or school breaks at the school. This highlighted the relentless nature of the issues they faced. Both physical and emotional presence were needed at school. This presence included the [re]building of relationships – with staff, parents and the wider community. Above all, the participant principals' experiences demonstrate that school recovery is extremely hard work, and often comes at a physical and emotional cost to the principal.

Emotional safety

Although Grace had not experienced the highly detrimental effects that Phillip and Susan experienced as a principal, she was very aware of the need to keep herself mentally stable and emotionally safe, especially when listening to people's stories. "You have to be able to say, right, there is my emotional line and I can leave that story there". She felt she had learnt a lot from Pohutukawa community:

> … how to deal with those things and actually be able to listen without feeling emotional, or with the emotional buy-in. … [to keep] emotionally out of that space and being able to listen and maintain that integrity and that relationship.

Grace reflected that prior to her participation in my research she had not really talked about her experiences or her leadership philosophies before, stating "it's really good to do this; to think and validate my philosophical position". She felt there was a strong need for principals to have "someone in a professional supervision sort of a role, someone you can offload some of that stuff to, would actually be really, really helpful". Grace laughed when she confided she had been using our interviews as a type of

supervision session - “It’s been really good, I’ve actually been using you in that sort of role”.

The need to talk to someone with experience leading a school through an intervention was vitally important for the participating principals. When they did not have a trusted colleague whom they could talk to, the principals often found themselves turning towards family and friends, however they were very aware of the emotional burden they were placing on them. Their actions indicate a need for outside, professional counselling or supervision.

To summarise, statutory intervention as experienced by the principals placed a large, incessant strain on their professional and personal lives. As the professional leader of a high-need school facing multiple complex and challenging issues, they experienced anxiety while attempting to manage the situation by themselves. The two principals embroiled in their respective school’s situation, were frustrated by the limited support they received from the professional organisations they turned to. Finding trusted colleagues amongst neighbouring principals was challenging. Previous experiences with their colleagues’ lack of professionalism and confidentiality stopped the participating principals from sharing information about their schools. Being unable to trust their neighbouring colleagues left the principals feeling isolated, both professionally and socially as experienced by Susan. Over time, the burden of leading a school under intervention began to exact a toll on their personal lives and health.

Grace’s narrative provided a different perspective of leading a school during a statutory intervention. It appears that in this instance, being an ‘outsider’ was beneficial not only to Grace’s health and wellbeing, but to the school in general. As an outsider, she was initially able to view the situation at Pohutukawa School dispassionately as she was not entrenched in the situation or connected to historical events and incidents. She began her tenure aiming to gain the trust of staff, students and parents. This preceded her focus on addressing deeper systemic issues within the school such as deficit beliefs and staff lack of trust in one another and the role of the principal in the school. Being an outsider to the school, was an advantage in pursuing these aims while an intervention was underway.

The three principals were all committed to their respective schools, often spending weekends and school breaks at their schools to ensure the properties were well-kept.

Without the support of their families, the participating principals would not have been able to achieve the changes they desired for their school and their students. However, was the physical, mental and emotional cost of leading a complex, challenging high-need school too high? Two principals reported a lack of sleep; an over-reliance on medication or alcohol to cope with each day; they experienced symptoms of acute stress - of having a tight stomach while driving to work, and continually feeling ill throughout the day. These principals experienced some very low moments with one principal contemplating suicide as a way to end the burden of leading a school under statutory intervention. Underpinning the participating principals' concerns for their health was their need to have someone to talk too – not necessarily another principal experienced in statutory intervention, but someone trusted who could provide ongoing mental and emotional support during those difficult times.

Up to now, the focus of my research thesis has been the perceptions and experiences of three principals leading their schools through a statutory intervention. Part One presented the experiences of two principals who initiated a statutory intervention after their realisation that the situation within their respective schools was not improving. Part Two presented a different, but equally important perspective of statutory intervention as experienced by a New Zealand primary school principal who knowingly applied for the principalship of a school already in an intervention. Parts 3-5 draws the three principals' experiences together.

This chapter concludes with *Insider-research borderlands*, where I turn the lens onto my personal and professional experiences of taking on a principal role as Grace did, stepping into leading a school already under statutory intervention.

Part 6: Insider-researcher's borderlands

It is timely to share my experiences of being a principal in a high-needs school with multiple complex issues. The Education Gazette vacancy advertisement advised there was a statutory appointee (limited statutory manager) supporting the Board of Trustees. Therefore, like Grace, I was appointed as the principal of a school already in a statutory intervention and I needed to move to a new region to take up my appointment, leaving behind a supportive principal-network. However, I can also see

my experiences reflected in Phillip and Susan's experiences. Like the participant principals, I too turned to the *Education Gazette* to find the official notifications of my school's statutory intervention change of status. And, like them, I was unable to find it and believed the Ministry of Education had missed putting the notification in.

My new school, like Phillip and Grace's, carried a substantial financial debt. Student behaviour required addressing, as did their learning and levels of academic achievement. Teachers held deficit views of the students and were disengaged from their teaching, the students and their learning. Similarly, I also found school-wide, long-term implementation of positive change did not occur until a number of staff had left and were replaced with staff who had not been connected with the historical issues. With new staff, deficit thinking and prior (mis)conceptions of student ability and their behaviours were replaced with hope and dreams for students' futures. Like Susan, I was a teaching-principal. I juggled classroom responsibilities, addressed student behaviour, wrote curriculum documents, appraised teachers and dealt with the administrative tasks of leadership and management.

The school could not afford a part-time caretaker/grounds person. This meant I took on this role as well. Weekends were spent on ground maintenance such as spraying for weeds, cleaning windows or washing down decking. When I could access groundwork assistance from the Department of Justice community work groups, I was required to be on site to unlock access to toilets, kitchen and garden tools. If any property maintenance was required during school breaks, I was the person who met with contractors, provided access and secured the buildings at the end of the day. I was also on-call for security callouts. These included alarms being triggered in the early hours weekday mornings. This made teaching stressful and tiring. Together, these duties and encroachment on any private time negatively affected my ability to take time away from the school and relax.

Like Phillip and Susan, my health suffered during the early years of this principalship. This manifested as long-term loss of voice, with no underlying medical reason. Referrals to speech-language therapy and to ENT specialists indicated it was possibly psychological. Their diagnosis suggested I had spent many months metaphorically swallowing my words, of being unable to speak my professional mind about the nature

of the school, staff and student behaviour, and parent engagement. Over time, my loss of professional voice became a habit.

As well as losing my voice, my weight fluctuated unhealthily. My eating habits were sporadic. Because of the constant daily pressures and workload, I sometimes forgot to eat. Working 10-12 hours a day meant going home exhausted. I withdrew from socialising. All of my energy was spent on staying positive and calm while at school. There were school days when I could not physically leave my home. Trying to leave home brought on dizziness, tightness of stomach and headaches – all signs of stress-induced anxiety. Doing something about it was difficult. Acknowledging I needed help and finding help brought different levels of anxiety. I did not want to admit that I was not coping with the situation at school, nor did I want it known I was seeking mental health support. I did not know who to turn to for help or how to access the support I needed.

In common with the participating principals, I too did not know who to speak too, or where to go for support and guidance. My previous colleagues did not understand the complexities or challenges I experienced on a daily basis. Being new to the district and region, I did not know my neighbouring principals. I did not know who to trust with confidential, sensitive information as the neighbouring schools were actively poaching students from my school and community. It took several years before I established a deeper level of trust with neighbouring principals, and even now, they still do not know the full story and the impact this school had on me.

Another problem was the lack of elected members to the Board of Trustees. The board continued to have more co-opted members than elected ones. This was an issue because the school board no longer represented the school community. As the board was unable to operate without substantial support of the LSM, following a negative ERO report, and after reviewing the statutory intervention progress to date, the Ministry of Education raised the level of intervention from limited statutory manager to commissioner.

The newly appointed commissioner, appointee B, while having a background in business management had no prior experience working as a statutory appointee. We had differing opinions as to the immediate and long-term needs of the school. There were numerous moments when my educational and professional judgements were

overruled. For example, I discouraged enrolments as I considered the existing behaviour of a number of students made the school academically, physically and emotionally, an unsafe place for everyone involved. Meanwhile, Commissioner B actively sought new enrolments.

Eventually, I approached the Ministry of Education to voice my concerns over the suitability of this person. Following a lengthy illness, Commissioner B resigned. I led the school for two months without any form of governance while the Ministry appointed the next commissioner (appointee C). This proved challenging – professionally and personally.

Without an operating board of trustees or an appointee fulfilling this role, many operational requirements such as submitting board-approved monthly and annual accounts were difficult. I was without support or guidance as I addressed student behaviour and learning. The challenges did not end there. The senior classroom (Years 5-8; aged 9-13years) teacher took a number of sick days to cope with stress, which increased student behaviour issues: they often misbehaved with relievers. When relievers were unavailable, I needed to combine classes and teach both together (years 1-8; aged 5-13 years). Other times, a reliever took my class while I taught the senior class. There were a number of weeks when I did not get any classroom release. This was pivotal so that I could undertake my leadership and management tasks. The impact of the lack of release time was two-fold: I was unable to provide in-class support and guidance to the other teacher, and I found myself undertaking principal duties during lunch breaks, or in the evenings, once I had completed my classroom planning, preparation, marking, and student assessment data.

Appointee C was an experienced, retired primary school principal. He was an experienced statutory appointee and viewed his role as one of support and guidance. We established a positive, supportive and trusting relationship. Appointee C adjusted the school budget to ensure a security company attended any initial callouts to the school. With extra funding from the Ministry of Education, a part-time caretaker was appointed, and was tasked with responding to any security issues, liaise with the Department of Justice, and where appropriate, provide access for contractors. This freed up my personal time and I was no longer spending long hours at work. Together, Commissioner C and I addressed remaining student behaviour. We sought ways to

engage whānau/families and community. As historical and recent school issues were addressed, our school role began to grow. We gained a reputation amongst new families for prioritising student wellbeing before addressing any academic concerns. With the establishment of a Board of Trustees, the Ministry of Education revoked the commissioner appointment, thus ending Appointee C's involvement. As the new incoming board knew the commissioner, we persuaded the Ministry of Education to retain him as the Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) to train and guide the board. During the three years of working with Appointee C, he became my mentor; guiding and supporting my decisions. He was my sounding board when I needed to discuss difficult leadership decisions before implementation. I was always able to phone him, to talk issues through or seek advice on moral or ethical decisions or principalship or educational matters.

Together, with the combined experiences of the participating principals and my own, the indications are that the impact of a statutory intervention is deeply felt on a professional and a personal level. The findings also highlight the significance of the statutory appointee's role. It is vitally important that appointees seek to work collaboratively with principals and acknowledge their awareness of the school community and their leadership skills. Further, the findings demonstrate that astute and knowledgeable appointees, support and guide principals through this process of change. Principal engagement with the intervention process promotes long-term success and sustainability of change. It is also vital that educational authorities and those charged with implementing intervention processes acknowledge that an intervention affects the school community, the staff and the principal, but more concerning, it affects the principal's physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

Across the participant principals and my stories, the key areas of congruence are:

Navigating the statutory intervention process

a) Accessing professional and institutional support
b) Working with the statutory appointee
c) Tensions of time

The relational nature of statutory interventions

a) Professional implications of leading school recovery
b) Principal health and wellbeing

c) Trusting relationships; and

The importance of contextual knowledge and awareness

d) Pressures of school recovery leadership

These are discussed in the following chapter, where implications for future practices will be outlined.

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION

The findings presented in the previous chapter are the experiences of three New Zealand primary school principals whose daily work has an impact on the professional-knowledge landscape of their school (Clandinin et al., 2009). Connelly and Clandinin (1995b) coined the metaphor 'professional-knowledge landscapes' to frame the confluence of "teachers' personal practical knowledge" (p. 4) with the theoretical and research-based knowledge of the teaching profession. Connelly and Clandinin (1995a) state "teachers who live their lives on the professional knowledge landscape shape the landscape over time and the landscape shapes them" (p. 28). The participating principals' knowledge was lived, contextualised, shaped, and embedded within the professional-knowledge landscape of New Zealand primary schools. Phillip's, Susan's and Grace's stories outline a time when each principal was immersed in their school's statutory intervention. Their stories "express their personal understandings" (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007, p. 367) of their experiences and highlight issues that affected them. Their stories lay bare the complexities, challenges and difficulties of being a principal during a statutory intervention in schools where countervailing pressures across numerous levels of school leadership and from multiple directions are laid at the principal's feet (Theoharis, 2007).

Dewey's (1938) transactional ontology acknowledges the temporality of people's interactions with an event, and thus, their understanding of their experiences are forever changing and shifting. When considering the principals' stories through Dewey's (1938) transactional ontology I was reminded that the principals' experiences needed to be understood within the broader framework of principalship in New Zealand schools, and the specific contextual location of each individual school. It was through the principals' stories that I interpreted and recognised their experiences as lived knowledge (Caine et al., 2013) set within a "particular historical, social" and cultural moment (Dilthey (1860s-70s), cited in Ormston et al., 2014, p. 1). These historical, social and/or cultural moments traversed three ecological contexts: the micro context (personal and school) of each principal's school and encompassed the

historical and chronological nature of events and those involved. The meso context (wider school and community) involved the societal, cultural and political (such as the board) structures within each school and community. While the macro context (wider societal) included the political processes and structures surrounding an intervention – the New Zealand Government Education Act, the Ministry of Education including policies, school advisors, the appointees and the governance structures of schools, for example (Hawk, 2008; Morrison, 2017; Torrance & Forde, 2017). Intersecting these levels were the individual principals' metaphysical landscapes that included their values, beliefs and sense of purpose. Weaving throughout and interacting with their landscapes were the relational practices of individual principals (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Each landscape was specific to a time and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey, 1938), and each landscape and its associated experiences, shaped, and was shaped by, the principal's actions, beliefs and practices (Clandinin, 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1995a).

In applying a relational ontological perspective to the principals' narratives, I recognised and acknowledged the temporality of their interactions, knowledge and understanding. I acknowledged the "different and sometimes contradictory" (Squire et al., 2013, p. 2) experiences and perceptions shared with me as I sought to make sense of the principals' narratives.

Moreover, I recognised my position as an insider-researcher may have enabled me to develop a deeper, more emotional and empathetic relationship with these principals, which in turn, may have allowed them to share more meaningful and deeper contextualised accounts of their experiences (Josselson, 2013). Thus, I hope that in return, the principals had the opportunity to reflect upon and understand their own experiences.

In this chapter, I synthesise key findings with the literature and the research questions to theorise the principals' experiences of leading and managing a New Zealand primary school through a statutory intervention. As some words are context-specific to the New Zealand education system, I shall briefly review the educational terms used in this chapter.

- The *Ministry of Education* is commonly referred to as the *Ministry* by educators;

- *Appointee* is the Ministry's collective term for the people selected by the Ministry to work with schools during a statutory intervention. The terms *Commissioner* and LSM (*Limited Statutory Manager)* refer to an appointee's actual role in a school;
- *Statutory intervention* is shortened to *intervention* for readability; and
- *Board of Trustees* is shortened to *Board/s*

The participant principals experienced numerous countervailing pressures throughout the statutory intervention process. This was somewhat expected, as literature on change leadership in challenging circumstances highlighted the possibility that efforts to bring about sustainable change may be fraught by continuous challenges or "countervailing pressures" and are found in various "situations, incidents, issues and people" (Theoharis, 2007, p. 5).

What was unexpected was the commonality of three key findings across all participants: principal vulnerability; the significance of understanding and acknowledging individual school context; and finally, the importance of relationships to the overall health and wellbeing of principals and schools. While these three themes occur within aspects of educational leadership literature, there was little data connecting these themes to school leaders' work of turning schools around. I shall discuss these themes in relation to New Zealand primary school leaders' lived experiences of leading schools during a statutory intervention. Following this, I shall discuss how repositioning statutory interventions as school recovery promotes and enables a holistic and culturally responsive approach. In the penultimate section, I discuss the limitations and strengths of this research and I conclude with key recommendations arising from my research and offer suggestions for future research.

Statutory intervention is a vulnerable process

Statutory interventions have been available to New Zealand schools since 1994 (Thrupp, 2005b; Wylie, 2013). Given this almost 30-year availability, it is realistic to suppose that New Zealand principals might have a reasonable knowledge of interventions. However, my findings suggest that New Zealand school principals are probable largely unaware of statutory intervention processes and the effect these may have on their leadership.

The participant principals' initial limited knowledge or understanding of interventions impeded their ability to navigate the associated legislative requirements and was not helped by appointees failing to extend their knowledge of these requirements. The principals' professional vulnerability and the gaps in their knowledge and understanding of statutory intervention also had a significant impact on their interactions with others, particularly with their school's appointee. Moreover, the principals' professional vulnerability affected their physiological, psychological, psychosocial and emotional health and wellbeing.

Clarity of processes

As outlined in Chapter One, there are legislative guidelines and requirements associated with statutory interventions in New Zealand schools, including the publication of schools entering a statutory intervention (Sections 78M, and 78N). The participant principals had several concerns regarding this process. The first concern centred on where to find the published notice; as noted in the findings, Susan's comment on the official notification of Matai School's intervention, "… couldn't find the notice and thought 'good, they've missed putting us in'. I thought that was good for the school" was echoed by Phillip. The participants' relief at not finding the notice, centred on maintaining the reputation of their school, and therefore, that of their staff and students. The participants felt there were enough 'eyes' watching the school, and further public knowledge of issues within the school would negatively increase this level of observation (Azaola, 2012; Eacott, 2015; English & Bolton, 2016; Grenfell & James, 2003). Underpinning the principals' anxiety about protecting their school from negative publicity, was their apprehension of others' perceptions of themselves and their leadership and management skills.

Appointees roles, responsibilities and employment

Overall, the principals believed there was a lack of clarity of the intervention processes, the personnel involved and the specific roles and responsibilities of appointees. This research finding aligns with earlier findings from the Office of the Auditor-General 2008 review (Office of the Auditor-General, 2008), and later, the *Review of Statutory Interventions* Working Group (Ministry of Education, 2014b). Principals, schools and communities also require information as to the specific nature, focus and goals of a school's intervention. Further, my research findings indicate the concerns raised by

the 2014 *Review of Statutory Interventions* Working Group of the "perceived lack of transparency, partnership, collaboration and trust" (Ministry of Education, 2014b, p. 16) with the intervention processes and personnel involved, have not yet been fully addressed. Although the *Review for Statutory Interventions* (Ministry of Education, 2014b) indicated the need for appointees' to be the "most suitable qualified person" (p. 3) for a school, the Ministry does not follow-up with the school to check this fit. Neither does the Ministry follow-up to ensure the long-term sustainability of the intervention. Changes to this were recommended in 2010.

Additionally, the principals' concerns about who actually employs the appointee, and subsequently, who was responsible for overseeing and paying the appointees' invoices, requires further clarity from the Ministry. The Ministry of Education is very clear in their stance that a statutory appointee is **not** an employee or agent of the Ministry (Ministry of Education, 2017c, p. i), but instead, is a self-employed "statutory service provider" (Ministry of Education, 2017c, p. i). The Ministry of Education's position on appointees' payment is that schools should pay, unless doing so places the school under considerable financial stress. All three schools in my research were financially unable to pay the appointee.

The participant principals were unaware that appointees acted as self-employed "statutory service provider" (Ministry of Education, 2017c, p. i). They believed that as the Ministry arranged for the appointee to work with their school, that the appointee was therefore an employee of the Ministry. Thus, they questioned why the doubling handling: the appointees invoiced the school; the school invoiced the Ministry. The Ministry of Education paid the school's invoice, and the school then paid the appointee.

Susan, while fulfilling her professional responsibilities for maintaining Matai School financial records and reporting processes (Ministry of Education, 2018c), challenged the Ministry about this payment process, voicing her concerns about the lack of itemisation of appointee A's invoices. New Zealand schools are required to ensure any accounts payable contain sufficient information for accountants and auditors.

