SCHOOL PLANNING:
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FACTORS
THAT INFLUENCE SCHOOL PLANNING IN
COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOLS IN
THE SOLOMON ISLANDS
FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Educational Leadership

at the University of Waikato by

SAMUEL COLERIDGE ARUHU

University of Waikato   2010

Abstract

This study sought to investigate the factors that influence school planning in Community High Schools in Solomon Islands. In particular, it examines principal's perceptions of having worked with school plans. While the international literature focuses on school planning and the planning process, much of this literature relates to western contexts which are sometimes irrelevant to the context of a developing nation such as the Solomon Islands. Thus contextual specificity is an important underlying factor in the study.

This qualitative research gathered the stories of community high school principals on Makira Island through semi-structured interviews. These interviews were analysed on a case by case basis and then analysed using a thematic analysis approach.

While school planning is critical for schools, this study showed that most principals in community high schools in the Solomon Islands do not have the confidence to formulate, implement, and successfully evaluate a school plan. Key findings of this research include the urgency of providing professional development and ongoing support for Community High School principals, the role and priority of interpersonal and school-community relationships, the critical importance of school planning as a process, and the notion of seeing a school plan as a working, living document that supports the activity and development of a school.

Amongst the implications from this research is the need for current and future school principals to undergo professional development which is geared towards improving principal's understanding and skills in school planning. A thorough understanding of the essential elements of the school planning process, alongside ongoing support, will greatly enhance current and future community high school principals' capacity to improve planning in their schools.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, ***Henry and Joyce Awaihaka*** *who* had the vision and inspired me to go to school. This is your share of my achievements.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the people who have assisted me in completing this thesis. I am grateful to the Chief Education Officer of the Makira Provincial Education Authority for allowing their schools to be included in this project.

To my participants, I am greatly indebted to you for sharing your experiences and perspectives on working with school plans. I hope that through this study, current and future school principals will be enlightened on the critical aspects of school planning so that positive actions can take place. I thank each one of you for having the courage to participate in this research.

I am deeply indebted to my supervisor, Dr David Giles, for your inspiration and professional guidance throughout the research process. This thesis could not have been completed without your patience and valuable advice.

I would like to acknowledge those who have contributed to my research at the University of Waikato. Special thanks to Bev Price of the Graduate Studies Office for her continuous support and assistance. Many thanks to the staff at the education library and the central library of the University of Waikato. Thanks also to the wonderful team at the University of Waikato's International Centre for the tremendous support you gave which has contributed to the successful completion of my study.

I would also like to thank Hopkins Maori, Gareth Baewai, Gordon Baewai and Lent Gito for their company during the fieldwork visits we made to schools. Tagio raha di'u.

To my parents, I sincerely thank you for having the vision and giving me the opportunity to have an education, and for your continual encouragement, support and advice.

To my wife Sussie, I am very grateful to you for your support and continual encouragement, for your patience, and your understanding despite the challenges. Thank you too, for looking after our children while daddy goes to school, for

cooking, washing and cleaning and ensuring that the children get to school on time.

Finally, to my children, Steve, Susan, Nick and Stewart, you have been my inspiration.

Chapter One: Introduction

Statement of concern

School planning within the secondary school context of the Solomon Islands is not a totally new concept. Schools have been engaged in planning as early as the 1900s when formal education was first introduced in the island state by the missionaries (Ramoni, 2000). However, school planning during this time was not made compulsory for all schools; it was left to the school principal's discretion whether or not to plan. This trend was to change in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s with the advent of the neo-liberal agenda that promoted accountability for schools (Davies & Ellison, 1997). It was during this period that schools were expected and required to produce school plans (Davies & Ellison, 1997). In most national and community high schools in the Solomon Islands, school planning was seen to be one of the major roles of the school principal and their deputy, while the rest of the staff, students, parents and other stakeholders of the school did not play an active part.

The lack of effective leadership in the school system in the Solomon Islands has been a long-standing issue and has existed since the country gained political independence in 1978. The rapid establishment of the Community High Schools throughout the country since 1995 exacerbated the problem with many of these schools staffed by inadequately trained teachers and inexperienced principals (Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 2004). This situation led to a lack of proper planning in the community high schools, which has resulted in lessening standards in schools and criticisms from parents and senior members of the community about the deteriorating state of schools (Malasa, 2007).

Although no research has been conducted on how schools plan in the Solomon Islands secondary school context to substantiate the above claims, most would agree that school planning is critical to a school's success (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Hopkins & MacGilchrist, 1998; MacGilchrist, Mortimore, Savage & Beresford, 1997; Stoll & Fink, 1996). As such, school planning needs to be properly investigated to fully realise how such planning contributes to a school's efficiency and effectiveness.

In light of the above, this study was underpinned by the following research question:

What factors influence school planning, their development and implementation from the principal's perspectives of having working with school plans?

The development of my interest in school planning

My interest in school planning began when I was first appointed a deputy school principal at St Stephens High School, Pamua in 1997. Prior to my appointment, I had very little understanding about school planning. Half-way through the year the school principal resigned and I was temporarily appointed to take charge of the school through to the end of the year. My teacher training did not equip me to confidently take on the roles and responsibilities of being a school principal, in particular, I did not have the basic knowledge and skills necessary to effectively plan for a secondary school.

My interest in school planning was further enhanced when I began as a postgraduate student with the Centre for Educational Leadership at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. One of the papers that really got me thinking seriously about school planning was 'School leadership: Organisational development'. This paper focuses specifically on how organisations and institutions, such as schools, improve as a result of effective planning and organisation. Furthermore, by reflecting on this paper, I realised that a good number of school principals appointed to lead schools in the Solomon Islands do not appear to have the capacity to formulate and implement an effective school plan.

By researching in this area I believe that some of the factors that influence effective school planning from the principal's perspective within the community high schools in the Solomon Islands can be identified. This research has the potential to provide the basis for the design of professional development courses for school principals and other educational leaders to enhance their professional capabilities in planning effectively for their schools.

An effective school plan can promote learning, raise achievement standards, make good use of scarce resources, and meet the educational needs of a fledgling nation.

In the Solomon Islands, the need of school leaders in planning needs to be identified and addressed. Educational resources are scarce and need to be used effectively and in accord with the school plans, to ensure that the aims and objectives of the school are met. There is very little documented on school planning generally in the Solomon Islands, therefore the findings of the study will be helpful for current and future educational leaders in the country.

Significance of the study

The information gathered from this study will be useful for government organisations in the Solomon Islands, in particular, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD), the Provincial, Churches and private Education Authorities, school boards, school principals, heads of departments (HODs), teachers and students training to become teachers. These organisations and individuals may be aware of the critical importance of school planning but a lot still needs to be done to emphasise its importance, leading to policies that provide systems and procedures in the professional preparation of community high school principals and other secondary school leaders in the country. In addition, the knowledge that eventuates from this will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on school planning, their development and implementation. Most importantly, the study aims to highlight the factors that influence school planning, their development and implementation from principal's perspectives and experiences of having working with school plans.

The context of the study
Geographical and physical features

Solomon Islands consists of a double chain of islands scattered in the southwest pacific approximately 1,900 kilometres northeast of Australia, with a total land area of 28,369 square kilometres. The island nation is made up of six large islands and numerous smaller ones. With terrain ranging from rugged mountainous islands to low-laying coral atolls, the country stretches in a 1,450 kilometre chain southeast from Papua New Guinea across the Coral Sea to Vanuatu. The capital Honiara is situated on Guadalcanal. Other large islands include Choiseul, New Georgia, Santa Isabel, Malaita, and Makira. All the major islands have rain forested mountain ranges of mainly volcanic origin, deep narrow valleys, and the

coastal belts are lined with coconut palms and fringing reefs. The smaller islands are atolls and raised coral reefs and lagoons. These features impact substantially on logistics and communication and the effective delivery of essential services such as health and education throughout the country (Akao, 2008; Malasa, 2007; Pollard, 2000).

Socio-economic and cultural context

The Solomon Islands consists of people with diverse cultures, languages and customs. In 1998, the country's total population was estimated at 496,000 of which 93.3% are Melanesians, 4% Polynesians, 1.5% Micronesians and a small number of Europeans and Chinese (Solomon Islands Ministry of Finance, 1998). There are approximately eighty indigenous languages in the country. English is the official language of government and business, while Solomon Islands pijin is used to communicate between different ethnic groupings. Most of the people live in small widely dispersed settlements along the sea coasts. 60% live in small villages with fewer than 200 persons with their distinct cultural settings. 10% of the population live in urban centres while over 30,000 people living in the capital, Honiara. Most Solomon Islanders are Christian and affiliate to one of the predominant denominations: the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM), Roman Catholic Church (RC), South Seas Evangelical Church (SSEC), United Church (UC) and the seventh day Adventist (SDA).

About 80% of the population live in a subsistent manner from the land and do not engage in formal employment. These people sell the surplus from their crops to meet the basic necessities of life. The recognition of the bond of kinship, with important obligations extending beyond the immediate family groups and the local and clan loyalties, far outweighs regional and national affiliations. The social structure of most communities is generally egalitarian emphasising acquired, rather than inherited, status and a strong attachment of the people to the land. Most Solomon Islanders maintain this traditional social structure and find their roots in village life (Akao, 2008; Malasa, 2007).

The Educational context in the Solomon Islands

The education system in the Solomon Islands is administered under the Education Act of 1978 (Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 1978). This act stipulates

the roles and responsibilities of the Minister of Education, Education Authorities, school boards, school committees and school principals. Despite the fact that the Act has long been overdue for review to accommodate the changing needs of the national education system, the Act provides the legal basis for the decentralisation of the educational administration to the education boards of the nine provincial governments and the Honiara City Council (Malasa, 2007). The decentralisation of the education system became necessary because of the geographic isolation and cultural diversity of the country and the associated problems of communication and transportation (Sikua, 2002). The decentralisation of the education system also ensures that most of the administrative problems of the education system will be able to be dealt with at the local level.

The Teaching Service Office (TSO) monitors and facilitates the appointment, promotion, demotion and salary payments of teachers. This role operates in conjunction with that of the Education Authorities and School Boards who notify the TSO of any vacancy that may exist in their schools (Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 2007b). However, because of the decentralisation of the education system, the Education Authorities now play a major role in the appointment and promotion of teachers, except for salary payments which are administered centrally by the Teaching Service Office (Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 2007b).

The present education system is responsible for ensuring the operation and development of schools and training institutions across the Solomon Islands (Malasa, 2007). It manages over 600 primary schools with a student enrolment of 85,000, and 140 secondary schools with a student enrolment of 29,000 (Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 2004), and a teaching establishment of over 4,000 principals and teachers.

The secondary school system in the Solomon Islands can be categorised into three main types: The first are the Community High Schools. These schools are mostly rural and community-based and are administered by the Churches and Provincial Education Authorities. Most are extensions of existing primary schools and enrol students up to year 9, although some schools go up to year 12. The school

leadership structure consists of a principal, and two deputy principals, each representing the primary and secondary sectors.

The second type of secondary school is the provincial secondary schools. These schools are, as the name suggests, located in each of the nine provinces. Their host provincial government administers them. There are currently fifteen such schools throughout the country. These schools enrol students from year seven to year twelve, the majority of students taken from the host province.

The third type of secondary school is the national secondary schools administered by the central government through the Ministry of Education or the churches. Being national secondary schools, these schools enrol students from all over the country from forms one to seven (year seven to year thirteen). There are currently nine National secondary schools throughout the country.

The leadership structure for both the Provincial and National secondary schools consists of the Principal, Deputy Principal and Heads of Departments.

Decentralisation, according to Bray (1991), has resulted in policy and resource issues which have led to confusion over the authority and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and the education authorities, as well as the breakdown in communication between these stakeholders. This, in turn, has impacted on the effectiveness of the educational system.

An overview of the research

To ensure the sustainability and improvement of schools, it is critically important that those vested with responsibilities for leading in schools and other educational institutions plan (Helm, 2005). This study attempts to investigate the factors that influence school planning in Community High Schools in the Solomon Islands from the principal's experiences of having working with school plans. Although school planning is well documented and established internationally (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Stoll & Finks, 1996), its contribution to schools' effectiveness and improvement in the Solomon Islands has just recently been realized.

Formal education in the Solomon Islands was first introduced around the early 1900s by missionaries, with the aim of providing basic literacy and numeracy for the propagation of the gospel (Ramoni, 2000). This was to change towards the end of the 1970s when the Education system was administered under an Education

Act (Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 1978). The Act provides the legal basis on which the current Education system is to be managed and administered. Prior to this Act, the colonial government took advantage of the early missionary schools to recruit scholars that passed through this early education system into the government workforce. The colonial government's agenda differed from the missionaries. The establishment of a formal education system in Solomon Islands was seen as central to providing the much needed skilled manpower to administer the government departments to deliver much needed services to the local population and to resource the emerging private sector.

With the passing of the 1981 Provincial Government Act (Solomon Islands Ministry of Provincial Government, 1981) much of the administration of the education has been decentralised to the Provincial education boards, the Church Education Boards and the Honiara city Education board. This decentralised system is necessary because of the geographical isolation and cultural diversity of the country compounded by the problems of communication and transportation. This means that schools could be more responsive to the needs of their immediate communities. The Education Act is in need of a major review to address the changing needs of the national Education system (Malasa, 2007)

The neo-liberal agenda which emerged during in the 1980s and become prominent in the early 1990s, and which promoted transparency and accountability in schools, requires school leaders and school principals in particular to be actively involved in school planning to ensure that stakeholders benefit from the services delivered. School planning plays a major role in improving the learning of students, raising achievement standards, and making good use of scarce resources. Research in this area may prove useful for current and future school principals in planning effectively for their schools. This study aims to investigate some of the factors that influence school planning in community high schools in the Solomon Islands from the principal's perspectives of having worked with school plans.

An overview of the thesis
There are six chapters in this thesis. In this chapter, I have introduced the thesis and stated why I am interested in researching school planning in community high schools in the Solomon Islands. Chapter Two is a review of literature which examines school planning. The third chapter presents the research design for this

study. This includes the research methodology, methods, and ethical considerations that are integral to the research process. The fourth chapter presents the research findings that illustrate the themes and ideas that have emerged as a result of the data gathering. The fifth chapter is a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature. Lastly, the conclusion summarises my research, outlines some limitations of this study, provides suggestions for future research, and presents some recommendations that might initiate change in the nature of professional development in school planning. In the following chapter, I begin this thesis by examining literature on school planning.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The literature on school planning is already substantial and growing as new theories and concepts vie for our attention (Whitaker, 1998). In spite of the fact that the literature on school planning is abundant, there is wide spread disagreement over how the concept of planning is defined (Lipham & Hoeh, 1974; Whitaker, 1998). Some view planning as a highly personalistic process, tending to equate planning with the 'mental effort' from which a plan evolves. In the same way, others dating as far back as Fayol, tend to define planning in an almost clairvoyant way as 'forecasting the future'. Still other authorities take a much broader view, making planning almost synonymous with the total administrative process and include such stages as determining goals, specifying objectives, developing strategies, and making long-range decisions (Lipham & Hoeh, 1974).

Ackoff (1981) suggests that the process of planning is more important than the product (the actual plan). The involvement and participation of all the stakeholders in the planning process can ensure a greater commitment from those involved in implementing the school plan. Lipham and Hoeh (1974) highlight the process of school planning "as those activities related to defining and clarifying goals, purposes and objectives, investigating conditions and operations related to purposes and objectives considering possible alternatives and recommending changes to be made" (p. 81). Similarly, Caldwell and Spinks (1992) note the detail in planning as "a specification of what will be done, when it will be done, how it will be done and who will do it" (p. 13). Indeed there are different types of plans found in schools, including school development plans, strategic plans, curriculum plans, programme plans, lesson plans, instructional plans and school budget plans.