The two principals working with commissioners (who fulfil the Board of Trustees role) were concerned about the conflict of interest in presenting an account payable from the appointee, and the appointee approving payment of accounts at the monthly Board meeting. In such circumstances, the State Services Commission advice is to act

ethically and in "good faith, honesty and impartiality" (Ministry of Education, 2018c, p. 8). In these situations, it may be advisable for the Ministry to appoint a third person to the school Board to ensure financial impartiality. Alternatively, the appointee could directly invoice the Ministry. This would remove schools as the middle-person, from the process.

The Ministry's stance of not being the employee of the appointee is interesting, and may pose an interesting conflict of roles for commissioners. If a school pays the commissioners fees, this would make the commissioner an employee of the Board, or at least a contractor working for the school. Yet, whereas the school Board may discipline and/or terminate staff and terminate contracts, who holds this responsibility when a commissioner is governing the school?

Timeframes

Lengthy delays in obtaining support and intervention, as Phillip experienced, do not align with school recovery research advice, Redding and Morando Rhim (2014), for example, suggest that quick and urgent responses to situations are required. My research findings contradict the Ministry of Education (2013a, 2015, 2017a) claims that an intervention allows the Ministry to provide "prompt, flexible and appropriate responses" to schools in difficulties. Further, the Ministry do not stipulate or define the timeframe of what constitutes a 'prompt' response. However, my findings support recommendations arising from the 2008 *Review into Statutory Interventions* (Office of the Auditor-General, 2008), and the 2014 *Review of Statutory Interventions in State and State-Integrated Schools: Final report and recommendations to the Minister of Education* (Ministry of Education, 2014b). Specific recommendations from these reviews link to my findings. These include that better response times to schools in crisis is still needed; that early, open discussions between school Boards and the Ministry might alleviate further escalation of a school's internal issues. The Office of the Auditor-General (2008) and Ministry of Education (2014b) reports indicate that better response times, transparency and openness between schools and the Ministry of Education are likely to alleviate future escalations of a school's issues. These points are reflected in my findings, which showed that two principals had difficulties with the initiation of the intervention process. These principals did not experience the kind

of ‘prompt, flexible and appropriate responses’ the Ministry of Education promised was possible.

Scoping reports

Additionally, if principals lack clarity around their own professional role in relation to an appointee’s professional roles and responsibilities during an intervention, they may find themselves unable to engage fully in the recovery process. While the Auditor-General’s (2010) follow-up report indicated the Ministry required appointees to submit monthly progress reports, the report did not stipulate the need for these reports to be tabled at Board meetings. Across the three schools, the notable lack of appointees’ written monthly reports at Board meetings made it difficult for the principals to work alongside the appointee. More concerning is the belief from some appointees that the principal should not be privy to scoping reports. “I was told I didn’t have the right to see it” claimed Susan. This finding further supports the 2014 *Review of Statutory Interventions* and the “perceived lack of transparency, partnership, collaboration and trust” (Ministry of Education, 2014b, p. 16). Maintaining shared purpose, finding opportunities to demonstrate achievements and celebrate goals throughout an intervention is beneficial to the ultimate goal of returning the school to self-governance. Shared purpose also “fosters close and trusted relationships” and helps avoid the “negative consequences of burnout and high staff turnover” (Billett et al., 2005, p. 23) and principal job insecurity (Reina & Reina, 2006). These findings align with the 2008 and 2014 reviews into statutory intervention (Ministry of Education, 2014b; Office of the Auditor-General, 2008) that indicated better collaborative partnerships were required between all personnel and agencies involved.

Vulnerability

Engaging in a statutory intervention was a professionally and personally vulnerable process for the three principals. However, principal vulnerability is an aspect of school leadership seldom noted within educational leadership literature outside of literature addressing the experiences and roles of novice principals. More recently, principal vulnerability has been discussed in literature on relational trust (for example Kemmis et al., 2014; F. Meyer et al., 2017; Zembylas, 2010). Yet, approaching the Ministry for support makes principals vulnerable (J. Kelly, 2013). J. Kelly (2013) believes such acts require a degree of self-confidence and an “openness and willingness” (p. 864) to

expose one's leadership practices. Paignatelli (2011) suggests in approaching the Ministry for support, the principal is "both examining and disclosing oneself … putting oneself in a position of vulnerability" (p. 221). He adds that this self-examination is a form of "moral accountability" (Pignatelli, 2011, p. 221) where principals may question whether they have the leadership and management skills to 'be' a principal. For example, Phillip's narrative highlights the self-examination he undertook during the process of seeking support, saying, "If I thought I was the cause of the issues, I would simply leave". Thus, a principal openly seeking support and assistance from the Ministry may exhibit positive vulnerability, but react with negative vulnerability to the people or agencies sent to support them. The negative reaction may occur if the principal believes any support personnel are not acting in authentic ways (Louis & Murphy, 2017; F. Meyer et al., 2017; Moussavi-Bock, 2011). Once principals seek Ministry support, principals, like Susan and Phillip, may experience an erosion of self-confidence and self-agency if support is not timely or if there is discord between the level of help sought and that offered by officials.

Professional agency and autonomy

During each school's intervention, the principals experienced an unexpected loss of professional agency and autonomy. Nor did they expect to have to justify the school's direction to the appointee "I feel more under pressure to prove that what we are doing, the direction we are going, is the right thing for these students, for this school" (Grace). Billett, Clemans and Seddon (2005) caution that even when there is an agreement between all parties as to the identified needs of the school and community, "the response by different partners may be quite diverse and even conflicting" (p. 19). This disagreement was evident in Susan's recount of several incidents with Commissioner A, involving the location of the school camp and sale of the school bus.

Overall, the principals' experiences highlight the lack of transparency, partnership, collaboration and trust" from the Ministry of Education and statutory appointees (Ministry of Education, 2014b, p. 16). The participants' perceptions of the statutory intervention processes align with A. Kelly and Clarke's (2016) claim that many school interventions focus on school leaders rather than gathering a full understanding of the underlying issues and who is involved (Lynch, 2012; Smarick, 2010; Southworth, 1998; Stotsky & Holzman, 2015b, 2015a). As the international literature indicates, a

number of school interventions are imposed upon or 'done to' a school (Futernick & Urbanski, 2014; Le Floch et al., 2016; Scott, 2008). Two of the participant principals did not expect to feel that their job was at risk. This finding was unexpected, and suggests that the Ministry appointees may begin their appointment operating from the deficit position in which a principal is held responsible for the school's issues (Fullan, 2016a). Statutory appointees working from this position and who present "issues of power and authority" (Beatty, 2007b, p. 330) for principals, may actually disempower school principals, thereby preventing them from leading in ways that could positively support their respective schools. This positioning aligns with findings from a wide range of literature spanning decades (for example: Futernick & Urbanski, 2014; Le Floch et al., 2016; Marsh et al., 2013; Pink, 1985; Stotsky & Holzman, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2017; Wallace Foundation, 2013). Broadly, the literature advocates for removing the principal to address a school's issues. The intervention processes position the appointee's role as one of power and authority, rather than a supportive role that the participant principals expected. Ultimately, these factors, when interwoven with one another, heightened the participant principals' sense of vulnerability.

An ethic of care

A significant finding is that principals felt vulnerable when attempting to exercise their ethic of care for staff and students. The principals consistently voiced their concerns for student and staff wellbeing and their commitment to these relationships. For example, Grace expressed she was conscious Pohutukawa School staff "needed to experience and receive ethical care themselves before being able to demonstrate this one another and to the children". However, she also struggled to determine the best pathway for helping some teachers, and this, along with her empathy and support for Pohutukawa School and the community had begun to affect her emotional health. Noddings (2013) suggests an ethic of care, while requiring effort, promotes a commitment towards maintaining a caring attitude towards others. Unfortunately, while the principals sought to lead in this manner, in some instances, the appointee did not reciprocate this level of care for the principal, as evidenced by Commissioner A at Matai School. Thus, the findings indicate that even when principals led with and through an ethic of care, the intervention process did not support their need for care. It is even possible that the intervention hinder appointees' ability to work and lead

through an ethic of care. Moreover, it may be challenging for appointees and other educational officials to demonstrate an ethic of care towards a principal if the officials believe from the outset that the fault lies with the principal. In such circumstances, and as evidenced the findings section *Diminished principal agency* it is difficult for a principal to work with the appointee and still be emotionally available to others within the school. While the role and beliefs of statutory appointees is not the focus of my research, this is an area for future research. My research indicates a need for all parties to engage in relational practices.

The principals' experiences of an intervention suggest that Ministerial support is not particularly supportive. The experience appears to be one of being 'done to' or 'for' but not 'with' the principal, Board of Trustees and school community. The principals and their school Board of Trustees did not understand the legal obligations and responsibilities an appointee holds during an intervention, nor did they have knowledge of the actions and processes that the appointee had planned for their schools. Again, these findings point to a "lack of transparency, partnership, collaboration and trust" (Ministry of Education, 2014b, p. 16) between all parties involved in the intervention.

The findings identified that principals are particularly vulnerable when there was a lack of a professional relationship and trust between the principal and the appointee. A reciprocal ethic of care strengthens the relationship between principal and appointee. Significant and contributing to the notion of principal vulnerability are the associated concerns of isolation, loneliness, stress and burnout.

Principal well-being

Principals are the public figure of their school. They have full responsibility for the daily management of the school. Such responsibility, especially when leading high-need schools, can be emotionally draining (Mahfouz, 2020). In addition, principals do not have any 'peers' within the school; thus they may experience positional and structural isolation from others (Crow, 2006; Kelchtermans et al., 2011).

Principal isolation and loneliness is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Howard & Mallory, 2008). Within educational research literature, concerns of principal isolation, alienation and loneliness are primarily acknowledged in relation to

the experiences of novice principals (see Halsey, 2011; Herlihy & Herlihy, 1980; Jenkins & Reitano, 2015; Kelchtermans et al., 2011; Liljenberg & Andersson, 2019; Lindorff, 2001; Lock et al., 2012; Northfield et al., 2006; Sayce & Lavery, 2013; Spillane & Lee, 2014; Starr, 2011; Starr & White, 2008; Tahir et al., 2015; Wildy & Clarke, 2012; Wright, 2012). Overall, educational leadership literature implies principal isolation "significantly impacts physical and emotional burnout" and affects a principal's quality of work life (Stephenson & Bauer, 2010, p. 14). Hence, further research into principal isolation and loneliness across a broader spectrum of principals is desirable if researchers, educational leaders and agencies are to understand fully effects of isolation and loneliness on principals working in high-need, and/or under intervention schools.

Isolation and loneliness

Educational leadership researchers (for example Herlihy & Herlihy, 1980; Northfield, 2014; Northfield et al., 2006; Starr, 2011) indicate novice and transferring experienced principals, such as Grace, are more likely to experience a sense of isolation than principals who had been in their school for three or more years. Thus, positional isolation is likely to be short-lived and more associated with the lack of professional networks and professional socialisation (Crow, 2006). On the other hand, Wright (2012) contends for experienced principals, such as Phillip, Susan and Grace, work-place isolation and loneliness is a "complex hybrid of personal, social, and contextual factors, rather than seniority alone" (p. 57). Dussault and Barnett (1996) and more recently Bauer et al. (2019) Cook et al. (2016), Stephenson and Bauer (2010), Wright (2012), Sarpkaya (2014) and Riley (2014, 2015, 2017) found ongoing isolation affects principals' work and leads to a diminished sense of job satisfaction, competency, power and meaningfulness, which eventually results in burnout. Overtime, this affects principals' personal lives including their families lives (Mahfouz, 2020; Nichols & McBride, 2017). The findings show that isolation affected the principals at different times during statutory intervention. The findings therefore point to the role that appointees have in understanding and acknowledging the principals' professional and personal circumstances during an intervention. If principals under normal circumstances experience isolation and loneliness, how much deeper and more persistent are these feelings for principals stepping into, and leading a school during an intervention? Further research into this issue might also consider to what degree

principals' personal, social, and contextual factors influence their feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Stress

A significant concern arising from the findings is the effect of the intervention process on principals' physiological, psychological, psychosocial and emotional health and wellbeing. There is a wide range of literature available on teacher stress and burnout and while some of these cross over into principal stress and burnout, both groups experience this is differently, and the personal, professional and school-based implications are different (Beausaert et al., 2016).

Physiological, psychological, psychosocial and emotional ill-health can result from the "intense demands inherent" in principalship (Howard & Mallory, 2008, p. 19). A principal's ill-health such as ongoing chronic stress and burnout affects the whole school. Phillips and Sen (2011) propose that when principals are "both mentally and physically unwell", their ill-health could have "potentially disastrous impact on the well-being of the school and those within it" (p. 180). When principals are under stress therefore, their leadership style and management of the school is likely to become "unhealthy and dysfunctional" (Kelehear, 2004, p. 31). In such an environment, people stop communicating, school culture, morale, and professional and student performance drop. As Kelehear (2004) observed, this occurs when "tensions are high and emotional support is low" (p. 31). Conversely, when principals receive emotional and social support, emotional exhaustion, disillusion and disengagement decrease. This means there is space for professional- and self-efficacy to increase (Beausaert et al., 2016). Herlihy and Herlihy (1980) argue that principals in intervention schools "are caught in a double bind" (p. 8). They acknowledge that while a principal may wish to 'fight' and discuss their concerns with others, this assistance and support was often unavailable. Eventually, the principals stopped fighting and chose to 'flee', often leaving education altogether (Beausaert et al., 2016). Herlihy and Herlihy's (1980) findings resonate with the experiences of my three participant principals.

Burnout

Burnout is a more severe form of stress. Goutas (2008) simply describes it as a "lack of hope" (p. 135), while Smith el al. (2017) suggest it is "a state of emotional and

physical exhaustion by excessive prolonged stress" (n.p). Other symptoms of burnout include mental and physical exhaustion, low concentration, avoiding dealing with issues, events, place or persons, as well as feelings of helplessness and reduced personal achievement and inefficacy (Maslach et al., 2001). Dussault and Theiboult (1996) identified a negative relationship between professional/workplace isolation and variables such as depression, alcoholism and health problems. More concerning, burnout can induce feelings of hopelessness which is a precursor of depression and suicidal behaviour (Gold, 1984; Hadley & MacLeod, 2010). Two participating principals experienced many of these burnout symptoms, as their mental health and physical well-being were severely tested during the intervention. Given the recommendations of reports into New Zealand interventions (Ministry of Education, 2014b; Office of the Auditor-General, 2008, 2010) about making processes transparent and offering principals' support, it is urgent such recommendations are addressed. At least with some clarity about the stages of intervention and the roles appointees have, a principal might feel better placed to manage the intervention process.

Grace was more able to manage the difficult and often complex moments than Phillip and Susan. Perhaps Grace's more settled approach was linked to her outsider-ness, unlike Susan and Phillip's insider-ness. Mahfouz (2020) suggests principals' emotional state not only indicate their ability to manage stress, but their overall leadership effectiveness. Both Phillip and Susan's believed others had unfairly assumed they were the cause for a number of issues within the school, and they both struggled to understand the Ministry of Education seeming lack of response or urgency to their situations. There were times when both principals fought against the advice provided by the Ministry or their individual school's appointee. While it is not common practice within the New Zealand education system to immediately remove a principal when a school is placed under an intervention, it is possible principals might actively or subconsciously hold up the process. Since Grace was new to Pohutukawa School, she was able to be more objective than Phillip or Susan, viewing things as professional rather than personal challenges. Not already being embroiled in the politics and personalities of the school, meant Grace had greater mental energy to contend with multiple complex issues by herself.

Alleviating isolation, loneliness, stress and burnout

The limited research on principals' positional isolation and loneliness indicate newly appointed principals can alleviate some of these feelings if they have established, trustworthy professional networks (Lindorff, 2001; Raymond, 2007). Northfield et al. (2006) and Starr (2011) suggest that while local principal organisations might help alleviate feelings of isolation, having principal-mentors for novice principals has benefits. These include "reduced feelings of isolation, reduced stress and frustration, opportunity to be more reflective, … professional growth and improved expertise/problem analysis" (O'Mahony & Matthews, 2006, p. 18). If principals leading schools through an intervention have mentor-principals available to call on, they may feel more supported as they navigate through difficult situations. This is not only an ethic of care, but affords nature justice. For example, when Grace's school appointee brokered her access to an established principal professional learning group, she was able to make professional and personal connections with other experienced peers. Her professional connection with this group enabled her to talk more freely about the issues she was experiencing at Pohutukawa School. Perhaps if Phillip and Susan had access to either a principal group outside of their school district or to other principals with similar experiences, the significant impact on their psychological and physical health may have been less severe, potentially reducing their senses of professional isolation.

However, Langer (2002) offers a word of caution for group support and mentors, saying people will have different perspectives on events and people's actions, and that we cannot assume to understand how someone is feeling. Additionally, Kelchtermans, et al. (2011) warn that feelings of isolation, alienation and loneliness may intensify after principal meetings, or professional events such as conferences, and "ultimately result in increased loneliness (p. 102). Both Langer's (2002) and Kelchtermans et al.'s (2011) advice resonates with Phillip's comments about wanting someone to offer ideas that might help him to resolve the difficult situation with Kōtukutuku School's Board chairperson. Instead, Phillip felt an increased sense of loneliness and helplessness following conversations with trusted experienced principals. Kelchtermans et al. (2011) state principals need to acknowledge their emotions because they are not "idiosyncratic, accidental, temporary, … side-effects which need to be controlled and played down as much as possible" (p. 95). They advise principals

need to understand the "cultural, social, (micro) political, moral and emotional aspects" (p. 104) of principalship, as doing so will enable them to develop "relevant professional knowledge and skills, as well as a sense of professional self and belonging" (Kelchtermans et al., 2011, p. 104) which will help transcend loneliness. This is why the provision of professional mentors for principals in schools undergoing intervention is likely to be crucial to the health and well-being of these principals, because intervention is, for these three principals at least, a harrowing experience.

My research highlights the importance of the Ministry of Education investigating and responding to principal health and wellbeing concerns in intervention circumstances. All New Zealand employers, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 are to manage "work-related risks that could cause serious injury, illness or even death" (New Zealand Government, 2020b). This finding also indicates an obligation for statutory appointees to be more aware of signs and symptoms of stress, burnout and trauma in principals and other staff in intervention schools (Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, 2016; New Zealand Government, 2020a). It is important to distinguish whether principal health and wellbeing is either a contributing factor in the issues affecting the school under intervention, or a result of the complexities of the intervention. The appointee is well placed to notice this. Thus, prioritising principal physiological, psychological, psychosocial and emotional health during an intervention is a key recommendation of my research.

My research also indicates the need for principals to be aware of potential implications for their leadership practices, role and position during an intervention. It is important for the principal, the school Board of Trustees and the school's Ministry senior advisor to address possible outcomes and implications from the very onset of their initial discussions. This links to the transparency advised in the 2014 *Review of Statutory Interventions* (Ministry of Education, 2014b) recommendation, and that the scoping report should be discussed with the principal so that too, is transparent.

My findings show that the Ministry's intervention processes should spend particular attention and care towards a principal's vulnerability and their health and well-being. Gurr et al. (2014) state principals need to have "sense of optimism and a balanced perspective" about their work (p. 89) and instil a sense of hope in all stakeholders (Branson, 2010; McNae with Cook, 2017; Shields, 2014; Tuana, 2014) if the school is

able to changes its circumstances successfully. Yet my findings show that my participants often found themselves in survival mode. This meant they were unable to think logically or objectively about issues, because they were under too much stress. Further examination of principal vulnerability, isolation and loneliness during an intervention process is required.

Statutory intervention is both a contextual and relational process often involving people mired in complex and often challenging situations (Barker, 2005; Drago-Severson, 2012; Duke, 2008b; Harris et al., 2006; Klar et al., 2016; Leithwood et al., 2010). Currently, intervention processes suggest there is too much ambiguity around appointees' roles in relation to principals' roles (Office of the Auditor-General, 2010; Udahemuka, 2016). There is also a lack of transparency around the relationship between the scoping report and long-plans for individual schools (Ministry of Education, 2014b). Neither of these current practices support relational practices.

School intervention is a contextual process

School principals lead schools that are contextually and culturally specific to the wider community's complex ecology (McNae, 2017; Peck & Reitzug, 2014). School leaders, therefore, work in "conditions that exist in particular locations … at particular moments" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 33). It is possible that both external and internal factors will influence a school's decline into intervention. Because of the highly contextual nature of interventions, those in schools are likely to react to both the causes of the issues and subsequent intervention differently (Duke, 2008a; Leithwood et al., 2010). Thus, any decisions necessary to address these issues are likely to result in individualised plans that support and empower stakeholders to engage with, and participate in the recovery process. In this section, I discuss three themes that contribute to the contextual nature of statutory intervention – school culture, confronting deficit beliefs and stakeholders' voices.

School culture

A school is part of a wider community (Morrison, 2017; Reeves, 2009). Just as a trusting, open and honest relationship between the appointee and the school principal

is essential for the progress of the intervention and the overall wellbeing of the school, so too is a positive relationship with the school's community. This helps the school in many ways, such as fostering community-school relationships and engagement (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Kutsyuruba et al. 2010; Lee, 2015; McNae with Cook, 2017; Morris, 2014). This enables the school to better reflect the cultural identity and practices of the community (Branson, 2008; Khalifa, 2012; Nicolaidou, 2005). Positive relationships also create opportunities for the community and school to examine the "the spaces they occupy together" (Beatty, 2007a, p. 51). An astute principal makes an effort to sustain a positive relationship, and, as Grace commented, such relationships are important.

Given the interconnected nature of school culture, climate and practices, the participant principals were often addressing dual aspects at the same time. For instance, while addressing staff and student deficit beliefs and increasing staff professional capabilities and capacity (Fullan, 2016b; A. Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Harris & Jones, 2013; Sergiovanni, 1998), the principals also worked to ensure key traditions, values and beliefs of the school and community culture were retained. Phillip, during the early years of his appointment, sought to engage Pasifika families in their children's learning and deliberately acknowledged the cultural heritage of students in order to build positive relationships and therefore, a school culture of inclusion.

Grace sought to maintain and honour the heritage and culture of Pohutukawa School and community. She engaged Pohutukawa School and community in redeveloping the school's motto, vision and curriculum. The school uniform and new logo reflected a significant natural feature within the community, thus strengthening the connection between school and community. Grace encouraged parents to express their dreams and desires for their children's future, and to consider their own and the school's role in empowering students to achieve these dreams.

Both Phillip and Grace noticed that as they worked on the schools' culture to better reflect the community and local environment, stakeholders began engaging with the school. In turn, this had a positive effect on improving student's academic achievement and classroom behaviour (Augustine-Shaw et al., 2017; Baroody, 2011; Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Cavanagh et al., 2012; Drago-Severson, 2012; Habegger, 2008; West et al., 2005; Wrigley, 2011). The examples from participants' experiences

outlined above, align with studies by educational researchers such as Angelle (2017a) and Beatty (2007a). Their work suggests that re-culturing a school, and rebuilding school capacity enhances people's social and emotional safety, thus promoting a more socially cohesive and inclusive school.

On the other hand, achieving a positive school-community relationship may be difficult to achieve if the community is unwilling, or unable to engage with the school or principal (Augustine-Shaw et al., 2017; Beatty, 2007b; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Kutsyuruba et al., 2010; Qian & Walker, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Zembylas, 2013). This may be exacerbated by principal's perceptions of the community, or their reluctance to engage with the school community (see page 105 and the following theme – *confronting deficit beliefs*).

Confronting deficit beliefs and resistant behaviour

Addressing people's deficit beliefs and resistant behaviour requires people to be aware firstly of their own beliefs and behaviours before drawing attention to other peoples'. However, if an organisation or society holds deficit beliefs, it is likely to be significantly harder for people to raise awareness about them. The participant principals indicated their awareness of society's beliefs about their individual schools once it became common knowledge an intervention was in place. Phillip observed that other principals' comments about "clearing out the rubbish" at Kōtukutuku School were hurtful and unhelpful, yet he did not address these beliefs. Two principals, Phillip and Susan, who were caught up in the situation at their schools, believed the Ministry held negative and deficit beliefs about their principalship and their ability to address the issues affecting their schools (see earlier section on *vulnerability*).

The findings uncovered what the participant principals understood about the community and staff cultures, and the influence of these cultures on issues within their schools. For example, Susan believed a particular group of parents caused a number of school-community issues. She also thought the community "acted like scared little bunnies hiding in their burrows" in response to Matai School's intervention. Grace, on the other hand, shared her beliefs that Pohutukawa School and community were hurting from historical, deeply-felt traumatic events (Zembylas, 2013) and broken trust (Augustine-Shaw et al., 2017; Qian & Walker, 2014). The principals were very aware of the extent to which the local community influenced the troubles they experienced

(Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Kemmis et al., 2014; Sutherland, 2017). Shields (2014) reminds school leaders that when we place the "locus of blame and responsibility" onto others (p. 34) we are remiss in addressing our own deficit views, beliefs, actions and practices.

Addressing deficit beliefs within each school presented some countervailing pressures for the principals. In each of the schools described in my study, staff resistance to change and to identifying and acknowledging their own personal beliefs slowed the process of change. Community and staff continual levels of resistance to change affected the three principals' deeply. They questioned their leadership abilities and skills, for example, and began to second-guess themselves.

Notman (2015) states principals occasionally experience difficulty in shifting "teachers' thinking and pedagogical practice to meet the diverse learning needs of their students" (p. 39), especially if teachers continue to hold preconceived perceptions of students based on their family background and experiences at the school. The principals' experiences indicated that time, care and guidance is a necessary component of how they seek to create positive change with staff, particularly when challenging staff and student deficit beliefs and views (Fairchild & DeMary, 2011; Kowal & Ableidinger, 2011; Peck & Reitzug, 2014). The principals felt caught between the positive aspect of retaining long-term staff members who held historical and cultural knowledge of the school and community, and the negative affect of disengaged staff who were reluctant to either accept the changes or leave the school. This also points to the importance of support and guidance for principals to manage these relational but potentially disruptive actions.

However, there were times when the principals themselves engaged in resistant behaviour in order to circumnavigate or question processes, policies and practices, "constraints and complexities" (Wang, 2016, p. 537), or avoid certain situations that were counterproductive to their work. In this context, resistance might be linked to principal's blind spots about their own behaviour, beliefs and values (Chapman & Tobia, 2012; Gamage, 2006; K. Holmes et al., 2013; Mintrop & Charles, 2017; Starr, 2011, 2014b, 2014b; Wylie, 2012b). Such behaviour also links to the principals perceptions of loss of professional agency and voice and feelings of vulnerability. For instance, they circumnavigated financial and staffing constraints so they could support

other teachers or target particular students' learning need (see Phillip's narrative). Grace prioritised people before other unnecessary demands on her time (Wang, 2016), stating "paperwork will always be there, but people, in their moment of need, cannot wait", adding, "if the paperwork does not get done, then it was not that important in the first instance". Such strategic behaviour was one way principals could manage their demands and support positive relational connections.

Stakeholders' voice

The findings indicate that the perspectives and engagement of various school stakeholders appear to be missing from a number of statutory interventions (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Drago-Severson, 2012; Glaze, 2018; Habegger, 2008; Wrigley, 2011). Each group of stakeholders (staff, students, parents, community) has different and possibly competing views, values and beliefs, as well as knowledge and understanding of the school. It is important that these multiple views be acknowledged (Gurr, 2014; Kemmis et al., 2014; P. Smith & Bell, 2011; Wrigley, 2011). Yet, the experiences of the participant principals, as well as my own experiences suggest that some stakeholders' voices are not heard. These silent voices predominantly tend to be the largest group of stakeholders – the students. While two of the participants spoke about the importance of empowering staff, parents and community to engage with, and contribute towards the schools' recovery, the role and voices of students within the recovery process were largely silent. Further research into student views and engagement with the intervention process is a recommendation from my findings.

Addressing issues affecting a school's decline and the school's subsequent journey to recovery requires all stakeholders to be engaged in the process. This includes acknowledging people's vulnerabilities and historical hurts; the school's history, values and traditions; and whānau/families dreams, wishes and desires for the future, for example. Furthermore, school recovery processes require people to acknowledge the individual situation and specific cultural context of each individual school. This requires appointees and principals' to model relational practices. Modelling relational practices is a start.

School intervention is a relational process

A number of school turnaround/effective school leadership researchers (such as Fuller, 2017; A. Hargreaves, 2004; Louis & Murphy, 2017; Nicolaidou & Ainscow, 2005; Poirel & Yvon, 2014; Zembylas, 2013) reference the emotionally and relationally labour-intensive work of school leaders. These authors and others (such as Angelle, 2017b; Hadfield & Jopling, 2012; Mintrop & Charles, 2017; Moolenaar & Sleegers, 2015; Price, 2015) acknowledge that a principal's ability to work with, and alongside, various stakeholders is reliant on a number of factors and influences, including how other people perceive and evaluate a principal's leadership (Angelle, 2017c).

The principals' experiences indicate times when their relationships within the school, the community, and with the statutory appointee were not effective or productive enough to lead to the end-goal of achieving self-governance. Successful leadership of a school under statutory intervention is dependent on the statutory appointee and principal's ability and willingness to build and sustain relationships, both with one another, and then within and beyond the school (Billett et al., 2005; Price, 2015). Susan's experiences with Commissioner A, is a case in point. If positive partnership principles are not established from the start, trust may never develop, making it difficult for the two people to work together productively, for the good of the school.

Dhillon (2013) implies effective partnerships are not straight forward; that all relationships progress through "peaks and troughs of development" and may include periods of "deep decline" (p. 738). For a working partnership to survive post-decline, all partners must equally contribute and see value in continuing the partnership. Unfortunately, when a partnership is in a deep decline, for example as in Phillip's relationship with the Board chair, or Susan's with appointee A, people may perceive that trust has been "breached, broken and betrayed" (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2014, p. 2). When a relationship reaches this level of decline, it often results in people reverting to survival mode behaviours. Reina and Reina (2006) suggest in these instances, not only will an individual go into a self-protective mode, but they also tend to "cast themselves as the intended recipients of other people's harmful actions" (p. 25). As evident in pages 99 and 109, two of my three principals exhibited self-protective behaviour.

The importance of trust

Trust is an essential ingredient for well-functioning schools (Beatty, 2007a; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Kutsyuruba et al., 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Trust operates on a number of levels – between individuals, between the school and its Board of Trustees and the wider community. When schools enter an intervention, it is likely that trust has been a casualty of the issues precipitating the intervention. The findings highlight how important it is that all parties involved in an intervention seek to re-establish trust from the start. Acknowledging that they give one another the time and space to create, sustain and foster these relationships is crucial (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Kutsyuruba, et al. 2010; Lee, 2015; McNae with Cook, 2017; Morris, 2014). It is also important that all personnel involved in an intervention acknowledge the complexity of identifying and addressing issues, including any hidden issues, however painful that acknowledgement is. To do so, requires high levels of trust between the parties concerned. It is in everyone's interest to understand the various positions and perspectives, if there is hope for compromise and future success. Further, that they also acknowledge and be cognisant when differentiated leadership approaches and knowledge are necessary throughout the school's recovery (Alton-Lee, 2013; Ministry of Education, 2008). A change of personnel such as that favoured by a number of generic school turnaround processes, may indicate the start of a school improvement (Futernick & Urbanski, 2014; Le Floch et al., 2014). However, if the underpinning conditions of a school's decline are unable to be identified and addressed, then repeated churn of school personnel is detrimental to school improvement plans. It is likely that goodwill will erode. In Phillip's case, the erosion of collaboration and trust with the Board of Trustees chairperson was a key reason for calling in the Ministry of Education.

Collaborative partnerships

When principals and appointees can develop a mutually collaborative and responsive relationship, as well as to the job of making positive change to a school's fortune, progress can be less damaging to the school and the principal's health. This does not ignore Billett et al.'s (2007) view that even with common concerns and goals, "the process of working together is complex and challenging, often contested and require[s] new ways of working" (p. 638). As noted in the findings, working with appointees

who were experienced, ex-principals posed particular challenges for all the participants. These challenges often related to instances where the appointee appeared to be stepping into the principal's role of managing the school and staff, as experienced by Grace when she needed to clarify the Appointee's 'hat' [i.e. principal or appointee] when discussing issues. Both Phillip and Grace, while appreciating the chance to discuss school leadership matters with an experienced principal, voiced frustration at having to justify their actions to appointees, especially in the early stages of intervention, for it compromised their professional agency and autonomy. The findings support Billett et al's. (2007) suggestion that the process of building trust is "continually enacted, negotiated and remade throughout the life of the partnership" (p. 673) and requires a continual focus on relationship-building (Dhillon, 2013). The appointee's and principal's actions and behaviour towards one another influence the nature of the school's "ecosystems" with all its "interdependent parts" (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2014, p. 2), including the school climate, the school's values and vision (C. Day et al., 2010; Hallinger & Heck, 2011). Grace believed that the ongoing conversations with Pohutukawa School's commissioner helped her to reflect on and refine her vision and goals for the Pohutukawa School. Together, they also ensured the school community were engaged in this decision-making process. Kutsyuruba and Walker (2014) state that trust is a vital part of a school's ecosystem, which can be "built, brokered and bolstered" (p. 2). For example, at Matai School, Commissioner B gained Susan's trust through actions and brokered the involvement of a principal-mentor for Susan. In a similar fashion, Pohutukawa School's appointee brokered Grace's involvement in an inter-region principal professional development group.

Fullan (2016a) maintains that relationships are a key indicator of successful school recovery. When "shared norms and values" and "other characteristics such as reciprocity [and] openness" (Dhillon, 2013, p. 746) are upheld, the sustainability and lifespan of the working partnership between the principal and appointee is likely to be stronger. The relational aspect of developing trust with their school's appointee was a central concern for all participant principals: the relationship either helped or hindered any progress the school could make. When Susan, for example, felt Commissioner A publicly undermined her, Matai School's progress towards a stable and positive outcome stalled. Additionally, the findings suggest that when an appointee takes the

time to understand and acknowledge the schools unique context, positive interactions are present, which in turn, indicate the likelihood of a successful intervention as experienced at Kōtukutuku and Pohutukawa Schools. Price (2015) reminds us that leadership is relational work and it requires time, space and effort for these relationships to develop. However, it is equally important that all parties, including the Ministry, acknowledge when a partnership is not working. In these instances, the Ministry may be wise to acknowledge such "changing dynamics and challenges" (Ministry of Education, 2014b, p. 10) and alter personnel quickly.

Re-orientating statutory intervention as school recovery

In Chapter Two, I considered an alternative way of re-framing statutory intervention measures as school recovery. Educational researchers such as Meyers et al. (2017) argue that school decline can be disrupted, thus avoiding generic school turnaround /statutory intervention measures (Fullan, 2016b; Meyers & Smylie, 2017), and the fallacy of 'heroic leaders' (R. Goddard, 2003; Mann et al., 2017; Starr, 2014b). Drawing upon medical terms such as *rehabilitation* (Hitt & Meyers, 2018) and *recovery* (Stark, 1998) I reframed and re-imagined statutory intervention as school recovery. I drew attention to the level of support, care and compassion a school might require while addressing complex and challenging situations, people and events. Furthermore, I suggested that the use of medical terms may remind educationalists and society to protect and enhance the mana [honour, respect and history] of those involved.

The findings highlight three significant themes - the vulnerability of principals as they engage in school intervention; secondly, the relational nature of such work suggests it is essential educational authorities and agencies place a higher emphasis on developing, maintaining and enhancing relationships with principals and stakeholders. Finally, statutory interventions are highly contextualised to individual schools and thus it is essential all stakeholders be engaged in the intervention process.

In order for these key themes to be incorporated into school recovery processes, it may be necessary for the Ministry of Education to reframe the language used during interventions. A multi-disciplinary team approach might lessen some of the

vulnerability principals' experience while leading their school through a statutory intervention. I discuss both these concepts next.

Reframing the language of statutory intervention

If statutory intervention in New Zealand is re-orientated and re-imagined as school recovery, it is essential that the often deficit intervention language and subsequent peoples' perceptions, is reframed to more holistic, inclusive and culturally appropriate terminology. Reframing the language may inspire the Ministry of Education, the appointees, educational researchers, educators and stakeholders, to consider alternative, individualised context-specific intervention processes. Acknowledging there is not one right way to work through school recovery is important as this allows school principals and appointees to embrace the cultural nuances that permeate and influence the change process (Blackmore, 2013; Fullan, 2016a; Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2013; Mette & Scribner, 2014; Meyers & Smylie, 2017; Møller, 2012; Redding & Morando Rhim, 2014; West et al., 2005). Unpacking the layers of complexity surrounding recovery takes time and thoughtful consideration of the circumstances. This unpacking should involve a clear and transparent strategy that engenders commitments from all involved. School recovery exacts courage, energy, contextual knowledge and collaboration from all stakeholders (Burbach & Butler, 2005; Gurr et al., 2014; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Peck & Reitzug, 2014; Shields, 2014). Statutory intervention seldom acknowledges any of these factors. Interventions are implemented due to Ministry concerns for the "operation of the school, or the welfare or educational performance of their students is at risk" (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Prioritising the care and wellbeing of key stakeholders, such as staff and Board members, may result in their increased engagement with the intervention process. Developing and nurturing effective and lasting relationships in recovering schools requires stable staff (M. Meyer et al., 2011; Price, 2015). Furthermore, for any long-term positive change to be beneficial for the school, a principal would need to remain at a school between five to eight years (Partlow, 2007; Price, 2015; Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Schools undergoing recovery processes require time and space to develop, maintain and strengthen relationships and support networks within and across school and community networks if a school is to continue advancing (Finnigan & Daly, 2016;

Quintero, 2017). Involving the school and community from the very beginning of an intervention, such as meeting potential appointees prior to the intervention, may prompt "detailed, transparent, consultative and robust" needs analysis (Ministry of Education, 2014b, p. 10). However, the Ministry of Education have a responsibility to ensure interventions are "transparent and flexible" (Ministry of Education, 2014b, p. 10). Further, the Ministry need to consider how their goal of meeting "changing dynamics and challenges" can truly be achieved (Ministry of Education, 2014b, p. 10).

Multi-disciplinary approach

Current statutory intervention processes provide an appointee with discretionary authority to seek additional specialist support for a school (Ministry of Education, 2015). Yet, if a school is to recover from initial challenging and complex situations, a multidisciplinary approach may be appropriate at the very inception of an intervention. A multidisciplinary team might consist of specialists in property, finance, change management, policy and processes, curriculum design, teaching and learning, for example. Psychologists and counsellors may work with individuals and groups of people within the school and community to help address historical and current hurts and issues, thus ensuring various stakeholders are psychologically and psychosocially well (Downey et al., 2008; Downey & Condron, 2016). Social workers could support individual families to address factors associated with socio-economic and family matters (Court & O'Neill, 2011; Hawk, 2008; Jang et al., 2008; Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Notman, 2015; Papa & English, 2011). Finally, kaumātua (Māori elders) and other significant cultural groups might be approached to help strengthen the school's cultural awareness and practices, thus ensuring the needs of all students are addressed (Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Hansen, 2012; Notman, 2008, 2015; Parker et al., 2011).

Various members of the team may not necessarily be required all the time; some members may be specialists who disrupt school decline or school-community issues at an early stage; while other specialist skills may be required over a longer period, for example finance. Such teams better reflect the complexities and nuances of countervailing pressures (Fairchild & DeMary, 2011; Kowal & Ableidinger, 2011; Myers & Goldstein, 1997; Peck & Reitzug, 2014; Theoharis, 2007). They might be better able to acknowledge people's resistance to change, supporting them to understand the rationale and urgency for change (Chapman & Tobia, 2012; Mintrop

& Charles, 2017; Wylie, 2012b). At the same time, they might maintain and affirm a school's cultural identity, meeting the cultural and learning needs of students and community (Cavanagh et al., 2012).