Whatever definition and approach is used, it is generally accepted that all organisations need to plan. Planning should be aimed at bringing about intended outcomes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation (Caldwell

& Spinks, 1988, 1992; Hodgkinson, 1991; Stoll & Fink, 1996; Waddel, Cummings & Worley, 2000). Schools should direct their planning at bringing about outcomes that increase their effectiveness. School plans can also be used to "solve problems, to learn from experience, to adapt to external environmental changes, to improve performance and to influence future changes" (Waddel et al., 2000, p. 210).

There appears to be a trend towards improving the planning process in organisations and institutions globally. The literature reflects a growing interest in the link between school planning and school effectiveness and improvement (Davies & Ellison, 1997; Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Mather, 1998; Stoll & Fink, 1996). This view of school planning places increasing demands upon educational organisations, such as schools, to actively engage in planning so as to improve their effectiveness and efficiency (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988; Glover & Levacic, 2005; Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Mather, 1998; Stoll & Fink, 1996). This has led to the notion that effective school planning is a key to sustainable educational reforms which build capacity and autonomy and focus resources on staff and system success (Glover & Levacic, 2005; Helm, 2005; Knoff, 2005). According to Helm (2005), it is difficult to imagine how schools can tackle the many challenges it must address without planning.

Studies on school planning have yet to explore school planning in developing countries of the South Pacific, especially in Melanesian countries like the Solomon Islands. Most of the research is carried out in developed countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and other European countries. Dimmock and Walker (2002) noted that this research lacks the contextual specificity and relevance as most of the findings are based on Euro-centric or Anglo-American theories, values and beliefs. They argue that "although cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches is generally beneficial, there are dangers in failing to recognise that theory, practice and imported expertise may not readily apply across national and cultural boundaries" (p. 167). There are also questions about whether principals and schools in developing countries, such as the Solomon Islands, would have the capacity and resources to be effectively engaged in school planning practices that have been identified in the literature. As noted by Davies (1994), the economy and cultural constraints of developing

17

countries can influence how principals approach their school planning roles and tasks in their schools.

However, despite the above arguments, there is also growing 'internationalisation' of education, reinforced by a belief that education models are transferable, regardless of the context (Gunter, 2008; MacBeath & Riley, 2004, cited in Malasa, 2007). This has shaped the thinking of policy-makers in both developed and developing countries, including the Solomon Islands. Therefore, in order to address school planning for my study, I will provide a thematic description of school planning in these developed countries and where possible relate them to the situation in the Solomon Islands.

This literature guides the scope of my inquiry on school planning. It begins with a brief section on the notions of leadership, management and administration, considers the neo-liberal agenda, before moving to leadership styles in relation to approaches to school planning. This review concludes with a consideration of purpose of school planning, approaches to school planning, and the planning process.

Leadership, management and administration

Leadership and management are indispensable (Everard, Morris & Wilson, 2004) and, in practice, closely linked (Earley & Weindling, 2004; Glover & Law, 2000; Horner, 2004; Hunt, 1996). Both are prerequisites for organisational success. They are both about motivating people and giving a sense of purpose and direction to organisations. There appears to be an increasing pressure on those charged with leading, managing and administering policy decisions to effectively integrate these roles with each of these functions. In this way, leadership, management and administration have different but overlapping skills, knowledge and abilities (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Earley & Weindling, 2004; Malasa, 2007).

Some argue that while leadership is more concerned with innovation, mission, vision, direction, inspiration and strategic development, the routine day-day problem solving, implementation, and operational issues of working effectively with people are clearly management (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Fullan, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1991; West-Burnham, 1997). In other words, management is more

concerned with stability and maintaining order and consistency in organisations while leadership is more concerned with the improvement of an organisation, and tends to be more formative and proactive (Day, Leithwood, Harris, Hopkins & Sammons, 2006; Earley & Weindling, 2004).

Administration also has differing meanings and is mainly associated with operational matters of an organisation (Earley & Weindling, 2004). An understanding of the differences between these concepts is essential to school planning, as it is concerned with the school leader's perception as to the factors that influence their performance as school planners. Kedian (2008) views leadership, management and administration as a continuum. He explained that where management ends, administration starts and where these two end, leadership starts.

The Neo-liberal agenda

Educational leaders and managers today are faced with the challenge of operating in a rapidly changing world (Davies & Ellison, 1997; Gunter, 2008). The globalisation of economic systems, technological advances, and the increased expectations that society has of its education system have replaced past certainties with new and uncertain frameworks (Davies & Anderson, 1992; Gewirtz, Ball & Bowe, 1995; Olssen & Matthews, 1997). Schools in this new framework are more accountable to their clients for the quality of education they provide. There are two mechanisms for this. First, accountability is made possible through the reformed structure and enhanced powers of the governing body. This enables more effective and immediate control of the school by its local community. Second, the 'market' ensures that schools that are popular with parents are rewarded with funding and resources with the opposite being true of unsuccessful schools (Davies, 2006; Davies & Anderson, 1992; Glatter, Woods & Bagley, 1997).

Education systems globally are heavily influenced and transformed by the neo-liberal ideology. The neo-liberal ideology is advanced by neo-liberal policy technologies such as the market, managerialism and performity that promote marketisation, school self-management, local governance and strong centralised

forms of control and accountability (Codd, 2005; Davies & Ellison, 1997; Olssen & Matthews, 1997; Whitty, Power & Halpin, 1998). The neo-liberal ideology is based on an economic view of life with inputs and outputs and a measurable process in-between (Codd, 2005; Jesson, 1999; Levacic, 1995; Olssen & Matthews, 1997). The neo-liberal agenda considers state welfare services, like health and education, to be best delivered along business lines.

The neo-liberal ideology views education as a commodity rather than a public good (Olssen & Matthews, 1997). Schools are now being thought of as small business firms (Codd, 2005; Davies & Ellison, 1997; Giles, 2008; Hodgkinson, 1991). The corporatisation of education diminishes the institution's activities to measurable outcomes. In England, the 1992 Education Act required the school performance information (examination results) to be published in League tables for public scrutiny (Cowan & Wright, 1988, cited in Wright, 2001). Such pressure calls for schools to emphasise effectiveness, efficiency, choice, competition, and accountability (Olssen & Matthews, 1997). In order to cope with the neo-liberal agenda, principals and school boards have no other option but to engage in school planning for the purpose of a competitive and strategic advantage.

The neo-liberal agenda puts a lot of additional pressure on school principals and boards. The neo-liberal agenda has brought a greater accountability for leaders to ensure that school plans are written in a more detailed nature to show empirical evidence of change. Principals do not have an option; they must construct their plans so that they show evidence of measurable outcomes.

The seriousness of a school plan now is that it links to funding (Doherty, 2008). Central government, parents and students generally expect to gain satisfaction for the education they are paying for (Glover & Levacic, 2005; Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1994). Doherty (2008) states that, in principle, "it matters little whether the paymaster is the parent, the employer, the student or the government ... stakeholders and customers alike quite reasonably expect some means of ensuring the value of what they are paying for" (p. 259). Furthermore, Doherty (2008) questions the way 'valued-added' features has been measured where people are concerned, given the number of contextual variables. Some of the contextual

variables are immeasurable in numerical terms, for even the most sophisticated statistical methods to cope with.

The next section of this literature review offers an overview of school planning and the main concepts associated with it. These include defining the terrains of school planning, the purposes for school planning, the approaches to school planning and the school planning processes.

Leadership Styles

Numerous studies claim that leadership, especially headship, is a crucial factor in school effectiveness and the key to organisational success and improvement. How leaders enact leadership or their leadership style impacts how people feel and are motivated to perform (Earley & Weindling, 2004). Effective leaders use a range of styles according to the demands of the situation. Begley (2006) noted that in order to lead effectively in schools, school leaders need to understand human nature and the motivations of individuals in particular. This study will limit itself to four leadership styles which are believed to be closely related to the successful implementation of a school plan.

Transformational leadership

Burns (1978), in his study of leadership and followership, made an important distinction between transactional and transformational leadership. According to Burns, leadership is transactional in most instances, that is, there is a simple exchange of one thing for another. The transformational leader,

> while still responding to the needs among followers, looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result of transforming leadership is a mutual relationship which involves stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and leaders into moral agents. (p. 4)

School leaders are essentially value carriers (Greenfield, 1986, cited in Gold et al., 2003). The kind of educational values they seek to reproduce in their leadership and management practices have consequences for the quality of education provided by schools within which they work. Transformational leadership underpins models of school leadership that stress the important psychological

21

function that, communicating positively enables individuals and groups to build and act towards a shared vision (Gold et al., 2003; Stoll & Fink, 1996). According to Gronn (1999)

> transformational leadership models are informed by the suggestion that leadership status in schools cannot be assumed, but rather is more often conferred by followers when they perceive their views are being fulfilled in the outlooks and actions of those occupying positions of leadership responsibility (p. 128).

Typical leadership actions associated with transformational leadership models include the mobilising of community commitment to an explicit educational vision, coaching and mentoring towards an increased leadership capacity generally, and the dispersal of leadership responsibilities throughout the staff (Bass, 1999; Campbell et al., 2003; Earley & Weindling, 2004; Gold et al., 2003; Leithwood et al., 1999). Finally, Marks and Printy (2003) suggest that in transformational leadership, leadership is not perceived as simply a trait of an individual but more of the sharing of leadership throughout the organisation. It is an inclusive leadership and one that is distributed throughout the school.

Hierarchical leadership

Hierarchical leadership is a style of leadership where responsibilities are clearly delineated. In hierarchical leadership there is typically one sole leader who occupies the highest position in the organisational structure. Other members of the organisation are regarded as followers. Such a clear line of command and roles and responsibilities present a barrier to the idea of teachers as leaders (Harris, 2003). The hierarchical leadership style sets one person (the leader) apart from the rest of the organisation, believing that this person provides a global perspective and direction that ensures the survival and progress for all (Mara & Neumann, 1993, cited in Gardiner, 2006). Gardiner (2006) suggests that all too often with hierarchical leadership, trust is low, information is shared on a limited basis, participation is controlled, and there is little influence on the decision-making. On the hand, shared leadership involves collaboration, trust is higher between leader and follower, and information is shared more openly. Most organisational structures in schools are hierarchical in nature, where the leader is situated at the top of the structure (Hatcher, 2005).

Distributed leadership

The recent educational reforms gave rise to new forms of leadership. Today there is much more talk about shared leadership, leadership teams, and distributed leadership. According to Woods et al. (2004, cited in Hatcher, 2005), distributed leadership is defined "as an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals engaged in concertive action, creating a new organisational culture based on trust rather than regulation in which leadership is based on knowledge not position" (p. 254). For Gronn (2000), distributed leadership is an idea whose time has come. Harris (2003a) says that leadership is then a shared and collective endeavour that engages all members of an organisation. This mode of leadership challenges the conventional single individualistic leadership style.

Distributed leadership has come to prominence in school management discourse as a means to achieve the participation and empowerment of teachers in creating democratic schools (Harris, 2003a, 2003b; Hatcher, 2005). Distributed leadership as its name suggests is a form of leadership that is distributed throughout the whole organisation. There are multiple leaders at every level who, in one way or another, act as a leader to a group of followers. Importantly, it is not the leader but leadership that is the key factor. Distributed leadership resides, not solely in the individual at the top, but in every person at every level of an organisation (Earley & Weindling, 2004; Goleman et al., 2002; Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2003; Spillane, Halverson, Diamond, 2001). This means that there are multiple sources of guidance, direction, and expertise in an organisation (Harris, 2003).

Two studies conducted in England in 1999 (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000) and 2001 (Harris & Chapman, 2002) offered a contemporary view of successful leadership and provide insights into current leadership practices in schools. The central message emanating from both studies recognised the limitation of a singular leadership approach and saw the leadership role as being primarily concerned with empowering others to lead. Both studies point towards an emerging model of leadership that is less concerned with individual capabilities, skills and talents and more pre-occupied with creating collective responsibility for leadership practices. The focus is less upon the characteristics of the leader and more upon creating shared contexts for learning and creating

23

leadership capacity. The job of those in the formal leadership position is to create a common culture of expectations around the use of individual skills and abilities. In short, distributing leadership equates with maximising the human capacity within an organisation (Day et al., 2000; Harris & Chapman, 2002).

Collaborative leadership

Collaborative leadership refers to sharing leadership in a collaborative way. For this form of leadership to be firmly established in schools, there needs to be external and internal linkages to facilitate the collaborative process for the school. Externally linkages require better communication, co-operation, collaboration and coordination with school authorities and community agencies (Fullan, 1992, 2003; Gibson, 2005; Glanz, 2006; Hall, 2001; Leithwood et al., 1992; Southworth, 2005). Internally, the principal must establish trust and collegiality between teachers, students and administrators. The principal must facilitate these collaborative processes if their leadership is to be highly effective (Blackmore, 2002; Caldwell, 2006; Coleman, 2002; Kotter, 1996; Lambert, 1998; Leithwood etal., 2005; Senge, 1990; Sergiovanni, 2000; Southworth, 1999).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) emphasized the importance of improving the internal interactions and relationship building of schooling. They noted that schools can be re-cultured into making space and time available to stimulate interactions to improve teaching and learning environments. To create a culture of educational change requires a shift towards developing more collaborative working relationships between principals and teachers and among teachers themselves. In order for the relationship to be more collaborative, the building of trust, openness, risk-taking and commitment must be initiated, supported and facilitated by the school principal (Fullan, 2003; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Glanz, 2006; Hargreaves, 1997; Lambert, 2005; Ryan, 2006; Southworth, 1998, 2005; West-Burnham, 2004). Southworth (2005) stated that the need to extend the collaboration beyond the school boundaries is also important as this will develop better understanding and mutual relationships between the school and wider community.

The purpose for school planning

Until the late 1980s, there was no formal requirement for schools to produce school plans. There is now a general trend in education in which schools are expected to develop their own school plans. School plans serve a number of purposes and functions for schools. First, school plans give a sense of purpose and direction for schools. Without a school plan it would be impossible to achieve the outcomes that are expected of schools (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988, 1992; Hodgkinson, 1991; Stoll & Fink, 1996).

Morgan (1989) emphasises the importance of school planning in a rapidly changing world;

> the world is such a changeable place that you need to have a well articulated long- term sense of where you're going, which gives you the base, the confidence to take on whatever adaptability issues come along without losing your sense of direction (p. 46).

The key to effective schooling is said to be the capability of the leaders and the staff at the school level in having a clear understanding of the changing context in which education is now operating and the constantly changing nature of schooling (Davies & Ellison, 1997). Schools can seek to cope with these changing circumstances through effective school planning. Once there is a clear perspective of the world in which the school is operating, and a more systematic means of ensuring that the school moves in that direction, plans can enable schools to successfully achieve their vision, mission and goals (Davies & Ellison, 1997; Morgan, 1989).

School plans also serve an accountability purpose. They should not only be used to satisfy bureaucratic requirement processes but should be used to improve and advance the services provided by an organisation (Stoll & Fink, 1996; Whitaker, 1998). In this way, school plans serve as reference points for specific tasks and projects; those created by individuals to guide their practical work in the weeks and months ahead. In this way, plans are a sign post to the future and a rallying point for commitment (Whitaker, 1998). Having a school plan can ensure that the mission, vision and goals of the school are shared amongst all the members of the school community.

School plans serve as mechanisms for implementing educational policies. From time to time, governments formulate education policies that are then given to schools for their implementation. Plans will usually incorporate procedures for the implementation of government policies at the school level (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992). Similarly, school plans are essential for the better utilisation and management of scarce and limited resources (human, materials, financial). Resources are an essential component of any organisation. There utilisation and management has to be planned to give maximum benefit to the organisation. Without adequate planning, organisations may unwisely use resources on less important areas of the organisation and neglect more important areas.

Finally, school plans can be used for the purpose of forecasting the future. To be better prepared for what might be in store for schools in the future, it is essential that schools plan as a way and means of dealing with an unpredictable future. As Davies and Ellison (1997) and Cranston (2008) argue, the globalisation of economic systems, technological advances, and the increased expectations that society has of its education system, have replaced past certainties with new and uncertain frameworks. We cannot significantly improve the quality of our schools by simply working harder. We have to work smarter not harder. In other words, to deal satisfactory with the future we cannot totally rely on our past experiences alone, we have to plan for what might be expected in the future.

Approaches to school planning

Schools approach school planning in different ways. There does not appear to be any standardised form of school planning. Some schools have detailed and documented school plans which, after their completion, have no further use for schools (Stoll & Fink, 1996). By way of contrast, Whitaker (1998) points out that "one of the difficulties created by an excessive zeal about the value of documented planning is [that] ... schools … become slaves to the same syndrome, produc[ing] excessively detailed annual plans which, when completed, hardly anyone will ever read" (p. 64). Whatever the rationale and form of school plans, school plans should carry something of a practical nature, a document that can be used to improve the activities of a school, a reference point for specific tasks and plans.

School Development Planning

A school development plan is a plan to improve the quality of teaching and learning in a school through the successful management of innovation and change. Development planning, according to Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991), encourages leaders and teaching staff to ask four basic questions: Where is the school now? What changes do we need to make? How shall we manage these changes over time? How shall we know whether our management of change has been successful? In this way, development planning helps the school provide practical answers to these questions. This will take time and energy however the gain is that the school is enabled to organise what it is already doing, and what it needs to do, in a more purposeful and coherent way. The distinctive feature of a development plan is that it brings together in an overall plan, national policies and initiatives, the school's aims and values, and its localised needs for development. By co-ordinating aspects of planning which are otherwise separate, the school can acquire a shared sense of direction and is able to control and manage the tasks associated with development and change.

Priorities for development are selected and planned in detail and then supported by action plans and working documents. The priorities for later years are sketched in outline to provide the longer-term programme (Davies & Anderson, 1992; Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991). Development planning is more than a document; it is the process of creating the plan and then ensuring that it is put into effect. The process involves reaching agreement on a sensible set of priorities for the school and then taking action to realise the plan (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991).

Development planning is not new to schools (Cuckle & Broadhead, 2003; Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Stoll & Fink, 1996). It can be seen in various guises and carrying different names throughout the world, such as the 'school based management' approach that originated from Tasmania, Australia (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988). It is also referred to as the 'school growth plans' strategy of the Harlton school board in Canada (Stoll & Fink, 1996). School development planning is also used interchangeably with school improvement planning (Cuckle & Broadhead, 2003; Davies, 2006; Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991). Stoll and Fink (1996) suggest that

School development planning is a mechanism by which school effectiveness and school improvement can be interwoven to assist schools produce successful change and enhanced outcomes for all pupils. School development planning appears to offer a vehicle to connect the two fields, and also illustrate a way to open doors simultaneously (p. 63).

While most proponents agree that the ultimate aim of school development is to improve the quality of pupil learning appropriate to their needs in a changing world, MacGilchrist (1994, cited in Stoll & Fink, 1996) suggests that anther purpose appears to be the control a school has over its own work.

School development planning is a strategy that is becoming increasingly widespread in British schools as teachers and school leaders struggle to take control of the process of change (Davies & Anderson, 1992; Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Hopkins et al, 1994; Stoll & Fink, 1996). Hopkins et al. (1994) suggests that not all schools find school development planning easy. Schools face a double problem: (1) they cannot remain as they are now if they are to implement recent reforms, but at the same time they also need to (2) maintain some continuity between their present and previous practices. There is, therefore, for most schools a tension between development (change) and maintenance (stability and continuity). Schools that can balance the demands of development and maintenance will find it easy to engage in development planning.

Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) suggest that there four main processes of development planning:
- Audit. Where a school reviews its strengths and weaknesses;
- Construction. Where priorities for development are selected and then turned into specific targets.
- Implementation. Where the planned priorities and targets are implemented.
- Evaluation. Where the success of the implementation is checked.

The terms for these processes vary between schools; however the more important point is that these processes should be viewed in a holistic way. These processes will be discussed more fully later in the literature review.

If school development planning is to be successful, it is essential that the teaching staff develop a commitment to it. Accordingly, they should be fully briefed at the

outset about what school development planning is, why it is desirable, and how it is to be organised. They should be made aware of the role they can play in the process and the benefits they can expect to derive from it. The focus of the briefing should be on linking the process to issues that are important, so that the relevance of the process in meeting school needs is clearly illustrated (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Hopkins & MacGilchrist, 1998; Stoll & Fink, 1996).

As a strategy for school improvement, development planning has attracted its critics. Some have been concerned about its apparent bureaucratic and prescriptive character (Smyth, 1991); its tendency to distort the nature of educational change and its `hyper-rationality' (Fullan & Miles, 1992); its lack of a management and inclusive strategic dimension (Fidler, Edwards, Evans, Mann, & Thomas, 1996); and its inappropriateness to some school settings and certain types of change imperatives (Hutchinson, 1993; Wallace, 1994).

Strategic Planning

For some people the term strategic planning brings into mind a disciplined and thoughtful process that links the values, mission, vision and goals of a school system with a set of coherent strategies and tasks designed to achieve those goals. For others, the term induces a cringe brought about by memories of endless meetings, fact free debates, strategies, plans, and goals, all left undone after the plan was completed (Reeves, 2007). Essentially, according to Davies and Ellison (1997), strategic planning is defined as "the systematic analysis of the school and its environment and the formulation of a set of key strategic objectives to enable the school to realise its vision, within the context of its values and its resource potential" (p. 81).

In short, a strategic plan is a statement of intent on where an organisation is going and how it intends to get there. A strategic plan consists of values, mission, and vision statements. A mission statement is usually a fairly brief statement that declares the purpose of the organisation and its reasons for existing. A vision statement is usually a somewhat longer statement that describes the picture of where the organisation hopes to be in a given time frame. It is a statement of the ideal future of the organisation. In that sense it is a picture of the mission accomplished while the statement of values is precisely that. It is a statement of

the organisational values that underpin the work the organisation is doing and the manner in which it operates (Davies, 2003; Davies & Anderson, 1992; Davies & Davies, 2006; Davies & Ellison, 1997; Kedian, 2008). Many schools purport to have a strategic plan, but on analysis, the plan lacks a clear mission and vision statement, and consequently becomes a statement which could more accurately be described as an extended operational plan. While these are helpful in forecasting budgets, staffing and the like, they seldom lead to any significant change in the organisation (Davies & Ellison, 1997). Philips and Moutinho (2000) found that strategic planning has been proven to be an essential pre-requisite in successful organisations. As such, school leaders should embrace the importance of strategy by developing plans that are focused and brief, and that provide consistent monitoring and evaluation (Reeves, 2007).

Helm (2005) suggests that there are schools that do not plan because they believe that it is impossible to predict what the future will bring. As a result, they do not see any reason why schools should be developing five to ten year strategic plans. The lack of a plan almost guarantees that there is less organisational control over the future. Davies and Ellison (1998) note that there are problems associated with this approach in that it assumes a rationality and predictability which may not be possible in a turbulent, dynamic environment.

Davies and Ellison (1998) suggests that strategic planning involves journey thinking in which patterns are extrapolated from the past and projected forward several years into the future. Strategic planning may well be useful for the more predictable and controllable elements within the planning processes, especially when these are incremental and linear and where a good understanding of the detail is possible.

Action Planning
Action planning is part of the overall school planning process. It is a process that enables schools to identify precisely what they want or need to achieve in relation to each priority; to plan and document a course of action to achieve it; and to provide for monitoring and evaluation so that practices can be modified in the light of experience (Hargreaves & Hopkins 1991; Stoll & Fink, 1996). The purpose of action planning is to address the short-term dimension of school

development. Action planning focuses on the identification of a small number of immediate priorities and the initiation of particular actions to address these priorities. Action planning is based on the premise that the best way of promoting the acceptance of school development planning is to ensure plenty of early action and achievement as a positive reinforcement for the participants in the process.

An action plan focuses on a particular priority. In relation to that priority, it specifies targets (what is to be achieved, the objectives), tasks (the actual jobs to be completed to attain the targets), resources, (human, financial, organisational, and physical resources needed for implementation), remits (who is to do what), time-frames (when the actual jobs will be done, the deadline by which tasks will be accomplished), and success criteria (the outcomes that will indicate that the plan is achieving or has achieved its objectives).

Action planning typically comprises the following phases of activity; reflection, elaborate planning and action planning (SDPI, 2001). Reflection focuses on the review of the school's mission and goals, and areas where procedures for co-ordination, consultation and communication need to be developed or improved. Elaborated planning draws on these insights, conducts a more wide-ranging review, and incorporates a focus on the factors that govern how the school wants and needs to be (SDPI, 2001). The development of an action plan necessitates a planning team to initiate the planning.

School budget planning

A school budget is a financial plan which contains estimates of expenditure and a forecast of revenue. A school budget plan may be viewed as a financial translation of an educational plan for a school. Budgeting is thus an integral part of the overall school plan (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988). The school budget should reflect the priorities identified in the school plan. Like other approaches to planning, the school budget plan should begin with a budget audit, forecasting, implementation and evaluation (Davies & Anderson, 1992).

In the auditing stage, the school needs to consider the position of the school and what its curricular, staffing, materials and other needs and priorities are. Unless the school carries out an audit of all its activities, it will be assessing its finance

out of context. Unlike in a business setting where profit is the ultimate goal, effective education is. Consequently, having a clear understanding of the identified goals and resource needs should be the first priority of school leaders. However, as (Davies & Anderson, 1992) warns, one of the dangers of finance committees in schools is that they make decisions based purely on the figures placed in front of them on the balance sheets and do not take into consideration the relevant educational effects of such decisions. It is of paramount importance that as a key element of the budgetary process, the school attempts to forecast its future income and expenditure trends.

In the implementation stage of the budget, it is important that the school board, the principal, and staff of the school, see the financial decisions not in isolation, but as part of a cycle (Davies & Anderson, 1992). It is worth considering how the budgetary process is undertaken, who is involved and how teachers contribute to the process, so that staff regard the budget as a financial expression of the educational goals of the school and not as a secret document.

During implementation, it is essential that the budget is continuously monitored. According to Davies and Anderson (1992), this is something that schools do relatively well.

The planning process
Stage 1: Audit
The first stage in school planning is assessment, which is often referred to as an audit and occurs before planning. This is when the school collects and analyses information to determine the current position of the school. An important feature of assessment is moving to systematic evidence. For this purpose, various methods might be used including informal observations, interviews, discussions, notes of activities, surveys, and the results of assessments, tests or examinations (Stoll & Fink, 1996). This stage is frequently mismanaged and compounded by anxieties of collecting large amounts of data, due in part to lack of knowledge about the data analysis and interpretation (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Stoll & Fink, 1996). An audit involves questioning current provisions and practices in a systematic and self-critical way. The audit clarifies the nature of the school's weaknesses and guides the action needed to put things right. Hargreaves &

Hopkins (1991) state that carrying out a full audit of all provisions and practices is very time consuming. In the past, school based review demanded a thorough examination of the life and work of the school. "A planned series of specific audits creates a rolling programme which provides a picture of the school built up over successive years. The audit paves the way for the identification of priorities for development" (p. 40). Once the school audit is complete the next stage in the planning process is the actual construction of the school plan.

Stage 2: Construction

During the construction stage, the information gathered and analysed during the school audit is then used to establish a plan with specific priorities or targets. The action plan includes the responsibilities of staff members for specific activities, timelines or target dates by which they should be completed, staff development, and the resources required. The action plan should also include success criteria because the question is asked for each priority, ' how will we know this has made difference?' The school staff will need to decide on the criteria to be used to assess the goal's effectiveness, and how and when it should be assessed. In practice, this has proved extremely difficult for many schools (Stoll & Fink, 1996). Hargreaves & Hopkins (1991) state that the more carefully the development plan is constructed, the easier it will be to manage the process of implementation. This gives continuity and coherence to the school's development, whilst leaving room in the plan to meet future demands arising from national or local initiatives and the school's changing needs.

Stage 3: Implementation

The implementation of a school plan is often a neglected part of the whole planning process. After the work of audit and construction, it is easy for staff to assume that an action plan will somehow take care of itself. However, Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) point out, "experience suggests that implementation does not proceed on auto pilot" (p. 67). Sustaining commitment is a key task for those in leadership. The enthusiasm of even the most committed staff can flag when routine work and unanticipated events distract teachers from the action plan. During implementation the school has to follow through with the plan. This is a process that requires periodical review and monitoring to see whether activities have taken place as planned and if they appear to be having the intended effect. In

some schools what goes on in the classroom bears little relation to what is set down in the school's plan (Hopkins & MacGilchrist, 1998). Implementation is the translation of rhetoric into reality (Stoll & Fink, 1996). Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) suggest that progress checks act as an evaluation of the implementation. It is a response to the question: how are we doing so far? Many progress checks are intuitive, a feel for whether things are going well or badly. This is a natural part of monitoring one's activities; it becomes more systematic if these intuitive reactions are shared within the team. The final stage of the planning process is the evaluation of the school plan.

Stage 4: Evaluation

The evaluation of a school plan is essential and plays a major role in every phase of the process of planning. It should be properly carried out to determine whether anticipated changes have occurred according to the plan. The

> evaluation is the gathering of information for the purpose of making a judgement. The judgements which are made are important factors in decisions on the formulation of goals, the identification of needs, the setting of policies and priorities, the preparation of plans and budgets and in the implementation of school programmes. It is recommended that an evaluation report is submitted by those who carried out the evaluation for further decisions on future planning (Beare et al., 1989, p. 168).

It is important to know the degree to which the objectives have been achieved (Stoll & Fink, 1996). Most often, the monitoring of the plan is ongoing. During the final evaluation, decisions are made about each target. Final discussions revolve around the changes introduced, and whether the development should be continued or extended. After reviewing targets, the whole process is repeated. Successfully accomplished goals also need to be maintained and become a regular part of the school's norms and practices. Unfortunately, this does not always occur (Hopkins & MacGilchrist, 1998; Stoll & Fink, 1996). Leaders who fail to monitor and evaluate their schools programmes are either unaware of the importance of this aspect of their work, or are not carrying out the role effectively (Earley & Weindling, 2004).

Conclusion

In this literature review I have examined literature on school planning. I began by looking at the notions of leadership, management and administration and their impact on school planning. In order to plan effectively, an understanding of the differences and similarities between these concepts is crucial to school planning. The neo-liberal reforms have given rise to a greater necessity for planning in schools. This review also considered links between leadership styles and their implications for school planning. While approaches to school planning vary, there is some commonalities in the planning process which includes the auditing, construction, implementation and evaluation of the school plan. In the next chapter I will describe the research methodology used in this study.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

Introduction

Burns (2000) and Kumar (1996) defined educational research as a controlled and systematic investigation to unveil a certain phenomenon, issue or problem relating to education, in order to alleviate the problems and issues or to increase one's knowledge of the world. In attempting to understand the concerns of school principals with regards to school plans, I chose to investigate principal's current and past experiences and perspectives of having worked with school plans.

This chapter describes the methodology, research method and ethical considerations of this research project. This research is located within the interpretive paradigm. The specific focus of this research design is captured in the following question:

> *What factors influence school planning in community high schools in the Solomon Islands from the principal's perspectives and experiences of having worked with school plans?*

I will firstly explain the theoretical perspective that underpins the research methodologies as well as the qualitative characteristics of this research. I will then focus on the ethical considerations identified as relevant to this study and the research methods used to collect the empirical data.