However, caution is necessary when considering a multidisciplinary team approach to avoid the possibility of "panoptical performativity" (Perryman, 2006, p. 148) or adding additional countervailing pressures onto the principal, staff and stakeholders (Theoharis, 2007). Further, a team approach may disrupt the heroic or saviour leader discourse that is often prevalent in schools undergoing an intervention (Ainscow et al., 2005; Caldwell et al., 2012; Harris, 2003; J. Holmes, 2017; Mann et al., 2017; Møller, 2012; Shulman & Sullivan, 2015; Spillane, 2005; Starr, 2014b). Thus, an appointee's overall responsibility might be to ensure a cohesive alignment and implementation of goals and actions.

Summary

Re-orientating statutory intervention as school recovery calls for educational authorities and agencies to move away from invasive, generic programmes and practices (Fullan, 2016a; Meyers & Smylie, 2017). As the findings indicate, school recovery takes time. Encouraging stakeholder participation from the very conception of an intervention calls for the Ministry of Education to review statutory intervention processes and timeframes. Doing so may ensure any intervention processes are responsive to the school's culture, enabling stronger relational practices to emerge from the intervention. It is important that principals and appointees disrupt the silences within the school (Chase, 2003; Mazzei, 2008; Theoharis, 2007) and de-privatise staff beliefs and assumptions about students and the school community. (Holte, 2014; Kemmis et al., 2014; Zembylas, 2010). As evidenced in the participant principals' narratives, supporting stakeholders to acknowledge their perceptions of others and themselves was often a difficult and at times arduous task. Yet, by doing so, the principals were often able to help others to re-imagine and re-orientate their perceptions, thus encouraging and enhancing the school's capacity and people's sense of social and emotional safety and cohesion (Angelle, 2017b; Beatty, 2007a; Cardno, 1999, 2007). (Angelle, 2017c; Beatty, 2007a)

A school exiting an intervention might require an extended period of support and monitoring to ensure new practices are embedded and long-term sustainability school culture and practices. Furthermore, this monitoring may enable the Ministry of Education to formally evaluate the long-term success of interventions (Udahemuka, 2016).

Research limitations and strengths

My research into New Zealand primary school principals' perceptions and experiences of leading a school under statutory intervention focused on how principals lead their school through the intervention. However, as the findings indicate, the principals themselves did not always focus on this topic during their interviews. This meant some interview questions such as those relating to principals' actions and goals for turning around their schools were not addressed. Instead, the main areas of discussion revolved around the actual intervention processes, the role of the appointee and most significantly, the physiological, psychological, psychosocial and emotional effect on their health and wellbeing.

It is possible that my limited research experience meant I missed opportunities to draw the principals' attention back to the leadership questions. However, I too had been a primary principal in a similar situation. I understood and acknowledged the desire these principals may have felt to discuss significant experiences with someone who 'got it'; who understood that a 'bad day' was much more complex and multi-layered than a child swearing and throwing objects at a teacher. I recognised how important it was for these principals to have the space and silence to contemplate their personal journey (Chase, 2003; Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin et al., 2009; Mazzei, 2008). I also acknowledged the importance of being a "stranger on the train" for the principals and enabling them to talk without incrimination or judgement (Josselson, 2013). Thus, the strength of my research are the principals' stories of their experiences and perceptions of the statutory intervention processes. That the principals were willing to share heart-felt moments and confidential information about their health concerns is another strength of my research.

While analysing the principals' stories for commonalities and differences, I needed to be aware of metaphorical borderlands (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007) and the prospect of my own experiences infecting the data. I therefore had to keep my own experiences to the outer edge of the borderlands as much as possible. I acknowledge there are likely to be occasions when my own perceptions have overlaid my understanding of what my participants have said. This was mitigated by participant's member-checked the transcribed interviews. I also discussed my interpretations of the data and findings as they developed with my supervisors.

Since the principals steered the direction of the interviews, questions relating to various indicators of school decline were not discussed. This included information on student achievement and each school's ability to meet the academic needs of its students. Inferential information on the teaching and learning capabilities of the schools were obtained through the interviews, such as Grace's comment on teachers needing to experience empathy themselves before modelling this to students. The interviews also provided inferential information on how the principals were addressing issues within their schools such as focusing on staff behaviour and capabilities. However, the participant principals had difficulty identifying the actual steps or processes they engaged in during their schools' journey to recovery. The participant principals responded to and addressed multiple issues within the school on a needs-first basis. For instance, student and staff wellbeing and safety needs were addressed urgently, while the principals were comfortable categorising Ministry paperwork requests as less urgent.

Other limitations with this research is the research period. My interviews were conducted over 36 weeks. This means that even though I interviewed participants three times, this was not a longitudinal study. I therefore cannot report on individual school progress and stability post-intervention. While interviews offered rich data about individual experiences, they are different from longitudinal mixed-methods research that might offer a nation-wide picture of statutory intervention. This was, however, not my focus. My research question focused on wanting to understand principals' perceptions of their experiences of leading a school through an intervention. Qualitative interviews therefore suited my project. Another project might seek to gain the Ministry of Education and statutory appointees' perspectives and to know more

about the statutory framework of intervention. There may be specific processes about finding suitable appointee candidates for example.

Further limitations include the small sample size and the particular focus on New Zealand state primary school principals leading small schools (<150 students). Therefore, generalisation is not possible. However the issues raised about principal health and wellbeing align with recent research surveys on this matter (see for example: Riley, 2015, 2017).

Recommendations

Recommendations arising from my research are as follows:

- Clearer communication from the Ministry to principals, schools and communities about the statutory intervention process, including
    - Timeframes for responding to schools' requests;
    - Timeframes for the appointment of a statutory appointee;
    - Timeframes for implementing the intervention;
    - Clearer notification information, including where to find the official statutory intervention notice. This could include the use of the official title *The New Zealand Gazette* followed by the URL;
- Pre-tenure meeting/s between the proposed statutory appointee, the school and Ministry, to outline the kaupapa [principles, ideals, values] of the intervention and address:
    - stakeholders on their perceptions of key areas of concern;
    - appointee's background knowledge/experiences shared;
    - appointees' role and responsibilities, including
        - Who the appointee reports to
        - Who pays appointees invoices; need for itemised invoices
    - Process for raising concerns;
- Prepare principal for the potentially lengthy recovery process;
- Engagement of key stakeholders during scoping phase, including the development of the report and proposed goals;
- Principal and other stakeholders to view monthly progress reports;
- Principal health and well-being as a key responsibility / area of concern for appointees;
- Brokering of principal's access to supportive local networks, if needed.

Such actions might result in

- Better engagement of school stakeholders with the statutory intervention process, and consequently the school;
- Stronger working relational practices between the principal and appointee;
- Better protection of the mana of the school and those involved
- Collaborative partnerships between
- A process shifting from 'being done to' to being 'done with' the principal and key stakeholders.

Potential of this research

My research has the potential to significantly contribute to the field of New Zealand education leadership research on high-need schools, and schools under statutory intervention. This research has importance for New Zealand principals who are currently working in, or who are thinking of applying for principalship in high-need schools placed in Statutory Intervention under section 78(M) and 78(N) (1-3) of the Education Act 1989. This research may help inform some of the challenges involved for those leading schools under statutory management.

Moreover, this research may help New Zealand education leadership researchers, educational consultants, statutory appointees and principals to better understand the challenges experienced by principal's working in such schools. Through better understanding, principals working in statutory intervention schools may receive more targeted and individualised support.

Professional identities such as the Teaching Council, ERO, the Ministry of Education, along with organisations such as NZEI, NZPF and education policy makers, may better understand the complexity of challenges principals experience as they work to positively change the fortunes of a school in an intervention. These organisations may then take appropriate action to assist and support New Zealand principals during their principalship of that school. Furthermore, this research may contribute to government reviews of statutory intervention policy and practices.

Internationally, this research may add to the growing field of educational research on *turnaround* schools providing a New Zealand perspective of the adversities and successes experienced by school principals as they lead challenging schools. My

research adds three New Zealand primary school principals' voices and experiences to this growing field of research.

This research focused on a particular group of New Zealand school principals – primary school principals leading a small school during a statutory intervention. The voices reflected in the findings are those of the three participating New Zealand primary school principals.

Conclusion

The experiences of the principals involved in this study are contextualised and unique to their schools. It is therefore important for principals to understand and acknowledge the circumstances they are in, and know when and how to address incidents from the beginning. The participant principals have been shaped and influenced by both their experiences and their interactions with the various people involved in the intervention. This means they know more than they did entering the statutory intervention context, emerging much wiser principals.

Papa and English (2011) questioned how principals know and understand *what to do, how to do it, and [have] the courage to act*" (p. 3) when implementing school recovery processes such as school turnaround or statutory interventions. The findings of my research demonstrated that principals' actions are largely unplanned. Instead, their actions relied on their professional beliefs, values and inherent sense of right or wrong. It is likely the multiple challenging and often complex situations, events and people within each school required the principals to take a responsive, individualistic approach, rather than a planned, generic approach as advocated in school turnaround literature.

The participant principals' actions were similar to the intent and purpose of statutory interventions – addressing concerns that placed student welfare or academic performance at risk. Yet, it was also important to the principals, that their relationships with students were not detrimental to teacher:student relationships. As acknowledged by Phillip and Grace, the students had to trust their teachers before any significant learning occurred.

Establishing a positive relationship with the students, parents and staff was vital, particularly if people's negative behaviour and deficit beliefs were to be addressed. The principals focused on staff professional values and beliefs, and teachers' classroom practices in order to change the school culture. For Phillip and Grace, school-community relationships appear to have been a secondary focus, and initial engagement focused on the development of a school culture to better reflect the community. As each school settled into its journey towards long-term positive change, the principals deliberately communicated successes, including student academic and social engagement, progress and achievement. By such acts, they began repairing the community's view of the school.

The principals undertook this intervention work in a manner that was relational and highly contextualised to their individual school and community. These principals identified and addressed issues that predominantly affected the micro-context of their schools. Their knowledge and understanding of their school community enabled them to work in ways that were culturally literate and contextually responsive.

Redding and Morando Rhim (2014) state leading a school's intervention comes at a cost. As indicated in the findings and discussed in the first part of this chapter, leading a school through a statutory intervention was challenging professionally and personally for these principals. Thus, the most unacceptable cost of leading a statutory intervention school was to the principals' health and wellbeing. In an effort to manage their health and wellbeing, the principals sought to find a balance between issues and situations they could and could not control. As illustrated in the Findings, achieving this balance was, at times, difficult but the principals were able to reach a point where they could still survive, where they could begin to be outward looking, rather than inward. Eventually, they were able find a balance where they were emotionally safe.

Therefore, while the principals were both a "catalyst [of change] and the agent of support" (Hallinger & Heck, 2011, p. 4); the significant impact on the participant principals indicate they cannot, and should not be left to address complex, challenging situations, people and events by themselves. This may be the most important and significant role for a statutory appointee – supporting the principal to identify, implement and sustain change within their school, while ensuring they are maintaining

their own physiological, psychological, psychosocial and emotional health and wellbeing.

REFERENCES

Abrahamsen, H., & Aas, M. (2016). School leadership for the future: Heroic or distributed? Translating international discourses in Norwegian policy documents. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 48*(1), 68–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2016.1092426

Ahumada, L., Galdames, S., & Clarke, S. (2016). Understanding leadership in schools facing challenging circumstances: A Chilean case study. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *19*(3), 264–279. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2015.1048744

Ainscow, M., West, M., & Nicolaidou, M. (2005). Putting our heads together: A study of headteacher collaboration as a strategy for school improvement. In P. Clarke (Ed.), *Improving schools in difficulty* (pp. 117–136). Continuum International Publishing Group.

Ali, S., & Kelly, M. (2012). Ethics and social research. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Researching society and culture* (3rd ed., pp. 115–128). SAGE Publications.

Alton-Lee, A. (2013). Using educational research as a resource for continuous improvement in education: The best evidence syntheses. In A. D. Reid, E. P. Hart, D. Kumar, & M. A. Peters (Eds.), *Companion to research in education* (pp. 209–213). Springer Science & Business Media.

Angelle, P. S. (2017a). Beliefs and behaviors of two high school principals in developing a sense of school community for students. *NASSP Bulletin, 101*(1), 5–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636517694957

Angelle, P. S. (2017b). Moving forward. In P. S. Angelle (Ed.), *A global perspective of social justice leadership for school principals* (pp. 303–319). Information Age Publishing.

Angelle, P. S. (2017c). The enactment of social justice. In P. S. Angelle (Ed.), *A global perspective of social justice leadership for school principals* (pp. 65–84). Information Age Publishing.

Arar, K., Örücü, D., & Ak Küçükçayir, G. (2019). Culturally relevant school leadership for Syrian refugee students in challenging circumstances. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *47*(6), 960–979. https://doi.org/10.1177/741143218775430

Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL). (2013). *ATL factsheet on schools in special measure in England and Wales*. Association of Teachers and Lectures (ATL). https://www.atl.org.uk/Images/adv36-schools-in-special-measures-in-england-and-wales-nov-13

Augustine-Shaw, D., Hachiya, R., & Northern Miller, T. (2017). Leadership for change. In D. J. Touchton, M. A. Rodríguez, G. Ivory, & M. Acker-Hocevar (Eds.), *Quandaries of school leadership: Voices from principals in the field* (pp. 207–223). Palgrave Macmillan US.

Auld, E., & Morris, P. (2014). Comparative education, the 'New Paradigm' and policy borrowing: Constructing knowledge for educational reform. *Comparative Education*, *50*(2), 129–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2013.826497

Avolio, B. J., & Gardner, W. L. (2005). Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *16*(3), 315–338. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.001

Azaola, M. C. (2012). Revisiting Bourdieu: Alternative educational systems in the light of the theory of social and cultural reproduction. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *22*(2), 81–95. https://doi.org/10.1080/09620214.2012.700187

Bakkenes, I., Brabander, C. D., & Imants, J. (1999). Teacher isolation and communication network analysis in primary schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *35*(2), 166–202. https://doi.org/10.1177/00131619921968518

Ball, S. J. (1998). Big policies/small world: An introduction to international perspectives in education policy. *Comparative Education*, *34*(2), 119–130. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050069828225

Barascout, R. (2015). A bullied boy who grew up to change school climate. In S. J. Gross & J. P. Shapiro (Eds.), *Democratic ethical educational leadership: Reclaiming school reform* (pp. 144–148). Routledge.

Barber, M. (1998). The dark side of the moon: Imagining an end to failure in urban education. In L. Stoll & K. Myers (Eds.), *No quick fixes: Perspective on schools in difficulty* (pp. 17–33). The Falmer Press.

Barker, B. (2005). Transforming schools: Illusion or reality? *School Leadership & Management*, *25*(2), 99–116. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430500036215

Barkuizen, G., Benson, P., & Chik, A. (2014). *Narrative inquiry in language teaching and learning research*. Routledge.

Baroody, K. (2011). *Turning around the nation's lowest-performing schools: Five steps districts can take to improve their chances of success*. Centre for American Progress. http://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/02/pdf/five_steps.pdf

Bassey, M. (2012). Case studies. In A. Briggs, M. Coleman, & M. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership and management* (3rd ed., pp. 155–169). SAGE Publications.

Battersby, S. L., & Verdi, B. (2015). The culture of professional learning communities and connections to improve teacher efficacy and support student learning. *Arts Education Policy Review*, *116*(1), 22–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2015.970096

Bauer, S. C., Silver, L., & Schwartzer, J. (2019). The Impact of isolation on new principals' persistence: Evidence from a southern US state. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *47*(3), 383–399. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143217739359

Beatty, B. R. (2007a). Feeling the future of school leadership: Learning to lead with the emotions in mind. *Leading and Managing*, *13*(2), 44–65.

Beatty, B. R. (2007b). Going through the emotions: Leadership that gets to the heart of school renewal. *Australian Journal of Education*, *51*(3), 328–340.

Beausaert, S., Froehlich, D. E., Devos, C., & Riley, P. (2016). Effects of support on stress and burnout in school principals. *Educational Research*, *58*(4), 347–365. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2016.1220810

Becroft, A. (2016). Forward. In P. Towl & S. Hemphill (Eds.), *Locked out: Understanding and tackling school exclusion in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. x–xiv). NZCER Press.

Begley, P. (2012). Leading with moral purpose: The place of ethics. In M. Preedy, N. Bennett, & C. Wise (Eds.), *Educational leadership: Context, strategy and collaboration* (pp. 38–51). SAGE Publications.

Bennett, J., Ylimaki, R. M., Dugan, T. M., & Brunderman, L. A. (2014). Developing the potential for sustainable improvement in underperforming schools: Capacity building in the socio-cultural dimension. *Journal of Educational Change*, *15*(4), 377–409. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-013-9217-6

Berry, B., & Rasberry, M. (2007). *Supporting and staffing high-needs schools: Recommendations from Washington's national board-certified teachers*. National Education Association and the Center for Teaching Quality.

Berwick, C. (2015, November 3). *How one country managed to turn around its failing schools: The great German school turnaround*. The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/11/great-german-scool-turnaround/413806/

Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J., & Biddulph, C. (2003). *The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand: Best evidence synthesis*. Ministry of Education. https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/7692/bes-community-family-influences.pdf

Billett, S., Clemans, A., & Seddon, T. (2005). *Forming, developing and sustaining social partnerships* (A National Vocational Education and Training Research and Evaluation Program Report, p. 45). Australian Government. https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/file/0019/4933/nr4012.pdf

Billett, S., Ovens, C., Clemans, A., & Seddon, T. (2007). Collaborative working and contested practices: Forming, developing and sustaining social partnerships in education. *Journal of Education Policy*, *22*(6), 637–656. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930701625288

Bishop, R., & Berryman, M. (2010). Te Kotahitanga: Culturally responsive professional development for teachers. *Teacher Development*, *14*(2), 173–187. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2010.494497

Bishop, R., Ladwig, J., & Berryman, M. (2014). The centrality of relationships for pedagogy: The whanaungatanga thesis. *American Educational Research Journal*, *51*(1), 184–214. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831213510019

Blackmore, J. (2013). A feminist critical perspective on educational leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *16*(2), 139–154. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2012.754057

Bold, C. (2012). *Using narrative in research*. SAGE Publications.

Bolden, R., Hawkins, B., Gosling, R., & Taylor, S. (2011). *Exploring leadership: Individual, organisational and societal perspectives*. Oxford University Press., New York.

Boston, J. (2013). The challenge of securing durable reduction in child poverty in New Zealand. *Policy Quarterly*, *9*(2), 11.

Boston, J., & Chapple, S. (2014). *Child poverty in New Zealand*. Bridget Williams Books.

Boyce, J., & Bowers, A. J. (2016). Principal turnover: Are there different types of principals who move from or leave their schools? A latent class analysis of the 2007–2008 schools and staffing survey and the 2008–2009 principal follow-up survey. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 1–36. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2015.1047033

Branson, C. M. (2008). Achieving organisational change through values alignment. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *46*(3), 376–395. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230810869293

Branson, C. M. (2010). *Leading educational change wisely*. Sense Publishers.

Branson, C. M., & Gross, S. J. (2014). Introduction: Why ethical educational leadership? In C. M. Branson & S. J. Gross (Eds.), *Handbook of ethical educational leadership* (pp. 1–8). Routledge.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bresler, L. (2006). Embodied narrative inquiry: A methodology of connection. *Research Studies in Music Education*, *27*(1), 21–43. https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X060270010201

Brookover, W., & Lezotte, L. W. (1979). *Changes in school characteristics coincident with changes in student achievement* (Occasional Paper No. 17). The Institute for Research on Teaching, College of Education. Michigan State University.

Brower, R. (2006). *Whose business is school reform? Letting the experts drive school improvement*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Bryk, A. S. (2010). Organising schools for improvement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *91*(7), 23–30.

Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership*, *60*(6), 40–44.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Burbach, H. J., & Butler, A. R. (2005). Turnaround principals. *School Administrator*, *62*(6), 24–31.

Bush, T. (2012). Authenticity in research: Reliability, validity and triangulation. In A. Briggs, M. Coleman, & M. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership and management* (3rd ed., pp. 75–89). SAGE Publications.

Bush, T. (2020). Turnaround leadership in education: A restatement of heroic leadership or a flawed concept. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *48*(1), 3–5. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143219877629

Busher, H., & James, N. (2012). The ethical framework of research practice. In A. Briggs, M. Coleman, & M. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership and management* (3rd ed., pp. 90–104). SAGE Publications.

Caine, V., Estefan, A., & Clandinin, D. J. (2013). A return to methodological commitment: Reflections on narrative inquiry. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, *57*(6), 574–586. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2013.798833

Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *109*(2), 175–187. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1116-2

Calkins, A., Guenther, W., Belfiore, G., & Lash, D. (2007). *The turnaround challenge: Supplement to the main report*. Mass Insight Education & Research Institute. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED538300

Cannella, G. S., & Lincoln, Y. (2013). Ethics, research regulations, and critical social science. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 169–187). SAGE Publications.

Cardno, C. (1999). Appraisal policy and implementation issues for New Zealand schools. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *13*(2), 87–98. https://doi.org/10.1108/09513549910261168

Cardno, C. (2007). Leadership learning: The praxis of dilemma management. *ISEA*, *35*(2), 33–50.

Carpenter, D. (2015). School culture and leadership of professional learning communities. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *29*(5), 682–694. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-04-2014-0046

Cavanagh, T., Macfarlane, A., Glynn, T., & Macfarlane, S. (2012). Creating peaceful and effective schools through a culture of care. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, *33*(3), 443–455. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2012.681902

Chapman, C., Reynolds, D., Muijs, D., Sammons, P., Stringfield, S., & Teddlie, C. (2016). Educational effectiveness and improvement research and practice: The emergence of the discipline. In C. Chapman, D. Muijs, D. Reynolds, P. Sammons, & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of educational effectiveness and improvement: Research, policy and practice* (pp. 1–24). Routledge.

Chapman, C., & Tobia, E. (2012). Turning around low-performing schools. *Southeast Comprehensive Centre EBulletin*, *4*(3), 1–6.

Chase, S. (2003). Taking narrative seriously: Consequences for method and theory in interview studies. In Y. Lincoln & N. Denzin (Eds.), *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief* (pp. 273–296). AltaMira Press.

Chase, S. (2011). Narrative inquiry: Still a field in the making. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 421–434). SAGE Publications.

Christians, C. (2013). Ethics and politics in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 125–167). SAGE Publications.

Clandinin, D. J. (2013). *Engaging in narrative inquiry*. Left Coast Press, Inc.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. Jossey-Bass.

Clandinin, D. J., Murphy, M. S., Huber, J., & Orr, A. M. (2009). Negotiating narrative inquiries: Living in a tension filled midst. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *103*(2), 81–90. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220670903323404

Clandinin, D. J., & Rosiek, J. (2007). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: Borderland spaces and tensions. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 35–76). SAGE Publications.

Clarke, P. (2005). *Improving schools in difficulty*. Continuum International Publishing Group.

Clarke, S., & O'Donoghue, T. (2017). Educational leadership and context: A rendering of an inseparable relationship. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *65*(2), 167–182. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2016.1199772

Codd, J., Harker, R., & Nash, R. (1990). Education, politics and the economic crisis. In J. Codd, R. Harker, & R. Nash (Eds.), *Political issues in New Zealand education* (2nd ed., pp. 7–22). Dunmore Press.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, *19*(5), 2–14. https://doi.org/10.2307/1176100

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1995a). Personal and professional knowledge landscapes: A matrix of relations. In D. J. Clandinin & F. M. Connelly (Eds.), *Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes* (pp. 3–15). Teachers College Press.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1995b). Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes: Secret, sacred, and cover stories. In D. J. Clandinin & F. M. Connelly (Eds.), *Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes* (pp. 25–35). Teachers College Press.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In J. Green, G. Camilli, & P. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (3rd ed., pp. 477–488). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cook, S. C., Johnson, J., & Stager, T. (2016). *Breaking out of isolation: Becoming a connected school leader*. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483392400

Coulter, C. A. (2009). Response to comments: Finding the narrative in narrative research. *Educational Researcher*, *38*(8), 608–611. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09354124

Court, M., & O'Neill, J. (2011). 'Tomorrow's Schools' in New Zealand: From social democracy to market managerialism. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *43*(2), 119–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2011.560257

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating*. Pearson Education.

Crow, Gary. M. (2006). Complexity and the beginning principal in the United States: Perspectives on socialization. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *44*(4), 310–325. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230610674930

Cubitt, S., & Burt, C. (2002). Leadership style, loneliness and occupational stress in New Zealand primary school principals. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, *37*(2), 159–169.

Cunliffe, A. L., & Eriksen, M. (2011). Relational leadership. *Human Relations*, *64*(11), 1425–1449. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726711418388

Davies, B., & Davies, B. J. (2012). The nature and dimensions of strategic leadership. In M. Preedy, N. Bennett, & C. Wise (Eds.), *Educational leadership: Context, strategy and collaboration* (pp. 83–95). The Open University.

Day, C., & Leithwood, K. (Eds.). (2007). *Successful principal leadership in times of change: An international perspective* (Vol. 5). Springer.

Day, C., Sammons, P., Hopkins, D., Harris, A., Leithwood, K., Gu, Q., & Brown, E. (2010). *10 strong claims about successful school leadership*. National College for School Leadership. http://www.almaharris.co.uk/files/10strongclaims.pdf

Day, C., Sammons, P., Leithwood, K., Hopkins, D., Gu, Q., Brown, E., & Ahtaridou, E. (2011). *Successful school leadership: Linking with learning and achievement*. Open University Press.

Day, S., & Hackman, S. (2012). *Strategies to challenge and support school performance in the United Kingdom* (p. 20). WestEd. https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/1371077220resource1270-3

Dempster, N., Carter, L., Freakley, M., & Parry, L. (2004). Contextual influences on school leaders in Australia: Some data from a recent study of principals' ethical decision-making. *School Leadership & Management*, *24*(2), 163–174. https://doi.org/10.1080/1363243041000695804

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). (2003). *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2013a). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 1–42). SAGE Publications.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). (2013b). *The landscape of qualitative research* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Department for Education. (2009). *The national strategies: Primary: The improving schools programme handbook* (No. 00314-2009BKT-EN; p. 88). Department for children, schools and families. http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/2428/7/pri_isp_handbook_0031409_Redacted.pdf

Department for Education. (2018). *Schools causing concern. Guidance for local authorities and Regional Schools Commissioners on how to work with schools to support improvements to educational performance and on using their intervention powers*. UK Government. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/680559/Schools_causing_concern_guidance_-_February_2018

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. The Macmillan Company.

Dhillon, J. K. (2013). Senior managers' perspectives of leading and managing effective, sustainable and successful partnerships. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *41*(6), 736–750. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213494186

Diener, E., & Crandall, R. (1978). *Ethics in social and behavioral research*. University of Chicago Press.

Dimmock, C. (2012). *Leadership, capacity building and school improvement: Concepts, themes and impact*. Routledge.

Dimmock, C., & Lam, M. (2012). Grounded theory research. In A. Briggs, M. Coleman, & M. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership and management* (3rd ed., pp. 188–204). SAGE Publications.

Dingwall, R. (1997). Accounts, interviews and observations. In R. Miller & R. Dingwall (Eds.), *Context and method in qualitative research* (pp. 51–65). SAGE Publications.

Downey, D. B., & Condron, D. J. (2016). Fifty years since the Coleman Report: Rethinking the relationship between schools and inequality. *Sociology of Education*, *89*(3), 207–220. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040716651676

Downey, D. B., von Hippel, P. T., & Hughes, M. (2008). Are 'failing' schools really failing? Using seasonal comparison to evaluate school effectiveness. *Sociology of Education; Albany*, *81*(3), 242–270.

Drago-Severson, E. (2012). New opportunities for principal leadership: Shaping school climates for enhanced teacher development. *Teachers College Record*, *114*(3), 1–44.

Duke, D. (2008a). Diagnosing school decline. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *89*(9), 667–671. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170808900912

Duke, D. (2008b). Understanding school decline. *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM))*, *36*(2), 46–65.

Duke, D. (2012). Tinkering and turnarounds: Understanding the contemporary campaign to improve low-performing schools. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, *17*(1–2), 9–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2012.636696

Duke, D. (2014). A bold approach to developing leaders for low-performing schools. *Management in Education*, *28*(3), 80–85. https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020614537665

Duke, D. (2015). *Leadership for low-performing schools: A step-by-step guide to the school turnaround process*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Duke, D., & Hochbein, C. (2008). Rising to the challenges of studying school decline. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *7*(4), 358–379. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700760802155515

Duke, D., Tucker, P., & Salmonowicz, M. (2014). *Teachers' guide to school turnarounds* (2nd ed.). Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Dussault, M., & Barnett, B. G. (1996). Peer-assisted leadership: Reducing educational managers' professional isolation. *Journal of Educational Administration, 34*(3), 5–14. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578239610118848

Dussault, M., & Thibodeau, S. (1996). *Relationships between professional isolation of school principals and their performance at work*. Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED396414

Eacott, S. (2015). *Educational leadership relationally: A theory and methodology for educational leadership, management and administration*. Sense Publishers.

Eagly, A. H. (2005). Achieving relational authenticity in leadership: Does gender matter? *The Leadership Quarterly*, *16*(3), 459–474. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.007

Edmonds, R. (1979). Effective schools for the urban poor. *Educational Leadership, 37*(1), 15–24.

Education Act 1989. https://bit.ly/3j5JwUT

Education Council Matatū Aotearoa. (2018). *The leadership strategy for the teaching profession of Aotearoa New Zealand: Enabling every teacher to develop their leadership capability*. Education Council. https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/Leadership_Strategy.pdf

Education Review Office. (1999). *Small primary schools*. Education Review Office.

Education Review Office. (2016a). *ERO's progress in 2016/17: ERO approach to school turnaround*. Education Review Office. http://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/annual-report-201617/eros-progress-in-201617/

Education Review Office. (2016b). *School evaluation indicators: Effective practice for improvement and learner success*. New Zealand Government. http://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/school-evaluation-indicators/

Education Review Office. (2016c). *The collection and use of assessment information: Good practices in secondary schools: Examples of good practice*. Education Review Office. https://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/the-collection-and-use-of-assessment-information-good-practice-in-secondary-schools/examples-of-good-practice/

Education Review Office. (2017). *Briefing to the incoming Minister*. Education Review Office. https://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/briefing-incoming-minister/briefing-to-the-incoming-minister-nov2017/

Education Review Office. (n.d.). *Return times for school review*.

Education Review Office, & Ministry of Education. (2016). *Effective school evaluation: How to do and use internal evaluation for improvement*. New Zealand Government. http://www.ero.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/ERO-15569-Effective-School-Evaluation-June16-FULL-WEB-002

Education Scotland. (2018). *Inspection of the progress made by local authorities in improving learning raising attainment and closing the poverty related gap*. https://bit.ly/3h82kkj

Elbaz-Luwisch, F. (2007). Studying teachers' lives and experience: Narrative inquiry into K-12 teaching. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 357–382). SAGE Publications.

English, F. W., & Bolton, C. L. (2016). *Bourdieu for educators: Policy and practice*. SAGE.

Estyn. (2018). *Inspection | Estyn*. https://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection

ETI. (2015, October 27). *Focus and purpose of inspection*. Education Training Inspectorate (ETI). https://www.etini.gov.uk/articles/purpose-inspection

Fairchild, T., & DeMary, J. (2011). *The turnaround mindset: Aligning leadership for student success*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Finnigan, K., & Daly, A. (2016). Why we need to think systemically in educational policy and reform. In A. Daly & K. Finnigan (Eds.), *Thinking and acting systemically: Improving school districts under pressure* (pp. 1–9). American Educational Research Association.

Firestone, W. A. (1991). Introduction. In J. R. Bliss, W. A. Firestone, & C. E. Richards (Eds.), *Rethinking Effective Schools: Research and practice*. Prentice Hall.

Freiberg, H. J., Prokosch, N., Treister, E. S., & Stein, T. (1990). Turning around five at-risk elementary schools. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *1*(1), 5–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/0924345900010103

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading a culture of change*. Jossey-Bass.

Fullan, M. (2003). *The moral imperative of school leadership*. Corwin Press.

Fullan, M. (2008). *The six secrets of change*. Jossey-Bass.

Fullan, M. (2011). *The moral imperative realised*. Corwin Press and Ontario Principals' Council.

Fullan, M. (2016a). *The new meaning of educational change* (5th ed.). Teachers College Press; Routledge; Ontario Principals' Council.

Fullan, M. (2016b). Amplify change with professional capital. *Journal of Staff Development*, *37*(1), 44–56.

Fuller, K. (2017). Assumptions and surprises: Parallel and divergent social justice leadership narratives. In P. S. Angelle (Ed.), *A global perspective of social justice leadership for school principals* (pp. 87–109). Information Age Publishing.

Futernick, K., & Urbanski, A. (2014). Successful school turnarounds through labour-management partnerships: The role of state education agencies. In L. Morando Rhim & S. Redding (Eds.), *The state role in school turnaround: Emerging best*

practice (pp. 65–80). WestEd. https://centeronschoolturnaround.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/The_State_Role_in_School_Turnaround.pdf

Galič, M., Timan, T., & Koops, B.-J. (2017). Bentham, Deleuze and Beyond: An Overview of Surveillance Theories from the Panopticon to Participation. *Philosophy & Technology*, *30*(1), 9–37. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-016-0219-1

Gamage, D. T. (2006). *Professional development for leaders and managers of self-governing schools*. Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-4929-3_8

Garcia, A. S., Morrison, K., Tsoi, A. C., & He, J. (2014). *Managing complex change in school: Engaging pedagogy, technology, learning and leadership*. Routledge. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/waikato/detail.action?docID=1707444

Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Sociology Press.

Glaze, A. (2018). *Reaching the heart of leadership: Lessons learned, insights gained, actions taken*. Corwin Press and Ontario Principals' Council.

Goddard, J. T. (2003). Leadership in the (post) modern era. In N. Bennett & L. Anderson (Eds.), *Rethinking educational leadership: Challenging the conventions* (pp. 20–33). SAGE Publications.

Goddard, R. D. (2003). Relational networks, social trust, and norms: A social capital perspective on students' chances of academic success. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis; Washington*, *25*(1), 59.

Goddard, R. D., Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. K. (2001). A multilevel examination of the distribution and effects of teacher trust in students and parents in urban elementary schools. *Elementary School Journal*, *102*(1). http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=5164515&site=ehost-live

Gold, Y. (1984). Burnout: A major problem for the teaching profession. *Education, 104*(3), 271–274.

Goldstein, H., & Woodhouse, G. (2000). School effectiveness research and educational policy. *Oxford Review of Education*, *26*(3–4), 353–363. https://doi.org/10.1080/713688547

Goutas, L., J. (2008). Burnout. *The Write Stuff: The Journal of the European Medical Writers Association*, *17*(3), 135–138.

Grenfell, D. M., & James, D. (2003). *Bourdieu and education: Acts of practical theory*. Routledge.

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contractions, and emerging confluences. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 191–215). SAGE Publications.

Gurr, D. (2014). Successful school leadership across contexts and cultures. *Leading and Managing*, *20*(2), 75–88.

Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., Clarke, S., & Wildy, H. (2014). High-need schools in Australia: The leadership of two principals. *Management in Education (MiE)*, *28*(3), 86–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020614537666

Habegger, S. (2008). The principal's role in successful schools: Creating a positive school culture. *Principal*, *88*(1), 42–46.

Hadfield, M., & Jopling, M. (2012). How might better network theories support school leadership research? *School Leadership & Management*, *32*(2), 109–121. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2012.670115

Hadley, S. A., & MacLeod, A. K. (2010). Conditional goal-setting, personal goals and hopelessness about the future. *Cognition & Emotion*, *24*(7), 1191–1198. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930903122521

Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *4*(3), 221–239. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700760500244793

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2010). Collaborative leadership and school improvement: Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. *School Leadership & Management*, *30*(2), 95–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632431003663214

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2011). Exploring the journey of school improvement: Classifying and analyzing patterns of change in school improvement processes and learning outcomes. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *22*(1), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2010.536322

Halpin, D., & Troyna, B. (1995). The politics of education policy borrowing. *Comparative Education*, *31*(3), 303–310. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050069528994

Halsey, R. J. (2011). Small schools, big future. *Australian Journal of Education*, *55*(1), 5–13.

Hansen, M. (2012). Key issues in empirically identifying chronically low-performing and turnaround schools. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, *17*(1–2), 55–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2012.637165

Hargreaves, A. (2004). Distinction and disgust: The emotional politics of school failure. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *7*(1), 27–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360312032000138700

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. Teachers College Press.

Hargreaves, D. (1995). School culture, school effectiveness and school improvement. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *6*(1), 23–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/0924345950060102

Harris, A. (2003). Introduction: Challenging the orthodoxy of school leadership: Towards alternative theoretical perspectives. *School Leadership & Management*, *23*(2), 125–128. https://doi.org/10.1080/1363243032000091913

Harris, A., Chapman, C., Muijs, D., Russ, J., & Stoll, L. (2006). Improving schools in challenging contexts: Exploring the possible. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *17*(4), 409–424. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450600743483

Harris, A., & Jones, M. (2013). System improvement through capacity building: The power and potential of professional learning communities. In I. R. Haslam, M. S. Khine, & I. M. Saleh (Eds.), *Large scale school reform and social capital building* (pp. 140–154). Routledge.

Harris, A., & Jones, M. (2016). International comparisons: Critique, culture and context. In A. Harris & M. Jones (Eds.), *Leading futures: Global perspectives on educational leadership* (pp. xiii–xxxii). SAGE Publications India.

Hartas, D. (2010). Educational research and inquiry: Key issues and debates. In D. Hartas (Ed.), *Educational research and inquiry: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (pp. 13–32). Continuum International Publishing Group.

Harvey, Thomas. R., & Broyles, E. A. (2010). *Resistance to change: A guide to harnessing its positive power*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Hassel, E., & Hassel, D. (2009, Winter). The big u-turn. *Education Next*. http://educationnext.org/the-big-uturn/

Hawk, K. (2008). *School decline: Predictors, process and intervention* [Doctor of Education, Massey]. http://hdl.handle.net/10179/1176

Henn, M., Weinstein, M., & Foard, N. (2009). *A critical introduction to social research* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Herlihy, B., & Herlihy, D. (1980). The loneliness of educational leadership. *NASSP Bulletin*, *64*(433), 7–12. https://doi.org/10.1177/019263658006443302

Herman, R. (2012). Scaling school turnaround. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, *17*(1–2), 25–33. https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2012.637166

Hewitt, K. K., & Reitzug, U. C. (2017). Turnaround as Faustian bargain: The myth of virtuous action. In C. V. Meyers & M. J. Darwin (Eds.), *Enduring myths that inhabit school turnaround* (pp. 277–295). Information Age Publishing.

Hickey, K. M. (2010). *Leadership practices and processes in turnaround schools: A phenomenological multi-case study* [Ph.D.]. Illinois State University.

Hickman, G. (2012). Concepts of leadership in organisation change. In M. Preedy, N. Bennett, & C. Wise (Eds.), *Educational leadership: Context, strategy and collaboration* (pp. 67–82). The Open University.