Interpretive paradigm

The interpretive research paradigm is concerned with how individuals make meanings out of their social situations and settings (Bouma, 1996). An interpretive researcher seeks to uncover the humanly created meanings and experiences that are shared by the participants (Clark, 1997). In this way, the research aims to understand the subjective world of human experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). At its core, interpretive research is a search for local meanings and aims for particularisability, not genaralisability.

Interpretive research seeks to describe, analyse, and interpret features of a specific situation, preserving its complexity and communicating the perspectives of participants. Interpretive researchers attempt to capture local variation through

descriptions of settings, and through interpretations of how actors make sense of their socio-cultural contexts (Borko et al., 2007). In addition, Borko et al. (2007) state that one of the challenges of researching in the interpretive paradigm is the lack of conceptual frameworks and designs, which make it a difficult task to draw comparisons across the cases.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is typically located within the interpretive research paradigm (Keeves 1998, cited in Boubee-Hill, 1998). Qualitative research is concerned with seeking insights and trying to understand individuals' perceptions of the world. Qualitative research methods tend to emphasise the socially constructed view of reality and the situational constraints that shape an inquiry.

In general, qualitative research approaches include case studies, ethnographic research, phenomenological research and grounded theory research as these are used to gather descriptive accounts of the unique lived experiences of the participants to enhance an understanding of a particular phenomena (Bell, 1993; Maynard, 1994; Mutch, 2005). A qualitative researcher places their validity on multiple realities and a holistic analysis of a social phenomenon (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell 1994).

Qualitative researchers suggest that it is necessary to be engaged in a social context over a period of time. In this way, the researcher is able to identify salient features of situations and meanings that emerge (Cohen et al., 2007). Qualitative researchers work hard to write vivid depictions to convey what it is like to be part of the scene and the lived experiences of the people under study. To this end, researchers construct descriptions of what it looks like, feels like, and perhaps sounds, tastes, or smells like to be in the setting (Eisenhart, 2006). What is of critical importance for researching in indigenous contexts is that it takes place within the cultural world view within which the research participants function (Bishop, 1997).

Research Approach

A researcher who is engaged in the interpretive research paradigm employs a variety of qualitatively oriented research methodologies. Although there are many approaches that are associated with qualitative research, there are four main

research methodologies which are often found in human and social science research (Creswell, 1994). They include case studies, ethnographic research, phenomenological research and grounded theory research. These four research methodologies fall within the framework of the qualitative research approach. This research project adopted a case study research approach.

Case study

The case study research approach is often employed to gain first-hand in depth and rich information on a certain social reality under inquiry (Bouma, 1996). Some of the basic characteristics of case studies include the studying of a single or a bounded phenomenon or system in depth (Bouma, 1996); using a variety of data collection techniques (Merriam, 1988); and using multiple sources of evidence (Gillham, 2000).

A case study researcher considers techniques for data collection in terms of how these might yield appropriate information. At the same time, Bouma (1996) suggests that two or three sources of data could be used, for example, a descriptive questionnaire and interviews, together with an observational method. This is referred as a methodological triangulation (Bouma, 1996; Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 1994). In so doing, the data collected becomes authenticated and the validity of the data collected is established to some extent.

Research techniques

Interviews are a method of data collection that ranges from unstructured interactions, through to semi-structured situations, to highly formal interaction with the participants. Interviews, according to Cohen and Manion (1994), are defined as "a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information" (p. 271). Bishop (1997) describes the conversational nature of interviews as being akin to "the development of collaborative storytelling by means of sequential, semi-structured, in depth interviews as conversation, conducted in a dialogic reflective manner that facilitates on-going collaborative analysis and construction of meaning/ explanations about the lived experiences of the research participants" (p. 29).

In this research, interviews were used as an in-depth conversation with participants regarding their experiences and perceptions of factors that influence school planning in community high school in the Solomon Islands. Interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis. The reason for selecting semi-structured interview is two-fold; first its appropriateness in relation to the nature of my study, where participants were asked open-ended questions regarding their understanding of effective school planning, and secondly, it was easier for me to manage and complete within the timeframe allocated for data collection.

Semi-structured interviews are based on the use of an interviewing guide where a written list of questions and topics that need to be covered in a particular order is at hand. With this approach, the researcher may ask 'closed ended' questions and 'open-ended' questions. 'Closed-ended' questions in this context denote questions which are specific. 'Open- ended' questions, on the other hand, are those that ask for broad or general information (O'Leary, 2004). This flexibility gives the researcher opportunities to frame and reframe the questions so that they can be more certain that they are understood in the same way by the participants. One of the advantages of using semi-structured interviews is that the interviewer has the freedom to follow up any answers in an effort to get more information or to clarify the respondent's replies (Best & Kahn, 1993). Semi-structured interviews were seen as the appropriate method to be used in this study because open ended questions were asked of participants regarding their understanding and experiences of effective school planning. Using open ended questions allowed for in-depth responses.

Conducting the interviews

Participants were involved in a single, 45 to 60 minute, face-to-face, semi-structured interview. After the interviews had been conducted and transcribed, the interview transcripts were returned to the participants for confirmation of their accuracy. An interview guide is attached (see appendix A). The data was then thematically analysed and included in the final research report.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in English but sometimes switched to Solomon Islands pijin for clarity purposes. All the interviews were tape-recorded. As the researcher, my attention focused on the participants and the experiences they were sharing. I also made informal notes in my journal.

Interview notes are a useful supplement for recording non-verbal expressions of the participants and as a source of back-up notes (Bell, 1999; Burns, 2000).

Participants

Six community high school principals on Makira Island in the Solomon Islands were selected as the sample for this research project. Purposive sampling was used to select my participants (Mutch, 2005). This is where participants are selected intentionally (Creswell, 2002) because they suit the purpose of study (Mutch, 2005). In my research, principals needed to have had experiences of working with school plans. Letters of invitation were sent to the six principals. The letter of the invitation outlined the research intentions and the expectations of the participants. Participants had the opportunity to discuss the research with the researcher prior to signing the informed consent (See appendix B).

Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis deals with meaningful talk and action (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). In this research project, a thematic data analysis approach was adopted as this is a commonly used strategy for analysing and reporting qualitative data (Mutch, 2005). This thematic analysis is a qualitative strategy that takes its categories from the data. It focuses on identifiable themes and patterns (Aronson, 1994).

Ethical procedures adopted for the study

The following procedures were adopted to ensure ethical conduct within my research project.

Access to participants

Like all state schools in the Solomon Islands, Community high schools are administered by their respective Provincial Education Authorities. This means, the principals and teachers are direct employees of their respective Provincial Education Authority. As my intention was to work with school principals on Makira Island, I needed the permission from the Makira Provincial Education Authority to gain access to the schools and the principals (See appendix C). To protect the identity of the school principals, this request for permission was in the

form of a general letter without the identification of specific schools (See appendix B).

Informed consent

The school principals that participated in this research project were informed of the purpose and procedures of the study in an invitation letter. I ensured that they understood the nature of the research and any possible impact on them personally and professionally. Participants needed to sign the consent form before they could participate in the research project (See appendix D).

Confidentiality

Participants in this research project were assured that any data they provided would remain anonymous and would not be disclosed for any purpose other than for academic purposes, without their consent. It was also essential that information shared by the participant was kept confidential at all times. This meant that no one, other than the researcher and his supervisor, could have access to the raw data collected.

Potential harm to participants

The participants in this research project understood the nature and consequences of their participation. The nature of this inquiry is primarily positive. My purpose for interviewing these participants is to understand more fully their experiences of having worked with school plans with a view to learning about the needs of leaders with regard to school planning. My hope was that the interview was mutually beneficial.

Participants' right to decline to participate and right to withdraw

The participants determined the time of the interview and were asked to focus on their own experiences of school planning. They were involved in a single, face-to-face, semi-structured interview after which they were asked to check their interview transcript. The expectation of this research was for 65 to 80 minutes of participant's time; 45 to 60 minutes in an interview, and a further 20 minutes, at a different time, to check the transcript.

The participants had the right to decline my invitation to participate in this research. They were made aware of their rights to withdraw from this research

without fear of any consequences. Participants were advised that they could withdraw up to seven days after confirming the accuracy of their interview transcript.

Arrangements for participants to receive information

The participants were informed about this research by a written letter. Subsequent communication with the participants was by letter. In this way, the letter of invitation, the transcript, and a final summarised report were posted to the participants.

Use of the information

Data collected were used solely for the purposes of completing this research project. I understand that I will need to seek further consent from the participants if I wish to use the data for public presentations (newspaper, journals etc) or for the Ministry of Education publications.

Conflicts of interest

My intention to enter the Community High School was to interview the school principals about their experiences in developing and implementing school plans. I was not involved in assessing students nor did I have any authority over staff. I sought to maintain a professional relationship with participants throughout the course of the research.

Procedure for resolution of disputes

Participants were asked to contact my supervisor if they had concerns about this research. The contact details of my supervisor were included in the letter of invitation (Appendix B).

Other ethical concerns relevant to the research

During the research process, I ensured that my interview questions remained the focus of the interaction. In this way, the participants were not made to feel that their privacy had been invaded or that their time had been improperly used.   In view of the small and close-knit communities in the Solomon Islands, maintaining anonymity for the participants can be a challenge. Every step was taken to ensure that the identities of the participants were not publicly revealed.

The interview data collected from participants was not attributed to any specific participant but was analysed using identification codes to ensure anonymity. Raw interview data and recordings have been securely stored. I assured the principals who participated in the study that their identity, and that of their school, would not be revealed in the final research report or anytime during the process of data interpretation, transcription or analysis. In addition to the above, my research project conformed to the University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Regulations 2007, and the Solomon Islands Research Act of 1982.

Cultural and Social considerations

As a citizen of the Solomon Islands, I was very aware of the cultural backgrounds of my participants. This includes the accepted cultural protocols within the school communities. Since I conducted my research in the Solomon Islands, I am required by the Solomon Islands Research Act of 1982 to submit four copies of the final report to the Ministry of Education.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the method and methodologies that are relevant to this research project. The qualitative approach was critical to this study in obtaining descriptive accounts of participant's experiences with school planning. Semi-structured interviews proved to be an essential research technique in collecting data for this research project and in allowing the participants to tell their stories. Ethical issues that are relevant for this study have been identified and considered in the light of the research process. The next chapter will discuss the findings of the research project which stems from the thematic data analysis.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

This study sought to investigate school planning in the community high schools in the Solomon Islands from the principal's experiences and perspectives of having worked with school plans. This study was based on the following research question:

> *What factors influence school planning in community high schools in the Solomon Islands from the principal's experiences and perspectives of having worked with school plans?*

Information was gathered from six in-depth interviews. The objective of the interview was to allow the six community high school principals to express, in their own words, their experiences of working with school plans. In particular, my intention was to gain insights into the factors that influence school planning in the community high schools. The data were analysed for distinctive features of each case in the first instance, this being the focus of the findings chapter. Secondly, a process of thematic analysis was used to elicit emergent and recurring themes across the cases. These themes are presented, discussed and critiqued against the literature in the discussion chapter which follows. In this chapter then, I will introduce the participants, their backgrounds and their contexts through a synopsis of each case. For this study pseudonyms are used instead of the participant's real names.

The six participants for this study are all men and come from different parts of the Makira province; one of the nine provinces that make up the Solomon Islands. Even though the participants come from the same province, they have diverse cultures, languages and customs. The first participant whom I will call Sailosi comes from the eastern part of Makira province, McGregary and Charles come from the Central region, while Roger, Ratu and Fox come from the western part of the island province. Four of the participants have a Diploma in Teaching (secondary) qualification, one has a Bachelor of Education and one has a certificate in tropical agriculture. On top of their daily responsibilities as school principals, the participants also assist in classroom teaching. The participants have been principals between one to twenty years. All except one started their teaching

career as a secondary teacher. The other person worked as an agriculture field officer before joining the teaching profession. The participants teaching experience ranged from four to thirty-nine years.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Daula community high school
Daula community high school is centrally located in the provincial centre of Kirakira. The school consists of three strands, a kindergarten with an enrolment of 90 students, a primary school with classes from years 1 to 6 with an enrolment of 460 students, and a community high school strand which has classes from years 7 to 11 with an enrolment of 368 students, bringing the total enrolment of the school in 2009 to 898 students.

The school has a hierarchical organisational structure where there is one overall principal and three deputy principals responsible for the three strands of the school. There are 44 teaching staff in the school. The school is governed by a school board appointed from respective members of the local community and administered by the Provincial Education Authority (PEA). The school principal is a graduate from the University of the South Pacific (USP) and has been in the teaching profession for twelve years. He has been principal for four years in the current school.

From the principal's perspective, a better understanding of one's school is a pre-requisite to better school planning. As a school principal, one needs to thoroughly understand the important components of the school and how these inter-relate with each other and impact on the school. This understanding is made possible through a careful audit of the different elements that constitute the school. A SWOT analysis is one tool that can be used to gain a better understanding of the school context. The SWOT analysis makes it possible to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school, opportunities that exist in the school and possible threats that are likely to have a negative impact on the school. This provides the basis for school planning. The principal elaborates:

> *...once you understand your school, it would be easy for you to identify where to start from in your planning.*

This principal considers that involvement in the planning process is far more important than the plan itself. Those people who will be responsible for the implementation of the plan must be involved and participating and contributing positively to the formation of the school plan. This creates a feeling of ownership of the plan amongst those who are committed to the successful implementation of the plan. The principal states:

> *All the stakeholders must have a sense of feeling that they own the school plan.*

Collaboration and consultation are essential components of school planning; they cannot be ignored. The experiences, ideas, opinions and perceptions of others, both within and outside the school, must be used to develop an effective school plan. By engaging in collaboration and consultation staff, and others who are involved in the process, have a feeling that their ideas are valued. The principal comments:

> *We draw a lot of ideas, opinions and perspectives from a whole lot of different people both within and outside the school... I often look at the potentials and experiences of these people.*

The school's use of resources is becoming a major concern for school principals in Community High Schools (CHS). Given the fact that most CHSs are under resourced, it is important that resources available for school use be used wisely to provide the maximum benefit to the school. This can only be achieved if there is proper planning in schools to determine how best school resources can be utilised. The principal notes:

> *Resource use has been a major concern in a lot of CHSs. Most CHS principal's voice that there is always a lack of school resources available to them. This ... comes back to lack of proper planning.*

In an education system where students compete for spaces at the next level of education, students have to pass important external examinations to proceed further. It can be quite tempting to concentrate on the examinations students have to sit and ignore basic knowledge and skills that are essential to their future survival. While it is important to assist students academically, it is also important to provide life skills training that assist them in their future. The principal elaborates:

*Our main goal here ... is to train these young people to be
academically successful but at the same time to acquire basic skills
and knowledge that would be able to sustain them in their future
lives.*

While school planning is critical to the better management and administration of schools, many schools are not actively engaged in this process. It would appear that CHS principals realise this matter from their experiences of having worked with school plans. The school principal recalls:

*From my experience I realised the fact that school planning
contributes to a major part of school success.*

At the planning stage, one should aim at setting achievable goals and targets so that people who implement the school plan experience success in working with the plan. Nothing would be so discouraging and disappointing than having worked so hard on a school plan and later found that nothing much has been achieved. The school principal notes:

*it is important to set achievable goals and targets, so that those
who work with you experience some success in what you're doing
for the school.*

Finally, it is wise to be aware of the strengths of the people you work with and the finances that you have available to implement school plans. It is impractical to plan beyond the strength of your team or without adequate finances. Even if a principal has an exceptionally committed team, school finances will determine whether a plan is likely to be successfully implemented or not. The school principal warns:

*be aware of the strength of your team and the finances that you
have available to implement the plans that you come up with.*

Case Study 2: Frigate Bird community high school

Frigate Bird Community High School is situated in a remote location on Makira Island. As such, transportation and communication facilities are almost inaccessible. The main access to the school is by a footpath cut through a thick jungle to the school. School supplies are transported to the school using human labour. The school is a recent initiative by a local community in partnership with the Solomon Islands Government, through the ministry of education, to provide

secondary education to the children in the local communities surrounding the school.