Hitt, D. H., & Meyers, C. V. (2018). Beyond turnaround: A synthesis of relevant frameworks for leaders of sustained improvement in previously low-performing schools. *School Leadership & Management*, *38*(1), 4–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2017.1374943

Hochbein, C. (2011). Overlooking the descent: Operational definition, identification, and description of school decline. *Journal of Educational Change*, *12*(3), 281–300. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-010-9135-9

Hochbein, C. (2012a). Downward spirals, boiled frogs, and catastrophes: Examining the rate of school decline. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *11*(1), 66–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2011.577927

Hochbein, C. (2012b). Relegation and reversion: Longitudinal analysis of school turnaround and decline. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, *17*(1–2), 92–107. https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2012.636728

Hodgen, E., & Wylie, C. (2005). *Stress and wellbeing among New Zealand principals: Report to the New Zealand Principal Federation* (pp. 1–12). New Zealand Council for Educational Research. http://www.nzpf.ac.nz/uploads/7/2/4/6/72461455/section1.pdf

Hollingsworth, M., & Foster, E. (2005). *Schools causing concern* [DfES/1549/2005]. HMI Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division, Ofsted; School Improvement and Targets Unit, DfES. www.education.gov.uk/publications/.../DFES-1549-2005%20amended.rtf

Holmes, J. (2017). Leadership and change management: Examining gender, cultural and 'hero leader' stereotypes. In C. Ilie & S. Schnurr (Eds.), *Challenging leadership stereotypes through discourse: Power, management and gender* (pp. 15–43). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4319-2_2

Holmes, K., Clement, J., & Albright, J. (2013). The complex task of leading educational change in schools. *School Leadership & Management*, *33*(3), 270–283. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2013.800477

Holte, K. L. (2014). The prevalence of silence. In C. M. Branson & S. J. Gross (Eds.), *Handbook of ethical educational leadership* (pp. 139–150). Routledge.

Hopkins, D. (2001). *School improvement for real*. RoutledgeFalmer.

Howard, M., & Mallory, B. (2008). Perceptions of isolation among high school principals. *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership*. http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/jwel/32

Ilies, R., Morgeson, F. P., & Nahrgang, J. D. (2005). Authentic leadership and eudaemonic well-being: Understanding leader–follower outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *16*(3), 373–394. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.002

Jang, E. E., McDougall, D. E., Pollon, D., Herbert, M., & Russell, P. (2008). Integrative mixed methods data analytic strategies in research on school success in challenging circumstances. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *2*(3), 221–247. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689808315323

Jenkins, K., & Reitano, P. (2015). Teaching principals' stories. In D. Graham & J. Miller (Eds.), *Bush tracks* (pp. 119–133). Springer.

Jensen, B., & Sonnemann, J. (2014). *Turning around schools: It can be done* (No. 2014–1). Gratton Institute. http://grattan.edu.au/publications/reports/post/turning-around-schools-it-can-be-done

Jones, M., Harris, A., & Harris, A. (2014). Principals leading successful organisational change: Building social capital through disciplined professional collaboration.

Journal of Organizational Change Management, *27*(3), 473–485. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-07-2013-0116

Josselson, R. (2007). The ethical attitude in narrative research. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 537–566). SAGE Publications.

Josselson, R. (2013). *Interviewing for qualitative inquiry: A relational approach*. The Guilford Press.

Kelchtermans, G., Piot, L., & Ballet, K. (2011). The lucid loneliness of the gatekeeper: Exploring the emotional dimension in principals' work lives. *Oxford Review of Education*, *37*(1), 93–108. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2010.545192

Kelehear, Z. (2004). Controlling stress. *Principal Leadership, Middle Level Ed.; Reston*, *5*(3), 30–33.

Kelly, A., & Clarke, P. (2016). Challenges of globalisation and the new policy paradigms for EEIR. In C. Chapman, D. Muijs, D. Reynolds, P. Sammons, & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of educational effectiveness and improvement: Research, policy and practice* (pp. 365–379). Routledge.

Kelly, J. (2013). Professional learning communities: The emergence of vulnerability. *Professional Development in Education*, *39*(5), 862–864. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.753932

Kelsey, J. (1997). *The New Zealand experiment: A world model for structural adjustment?* Auckland University Press.

Kemmis, S., Wilkinson, J., Edwards-Groves, C., Hardy, I., Grootenboer, P., & Bristol, L. (2014). *Changing practices, changing education*. Springer Singapore.

Khalifa, M. (2012). A re-new-ed paradigm in successful urban school leadership principal as community leader. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *48*(3), 424–467. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11432922

Klar, H. W., Huggins, K. S., Hammonds, H. L., & Buskey, F. C. (2016). Fostering the capacity for distributed leadership: A post-heroic approach to leading school improvement. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *19*(2), 111–137. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2015.1005028

Knox, S., & Burkard, A. W. (2009). Qualitative research interviews. *Psychotherapy Research*, *19*(4–5), 566–575. https://doi.org/10.1080/10503300802702105

Kosaretsky, S., Grunicheva, I., Pinskaya, M., Harris, A., & Jones, M. (2016). Leading professional learning to improve schools in challenging circumstances in Russia. In A. Harris & M. Jones (Eds.), *Leading futures: Global perspectives on educational leadership* (pp. 156–168). SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.

Kowal, J., & Ableidinger, J. (2011). *Leading indicators of school turnarounds: How to know when dramatic change is on track* (p. 28). University of Virginia's Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education. www.DardenCurry.org

Kowal, J., & Hassel, E. (2005). *School restructuring options under No Child Left Behind: What works when? Turnarounds with new leaders and staff*. The

Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement. www.schoolturnaround.org

Kutash, J., Nico, E., Gorin, E., Rahmatullah, S., & Tallant, K. (2010). *School turnaround: A brief overview of the landscape and key issues* (pp. 1–19). FDG Social Impact Advisors. https://www.fsg.org/tools-and-resources/school-turnaround-field-guide

Kutash, J., Nico, E. R., Malenfant, E., Rahmatullah, S., & Tallant, K. (2010, August 30). *School turnaround field guide*. FSG. https://www.fsg.org/tools-and-resources/school-turnaround-field-guide

Kutsyuruba, B., & Walker, K. (2014). The lifecycle of trust in educational leadership: An ecological perspective. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *0*(0), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2014.915061

Kutsyuruba, B., Walker, K., & Noonan, B. (2010a). The Ecology of Trust in the Principalship. *EAF Journal*, *21*(1), 23–I.

Kutsyuruba, B., Walker, K., & Noonan, B. (2010b). The ecology of trust in the principalship. *EAF Journal*, *21*(1), 23–I.

Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing interviews*. Sage Publications.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed). Sage Publications.

Langer, E. (2002). Well-Being: Mindfulness versus positive evaluation. In C. R. Synder & S. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 214–230). Oxford University Press.

Lashway, L. (2003). *The mandate to help low-performing schools* (169 ED478248 2003-07-00; pp. 1–8). ERIC Digest. https://files-eric-ed-gov.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/fulltext/ED478248.pdf

Lauder, H., Wylie, C., & Parker-Taunoa, R. (2012). Citizens or consumers? The politics of educational reform: An introduction. In H. Lauder & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Towards successful school* (Vol. 185, pp. 1–14). Routledge.

Le Floch, K. C., Birman, B., O'Day, J., Hurlburt, S., Mercado-Garcia, D., Goff, R., Manship, K., Brown, S., Therriault, S. B., & Rosenberg, L. (2014). *Case studies of schools receiving school improvement grants: Findings after the first year of implementation (NCEE 2014-4015).* National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Le Floch, K. C., Butler, A., & Barbour, C. (2017). Everything but the kitchen sink: How an abundance of concurrent efforts thwarts school improvement. In C. V. Meyers & M. J. Darwin (Eds.), *Enduring myths that inhabit school turnaround* (pp. 95–110). Information Age Publishing.

Le Floch, K. C., O'Day, J., Birman, B., Hurlburt, S., Nayfack, M., Halloran, C., Boyle, A., Brown, S., Mercado-Garcia, D., & Goff, R. (2016). *Case studies of schools receiving school improvement grants. Final report. (NCEE 2016-4002)*. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee.

Lee, L. C. (2015). School performance trajectories and the challenges for principal succession. *Journal of Educational Administration, 53*(2), 286–262.

Lee-Corbin, H. (2005). Under the microscope: A study of schools in special measures and a comparison with general characteristics of primary school improvement. *Education 3-13, 33*(2), 51–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004270585200231

Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2006). *Successful school leadership: What it is and how it influences pupil learning* (No. RR800). National College for School Leadership. http://illinoisschoolleader.org/research_compendium/documents/successful_school_leadership.pdf

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Strauss, T. (2010). *Leading school turnaround: How successful leaders transform low-performing schools*. Jossey-Bass.

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Strauss, T. (2013). How to reach high performance. In M. Grogan (Ed.), *Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership* (3rd ed., pp. 255–273). John Wiley and Sons.

Leithwood, K., & Louis, K. S. (2012). *Linking leadership to student learning*. Jossey-Bass.

Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership*. Laboratory for Student Success, Temple University. https://docplayer.net/85072-What-we-know-about-successful-school-leadership.html

Leithwood, K., & Strauss, T. (2008). *Turnaround schools and the leadership they require* (p. 89). Canadian Education Association. https://www.edcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/cea-2008-turnaround-schools.pdf

Lewins, A., Taylor, C., & Gibbs, G. R. (2010). *What is qualitative data analysis (QDA)* [Online QDA Web Site]. http://onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/Intro_QDA/what_is_qda.php

Lezotte, L. (2001). *Revolutionary and evolutionary: The effective schools movement*. Effective Schools Products. http://www.effectiveschools.com/images/stories/RevEv.pdf

Li, Y. Y. (2017). Processes and dynamics behind whole-school reform: Nine-year journeys of four primary schools. *American Educational Research Journal, 54*(2), 279–324. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216689591

Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide* (3rd ed.). SAGE.

Liljenberg, M., & Andersson, K. (2019). Novice principals' attitudes toward support in their leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 0*(0), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2018.1543807

Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S., & Guba, E. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences revisited. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 97–128). SAGE Publications.

Lindorff, M. (2001). Are they lonely at the top? Social relationships and social support among Australian managers. *Work & Stress*, *15*(3), 274–282. https://doi.org/10.1080/026783701110.1080/02678370110066599

Liu, P. (2017). Transforming turnaround schools in China: A review. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *28*(1), 74–101. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2016.1239641

Liu, P. (2020). Understanding turnaround leadership research: Continuity and change (2009–2016). *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *48*(1), 6–24. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143218807490

Lochmiller, C. R., & Chesnut, C. E. (2017). Preparing turnaround leaders for high needs urban schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *55*(1), 85–102. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-11-2015-0099

Lock, G., Budgen, F., Lunay, R., & Oakley, G. (2012). The loneliness of the long-distance principal: Tales from remote Western Australia. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, *22*(2), 65–77.

Loughland, T., & Thompson, G. (2016). The problem of simplification: Think-tanks, recipes, equity and 'Turning around low-performing schools'. *Australian Educational Researcher*, *43*(1), 111–129. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-015-0190-3

Louis, K. S., & Murphy, J. F. (2017). Trust, caring and organizational learning: The leader's role. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *55*(1), 103–126. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-07-2016-0077

Lumby, J. (2013). Improving schools: The importance of culture. *The Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning*, *8*, 19–28.

Lynch, M. (2012). *A guide to effective school leadership theories*. Routledge.

MacBeath, J., Gray, J., Cullen, J., Cunningham, H., Ebbutt, D., Frost, D., Steward, S., & Swaffield, S. (2005). *Responding to challenging circumstances: Evaluation of the 'schools facing exceptionally challenging circumstances' project* (p. 207). University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education. http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130321025022/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RW90.pdf

Macfarlane, A. H. (2010). An educultural approach to classroom management: Integrating body, mind and heart. *New Zealand Physical Educator; Wellington*, *43*(1), 7–11.

MacNeil, A. J., Prater, D. L., & Busch, S. (2009). The effects of school culture and climate on student achievement. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *12*(1), 73–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603120701576241

Mahfouz, J. (2020). Principals and stress: Few coping strategies for abundant stressors. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *48*(3), 440–458. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143218817562

Mann, E., Herman, R., & Hansen, M. (2017). Should they stay or should they go? The mythical appeal of staff replacement as a turnaround strategy. In C. V. Meyers & M. J. Darwin (Eds.), *Enduring myths that inhibit school turnaround* (pp. 253–273). Information Age Publishing.

Manwaring, R. (2011). School turnaround success: Focus on implementation. *Principal*, *90*(4), 10–13.

Marsh, J., Strunk, K., & Bush, S. (2013). Portfolio district reform meets school turnaround. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *51*(4), 498–527. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231311325677

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*(1), 397–422. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397

Mazzei, L. (2008). An impossibly full voice. In A. Jackson & L. Mazzei (Eds.), *Voice in qualitative inquiry: Challenging conventional, interpretive, and critical conceptions in qualitative research* (pp. 45–62). Routledge.

McCabe, C. (2011). *The fearless school leader: Making the right decisions*. Eye on Education.

McNae, R. (2014). Seeking social justice. In C. M. Branson & S. J. Gross (Eds.), *Handbook of ethical educational leadership* (pp. 93–111). Routledge. http://site.ebrary.com/lib/alltitles/docDetail.action?docID=10869852

McNae, R. (2017). School leaders making sense of the 'self' with[in] social justice: Embodied influences from lived experiences. In P. S. Angelle (Ed.), *A global perspective of social justice leadership for school principals* (pp. 251–270). Information Age Publishing.

McNae, R., & Cook, S. (2017). Leading turnaround schools: Surfacing hope in times of crisis. In R. McNae, M. Morrison, & R. Notman (Eds.), *Educational leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand: Issues of context and social justice* (pp. 29–45). NZCER Press.

Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. (2016). *Working well: A workplace guide to mental health*. Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz

Meredith, P. (2013). England. In L. Gearon (Ed.), *Education in the United Kingdom: Structures and organisation* (pp. 3–15). Routledge.

Mette, I. M., & Scribner, J. P. (2014). Turnaround, transformational, or transactional leadership: An ethical dilemma in school reform. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, *17*(4), 3–18. https://doi.org/10.1177/1555458914549665

Meyer, F., Le Fevre, D. M., & Robinson, V. (2017). How leaders communicate their vulnerability: Implications for trust building. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *31*(2), 221–235. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-11-2015-0150

Meyer, M., Macmillan, R. B., Northfield, S., & Foley, M. (2011). Principal turnover and the impact on teacher–principal relationships: Mitigating emerging values issues. In R. E. White & K. Cooper (Eds.), *Principals in succession* (pp. 65–87). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-1275-1_6

Meyers, C. V., & Hitt, D. H. (2017). School turnaround principals: What does initial research literature suggest they are doing to be successful? *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, *22*(1), 38–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2016.1242070

Meyers, C. V., Hochbein, C., Smylie, M. A., Stringfield, S., & Stein, M. (2017). Understanding decline and failure is foundation to moving forward. In C. V. Meyers & M. J. Darwin (Eds.), *Enduring myths that inhabit school turnaround* (pp. 31–47). Information Age Publishing.

Meyers, C. V., & Murphy, J. F. (2007). Turning around failing schools: An analysis. *Journal of School Leadership*, *17*, 631–659. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460701700504

Meyers, C. V., & Sadler, J. (2018). District leaders engaged in school turnaround: Identified challenges and espoused responses. *NASSP Bulletin*, *102*(2), 89–110. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636518786008

Meyers, C. V., & Smylie, M. A. (2017). Five myths of school turnaround policy and practice. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *16*(3), 502–523. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2016.1270333

Mills, C., & Gale, T. (2010). *Schooling disadvantaged communities: Playing the game from the back of the field*. Springer Netherlands.

Milner, H. R. (2013). Analysing poverty, learning, and teaching through a critical race theory lens. *Review of Research in Education*, *37*(1), 1–53. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12459720

The National Administration Guidelines. Retrieved 10 May 2020, from https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/legislation/nags/

Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand curriculum*. Learning Media Limited.

Ministry of Education. (2008). *Kiwi leadership for principals: Principal as educational leaders*. Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2013a). *Interventions: Guide for schools*. https://web.archive.org/web/20150126073328/http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/SupportForBoards/InterventionsInSchools/InterventionsInSchools.aspx

Ministry of Education. (2013b, April 3). *Section 78M Statutory Interventions*. https://web.archive.org/web/20150128154204/http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/SupportForBoards/InterventionsInSchools/KITs/Section78MStatutoryInterventionsInformation.aspx

Ministry of Education. (2013c, December 9). *Section 78N(3) Statutory Interventions*. https://web.archive.org/web/20150128154219/http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/SupportForBoards/InterventionsInSchools/KITs/Section78N3StatutoryInterventions.aspx

Ministry of Education. (2014a). *Investing in Educational Success*. Education in New Zealand. http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/specific-initiatives/investing-in-educational-success/

Ministry of Education. (2014b). *Review of statutory interventions in state schools and state integrated schools: Final report and recommendations to the Minister of Education*. Author. http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/SupportForBoards/InterventionsInSchools/Review.aspx (link no longer available)

Ministry of Education. (2014c, December). *Board of Trustees section: A review of the statutory intervention process*. https://web.archive.org/web/20150121163525/http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/SupportForBoards/InterventionsInSchools/Review

Ministry of Education. (2014d, December). *Investing in Educational Success ... Principals recruitment allowance guide for schools and kura*. Education in New Zealand. http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/specific-initiatives/investing-in-educational-success/principals-recruitment-allowance/

Ministry of Education. (2015). *Interventions: Guide for schools*. http://www.education.govt.nz/school/running-a-school/interventions-in-schools/interventions-guide-for-schools/

Ministry of Education. (2017a). *Creating a more graduated range of interventions*. Education in New Zealand Ed-Act-Update-FS-6-. http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Legislation/Ed-Act-Update-Factsheets/Ed-Act-Update-FS-6-Creating-a-more-graduated-range-of-interventions.pdf

Ministry of Education. (2017b). *Statistics: Number of schools*. Education Counts. https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/number-of-schools

Ministry of Education. (2017c). *Statutory services provider role description: For roles in statutory intervention*. Ministry of Education. https://moeattend.cwp.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/2017-Role-Description-for-Statutory-Services.pdf?SubsiteID=27

Ministry of Education. (2018a). *Professional standards: Primary school principals*. Educational Leaders. http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Professional-information/Professional-standards-primary-school-principals

Ministry of Education. (2018b). *Schools / Homepage—Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI)*. Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI). https://www.tki.org.nz/Schools

Ministry of Education. (2018c). *Financial information for schools handbook*. Ministry of Education. https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Running-a-school/Financial-Information-for-Schools-Handbook/Financial-Information-for-Schools-Handbook-2019

Ministry of Education. (2020a). *Primary Principals' Collective Agreement*. Education in New Zealand. https://www.education.govt.nz/school/people-and-employment/employment-agreements/collective-agreements/primary-principals-collective-agreement/

Ministry of Education. (2020b, April). *Make a complaint*. Education in New Zealand. https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/contact-us/complaints/

Ministry of Education & New Zealand School Trustees Association. (2017). *Health and Safety at Work Act 2015: A practical guide for boards of trustees and school leaders.* Crown Publishing Group. https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Initiatives/Health-and-safety/Tools/Health-and-Safety-at-Work-Act-2015-practical-guide.pdf

Mintrop, R., & Charles, J. (2017). The formation of teacher work teams under adverse conditions: Towards a more realistic scenario for schools in distress. *Journal of Educational Change*, *18*(1), 49–75. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-016-9293-5

Moctezuma, J. A. (2017). *The lived experience of teachers choosing an arts-rich approach in turnaround schools* [PhD, University of New Orleans]. https://scholarworks.uno.edu/td/2423/

Møller, J. (2012). The construction of a public face as a school principal. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *26*(5), 452–460. https://doi.org/10.1108/09513541211240246

Moolenaar, N. M., & Sleegers, P. J. C. (2015). The networked principal: Examining principals' social relationships and transformational leadership in school and district networks. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *53*(1), 8–39.

Morando Rhim, L., Kowal, J., Hassel, B., & Hassel, E. (2007). *School turnarounds: A review of the cross-sector evidence on dramatic organisational improvement* (pp. 1–68). Centre on Innovation and Improvement. http://www.centerii.org/survey/downloads/Turnarounds-Color.pdf

Morris, J. (2014). *The school leadership effect* (New Zealand Education and Scholarship Trust and The New Zealand Initiative). New Zealand Education and Scholarship Trust.

Morrison, M. (2017). Conceiving context: The origins and development of the conceptual framework. In P. S. Angelle (Ed.), *A global perspective of social justice leadership for school principals* (pp. 43–64). Information Age Publishing.

Morrison, M., McNae, R., & Branson, C. M. (2015). Multiple hues: New Zealand school leaders' perceptions of social justice. *Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice*, *30*(1), 4–16.

Mortimore, P. (1993). School effectiveness and the management of effective learning and teaching. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *4*(4), 290–310. https://doi.org/10.1080/0924345930040404

Moussavi-Bock, D. (2011). Vulnerability is power in leadership and relationships. *Journal of Staff Development; Oxford*, *32*(6), 61–62.

Muijs, D. (2014). *Improving failing schools: Towards a research-based model. Stating the problem—What are failing schools?* 20th Annual World ICSEI (International Congress for Effectiveness and Improvement, 77-90. http://www.fm-kp.si/zalozba/ISBN/978-961-6573-65-8/077-090.pdf

Munn-Giddings, C. (2012). Action research. In J. Arthur, M. Waring, R. Coe, & L. Hedges (Eds.), *Research methods and methodologies in education* (pp. 71–75). SAGE Publications.

Murphy, J. F. (2008). The place of leadership in turnaround schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *46*(1), 74–98. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230810849826

Myers, K., & Goldstein, H. (1997). Failing schools in a failing system. In A. Hargreaves (Ed.), *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*

(Yearbook: Rethinking educational change with heart and mind, pp. 111–127). ASCD Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/cmm/migrated/documents/failing-schools-in-a-failing-system.pdf

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). (2017). *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*. https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/current-law-and-policy-priorities/current-law/elementary-and-secondary-education-act-(esea)

New Zealand Council for Educational Research [NZCER]. (2018). *Educational leadership capability framework*. Education Council. https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/Leadership_Capability_Framework.pdf

New Zealand Government. (n.d.). *About Us—New Zealand Gazette*. Retrieved 2 August 2016, from https://gazette.govt.nz/about-us/

New Zealand Government. (2020a). *A mental health guide for New Zealand leaders*. Government Health and Safety Lead. https://www.healthandsafety.govt.nz/assets/Documents/A_Mental_Health_Guide_for_New_Zealand_Leaders.pdf

New Zealand Government. (2020b). *Health and safety at work – quick reference guide*. WorkSafe. https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/getting-started/health-and-safety-at-work-quick-reference-guide/

New Zealand School Trustees Association. (2010). *Role of a school board of trustees*. NZSTA. http://www.nzsta.org.nz/board-as-governors/role-of-the-board/

New Zealand School Trustees Association [NZSTA]. (2010). *Legislation*. NZSTA. http://www.nzsta.org.nz/board-responsibilties/legislation/

Nias, J. (2005). Why teachers need their colleagues: A developmental perspective. In D. Hopkins (Ed.), *The practice and theory of school improvement* (pp. 223–237). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-4452-6_12

Nichols, J., & McBride, J. (2017). Promoted from within: Preparing beginning educational leaders for executive loneliness that occurs in their new position. *College Student Journal*, *51*(1), 47–56.

Nicolaidou, M. (2005). What is special about special measures? Perspectives from the inside. In P. Clarke (Ed.), *Improving schools in difficulty* (pp. 56–80). Continuum International Publishing Group.

Nicolaidou, M., & Ainscow, M. (2002, September). *Understanding 'failing' schools: The role of culture and leadership*. British Research Association Annual Conference, University of Exeter, Britain. http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00002522.htm

Nicolaidou, M., & Ainscow, M. (2005). Understanding failing schools: Perspectives from the inside. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *16*(3), 229–248. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450500113647

Noddings, N. (2013). *Caring: A relational approach to ethics and moral education*. University of California Press.

Northfield, S. (2014). Multi-dimensional trust: How beginning principals build trust with their staff during leader succession. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *17*(4), 410–441. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2013.825011

Northfield, S., Macmillan, R. B., & Meyer, M. J. (2006). Strategic leadership during principal succession. *EAF Journal: Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations; Winnipeg*, *17*(2), 72–94.

Notman, R. (2008). Leading from within: A values-based model of principal self-development. *Leading and Managing [Online]*, *14*(1). http://search.informit.com.au.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/documentSummary;dn=775982441576367;res=IELAPA

Notman, R. (2011). Leading New Zealand schools and centres: An introduction. In R. Notman (Ed.), *Successful educational leadership in New Zealand: Case studies of schools and an early childhood centre* (pp. 9–14). NZCER Press.

Notman, R. (2015). Leadership in New Zealand high-needs schools: An exploratory study from the International School Leadership Development Network project. *Scottish Educational Review*, *47*(1), 28–48.

Notman, R., & Henry, A. (2011). Building and sustaining successful school leadership in New Zealand. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *10*(4), 375–394. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2011.610555

Notman, R., Morrison, M., & McNae, R. (2017). Introduction: Leading for social justice and high needs in education. In R. McNae, M. Morrison, & R. Notman (Eds.), *Educational leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand: Issues of context and social justice* (pp. 1–13). NZCER Press.

NZSTA. (2019). *NZSTA — Our organisation*. https://www.nzsta.org.nz/our-organisation/

O'Brennan, L. M., Bradshaw, C. P., & Furlong, M. J. (2014). Influence of classroom and school climate on teacher perceptions of student problem behavior. *School Mental Health*, *6*(2), 125–136. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-014-9118-8

Office of the Auditor-General. (2008). *Ministry of Education: Monitoring and supporting school boards of trustees*. Office of the Auditor-General.

Office of the Auditor-General. (2010). *Performance audits from 2008: Follow-up report.* Office of the Auditor-General. http://www.oag.govt.nz/2010/performance-audits/docs/performance-audits.pdf

Ofsted. (2012). *Monitoring inspections of schools that are subject to special measures: Guidance for inspecting schools that are subject to special measure under section 8 of the Education Act 2005* (No. 090272). Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090272

Ofsted. (2017). *Ofsted inspections—Clarification for schools: Handbook for inspecting schools in England under section 5 of the Education Act* (No. 150066). Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted).

Olesen, V. (2013). Feminist qualitative research in the millennium's first decade: Developments, challenges, prospects. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 267–304). SAGE Publications.

Ollerenshaw, J. A., & Creswell, J. W. (2002). Narrative research: A comparison of two restorying data analysis approaches. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *8*(3), 329–347.

Olssen, M. (1996). In defence of the welfare state and publicly provided education: A New Zealand perspective. *Journal of Education Policy*, *11*(3), 337–362. https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093960110305

Olssen, M., Codd, J., & O'Neill, A.-M. (2004). *Education policy: Globalization, citizenship & democracy*. SAGE Publications.

O'Mahony, G. R., & Matthews, R. J. (2006). Wisdom meets hope: Mentoring relationships in supporting the development of beginning principals. *Leading and Managing*, *12*(1), 16–30.

O'Neill, J. (2005). Policies on teachers and teaching: More of the same? In J. Codd & K. Sullivan (Eds.), *Education policy directions in Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 115–126). Thomson/Dunmore Press.

Openshaw, R., Lee, G., & Lee, H. (1993). *Challenging the myths: Rethinking New Zealand's educational history*. Dunmore Press.

Ormston, R., Spencer, L., Barnard, M., & Snape, D. (2014). The foundations of qualitative research. In J. Ritchie, J. Lewis, C. M. Nicholls, & R. Ormston (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students researchers* (2nd ed., pp. 1–25). SAGE.

Orr, M. T., Berg, B., Shore, R., & Meier, E. (2008). Putting the pieces together: Leadership for change in low-performing urban schools. *Education and Urban Society*, *40*(6), 670–693. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124508324018

Orr, M. T., Byrne-Jimenez, M., McFarlane, P., & Brown, B. (2005). Leading out from low-performing schools: The urban principal experience. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *4*(1), 23–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700760590924609

Papa, R., & English, F. (2011). *Turnaround principals for underperforming schools*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Parker, D. C., Grenville, H., & Flessa, J. (2011). Case studies of school community and climate: Success narratives of schools in challenging circumstances. *School Community Journal*, *21*(1), 129–150.

Partlow, M. C. (2007). Contextual factors related to elementary principal turnover. *Planning and Changing*, *38*(1/2), 60–76.

Patterson, J. L., & Kelleher, P. (2005). *Resilient school leaders: Strategies for turning adversity into achievement*. ASCD Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (M. Patton, Ed.; 3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Patton, M. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Peck, C., & Reitzug, U. C. (2014). School turnaround fever: The paradoxes of a historical practice promoted as a new reform. *Urban Education, 49*(1), 8–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912472511

Pelias, R. (2011). Writing into position: Strategies for composition and evaluation. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 659–668). SAGE Publications.

Pepper, M. J., London, T. D., Dishman, M. L., & Lewis, J. L. (2010). *Leading schools during crisis: What school administrators must know*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Perryman, J. (2006). Panoptic performativity and school inspection regimes: Disciplinary mechanisms and life under special measures. *Journal of Education Policy, 21*(2), 147–161. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930500500138

Perryman, J. (2009). Inspection and the fabrication of professional and performative processes. *Journal of Education Policy, 24*(5), 611–631. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930903125129

Phillips, S., & Sen, D. (2011). Stress in head teachers. In J. Langan-Fox & C. Copper (Eds.), *Handbook of Stress in the occupations: New horizons in management* (pp. 177–200). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Pignatelli, F. (2011). Being accountable: Why friendship, vulnerability, and forgiveness matter. *Schools: Studies in Education, 8*(2), 215–230. https://doi.org/10.1086/662107

Pink, W. (1985). Creating effective schools. *The Educational Forum, 49*(1), 91–107. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131728409335823

Poirel, E., & Yvon, F. (2014). School principals' emotional coping process. *Canadian Journal of Education, 37*(3), 1–23.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995a). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 8*(1), 5–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839950080103

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995b). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 8*(1), 5–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839950080103

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2007). Validity issues in narrative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 13*(4), 471–486. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800406297670

Price, H. E. (2015). Principals' social interactions with teachers: How principal-teacher social relations correlate with teachers' perceptions of student engagement. *Journal of Educational Administration, 53*(1), 116–139.

Price, H. E., & Moolenaar, N. M. (2015). Principal-teacher relationships: Foregrounding the international importance of principals' social relationships for school learning climates. *Journal of Educational Administration, 53*(1), 2–7. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-11-2014-0134

Qian, H., & Walker, A. (2014). Leading with empathy. In C. M. Branson & S. J. Gross (Eds.), *Handbook of ethical educational leadership* (pp. 112–127). Routledge.

Quintero, E. (2017). Elevating relationships: How collaboration shapes teaching and learning. *American Educator, Summer*, 18–21.

Ranson, S. (2008). The changing governance of education. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *36*(2), 201–219. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143207087773

Ravitch, D. (2010). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining education*. Basic Books.

Raymond, J. M. (2007). Lonely at the top. *School Administrator*, *64*(4), 61-.

Redding, S., & Morando Rhim, L. (2014). Introduction to the state role in school turnaround: Emerging best practice. In L. Morando Rhim & S. Redding (Eds.), *The state role in school turnaround: Emerging best practices* (pp. 13–18). WestEd.

Reeves, D. B. (2009). *Leading change in your school: How to conquer myths, build commitment, and get results*. ASCD Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Reina, D. S., & Reina, M. L. (2006). *Trust and betrayal in the workplace: Building effective relationships in your organisation* (2nd ed.). Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Reynolds, D. (1995). *The ineffective school*. 1–30. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED393168

Reynolds, D., Sammons, P., De Bieke, F., Van Damme, J., Townsend, T., Teddlie, C., & Stringfield, S. (2014). Educational effectiveness research (EER): A state-of-the-art review. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *25*(2), 197–230. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2014.885450

Reynolds, D., Teddlie, C., Chapman, C., & Stringfield, S. (2016). Effective school processes. In C. Chapman, D. Muijs, D. Reynolds, P. Sammons, & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of educational effectiveness and improvement: Research, policy and practice* (pp. 77–99). Routledge.

Riley, P. (2014). Principals' psychological health: It's not just lonely at the top, it's dangerous. *InPsych: The Bulletin of the Australian Psychological Society Ltd*, *36*(6), 12–13.

Riley, P. (2015). *The Australian principal occupation health, safety and wellbeing survey 2015*. Institute for Positive Psychology and Education; Australian Catholic University. http://www.principalhealth.org/au/2015_Final_Report

Riley, P. (2017). *New Zealand primary school principals' occupational health and wellbeing survey 2016*. Institute for Positive Psychology and Education; Australian Catholic University. https://bit.ly/2Zy5t7c

Riley, P., & Langan-Fox, J. (2013). Bullying, stress and health in school principals and medical professional: Experiences at the 'front-line'. In Ronald. J. Burke, S. Fox, & C. Cooper (Eds.), *Human Frailties: Wrong choices on the drive to success* (pp. 181–200). Gower Publishing Ltd. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/lib/waikato/reader.action?docID=1564280&ppg=6

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Elam, G., Tennant, R., & Rahim, N. (2014). Designing and selecting samples. In J. Ritchie, J. Lewis, C. M. Nicholls, & R. Ormston (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers* (2nd ed., pp. 111–142). Sage Publications.

Robinson, V. (1994). *The community-school collaboration research project*. University of Auckland.

Robinson, V., Hohepa, M. K., & Lloyd, C. (2015). *School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why: Best evidence synthesis iteration (BES): Executive summary (Redacted version)*. Ministry of Education.

Robinson, V., Hohepa, M., & Lloyd, C. (2009). *School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why*. The University of Auckland. http://educationcounts.govt.nz/goto/BES

Robinson, W. S., & Buntrock, L. M. (2011). Turnaround necessities. *School Administrator, 68*(3), 22–27.

Rubin, H., & Rubin, I. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). SAGE.

Ryan, G., & Bernard, R. (2003). Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods, 15*(1), 85–109. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X02239569

Sammons, P. (1996). Complexities in the judgement of school effectiveness. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 2*(2), 113–149. https://doi.org/10.1080/1380361960020201

Sammons, P., & Bakkum, L. (2011). Effective schools, equity and teacher effectiveness: A review of the literature. *Profesorado: Revista de Curriculum y Formaction Del Profesorado, 15*(3), 9–26.

Sammons, P., Hillman, J., & Mortimore, P. (1995). *Key characteristics of effective schools: A review of school effectiveness research.* http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED389826

Sarpkaya, P. Y. (2014). The effects of principals' loneliness in the workplace on their self-performance. *Educational Research and Reviews, 9*(20), 967–974.

Sayce, D., & Lavery, S. D. (2013). Beginning the school principalship in rural and remote Catholic Schools in Western Australia. *Paradox and Possibility*. 6th International Conference on Catholic Education Leadership, The University of Notre Dame, Australia. http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/edu_conference/61

Scott, C. (2008). *A call to restructure restructuring: Lessons from the No Child Left Behind Act in five States.* Center for Educational Policy. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED503798.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide of researchers in education and the social sciences* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Sergiovanni, T. (1998). Leadership as pedagogy, capital development and school effectiveness. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 1*(1), 37–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360312980010104

Sergiovanni, T. (2001). *Leadership: What's in it for school?* RoutledgeFalmer.

Shields, C. (2014). Ethical leadership: A critical transformative approach. In C. M. Branson & S. J. Gross (Eds.), *Handbook of ethical educational leadership* (pp. 24–42). Routledge.

Shuker, R. (1987). *The one best system? A revisionist history of state schooling in New Zealand*. Dunmore Press Limited.

Shulman, V., & Sullivan, S. (2015). Here today gone tomorrow: Conceptualizing instructional leadership through case studies of unsustained initiatives. *Education and Urban Society*, *47*(3), 271–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124513495271

Silver, H. (1994). *Good schools, effective schools: Judgements and their histories*. Cassell.

Smarick, A. (2010). The turnaround fallacy. *Education Next*, *10*(1), 20–27.

Smith, M., Segal, J., Robinson, L., & Segal, R. (2017, October). *Burnout prevention and treatment: Techniques for dealing with overwhelming stress*. https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/burnout-prevention-and-recovery.htm

Smith, P., & Bell, L. (2011). Transactional and transformational leadership in schools in challenging circumstances: A policy paradox. *Management in Education (MiE)*, *25*(2), 58–61. https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020611399608

Smyth, J. (2011). The disaster of the 'self-managing school' – genesis, trajectory, undisclosed agenda, and effects. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *43*(2), 95–117. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2011.560253

Southworth, G. (1998). *Leading improving primary schools: The work of headteachers and deputy heads*. Falmer Press.

Sparrowe, R. T. (2005). Authentic leadership and the narrative self. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *16*(3), 419–439. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.004

Spillane, J. P. (2005). Distributed leadership. *The Educational Forum*, *69*(2), 143–150. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131720508984678

Spillane, J. P., & Lee, L. C. (2014). Novice school principals' sense of ultimate responsibility: Problems of practice in transitioning to the principal's office. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *50*(3), 431–465. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X13505290

Spiro, J. (2018). *Leading change handbook: Concepts and tools*. Wallace Foundation. http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/leading-change-handbook.pdf

Squire, C., Andrews, M., & Tamboukou, M. (2013). Introduction: What is narrative research? In M. Andrews, C. Squire, & M. Tamboukou (Eds.), *Doing narrative research* (2nd ed., pp. 1–26). SAGE Publications.

Squire, C., Davis, M., Esin, C., Andrews, M., Harrison, B., Hyden, L.-C., & Hyden, M. (2014). *What is narrative research?* Bloomsbury.

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. SAGE Publications.

Stake, R. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*. The Guilford Press.

Stark, M. (1998). No slow fixes either. In L. Stoll & K. Myers (Eds.), *No quick fixes: Perspective on schools in difficulty* (pp. 34–46). The Falmer Press.

Starr, K. (2011). Principals and the politics of resistance to change. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *39*(6), 646–660. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143211416390

Starr, K. (2014a). Interrogating conceptions of leadership: School principals, policy and paradox. *School Leadership & Management*, *34*(3), 224–236. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2014.905466

Starr, K. (2014b). The perils of change leadership. *Independence*, *39*(2), 36–38.

Starr, K., & White, S. (2008). The small rural school principalship: Key challenges and cross-school responses. *Journal of Research in Rural Education (Online)*, *23*(5), 1–12.

Starratt, R. J. (2014). The purpose of education. In C. M. Branson & S. J. Gross (Eds.), *Handbook of ethical educational leadership* (pp. 43–61). Routledge.

Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2014). Cross-national policy borrowing: Understanding reception and translation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *34*(2), 153–167. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2013.875649

Stephenson, L. E., & Bauer, S. C. (2010). The role of isolation in predicting new principals' burnout. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, *5*(9), 25–42. https://doi.org/10.22230/ijepl.2010v5n9a275

Stevahn, L., & King, J. (2014). What does it take to be an effective qualitative evaluator? Essential competencies. In L. Goodyear, J. Jewiss, J. Usinger, & E. Barela (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in evaluation: From theory to practice* (pp. 141–166). Jossey-Bass.

Stoll, L., & Fink, D. (1994). School effectiveness and school improvement: Voices from the field. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *5*(2), 149–177. https://doi.org/10.1080/0924345940050203

Stoll, L., & Fink, D. (1998). The cruising school: The unidentified ineffective school. In L. Stoll & K. Myers (Eds.), *No Quick Fixes: Perspectives on Schools in Difficulty* (pp. 189–206). Falmer Press.

Stone-Johnson, C. (2016). Intensification and isolation: Alienated teaching and collaborative professional relationships in the accountability context. *Journal of Educational Change*, *17*(1), 29–49. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-015-9255-3

Stotsky, S., & Holzman, T. (2015a). Is 'turnaround' a useful model for low-performing schools? *Nonpartisan Education Review*, *11*(2), 1–16.