Frigate Bird Community High School is a two strand school consisting of a primary strand with an enrolment of 120 students from years 1 to 6, and a secondary component with 42 students from years 7 to 9, bringing the total enrolment of the school to 162 students in 2009. The school has one overall school principal and two deputy principals responsible for the two strands of the school, alongside nine other staff members.

The school is governed by a board appointed by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and endorsed by the Provincial Education Authority (PEA) from respected members of the local school communities. The school principal is a diploma graduate from the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE). He has been in the teaching profession for seven years with only six months experience as a community high school principal.

The school principal describes his experience of working with a school plan as a great challenge. In addition to being new to the principal position, he has not worked with school plans prior to his appointment. Although he believes that school plans are essential working documents that need to be well developed and implemented, there is always the challenge of formulating and implementing such plans. The principal states,

> *… School plans are … a very challenging undertaking … as a new school principal. … Working in a newly established Community High School [requires] a lot of time to think and plan for what is best for the school. I believe that you need to really make a proper plan for the school before you start working. Otherwise you won't achieve anything in the school.*

For this school principal, school plans are critical to the better management and administration of the school. As such, it is an essential process of identifying and setting achievable goals or targets to work towards. Goals and targets create a sense of purpose and direction. They provide the urge, courage, and confidence to accomplish what is in the plan, even if one experiences difficulties with working with the plan.

*...*you *need to set yourself some targets to work towards. This gives you the urge to keep on working hard even if you come across difficulties.*

The principal's experience has seen school resources wasted. Unless schools include mechanisms in their plans on how best to use the resources, resources will continue to be misappropriated. For this principal, one of the ways to address this problem was to share resources between schools and to engage in school planning to determine the best possible ways to use the school resources. As he states:

I signed a Memorandum of understanding with one of the Provincial high school principal's here and we agreed to share resources between our two schools whether personnel or material resources... A lot of times there is no planning at all going on in the schools and therefore, you find that school resources are misappropriated.

School planning for newly appointed CHS principals is a great challenge. Part of this, it would appear, is that a number of school principals are appointed directly from their position as a teacher. They are not well equipped to work with school plans. Most learn primarily from experiences they have developing and implementing a school plan. The principal relates his experience.

Being a newly appointed CHS principal I find that implementing a school plan is indeed a great challenge for me. However to me the most important thing is that I continually learn new things.

It is essential to set realistic and achievable goals or targets for the school. It can be very frustrating and discouraging for the people that you work with, to have worked so hard on the school plan and eventually not feel that they have accomplished something for the school. It is better to plan and achieve something for the school than plan for things that are impossible to accomplish and beyond the means of the school to financially support. The school principal elaborates:

It is important to set realistic and achievable goals and targets for the school. Sometimes school plans fail because there is no sense of achievement or purpose in the school plans.

A principal's thorough understanding of the essential elements of school planning is paramount to successful school planning. School principal's lack of understanding of the important components of school planning can result in schools becoming stagnant and lacking a sense of purpose and direction. By

sharing information with other school principals both will mutually benefit and learn from the other's experiences. The principal states:

> *I believe that it is important for ... CHS principals to have a thorough understanding of the essential elements of school planning. They need to consult and work together with other CHS principals to share their experiences working with school plans ...*
> *It is by talking to other school principals that gave me the confidence and courage to work on my own school plan.*

Finally it is vitally important that a school principal has a thorough knowledge, understanding, and skills in school leadership and management. Lack of understanding, knowledge and skills on the part of the school principal will have adverse effects on the school's plans. The principal comments:

> *Another important factor that might have a negative impact on a school plan is the principal's lack of understanding, knowledge and skills in school leadership and especially in working with school plans.*

Case Study 3: Star Beach Community High School.

Star Beach CHS is situated on the most easterly part of Makira Island. Like other CHS schools, Star Beach CHS is a two strand school consisting of a primary and a secondary strand. The primary strand has classes from years 1 to 6 and the secondary strand has years 7 to 9. The total enrolment in 2009 is 194 students, 88 students in the primary strand and 106 students in the secondary strand. There is one overall school principal and two deputy principals responsible for the two strands, with 13 teaching staff. The school principal is a diploma graduate from the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE). He has been in the teaching profession for seven years and served as a school principal for three years at the school. For the school principal, school planning was a new experience for him. He was appointed as a school principal with no experience in school leadership and school planning.

The principal's early experiences of working in the school were negative. There was a lack of community support, participation, and involvement in the school programmes and plans. This lack of community support was due to the former principal's autocratic leadership style and appalling attitude. The relationship between the school principal and the community was one of hostility and suspicion. There was concern from the community that the former principal

lacked transparency and accountability. As a result, the community withdrew their support from the school. The principal relates his early experience of working in the school.

> *The main reason for the community's withdrawal of support ... was due to the former principal's attitude and leadership style. He was not transparent and accountable.*

Faced with this situation, the principal visited the school community to get first hand information on what went wrong and raise awareness of the importance of the community's support and participation in the school programmes. This sought to restore community confidence and support for the new school leadership. Having obtained the information needed, the principal then dissolved the old school board and appointed a new school board. The school principal relays his early experiences of leadership in the school as follows,

> *the initiative that I took was to go around the school catchment area and give awareness talks to restore community support, participation and confidence in the new school leadership.*

Having settled the school-community relationships, the principal's next move was to work on a school development plan. Developing a school plan requires an understanding of the present situation. The principal, and those who would be engaged in school planning, should be aware of the strengths of the school, the weaknesses experienced, the opportunities that existed, and the likely threats to the school. An understanding of these essential elements would enable the principal and his staff to be able to identify what needs to be done to improve the school's current situation. The principal notes:

> *You really need to understand the present position of your school before you can plan for the school.*

From the principal's experiences, formulating a school plan is the initiative of the principal before other members of the staff and stakeholders contribute to the planning process. The principal begins the planning process by analysing the current situation of the school and then identifies what needs to be done to move the school forward. After this, the principal calls for a staff council meeting to share his ideas and allow his staff to contribute further to his ideas. The principal believes that consultation and collaboration are essential elements of the school

planning process. By involving others in the planning process, he feels that the leadership values the contributions and opinions of other members of staff. The principal elaborates:

> *I begin the (planning) process myself, when I thought I had identified all that needs to be done at the school, I called for a staff meeting. This is where the staff comment on what I had already identified and make additions to the list.*

Transparency and accountability are seen as essential components of school leadership. A lack of transparency and accountability can result in the community withdrawing their support for the school's programmes. As the school leader, the principal must demonstrate these two important qualities in their daily work. Being transparent in what is done in the school, and being accountable for the things that one is responsible for, builds confidence and support amongst the different stakeholders of the school. These two qualities are sometimes overlooked.

Finally, from the principal's experience, school planning is easy when one understands the mechanics of the planning process. However, implementing a school plan is more difficult as the principal tries to fulfil the expectations of different people who are involved in the activities of the school. The principal further comments:

> *I feel that the most difficult part of school planning is the implementation part ... here you are trying to coordinate the efforts of all the different peoples who are involved in the school towards achieving a common goal.*

Case Study 4: St Vincent community high school

St Vincent CHS is located in the central region on the island of Makira. The school comprises three strands; a primary, a secondary, and a vocational / technical strand. The primary strand have classes from years 1 to 6 and has an enrolment of 120 students, the secondary component has classes from years 7 to12 and has an enrolment of 364 students, and the vocational / technical school have a two year programme with an enrolment of 60 students, bringing the total enrolments for the school in 2009 to 544 students. Like the other CHS, St Vincent has one overall school principal and three deputy school principals responsible for the different strands of the school. The school principal is a diploma holder with a

vast experience in school leadership and management practices having served in the teaching profession for 39 years; twenty years of this as a school principal.

From the principal's experience, school plans make it easier to accomplish and fulfil the requirements and expectations of stakeholders. School plans guide and direct the actions of those in the school. Without school plans, the school will have a sense of chaos. There would be confusion, disorganisation, and a lack of purpose and direction amongst the different stakeholders of the school resulting in non-achievement of the school goals. The principal states:

> *School plans make it easier to fulfil the requirements of the government of the day, the MoE, PEA, the school board and of course not forgetting the community which are part and parcel of the school.*

From the principal's perspective, an effective school plan demands that a school principal have a creative and innovative mind. The school principal must think broadly of things that can be done at the school level and how they can be achieved successfully. As change is part of the dynamic world in which schools are located, it is critical that creativity and innovation are encouraged in school planning. The school principal elaborates:

> *You need to have a creative and innovative mind to think of all the possible things you can do for the school.*

The education of children, from the principal's perspective, should be a partnership between all the different stakeholders of the school, from the parents, the community, the teachers, and the other stakeholders. In order for this partnership to be fully realised, it is important that it is built on mutual respect and trust for each other.

School resource use was found to be one of critical aspects of a school plan. Most of the CHSs lack essential school resources to effectively implement their school plans. As such, whatever resources are available should be better utilised to bring about the maximum benefit for the school. In order for schools to use school resources wisely, their uses have to be carefully planned for to ensure that the student's learning is greatly enhanced. Planning ensures that resources are used appropriately to meet the different needs of the school. The principal comments:

We have to be careful with how we use resources in the school to maximise the learning of our students.

It is important in school planning that the students' learning environment is considered. The core business of schools is to improve the effectiveness of students' learning. Students who learn in a comfortable environment tend to be more successful than those that learn in an environment that is not appealing to them. The learning environment should contribute positively then to the student's learning. The internal and external environment of the students must be accounted for in the school's planning.

Another factor that needs to be considered in the planning stage is how best teachers can contribute positively to the learning of their students. The attitude, behaviour, and enthusiasm that teachers bring with them into the classroom will have an impact on the learning of students. Students learn best if teachers demonstrate a caring, helpful, and enthusiastic attitude towards their learning. In the planning stage therefore, it is of paramount importance that teachers plan for teaching approaches that stimulate student learning.

They (teachers) need to caring, helpful, enthusiastic and creative. They should be responding positively to the learning needs of their students.

School's financial resources are an important determining factor in the effective implementation of a school plan. Most CHSs are operating under very constrained school budgets. To effectively implement a school plan, there needs to be adequate school finances. However, from the principal's experience, this money is not always available. The principal states:

We do not have all the money that we would have wanted to effectively implement our school plans. Money is essential for the smooth running of our school.

The significance of school principals as vision holders relates to the way a principal can create positive changes in the schools they lead. Many principals do not appear to have a clear vision of how to move their schools forward. They appear to frequently rely on handover notes. The principal comments:

If you are a leader you should develop your own vision for your school ... As a new principal you need to be creative. Use your God given brain to think of all the possible things you can do for the

school ... most principals serving in our CHS rely on their handover notes to begin work at their schools.

Finally, one of the ways to improve school leadership in schools is for the more experienced principals to mentor aspiring teachers who are likely to become principals in schools. By adopting this approach, schools will always have capable leaders. The problem of not having enough capable school leaders is a result of not recognising this important aspect of training school leaders. The principal states:

> *I would like to see that more experienced principals who are approaching retirement age ... mentor potential staff members who are most likely to be appointed school principals in the future.*

Case study 5: Aroha Community high school

Aroha CHS is located on the island of Makira some eighty kilometres away from the provincial centre. The school comprises a primary school running classes from years 1 to 6 and a Community High School which runs classes from years 7 to 9. The school is governed by a board and administered by the Makira Provincial Education Authority. The total school enrolment in 2009 is 264, 106 students at the secondary strand and 158 at the primary school level. There is one overall school principal and two deputy school principals who are directly responsible for the two strands. There are fourteen staff, six at the primary school and eight at the secondary school level. The fact that the school is located on a remote part of the island makes communication and transport services very inaccessible. The school principal is a certificate holder in tropical agriculture and has been teaching in secondary schools for a number of years.

In developing a school plan, the school principal works with his staff to formulate a school plan. After they have worked on and completed the school plan, it is then passed on to the school board who carefully scrutinise the plan and make necessary adjustments. Once the school board is satisfied with the school plan, the board approves the plan and then the plan is ready for implementation. The school principal explains:

> *I work with my school staff to formulate a school plan. After this is completed we pass on the plan to the school board to scrutinise and make adjustments to it. Once the school plan has been*

*scrutinised and adjustments have been made and approved by the
school board, it is now ready for implementation.*

School planning is essential to the school and should take into account all the
different aspects of the school. Neglecting important aspects of the school in the
school plan will have adverse effect on the smooth running of the school.

*in terms of school planning you have to take account of all the
things that will affect the school in one way or the other.*

Implementing a successful school plan involves the community and school board.

*In order to successfully implement a school plan, you need to take
onboard the school community and the school board. They must be
part of the school plan.*

School planning should be based on reliable and valid information to determine
how resources are allocated. As such, the information required for the purposes of
planning should be available to the school before planning proceeds. The principal
comments:

*it is important to get all the information you need about the school
before you start ... we allocate certain [a] percentage of our
school budget to various aspects of our school plan e.g. teaching
and learning, school infrastructure projects etc.*

While school planning is deemed essential to the smooth functioning of schools,
not many principals are knowledgeable, experienced or skilful in the art of school
planning. The principal relates:

*This is really a new area for me. I am not an educational
administrator. I honestly don't know how to go about school
planning.*

*We have to determine the main causes of the unsatisfactory
implementation of the school plan. Sometimes those who are
responsible are not clear about what is actually expected.*

From the school principal's experiences, it is essential that current educational
policies are considered in relation to the school plans. The goals pursued by the
school should be consistent with the national goals and policies. The principal
states:

*I believe that it is important not to plan outside the current
educational policies. Our planning should be consistent with the
current educational policies of the government or the PEA.*

The school principal plays an active role in the formulation and implementation of school plans. As the leader of the school, the principal should be creative and taking a leading role in initiating plans for the school and in ensuring that the stakeholders are actively involved in the formulation and implementation of a school plan. One of the most challenging jobs a school principal is likely to face in terms of school planning is inadequate school finances. The final determining factor will be how much money is available to successfully implement the school plan.

Case study 6: South west Community High School

South west community high school is situated in a remote and isolated part on the island of Makira. Water supply, electricity, and communication are essential services that are not found in this school. The school consists of a primary and a secondary school. The primary school has classes from years 1 to 6 and the secondary component of the school runs classes for years 7 to 9. The school has one overall school principal and two deputy school principals looking after the two schools and 14 teaching staff. In 2009, the school had a total enrolment of 194 students. There are 86 students in the primary strand and 108 students in the secondary strand. The school principal is a diploma holder from the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE), the only tertiary institution in the country that trains both primary and secondary teachers for the country.

School planning is seen as an important aspect of the school in addressing the concerns of the school. Without proper planning, it is almost impossible to adequately address the issues and concerns faced by the school. The principal elaborates:

> *As you have seen, the school infrastructure that is in place is still developing. We need to come up with realistic plans to address this area of the school.*

School planning is not always soft touch. In the process of planning, one is likely to come across difficulties or challenges. For the principal of South west CHS, one of the main challenges working with school plans is coordinating the efforts of others to achieve the school goals. The principal comments:

> *The main challenge of working with a school plan for me are coordinating the efforts of the different people that are engaged in*

> *school planning ... [T]he different perspectives stakeholders bring with them into the planning process makes the task of school planning a challenge for me ... It is quite difficult to ensure that stakeholder's expectations are satisfied.*

Developing a school plan is one thing and implementing it successfully is another. From the principal's experience, formulating a school plan is the easier part, however it is when the plan is being implemented that one can assess whether or not the stakeholders are really committed to the plan.

In school planning, one has to determine where to start. The principal of South west CHS begins his planning by looking at the current situation and context of the school and asking himself questions relating to what has been identified and analysed. It is important that the whole school be scanned so that areas which need improvement can be identified.

In most schools, the school board is instrumental to the smooth functioning of a school. These people are entrusted to ensure that what is planned for is consistent with the interests of the stakeholders. At South west CHS, members of the school board rely on the school administration with regards to school plans.

> *What I found with some of my school board members is that because they are not well educated, they always rely on the school administration to do the school plans and they just sort of approve or endorse the school plans.*

Communication is an essential part of school planning. Poor communication may result in misunderstandings and a lack of participation from those responsible for implementing certain parts of the school plan. At South west CHS the principal noted that communicating the school plan to the stakeholders poses a challenge. The principal states:

> *For me, the most difficult part of implementing a school plan is communicating your school plan to the different stakeholders of the school ... with the lack of modern communication technologies at the school. It is not always easy to inform parents and communities .*

In CHS schools, teachers are expected to prepare students for external examinations at the end of year 6 and year 9. At the same time, it is equally important that students do not miss out on essential lifelong skills for the future. The principal seeks to cater for this,

I personally believe that students should be given the opportunity to learn as much as they possibly can and not be restricted to covering the syllabus and neglecting lifelong skills that would be useful to them when they become adults. Currently schools are only preparing their students to pass examinations and not training them to become self-reliant.

The successful implementation of a school plan depends on involving all the stakeholders in the whole process of school planning. This creates a sense of shared ownership.

How can a school plan be successfully implemented when everyone have different opinions about the plan? To ensure that the school plan is successfully implemented all the stakeholders of the school must have a feeling of ownership of the plan. Only then will they be committed to the successful implementation of the school plan.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented the individual experiences and perspectives of the Community High School principals in the Solomon Islands in terms of school planning. The experiences and perspectives of the principals were presented as the basis for identifying recurring themes. These themes are the focus of the next chapter.

Unless principals and school administrators are aware of the factors and challenges identified, school planning will always be a problematic area in Community High Schools in the Solomon Islands. The next chapter will be a discussion of these findings in relation to the emergent themes and the existing literature in this area.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

This study explored the factors that influence school planning in CHSs in the Solomon Islands from the principal's experiences and perspectives of having worked with school plans. While research has been carried out on school planning internationally, it appears to focus primarily on developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, United States and some European countries (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988; Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Hopkins & MacGilchrist, 1998; Stoll & Fink, 1996).

An assumption in the current literature appears to be that all school plans can be successfully implemented in spite of the school's context. However, this may not be so as the plans can lack context, specificity, relevance, and be based on Eurocentric or Anglo-American perspectives, values and beliefs (Dimmock & Walker, 2002). This study was designed to address the gap in the literature in relation to educational leaders' experience of school plans in a developing country; the Solomon Islands.

School plans are critically important

The participants in the study recognised the importance of school plans and the planning process as a major contributing factor to a school's success. As such the involvement, participation and contribution of all the stakeholders is of paramount importance to ensure that the school plan is well developed and achieves the aims and goals of the school. Daula CHS principal elaborates:

> ... school planning contributes to a major part of a school's success. If you do not plan your school properly, it is very likely that your school is heading towards failure. ...school principals take for granted that a school can run effectively with little or no planning... My experience is that you need to plan to ensure that you achieve the goals and targets of the school.

There is much evidence in the literature (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988; Davies & Anderson, 1992; Davies & Ellison, 1997, 1999; Hargreaves et al, 1989; Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Hopkins & MacGilchrist, 1998; Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1994; Stoll & Finks, 1996) that support this position. As Hopkins et al.

(1994) states, "planning provides a generic ... illustration of a school improvement strategy, combining as it does, selected curriculum change with modifications to the school's management arrangements or organisation" (p. 74). Apart from helping schools organise their current practice and intentions in a more purposeful and coherent way, plans should be about helping schools manage innovation and change successfully. Planning brings together, in an overall plan, national and local policies and initiatives, the school's mission, vision, values and goals, its existing achievements and its needs for development. By coordinating aspects of planning which are otherwise separate, the school acquires a sense of direction and is able to control and manage more easily the tasks of development and change (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Hargreaves et al., 1989; Hopkins et al., 1994; Hopkins, 2001).

Findings from this study indicate that participants are aware of the different aspects and needs of the school that need to be taken into consideration during planning. School plans should aim at improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools, enable the better management of school resources to bring about maximum benefits to the school, develop the school's infrastructure to support teaching and learning, and determine ways to deal with school discipline. In this way, school planning addresses the needs of the school in a practical way. Schools have multiple demands and expectations placed on them. One way to ensure that these demands and expectations are fulfilled is to develop practical school plans. As some principals stated:

> *Planning involves a lot of different areas within the school; it involves the whole aspect of the school ... school plans govern all the activities we plan to do... (Daula CHS principal)*

> *... the school infrastructure that is in place is still developing. We need to come up with realistic plans to address this...we have to plan to try and improve the discipline of our students... to raise the academic standards of our students (and) the spiritual aspect of the lives of our students...(South West CHS principal)*

Davies and Anderson (1992) suggest that, to be able to cater for the different needs of the school in terms of planning, it is essential that an assessment of the current position of the school is undertaken. This is to determine where the organisation is now and what its curricula, staffing, material, infrastructure and

priorities are. Unless the school engages in this activity it would be highly unlikely to address the different aspects of the school satisfactorily. Hopkins (2001) states that planning is a means by which schools manage the extensive national agenda and enables schools to organise what it is already doing and what it needs to do in a more purposeful and coherent way.

It is important in school planning that time is devoted to creatively thinking about, and focusing on, the future to ensure a proactive, rather than a reactive, stance to unfamiliar situations remains in place. Although it is not possible to know precisely what the future will bring, current trends and indicators can help to provide useful insights in developing a credible perspective. By examining trends and building scenarios of possible futures outcomes, leaders can develop a futures perspective of the school. In this way, school planning involves a journey of thinking in which those who are involved in the planning process extrapolate patterns from the past and project these into the future (Davies & Ellison, 1997, 1999). This approach to planning is especially helpful when working in a newly established school. Frigate Bird CHS principal comments:

> *Working in a newly established ... School ... needs ... time to think and plan for what is best for the school. ... This gives you the urge to keep on working hard even when you come across difficulties.*

School plans are working, living document that support the activity and development of the school
Research findings showed that participants think of school plans as working, living documents that support the activity and development of a school. Schhol plans can be likened to a road map to accomplishing the policies of the government, the PEA, school goals and targets and other stakeholders. St Vincent CHS principal remarks:

> *...school plans make it easier to fulfil the requirements of the government of the day, Mo E, the PEA, the school board and of course ... the community.*

Without school plans it would be very difficult to monitor school progress. As Daula CHS principal comments:

> *...think of a school plan as a working tool which is derived from ... people who have an interest, participate and are involved in the activities of the school... as a living document which serves as a*

reference point for all that you do in the school...I believe that compiling a school plan only to satisfy school requirements without actually using it is a waste of time, effort and money.

A school plan should be regarded as a working document which guides the strategic direction of a school. As such, it requires the participation and involvement of all those people who have a vested interest in the school. Davies and Ellison (1997) state that "in too many cases, the document becomes so detailed and unwieldy that it cannot be used as a working document. A useful phrase to remember is 'the thicker the plan the less it affects classroom practice' " (p. 91). Once a school plan has been developed, it should be used as a document to monitor the progress of planned activities in a school, and as a framework for modifications, should circumstances change (Davies & Ellison, 1992). To develop a school plan requires time, resources and the commitment of those involved in the planning process. Developing a school plan only to satisfy bureaucratic requirements without actually using it is a waste of time, resources and the commitment of those involved.

School accountability is recognised as a major concern affecting schools. The government, aid agencies, school boards, parents and the community expect better value for money. The input of resources (human, material and finances) should correlate to the expected outcomes of the educational provision. Schools therefore, have to find ways to show accountability. From the principal's experiences, planning is one way of demonstrating accountability. It was also revealed that those schools that do not engage in planning are more likely to misuse school resources or use them in ways that do not bring about maximum benefits to the school. South West CHS principal comments:

We spend according to the areas identified in our school plan, according to what we want to achieve for the school.

This is consistent with the position of Doherty (2008) and Glover et al. (2005). They suggest that central government, parents and students generally expect to gain satisfaction from the education they are paying for. In principle, it matters little whether the paymaster is the parent, the employer, the student or the

government, stakeholders and customers alike, quite reasonably, expect some means of ensuring the value of what they are paying for.

Relationships are critical to the process of school planning (Principal-School, School-Authority, and School- Community)

Relationships are vitally important in the development and implementation of successful school plans. As such, relationships need to be well established and maintained amongst all the stakeholders. Internally, the principal needs to establish and maintain positive relationships with members of staff, students, and families. Externally, the school must build and maintain positive relationships with the controlling authorities like the Ministry of Education and the community. By establishing and maintaining these relationships, there is a greater chance that school plans will become highly successful. Daula CHS principal comments:

> *... a school works with a lot of different stakeholders. ... You need to establish and maintain a very strong positive working relationship with all these people.*

This position was shared by St Vincent CHS principal:

> *I strongly believe that the underlying factor for implementing a successful school plan is establishing and maintaining a strong positive relationship with all the stakeholders of the school. Without this positive relationship students cannot perform to the best of their abilities, communities would not support and actively participate in school programmes, and therefore the plans of the school cannot be successfully implemented.*

Day et al. (2000) state that the most important aspect of leadership is working successfully with people; establishing relationships in which their leadership can be expressed. Being a head is not a "desk job" (p. 45) though it involves organisational and administrative skills. It is about having positive relationships with those whom you work with. Gunter (2001) stressed the importance of developing positive and productive relationships as this effects positive change in the school. Relationships are indeed essential to the development and implementation of school plans. Without positive relationships, people will not be motivated to be involved in the formation and implementation of the school plans.

Principal - School

The school principal fulfils an important position in the school. As such they need to establish and maintain a positive working relationship with those they interact with at work and during other times where school activities are occurring. This includes the students, the staff and their families, and others who work for the school. This relationship is essential for the effective implementation of school plans. St Vincent CHS Principal comments:

> *I believe so much in building a strong school-community relationship and in maintaining it. Not only between the school and the community but within the school setting itself; this relationship should also be shared amongst the members of the staff and the students. If this relationship is well established and maintained it should strengthen the implementation of the school plans, so that they can become more effective.*

Knoff (2005) states that relationships determine all levels of improvement and success in a school. Principals therefore, need to foster collaborative relationships among all the individuals actually working on a school plan. In his study of relationships in schools in the USA, Donaldson (2006) observed that most schools are functioning as if relationships among staff and between staff and parents are unimportant, unmanageable, or simply unmentionable and suggests that school leaders, working in school cultures so inhospitable to valuing relationships, face a major challenge simply to make these relationships a priority. Relationships between the school principal, staff and students should be trusting, open and strong enough to support a commitment to school planning and sustain action during the implementation of a school plan.

Crawford, Kydd, and Riches (1997) suggest four ways in which relationships can be fostered in schools. These include identifying ways to bring people together rather than to separate them, acknowledging the importance of a working relationship by honouring how people feel in their work and about one another, speaking explicitly about their working roles, and facilitating the group's capacity to work within its natural limit.

It is essential that the principal works with staff and students as a team to achieve the goals and targets of the school. All the participants agreed that unless there is a

positive relationship between the principal and the school, nothing much can be achieved for the school. Star Beach CHS principal states:

> *I believe that teachers must work together as a team in order to improve the school and deliver the best possible education to the children.*

South West CHS principal adds:

> *You … need … a sound working relationship between your staff and students. These two groups of people … play an important role in implementing a successful school plan.*

To ensure positive working relationships in the school, the principal needs to invite staff, students and others in the school to gain an understanding of how their time, energy and talents can assist in the development of a plan for the school. Those involved might be invited to address questions such as, if this is worth doing, how are we going to get it done? What parts of the plan can we do together? What can you do? What can I do?

By involving staff and students in this process, there is the likelihood that a shared understanding and commitment to the schools plans can emerge. Common understandings and commitments help to strengthen the working relationships among the principal and members of the school community. Effective leaders facilitate group processing, organising talent and energies in the best way they can to the challenge of the planning process. The relationships they foster help each person to know their own special talents and be willing and able to contribute them to questions and problems when the need arises (Kydd et al, 2003; Wallace & Hall, 1997).

Building relationships is not just a matter of managing people in the school but of providing the leadership necessary to harness the valuable resources in the form of the people (Duignan, 2006). The participants agreed that relationships are crucial as they help create the feeling of being part of the school plan. Daula CHS principal comments:

> *… they have a … feeling that they have ownership of the school plan. All the … stakeholders must have a sense that they own the school plan. These positive working relationships … must grow mutually so that the school plan can be successfully achieved.*

Beare et al. (1989) suggests that the most successful way of improving an individual's output in whatever form it takes, is to give them some ownership of the process or product. This is also true of the relationships between the principal, staff, and students. If the principal encourages the staff and students to become involved and participate in the school planning process, they will have a sense of ownership of the school plan, thereby developing a commitment to its successful implementation. It is critical that school principals build cordial relationships with staff and students to ensure their participation and involvement in school plans. Duignan (2006) states that principals have to "build strong relationships, to make connections, to build partnerships, and to build strong alliances with others" (p. 22). Without positive interpersonal relationships between the school leader and the school staff and students, the task of school planning can become quite difficult to complete and implement.

School-Authority

The School Board, the Provincial Education Authority and the Ministry of Education are all important stake-holders in the effective management and operation of schools. Without their support and participation, it is likely that schools would not function effectively as they might. Frigate Bird CHS principal states:

> *I strongly believe that one of the main aspects of school planning...*
> *is that all stakeholders of the school must be working co-*
> *operatively to achieve what has been planned for... If there is no*
> *co-operation... nothing can be achieved... So the principal,*
> *together with his staff and students, parents, communities (and) the*
> *school board... must all work together towards a common goal.*

The partnership between the school and the authorities is one that should be developed and maintained throughout. The traditional view that isolates the school board and ministry of education from the work of the school should be avoided. Duignan (2006) states that relationship building between the school and authority is one of the core ways that value-driven organisations value all those who work in and for the organisation. It is the way a school as a community, actively and fully engages its talented key stakeholders, giving them a sense of belonging and encouraging and supporting their commitment to the purposes of the school.

School-community

The findings of this research indicate that participants value the relationships that have been formed between the school and local communities. This may be due to the fact that schools are dependent on local communities for support towards the implementation of school plans, especially with regard to capital projects. Local communities assist schools by providing the raw materials for school building projects. The Principal of St Vincent comments:

> *I think the most important thing in taking the school to the required standards expected by its stakeholders...is building strong positive working relationships...If this relationship is not well established the school will experience some setbacks in its operation. St Vincent relies very much on the relationship it has established with the community, particularly with regards to resources which the school rely on from the community. The school also relies very much on the support and participation of the local community to successfully implement its programmes.*

Fullan (1991) highlights the need for relationships to be extended to the local communities in order to ensure that the school programmes reflect the whole school community. Schools function within a context of parents, community, school districts, other educational organisations and institutions, and levels of government. The goal of schools should be to establish positive relations with the community so that communities act in ways that are complementary and supportive to the schools endeavours. Stoll and Fink (1989) state that schools need critical friends, individuals, groups and communities who, at appropriate times, listen and help them sort out their decision-making. If relationships between the school and community are well established and maintained, communities should help the school to raise expectations because they want the best from the school.