Stotsky, S., & Holzman, T. (2015b). The costs of Federal intervention in local education: The effectiveness of America's Choice in Arkansas. *Nonpartisan Education Review*, *11*(2), 1–16.

Stringfield, S., Schaffer, E., & Reynolds, D. (2017). The myth of the single lever turnaround. In C. V. Meyers & M. J. Darwin (Eds.), *Enduring myths that inhabit school turnaround* (pp. 73–94). Information Age Publishing.

Sun, H., Creemers, B. P. M., & de Jong, R. (2007). Contextual factors and effective school improvement. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *18*(1), 93–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450601058287

Sutherland, I. E. (2017). Learning and growing: Trust, leadership, and response to crisis. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *55*(1), 2–17. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-10-2015-0097

Tahir, L., Thakib, M. T. M., Hamzah, M. H., Said, M. N. H. M., & Musah, M. B. (2015). Novice head teachers' isolation and loneliness experiences A mixed-methods study. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143215587302

Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. (2018). *Principals—Appraisal | Teaching Council of New Zealand*. https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/principals-appraisal

Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. (2019a). *About the Teaching Council | Education Council*. Teaching Council New Zealand. https://teachingcouncil.nz/content/about-teaching-council

Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. (2019b). *Our code, our standards | Teaching Council New Zealand | Matatū Aotearoa*. https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/our-code-our-standards

Tedder, M. (2012). Biographical research methods. In J. Arthur, M. Waring, R. Coe, & L. Hedges (Eds.), *Research methods and methodologies in education* (pp. 322–337). SAGE Publications.

The University of Auckland. (2017). *FTP Programme*. http://www.uacel.ac.nz/language/en-us/ftp-programme

Theoharis, G. (2007). Navigating rough waters: A synthesis of the countervailing pressures against leading for social justice. *The Journal of School Leadership (JSL)*, *17*(1), 4–27.

Thrupp, M. (1995). Poor performers or just plain poor? Assumptions in the neo-liberal account of school failure. *Waikato Journal of Education*, *20*(3), 169–182.

Thrupp, M. (2001). Sociological and political concerns about school effectiveness research: Time for a new research agenda. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *12*(1), 7–40. https://doi.org/10.1076/sesi.12.1.7.3459

Thrupp, M. (2005a). Importing England's 'third way' education policy: A cautionary note. In J. Codd & K. Sullivan (Eds.), *Education policy directions in Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 101–113). Thomson Dunmore Press.

Thrupp, M. (2005b). 'Official school improvement' in England and New Zealand: A cautionary comparison. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education*, *14*, 39–58.

Thrupp, M. (2005c). *School improvement: An unofficial approach*. Continuum International Publishing Group.

Timperley, H. S., & Parr, J. M. (2005). Theory competition and the process of change. *Journal of Educational Change; Dordrecht*, *6*(3), 227–251. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-005-5065-3

Tomlinson, S. (1997). Sociological perspectives on failing schools. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *7*(1), 81–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/09620219700200006

Towl, P. (2016). A stitch in time: Clues to mending the home-school relationship after a crisis event. In P. Towl & S. Hemphill (Eds.), *Locked out: Understanding and tackling school exclusion in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 153–173). NZCER Press.

Townsend, T., MacBeath, J., & Bogotch, I. (2016). Critical and alternative perspectives on educational effectiveness and improvement research. In C. Chapman, D. Muijs, D. Reynolds, P. Sammons, & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of educational effectiveness and improvement: Research, policy and practice* (pp. 380–406). Routledge.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. K. (2000). A multidisciplinary analysis of the nature, meaning, and measurement of trust. *Review of Educational Research*, *70*(4), 547–593. https://doi.org/10.2307/1170781

Tuana, N. (2014). An ethical leadership development framework. In C. M. Branson & S. J. Gross (Eds.), *Handbook of ethical educational leadership* (pp. 153–175). Routledge.

Udahemuka, M. (2016). *Signal loss: What we know about school performance*. The New Zealand Initiative. www.nzinitiative.org.nz

Udahemuka, M. (2017). *Amplifying excellence: Promoting transparency, professionalism and support in schools*. The New Zealand Initiative. www.nzinitiative.org.nz

U.S. Department of Education. (2017, May 25). *Federal role in education* [Websites]. https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/fed/role.html

Van Houtte, M. (2005). Climate or culture? A plea for conceptual clarity in school effectiveness research. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *16*(1), 71–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450500113977

Wallace Foundation. (2013). *The school principal as leader: Guiding schools to better teaching and learning*. The Wallace Foundation. http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/effective-principal-leadership/Pages/The-School-Principal-as-Leader-Guiding-Schools-to-Better-Teaching-and-Learning.aspx

Wang, F. (2016). Leadership as a subversive activity: Principals' perceptions. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *21*(5), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2016.1259507

Waring, M. (2012). Finding your theoretical position. In J. Arthur, M. Waring, R. Coe, & L. Hedges (Eds.), *Research methods and methodologies in education* (pp. 15–22). SAGE Publications.

Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. Routledge.

Weitzel, W., & Jonsson, E. (1989). Decline in organizations: A Literature integration and extension. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *34*(1), 91–109. https://doi.org/10.2307/2392987

Weitzel, W., & Jonsson, E. (1991). Reversing the downward spiral: Lessons from W.T. Grant and Sears Roebuck. *Executive (19389779)*, *5*(3), 7–22. https://doi.org/10.5465/AME.1991.4274439

West, M. (2010). School-to-school cooperation as a strategy for improving student outcomes in challenging contexts. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *21*(1), 93–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450903569767

West, M., Ainscow, M., & Stanford, J. (2005). Sustaining improvement in schools in challenging circumstances: A study of successful practice. *School Leadership & Management*, *25*(1), 77–93. https://doi.org/10.1080/1363243052000317055

Whetten, D. A. (1980). Organizational Decline: A Neglected Topic in Organizational Science. *The Academy of Management Review*, *5*(4), 577–588. https://doi.org/10.2307/257463

White, P. (2013). Who's afraid of research questions? The neglect of research questions in the methods literature and a call for question-led methods teaching. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *36*(3), 213–227. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2013.809413

Wildy, H., & Clarke, S. (2012). Leading a small remote school: In the face of a culture of acceptance. *Education 3-13*, *40*(1), 63–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2012.635057

Wright, S. (2012). Is it lonely at the top? An empirical study of managers' and nonmanagers' loneliness in organizations. *Journal of Psychology*, *146*(1/2), 47–60. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2011.585187

Wrigley, T. (2011). Paradigms of school change. *Management in Education (MiE)*, *25*(2), 62–66. https://doi.org/10.1177/089202060809398929

Wylie, C. (2008, June 16). *Principal wellbeing and stress in 2007—Are we seeing any changes yet?* [Notes for presentation to NZPF Principal Wellbeing/Hauora hui]. http://www.nzpf.ac.nz/uploads/7/2/4/6/72461455/wellbeing_june08_1_.pdf

Wylie, C. (2009). *Tomorrow's Schools after 20 years: Can a system of self-managing schools live up to its initial aims?* http://www.victoria.ac.nz/education/research/nzaroe/issues-index/2009/pdf/text-Wylie

Wylie, C. (2012a). *Vital connections: Why we need more than self-managing schools*. NZCER Press.

Wylie, C. (2012b). *Challenges around capability improvements in a system of self-managed schools in New Zealand*. WestEd. http://www.wested.org/wp-content/files_mf/1370998797resource1273

Wylie, C. (2013). Improving learning opportunities: Why schools can't do it on their own. *Set: Research Information for Teachers*, *1*, 45–48.

Wylie, C. (2017). *Principals and their work: Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016*. New Zealand Council for

Educational Research. https://www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/National%20Survey_Principals_Nov17.pdf

Zembylas, M. (2010). The emotional aspects of leadership for social justice: Implications for leadership preparation programs. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *48*(5), 611–625. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231011067767

Zembylas, M. (2013). Critical pedagogy and emotion: Working through 'troubled knowledge' in posttraumatic contexts. *Critical Studies in Education*, *54*(2), 176–189. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2012.743468

APPENDIX 1
Porokaiwhiri School

Porokaiwhiri School was my second principalship appointment, but I was the first female principal appointed to the school in its long history of schooling local children. I was informed that the community wanted a principal a young, Māori male principal, and I was the exact opposite – middle-aged, Pākehā (white) female. The teachers claimed to have wanted a principal who would lead the school, make good decisions for the students and school, supported the teachers, and who was capable of leading the school. However, their interactions with me, and their responses to proposed changes, suggested otherwise.

In 2009, Porokaiwhiri School was a U2, Decile 3, full-primary school situated in a small village with a significant percentage of the students and families identifying as Maori. The job advertisement listed the statutory appointee [limited statutory manager (LSM)] as the contact person. My initial queries about Porokaiwhiri School indicated the LSM was supporting the school to tidy their finances and book-keeping, and to appoint the incoming principal. The application information indicated that while the school roll was currently 48 students, the Board were confident of the roll growing back up to 52 students (retaining U2 status and staffing levels). The 2008 ERO (Education Review Office) review specified some concerns they had regarding the learning and achievement of students. However, the report indicated that these concerns had been resolved and the school had again been appointed a three-year review. There were no indications of the troubles and chaos that was the reality of teaching, and leading and managing, Porokaiwhiri School.

Prior to my appointment mid-2009, the school had, since the beginning of the year, faced multiple staff changes and continual falling roll. The principal had suddenly resigned, leaving in the middle of term one; the deputy principal resigned at the end of the same term. An interim principal was employed for the remainder of term one and term two, a 0.6 teacher was employed to provide principal-release and the school was divided across three classrooms. The Ministry of Education employed the statutory appointee in March 2009 under section 78M of the Education Act 1989 to manage

personnel concerns, to oversee the school finances and to support the new office manager in learning how the school budget and accounts operated. By the end of 2009, the roll stood at 40 students, with 12 leaving to attend high school the following year. Porokaiwhiri School faced surplus staffing with both teachers deciding to leave or retire after a combined 35^{+} years of service at the school.

The 2010 new school year began with new teaching and support staff. Following an ERO review at the end of 2010, the Ministry decided that the level of intervention should be increased as the LSM and Ministry school advisor believed that the Board of Trustees were unable to manage without significant appointee support. In April 2011, the Secretary for Education placed the governance of Porokaiwhiri School to a commissioner under section 78N(3) of the Education Act 1989. September 2011 saw the school again receiving notification of surplus staffing for the second teaching position due to continual falling roll with the teacher deciding to remain at the school to continue their surplus position until August 2012.

At the beginning of 2012, Porokaiwhiri School roll stabilised at 27 students, surplus staffing notice was rescinded and the school was again staffed at 2.3. Due to ongoing ill health, Commissioner A was unable to continue in their position and resigned in April 2012. In June 2012, after several months of operating without governance, Commissioner B was appointed.

Due to the number of Year 8 students transferring to high school at the end of 2012 and several families moving away from the area, Porokaiwhiri School roll hit its all-time low of 18 students in time for the 2013 July roll return. Once again, for the third time since my appointment, the school faced surplus staffing with the teacher deciding to remain at the school for the duration of their surplus position. Porokaiwhiri School Board of Trustees were elected into office in the May elections and commissioner B's status was re-classified to a LSM, under section 78M of the Education Act 1989, to support the trustees in their new role. The statutory intervention was revoked in December 2013 by the Secretary of Education and the Board was accepted for TTaS (Targeted Training and Support) in 2014.

Due to unexpected roll growth at the beginning of 2014, the surplus teaching position was rescinded, with the staffing levels confirmed at 2.5. The school was financially viable, investing in short- and long-term savings accounts. By the end of 2014,

Porokaiwhiri School roll reached 49 students with six Year 8 students leaving to continue their learning at high school. At the end of 2015, Porokaiwhiri School was staffed at 3.6 with a stable student roll of 54. The hard work and effort of the appointee and myself to address systemic school-wide issues was evident in the transformed school culture and practices that prioritised student hauroa (health and wellbeing), social skills, behaviour and engagement, and whānau/family involvement.

APPENDIX 2
Participant Information Sheet

Statutory Intervention:

Perceptions of New Zealand primary principals and their experiences

My name is Sheralyn Cook and I am a Doctor of Education candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato. I am seeking your participation in a research project exploring New Zealand Primary Principals' experiences of leading and managing a school while it was under Statutory Intervention, as outlined in Part 7A, Section 78(M) and Section (78N)(1-3) of the Education Act 1989.

What is the research about?

This proposed research is to fulfil the research requirements of the Doctor of Education Degree in the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato. This research project has been approved by the ethics committee at the Faculty of Education (Ethic approval: FEDU009/16). The working title of this research is: *Statutory Management: Perceptions of New Zealand primary principals and their experiences.*

This research project arose from my own professional experience of being appointed as the teaching-principal of a small, low socio-economic school already under Statutory Intervention (Section 78(m) of the Education Act 1989) which was later moved into Section 78(n3) and eventually out of Statutory Intervention; a process which took five years.

While I am deeply aware of my own personal experiences, I would like to hear the experiences and views of fellow principals who are currently leading similar schools, or who have had experience (positive or otherwise) leading a school while it was under statutory intervention.

Therefore, this research project aims to provide principals' perspective of the challenges and rewards of leading and managing schools that have been placed into Statutory Management.

There is growing international awareness that leading high-needs schools is challenging, demanding and fraught with difficulties, even more so if the principal is also teaching while leading a small, low socio-economic school, yet there is no actual research telling us how challenging and demanding this is from a principals' perspective. Hence, the aim of this project is to bring principal voice to the following question:

Over-arching Question:

> What are the perceptions of New Zealand primary principals and their experiences of leading their school through statutory intervention?

Subsequent themes of questions evolving from this question:

The Journey of Turning Around Schools:

- What did the principals focus on first and what areas did they leave until later in their journey and why?
- How do principals navigate the demands of leading a high-needs school – professionally and personally?

Ethic of Care / Hauora:

- What support is available for New Zealand primary principals working in high-needs schools;
- Where or whom, do these principals turn to for support?
- How effective was this support?

Leadership Knowledge and Skills:

- What specific leadership knowledge and skills did the primary school principals' require and/or need to adapt while turning the school around, and when?

<u>What will you be involved in and how long will it take?</u>

I would like to interview you over a series of three 90 minute semi-structured interviews and I would like to digitally record the interview. Should you choose to be interviewed you will be provided with a copy of the guiding questions one week prior to the interview. Also, you will be asked to give your written consent prior to beginning the first interview.

Following the interviews, a summary of the themes identified in your interview transcript will be returned to you for checking and amending of comments if needed. This is to ensure validity of the interview transcript and that I am recording your answers correctly.

If needed, a fourth interview may be undertaken to clarify any comments or questions left unanswered, but at this stage, it is not anticipated that this will be required.

<u>Where will the interviews take place?</u>

The interviews will take place at a setting of your own choice; whether this in the privacy of your office, or off-site at a venue that will enable us to complete the interviews in private and uninterrupted.

<u>What will happen to the information collected?</u>

Only I (Miss Sheralyn Cook) and my supervisors (Dr. Rachel McNae and Dr. Noeline Wright) will be privy to the recordings, notes and transcriptions from your interview. Moreover, these will be stored securely at my university office and used in the strictest confidence in the writing of subsequent research findings and reports, and in presentations and scholarly publications in the future.

Information from your interview will be used to provide an account of what it is like to be a principal leading a school through statutory intervention. It is anticipated that the

interview information will be used narratively in the thesis, and as such, sections of your interview may be presented as a quotation.

As this research project fulfils a component of a Doctor of Education degree in the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato, the completed thesis will be lodged in the University of Waikato Research Commons Database. You will be able to access the final thesis once it is lodged with the Research Commons.

While every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality, this cannot be guaranteed; however, neither you nor your school will be identified or identifiable. Five years after completion of the research, all research notes and recordings will be destroyed.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will have the right to:

- ask questions of the researcher at any time;
- answer all research questions in your own way;
- review and edit the initial transcription of the interview data to ensure its accuracy;
- withdraw from the study until you confirm transcripts of your last interview; and
- have access to a copy of the final research report provided you have remained as a participant in the research, via the Research Commons at the University of Waikato library.

I hope that you will agree to be involved in this important research. If you have any further queries about the research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sheralyn Cook (Miss)

Ed.D Candidate

Faculty of Education

The University of Waikato

Private Bag 3105

Hamilton 3240, New Zealand

APPENDIX 3
Research Questions

Statutory Intervention:
Perceptions of New Zealand primary principals and their experiences

Background Information - Initial interview

Researcher: Sheralyn Cook

Principal: Interview Date:

Background Information regarding the principal:

1. Tell me about yourself and your journey of becoming a teacher and a principal
2. Teaching / Principal experiences
3. What drew you towards applying for this school
4. What was your knowledge of the school and its history prior to appointment

Background Information regarding Statutory Intervention:

Timeline

Principal appointment

Statutory intervention initiated

Statutory intervention implemented

1. Who / what initiated statutory intervention
2. Reactions to Statutory Intervention being implemented

   Your reactions (emotions, thoughts etc.)

   Staff, BoT & community's reactions
3. Reasons for Statutory Intervention

4. Your prior knowledge, understanding and experience of statutory intervention
5. Your current knowledge, understanding and experience of statutory intervention
6. Background & experiences of Statutory Interventionist (if known)

Second and third semi-structured interview guide

1. Can you tell me your school's story – about what was happening in the time leading up to the intervention? About what is happening now?
2. Can you tell me about some of the challenges/surprises/rewards … you have experienced during this time?
3. What have your experiences been of working with a statutory appointee?
4. Can you tell me about some of the 'issues/things' which have non-negotiable for you?
5. Can you tell me about your leadership – has there been a change in your leadership philosophy / approach?
6. Reflecting back on your leadership, are there aspects of your leadership, or leading this school, that you would change, keep the same? Why?
7. Can you tell me about motivation? What keeps you coming back to school every morning? How did/do you know what to do, when to do, and how to do?
8. Can you tell me about your experiences with stress? What are your stress indicators? How do you cope with stress?
9. Can you tell me about isolation? How does the role of being a principal of a high-need school influence your feeling of professional isolation? In what ways does this impact on you? What strategies do you use to cope with professional isolation?
10. Can you tell me about the level of support you've received while leading your school through the intervention? Whom do you turn to? What advice/guidance did you receive/by whom/was it valuable?
11. Thinking about your experiences, what aspects of your experience concern you? What aspects do you think were helpful?
12. Tell me about your long-term plans (now, near-future, long-term 5+yrs) – for your school, for yourself professionally

13. Reflecting back on your experiences, what advice would you give yourself, or someone else who was beginning this process or who was thinking about applying for principalship of a school under intervention?
14. Is there anything you would like to share, comment on?

APPENDIX 4
Consent Form

Statutory Intervention:

Perceptions of New Zealand primary principals and their experiences

Participant consent form

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and have also been given and have understood an oral explanation of this study into New Zealand primary principals' perceptions and experiences of leading schools in statutory intervention. I understand this may include principals who are currently working in such schools, or who have had recent experience of working in a school under statutory intervention Part 7A, Section 78(m) and/or Section 78(n)(1-3) of the 1989 Education Act.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study or withdraw any information that I have provided up till the time that I have confirmed the final interview transcript. I understand that I can ask to see the research report when it is finished. I understand that I will be able to see the final thesis once it is lodged in the Research Commons at the University of Waikato library.

I understand that neither my name nor the name of my school will be used in the report or any presentations or publications that may arise from this research. I understand that the information I provide will be confidential to the researcher, Miss Sheralyn Cook and members of her supervisory panel (Dr Rachel McNae and Dr Noeline Wright).
I understand that sections of my interview transcript may be presented in the thesis as a quotation and in any subsequent publications or presentations.

Finally, I understand that the finding from this research will be used for a Doctor of Education thesis, and other scholarly publications and/or presentations.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Participant Information Sheet.

I agree to my response being digitally recorded.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____