While relationships are seen to be contributing positively to school plans it is not always easy to maintain them. All the participants spoke of experiences when relationships were difficult to maintain, especially during the implementation stage of a school plan. The principal of South West CHS elaborates:

> *...maintaining a positive school relationship is easily said than done. You are working with people with different ideas, opinions and perspectives about how things should be done in the school. It is quite difficult to ensure that all the stakeholders' expectations*

are satisfied with regards to school planning. Sometimes relationships between the different parties involved in school planning become hostile and you have to ensure that these differences are settled.

Similar experiences are related by the Principal of Aroha CHS:

It is not always easy to maintain this relationship... sometimes the school communities do not respond positively to your plans. However it is always good to be patient...

Every reform effort in education stresses the importance of involving the community in school improvement initiatives (Duignan, 2006; Stoll & Fink, 1996). This view is based on the idea that by involving the community, their contributions will significantly foster school success. However, as the findings suggest there are times when school community relationships are strained. Stoll and Fink (1996) outlined seven issues that have to be dealt with if school-community relationships are to be meaningful. Some of the issues that need to be attended to include a clear focus on goals, collaboration between the school and the community, and the need for school personnel to take the lead when conflicts of interest are aired.

The participants in the study experienced the sad fact that, although school-community relationships are critical and that they should be well maintained at all times, sometimes these relationships can be strained. It is critical that the school leadership take the first move to restore these relationships. The Principal of Star Beach CHS recalls:

Realising that the school was in a total mess, and that community support and participation was low, the first initiative that I took was to go around the school...communities and give awareness talk in an attempt to restore community support, participation and confidence in the new school leadership...you have to establish a good working relationship with the school communities to gain their support... I emphasised to them that unless the school and the communities work together very little can be achieved.

Relationships are essential to the successful development and implementation of school plans. As such they need to be developed and maintained throughout. Evans (1996) states that denying people's feelings about issues that impinge on their work through avoidance, compromise, and outright dismissal, undermines the individual, groups and communities ability to take on the tough challenges

they face as learners and innovators. According to Kydd et al. (2003), one way to involve the community to be actively involved in school programmes is for school leaders to maximise opportunities for all stakeholders to come together for positive purposes, whether recreational or professional problem-solving and growth. Knowing one another well enough to establish trust, openness and affirmation is a precondition for forming relationships that can mobilize people for professional improvement and personal support.

> *... It is very, very important that the school establish and maintain a positive working relationship with the school community... I personally believe that without this positive working relationship...nothing much can be achieved for the school. I also believe that this relationship determines whether a school plan can be successful or not... the co-operation of all those people who involve in the school plan makes the school plan to be successful.*

Leadership Styles

Participants in the study displayed different leadership styles while working with their school plans. It is worth noting that sometimes more than one leadership style may be displayed by one particular school leader during the planning process. The style of leadership a principal demonstrates will have a significant impact on the outcome of a school plan. Fiedler et al. (1977) suggests that leadership style is an innate, relatively enduring attribute of one's personality which provides the motivation and determines the general orientation in terms of the exercise of leadership. Leadership behaviour refers to particular acts which we can perform or not perform if we have the knowledge and skills, and we judge them appropriate according to the situation at hand.

The findings from this study found that there are three main leadership styles displayed by participants while working on their school plans.

Hierarchical (Top-down)

While the participants acknowledged the importance of shared or distributed leadership when working with school plans, there are times when they had to fall back on a hierarchical style of leadership. As the person responsible for the overall management of the school, the principal has to ensure that the work is done. Gardiner (1988) states that in hierarchy driven models, shared decision-making is largely unmet, trust is low, information is shared on a limited basis, and

participation is controlled. Similarly, hierarchy driven models have little influence over outcomes as decision making rests with one powerful leader, not with the group as a whole. In these contexts, divergent thinkers are viewed as trouble makers and often removed from roles and responsibilities. This appears to be the case with community high principals in this study. Daula CHS principal's comment:

> *I put down due dates that I expected my staff to complete the tasks that have been delegated to them. Once I informed them about what is required to be done and the date that I expected them to complete the given tasks, the staff all work together to accomplish the task before the due dates. However, if you delegate tasks without giving them due dates, it is most likely that task will never be completed.*

As in the above quote, staff can be coerced into doing particular tasks, rather than deciding for themselves. Fielder (1967) points out that a leader is someone in a group who is given the task of directing and coordinating tasks relevant to the group's activities. This view highlights one of the leadership styles practiced in CHSs. Noonan (2003) suggests that this view of leadership has an effect of relying on a single individual's actions which limits opportunities for others and fails to take into account their participation and contribution.

The setting of goals and targets for a school should be a shared activity between all stakeholders. However there are instances where the school leadership dictate what is to be done in the school. Findings from the study indicate that instead of sharing these important aspects of the school with all stakeholders, at times, these tasks have be unilaterally assigned. Frigate Bird CHS principal elaborates:

> *I as the school principal set the goals and targets for the school. However these goals and targets have to be approved by the school board before they can be pursued in the school. Once the school goals and targets have been approved by the school board, the staff is informed and we set off together to try and accomplish these goals and targets.*

Visions of an idealised future must also be shared (Starrat, 1986) and communicated (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) in ways which secures the commitment of the members of the organisation. Bennis & Nanus (1985) further state that:

> Their vision or intention are compelling and pull people towards them. Intensity coupled with commitment is magnetic... Leaders do not have to coerce people to pay attention, they are so intent on what they are doing that, like a child completely absorbed in creating a sand castle, and they draw others in. Vision grab. (p. 28)

Lumby (2005) notes that in many educational establishments, the mission and vision of a school has been left to the principal and the senior management team to develop, and only sent out to other members of the staff for consultation. This process appears to be ineffective in influencing others to be committed to the school plan.

A shared vision must permeate each and every activity of the school as well as the people who are involved in the activities. Findings from the study indicate that, while principals expect their staff and students to share the school vision, there is limited evidence of involving them in the development of the school vision.

Shared Leadership

Findings from this study show that while participants may sometimes fall back to hierarchical leadership style, there is some evidence of shared leadership being practised at the school level. At these times, the major decisions concerning the school plan are shared between the school principal and the members of the staff. The principal encourages the staff to become involved in the planning process by assigning responsibilities and by encouraging contributions and ideas towards the development of the school plan. The principal of Daula CHS explained:

> *...the staff is assigned to various areas of responsibilities within the school... we draw a lot of ideas opinions and perspectives from a whole lot of different people within and outside the school. So when it comes to planning I often look at the potentials or experiences of these people...*

Current discourses on the preferred style of educational leadership advocate for a shared leadership model. Coleman (2005) states that "in most models of leadership there is an underlying assumption that there is one main leader in each school or institution. In fact, the leadership of school is presumed to be in the hands of the principal or headteacher" (p. 10). However, there is a growing belief that leadership should, and must be, shared throughout an organisation. Harris (2002) suggests that leadership should be shared or dispersed among the teachers rather than be held by one person.

This position can be seen as sharing the leadership across the school (Gronn, 2003). In school planning therefore, it is of paramount importance that those who are accountable to stakeholders be involved in the decision-making about the school plan. Bush and Glover (2003) noted that there is a global trend in which the pyramid structure of school organisations are becoming flatter with less layers and a greater distribution of power. The multiple tasks associated with school planning necessitates that all those who are involved in the school take an active role in the planning of the school. Findings from this study indicate that, at times, participants shared leadership in the planning process. Daula CHS principal comments:

> *All the school groups formulate their own plans for the activities that they will do during the course of the year.*

While some people may view this as merely a delegation of responsibilities to members of the staff, I would argue that this is an example of shared leadership, in which those who are involved in planning are entrusted to take a leading role in the formulation of a school plan. Shared understanding among all staff about the purposes of educational organisations and collaborative ways of working towards this are of major importance to managing the context for effective learning and teaching (Louis & Miles, 1990; Nias, Southworth, & Campbell, 1992).

When leadership is shared, leaders and followers can change roles at times, sometimes leading and sometimes following. The authority to direct, decide, and act and the responsibility of doing so, flow between and among the members and leaders as a result of inclusive processes (Noonan, 2003).

Planning at the CHS level should be a shared responsibility in which the principal, the staff, students, the parents, the community and all other stakeholders of the school are involved in the planning of the school. The level of involvement may; however, not be the same depending on the role they play at the school. The principal of Aroha states:

> *It is important in our planning that all stakeholders should be involved... There is nothing more important than having a sense of feeling that the plan is your own and that you would want it to be successful.*

Shared leadership allows for genuine participation and involvement of stakeholders. Noonan (2003) states that the level of participation needs to be appropriate to the importance of the decision and the member's contribution to the decision-making process. "The greater the impact of the decision on individuals and the organisation the higher the level of member participation is required" (p. 39).

The planning Process

Findings from this study suggest that participants were not confident working with school plans. This is not surprising as most of the community high school principals are promoted directly from being classroom teachers. Amongst the participants in this research, only two of the community high school principals served as deputy school principals before being appointed as school principals. A lack of understanding and inexperience working with school plans may contribute to the inadequate planning taking place in schools. This is shared by the principal of Frigate Bird CHS:

> *...as a newly appointed principal, I am really struggling to make a plan for my school. I was never taught how to make a school plan... I have a lot of challenges in terms of school planning...*

This finding is disturbing as current educational reforms require that schools be operating from school plans. In addition, the lack of initial principal preparation may have contributed to this lack of understanding about school planning. This view is supported by Akao (2008) and Malasa (2007). However, as Malasa (2007) states, the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) is fully aware of this concern and has proposed initiatives aimed at addressing the planning needs of schools. Whether these initiatives influence CHSs is another question.

Audit

Findings from the study indicated that participants recognised the importance of auditing the current position of the school as the basis for effective school planning. Star Beach CHS principal states:

> *You cannot do anything in the school unless you identify what needs to be done. You have to look at the present position of the school and ask yourself some questions... You cannot do real*

planning unless you have identified what needs to be done. There are colleague principals out there who did not take account of the present position of the school...You really need to understand the present position of your school before you can plan for it.

This concern is also shared by St Vincent's principal:

Schools have their own unique contexts and one thing that is proved successful in one school does not necessarily become successful in another school. As a school principal you have to take account of the particular school context you're working under. As you enter into your new school observe the current situation of the school. What are its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities that exist and possible threats that are likely to have an impact on the school? After all these have been taken into consideration then set your new directions for the school.

An audit of the school is essential in forming a view of the current position of the school and at the same time identifying the key factors which will influence the school in both the short and medium term and which will, therefore, affect the choices that are to be taken to address the concerns of the school (Davies & Ellison, 1997; Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Stoll & Fink, 1996). Davies & Ellison (1997) suggests that a thorough overview is required during the auditing process as omissions or false assumptions at this stage could lead to wrong decisions later on. Some of the tools available to carry out this phase include: political, economic, social, and technological analysis (PEST), Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats analysis (SWOT) and Guidelines for Review and Internal development in schools (GRIDS). Hopkins & MacGilchrist (1998), in a study of how development planning is carried out in primary schools, suggested that the involvement of teachers and other stakeholders in auditing the current situation of the school is essential as this creates a sense of ownership of the plan once it has been completed and a commitment to its successful implementation. Non-involvement of stakeholders at this stage is likely to have a negative impact and could result in negative outcomes.

Findings from this study indicate that participants would value information that might assist with their school planning. Information comes from different sources, mainly from the Ministry of Education, the school board, and from the audit reports. The importance of having adequate information to inform school planning is critical, because the lack of it may distort the whole school planning process

(Caldwell & Spinks, 1988; Davies & Ellison, 1997; Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Stoll & Fink, 1996).   Having adequate information is crucial as this forms the basis for school planning. The principal of Daula CHS comments:

> *Before we can plan... for the school we need to know how much school finances we have available to facilitate the implementation of our plans.... The Ministry of Education ... supply us with this information as well as about terms and holidays, school material resources that they will supply and other relevant information needed to assist us with our planning. So based on this information the school is able to plan for the activities it will engage in... therefore allocate school resources accordingly to cater for the activities it plans to do.*

Construction

In developing a school plan it is essential that all stakeholders of the school are involved from the start of the planning process. This includes the principal, staff, the students, parents, the controlling education authority and the local community. The involvement of the stakeholders at the start of the planning process will ensure that the various stakeholders will work co-operatively to achieve what has been planned for the school. Another advantage of this process is that everyone will develop a sense of ownership over the plan and will want it to succeed. Davies and Anderson (1992) suggest that the most successful way to ensure individual's commitment to the whole process of planning is to actually involve them in the planning process itself. This view is shared by Everad & Morris (2004), who propose that involvement produces a commitment to the goals on which a sense of achievement depends. By involving people, we show that they are worthwhile, increasing their sense of responsibility in the school in the process. Star Beach CHS principal elaborates:

> *I believe that working together at the start of school planning helps in the implementation of the plan once it has been endorsed by the school board.*

It is essential that schools have a mission, vision and goals. These set the purpose and direction of the school. The mission, vision and goals of a school need to be shared amongst all the different stakeholders of the school. Findings from this study indicate that participants hold a vision for the school and see this vision as driving the school forward into the future. Daula CHS principal states:

Our main goal... is to train these young people to be academically successful, but at the same time to assist them to acquire basic skills and knowledge that would be able to sustain them in their future lives. It is important to set achievable goals and targets, so that those whom you work with experience some success in what you're doing for the school.

Although vision is a popular concept, one finds that most visions are one person's or a group's vision imposed on an organisation. Visions of such nature command compliance but not commitment. A shared vision is what schools need. Such a vision should permeate the whole organisation and in so doing, people who are truly committed to the vision can align their own personal vision (Senge, 1990).

Findings from this study also showed that during the construction phase, participants were aware of the fact that priorities selected for implementation should be achievable. Apart from selecting achievable priorities, it is also important that only a few priorities are selected. Stoll & Fink (1996) noted that one of the most challenging features of school planning is the ability to keep the plan to a realistic and manageable size. "Schools face so many competing external demands, as well as their own areas of interest, that it is hard for them to decide on a few key priorities" (p. 69). Daula CHS principal comments:

Another area which I think is important and can influence school planning is setting achievable goals. It is not good to plan for things that are impossible to achieve. Your staff will become frustrated if they do not experience success. You need to set achievable goals in your school plan to motivate your staff...

The choice of priorities, according to Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991), should be based on manageability. MacGilchrist et al. (1997) suggests that there are a range of strategies for avoiding the selection of unrealistic targets. These include balancing small (one year) priorities and those for the medium or long-term, and delineating development priorities and potential innovations.

Implementing the school plan

The successful implementation of a school plan may depend on a number of things. Among these, active participation and involvement from all stakeholders is seen to be central to achieving school plans. Daula CHS principal comments:

I believe that the success of (school plans depends on) how much time, commitment and dedication...stakeholders put into the implementing the school plan.

Southworth (1995) suggests that participation and involvement on agreed tasks is greatly enhanced when there is shared and agreed plan for the development of the school. Stoll & Fink (1996) state that commitment to change is more likely when those involved in the implementation of school improvement are also consulted and involved in decision-making.

Findings from this study indicate that communication plays a major role in the implementation phase. After the choice of priorities have been finalised at the construction stage, the plan is now ready to be implemented. During the implementation stage it is important that all stakeholders are aware of the content of the plan and the part they will be responsible for during implementation. Effective communication should be maintained throughout this stage. It is through regular communication that goals and tasks are further clarified. Communication should be a two-way process in which those who are responsible for an aspect of the plan's implementation communicate with the school principal's office and vice versa. St Vincent CHS Principal state:

There should be a two-way communication during the implementation in which those who are responsible for certain areas of the school plan communicate to the principal's office and the principal's office to communicate with those who are responsible for the implementation process.

Unless all those who will be responsible for the implementation of the plan are well informed about what needs to be done regarding the school plan, it is highly likely that the school plan will not be effectively implemented. Bell (1992) pointed out that in a community of professional colleagues, involvement, co-operation, participation, delegation and effective two-way communication are critical to the management of the process.

Other factors that influence planning include being clear about the roles and responsibilities that need to be performed during implementation. Findings from this study revealed that participants are aware of these factors and try as much as possible to ensure that implementers know exactly what needs to be done. Tasks and responsibilities need to be clarified for ease of implementation. Successful

implementation of the school plan is only possible when people are committed and dedicated to the implementation process. Daula CHS principal elaborates:

> *Even if a school comes up with an excellent school plan it can end up achieving nothing if those that are delegated with responsibilities are not carrying out their tasks. Sometimes Community High School principals do not take precautions or measures to ensure that those delegated with responsibilities carry out their tasks satisfactorily to achieve the plans of the school.*

It is much easier to construct a school plan than to implement it successfully and produce the evidence of success. Bell (1992) states that effective teamwork needs to be based on an understanding of the different reasons for participating as this assists in clarifying the implementation.

The implementation of a school plan can be a daunting undertaking. Those who are responsible for implementing the school plan sacrifice their time, effort and their numerous other commitments to successfully implement a school plan. It can be really disappointing and discouraging for a person who has committed much of their time, effort and commitments on the school plan to not be noticed. A tap on the shoulder or a complement may prove to be essential to the successful implementation of a school plan.

Evaluation

The evaluation of a school plan is integral to the whole planning process. However, it would appear that most schools are not carrying out this stage effectively. Findings from this study showed that participants lacked understanding about how to conduct an effective evaluation of their school plans. The evaluation is about the information that needs to be collected as the basis for further planning. It would be to the detriment of the school if evaluative decisions were based on false assumptions. Aroha CHS Principal Comments:

> *Although this is an important area in school planning we have not really engaged fully...in the process.*

The literature stresses the importance of carrying out the evaluation stage (Beare et al., 1989; Earley & Weindling, 2004; Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; MacGilchrist et al., 1997; Mather, 1998; Stoll & Fink, 1996). According to Beare et al. (1989), evaluation is the gathering of information on the school plan after it

has been implemented for the purpose of making a judgement. In order for judgements or decisions to be made based on facts, a thorough evaluation of the school plan is called for. While the evaluation of school programmes is becoming a necessity in organisations, it would appear that it is also the weakest areas of school planning.

It is suggested therefore, that school principals in community high schools in the Solomon Islands need training in this area. Stoll and Fink (1996) state that in order to measure change, it is essential that success criteria are determined early on in the process. It is also important that monitoring is carried out during the progress to check on the progress of the plan. Evaluation then, is a way of linking all the different stages of planning.

Findings from this study indicate that principals are aware of the importance of carrying out the monitoring during the implementation phase. They suggest that the School Board are the ones that should be responsible for the monitoring of the school plan to ensure that the implementation process is progressing according to plan. The Star Beach CHS comments:

> *The monitoring process in my opinion is an instrumental part of planning because it checks on the strengths and weaknesses of the school plan, so that weak areas can be attended to in time rather than waiting for the end of the year.*

Earley and Weindling (2004) suggest that two of the most important functions of governors are their evaluation and monitoring of school plans. While the school principal may be seen as the overall person responsible for the monitoring of the school plans, they may delegate certain areas of the school plan to be monitored by responsible members of the staff.

> *Obviously this role falls on the shoulders of the school head, the principal. The principal may also delegate parts of this responsibility to other members of the staff...*

The priority of professional development training and on-going support

One of the major concerns raised by the participants was the inadequate preparation they received prior to taking up their leadership role and position as school principals. Most claimed that they were appointed to principal posts without an induction or initial leadership training. It would appear from their

stories that most CHS principals are promoted directly from being classroom teachers into leadership positions in the school. The lack of initial principal preparation has negative consequences for schools in terms of planning. The Daula CHS principal comments:

> *... alot of CHS principals are ignorant of their roles ... lack of understanding have negative implications for their schools and communities...principals must have strong background knowledge in school leadership, management and administration. Having this knowledge and understanding will greatly improve the work of principals in our schools ... a lot of principals currently serving in our schools are just classroom teachers without any qualification to lead in our school.*

Principals in community high schools in the Solomon Islands are in need of professional development training (Akao, 2008; Malasa, 2007). It is important that those who assume leadership roles in schools are well prepared and supported until they become familiar with, and understand, the culture of the organisation they work in (Earley & Weindling, 2004; Kydd, Anderson & Newton, 2003). There are similarities between the views expressed here and those described by Akao (2008) and Malasa (2007) for the Solomon Islands, Puamu (1998) for Fiji, and Kelep-Malpo (2003) for Papua New Guinea. The participants believed that adequate pre-principal training is both necessary and desirable to assist principals to better cope with their work in schools.

As school planning becomes integral to the leadership and management of schools, it is important that principals are provided with training to become effective planners. Findings from this study showed that most principals, currently serving in the community high schools in the Solomon Islands, are not confident working with school plans. Engaging in ongoing professional development and having organised and ongoing support may assist these principals to gain a better understanding of the nature and process of school planning as this also builds leadership capacity. The Star Beach CHS principal states:

> *I believe that current school principals really need this training. There are lots of CHS principals out there in our CHS who do not know what to do. They are confused principals and once these principals are confused the rest of the school is also confused... I really, really believe that current school principals should ...undergo some kind of professional development training.*

Stoll and Bolam (2005) state that professional development has been widely accepted as critical to the improvement of organisational performance and therefore a core task of management and leadership in schools. Everard (1986) noted that organisations such as schools deserve better than to be lead by amateurs however naturally gifted they may be. A systematic process for developing leadership in schools is needed, because the problems that occur in organisations may affect people's effectiveness. Unless educational leaders are properly managed, there may be further serious consequences for school practice.

The participants believed that current school principals lacked basic understanding of the essential elements of school leadership, management and administration. Undergoing ongoing professional development and support will greatly enhance their professionalism in becoming an effective school leader. As the Daula CHS principal comments:

> *I believe that this Professional Development Training is a must for our CHS principals. I suggest that current and future CHS principals must thoroughly understand their roles... I assume that a lot of CHS principals serving in our CHS are ignorant of their roles and responsibilities... Lack of understanding...may have negative implications... on schools and communities... I strongly suggest that this training must be provided to our CHS principals.*

Everard (1986) suggested that in complex organisations, such as schools, it is essential that school leaders undergo professional development training to improve the leadership capacity of individuals and the organisation. A lot of school principals currently serving in CHS do not have the necessary qualifications to lead in a CHS. In order for these school principals to execute their roles in the schools with confidence, diligence, and commitment, professional development is a must. Most of the principals are diploma holders and do not feel confident effectively planning for their schools. Ongoing professional development training programmes and support for the principals would greatly assist in the execution of their roles in the school. The Aroha CHS principal states:

> *... I believe that with this professional development training for school principals, you would expect to see a lot of positive changes in our schools. There are lots of school principals currently serving in our CHS that really need this training... If such professional*

development training is made available for our school principals I am sure that our CHS will improve greatly...Most school principals are underperforming in our schools because they do not know what they should be doing... It is really urgent to ensure that our schools are performing effectively. Talking for myself, I am not an administrator as I have said. But with this training, I am confident that I can do more for this school.

Barriers to successful school planning

The participants spoke openly and at length about the many challenges and difficulties they face with regard to working with school plans. Apart from the priority of professional development training and on-going support which was lacking throughout the country, participants also noted the lack of initial principal preparation was a major contributing factor that hinders effective school planning. Indeed, most of the principals in this study were quite new to their position. They were appointed to become principals in the schools without experience in school leadership, as they were appointed directly from their position as classroom teachers. The Frigate Bird CHS principal elaborates:

> *I would like to say that as a newly appointed principal, I am really struggling to make a plan for my school. I was never taught how to make a school plan.... I have a lot of challenges in terms of school planning... I still feel that as a newly appointed CHS principal I really need to undergo some kind of professional development training to take a leading role in schools.*

This position was shared by the Principal of Aroha CHS:

> *Most school principals are underperforming in our schools because they do not know what they should be doing... It is really urgent to ensure that our schools are performing effectively. Talking for myself, I am not an administrator as I have said. But with this training, I am confident that I can do more for this school.*

To be effective school planners, it is essential that current and future school principals have a thorough understanding of the critical components of school planning. This suggests that school principals need to have adequate knowledge and skills to effectively lead staff and stakeholders to actively engage in the planning process.

Summary

This chapter has highlighted some of the important elements associated with school planning. In particular, it has discussed the importance of planning as a

mechanism to achieve the mission, vision and goals of a school. It is suggested that school planning should take a holistic view of the school and deal effectively with such matters as how teaching and learning can be enhanced, the need to provide adequate infrastructure to support learning and school finances which enable the implementation of school plans, and the importance of school planning in new setting. Second, it discussed school plans as working documents that support the activity and development of the school, in particular, this chapter discussed school plans as documents that guide and direct activities in a school in an organised and systematic way, and then as a mechanism to check on school progress. Third, this chapter discussed the critical importance of relationships to the planning process, notable in this respect, is that positive relationships are essential for securing commitment from teachers, students and other stakeholders in implementing the school plans. Discussion on the importance of relationships extended to particular relationships namely the principal-school, school-authority, and the school-community relationship. Supportive relationships are important to the participation and involvement of stakeholders in the planning process and the stages of planning in schools.

The priority of professional development and ongoing support for school principals is considered alongside the need for ongoing support. Such support needs to address the barriers that might be encountered while engaging in school planning.

In the concluding chapter, suggestions will be provided for future research possibilities that arise from this research, discussion will occur on the limitations of this research, and recommendations are made with regard to addressing the professional development concerns that arise from this study.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter provides a conclusion to this study. While the thesis is nearing completion, the impact of the research experience for me personally, continues. This conclusion has been organised to outline the thesis of the thesis, significant findings from the study, implications of the research, as well as recommendations for further research and professional practice.

Thesis of the thesis

While school planning is critical for schools, this study showed that most principals in community high schools do not have the full confidence to formulate, implement, and successfully evaluate, a school plan. This suggests that, planning in schools can only become successful if current and future school principals undergo professional development training which is geared towards improving their understanding and skills in school planning. Thorough understanding of the essential elements of the school planning process and ongoing support will greatly enhance current and future community high school principals' capacity to improve planning in schools.

Significant findings

The critical importance of planning

This study has highlighted a number of key areas that are considered to be essential to school planning in the community high schools in the Solomon Islands. The study has shown the critical importance of school planning in achieving the vision, mission and goals of a school. It was noted that because schools are becoming increasingly complex educational institutions, planning has become a pre-requisite to achieving a school's intentions and aspirations. A school that does not plan is like a ship without the use of a compass; any destination will do and occur. By engaging in planning, schools are more likely to achieve what they set out to fulfil and are better prepared to move into the future. In other words school plans sets the strategic direction on which a school operates and moves. In this way, the school plan is a living document. In order for schools to achieve their priorities and goals it is critically important that school plans are

realistic. This means that school plans should be set within the means of the school in terms of their financially support and available resourcing.

The process of planning must take into consideration all the different aspects of the school

It is vitally important that in the process of planning all the different aspects of the school are taken into consideration. The teaching and learning of students is the priority goal of schools. As such, these should become the main focus of school planning. New and better ways of supporting students' learning should be identified and applied. It has been widely shown that students' learning improves in environments that are conducive. This means that the school infrastructure is another important area which needs to be carefully considered and planned for. Whatever infrastructure schools have to offer their students will definitely contribute to how well students will learn.

School resources (human, material, and finances), and in particular, school finances need to be carefully and wisely utilised to maximise learning. Without planning, it is highly likely that resources be misused or used in areas that are not important to the school. It was noted that school discipline is another important area that school plans should address. It is important that the school, parents and the communities should be working in partnerships to address this concern of schools.

The culture of the school is of paramount importance in this respect. Unless the school culture is one which treats students equally and with respect schools will continue to experience negative behaviour from some students. School plans, should therefore, take a holistic approach in addressing the concerns of a school. Neglecting some aspects of the school will have negative implications on the school. Moreover, school planning is particularly important in new and turbulent environments.

School plans are a living, working document

School plans should be used as a working, living document that supports the activity and development of a school. In the past, school plans are often stored away after they have been developed and therefore serve no significant purpose for a school. One of the main functions of a school plans is that it should be used

as a working document which sets the strategic direction for a school and, at the same time, guides the work and actions of a school on a daily basis to achieve desired outcomes.

School plans also perform an essential task of checking on the progress of the school. This is achieved through the monitoring of planned activities to determine whether or not targets have been reached. Through an evaluation of school plans, decisions can be made on what has been achieved and what needs to be addressed in future school plans. School plans also serve an accountability purpose. Today, parents, school boards, and other stakeholders expect schools to deliver according to what they are paying for and enable stakeholders to check on their school's practice.

Relationships are critical to the planning process

This study revealed that relationships are critical to the planning process. Internally, the school principal needs to foster positive relationships with staff, students and others in the school. Staff and students are always available in the school to support the principal in his endeavours. However, if the relationship between the school principal, staff and students is hostile, it would be impossible to accomplish anything in the school. The principal therefore, should ensure that a positive working relationship is established and maintained at all times. This relationship should one that is based on openness, trust and respect for one another.

Externally, the school needs to establish and maintain sound relationships with authorities such as the school board and the Ministry of Education. A school is not an island; it needs the support and co-operation of the authorities to successfully achieve its goals. As such, it is critical that this relationship is established and maintained to allow for the free flow of information and resources to schools. The school-community relationship was also highlighted as schools rely on the communities to fulfil their plans. Without positive relationships between the school and communities, the involvement and participation of the community in school programmes will be minimal. The schools therefore, should take the first step in acquiring input from the community in its planning process to ensure their support and active participation in school programmes.

Relationships are particularly essential during the implementation part of the school plan. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with all stakeholders will ensure the full commitment of all to the successful implementation of the school plan.

Shared leadership

A shared leadership style is the preferred style of leadership that allows stakeholders to become more involved, participate, and have a commitment to the successful implementation of a school plan. Shared leadership allows for the sharing of leadership between the different levels of the school structure. For shared leadership to become a reality in schools, principals have to relinquish some of their power and authority to others in the school so that they can become leaders in the school. It ensures a clear delegation of responsibilities. This is not to say that there is no overall leader in the school. The school principal is the overall person to oversee that things are happening as they are planned for the school.

The involvement and participation of stakeholders

For school planning to become highly successful in schools, it is critical that all those who have a vested interest in the school are involved and participate in the formulation and implementation of a school plan. This creates a sense of ownership of the plan and a commitment to see that the plan is successfully implemented. Past experiences of school planning suggest that the principal is the only person who can develop viable visions for a school. This vision should be shared with the staff, students and other stakeholders for implementation. This approach is no longer supported because it does not rally the support and commitment of the stakeholders to successfully implement the vision. A vision that is developed and shared by all the stakeholders has the potential for successful implementation because all the stakeholders are committed to see the successful implementation.

Implications

There are a range of implications that arise from the findings of this research. The first implication relates to the policies associated with school planning in the Solomon Islands. There is a need to review and edit existing policies on school plans to ensure that all stakeholders are involved, and participating, in the

planning process. In this way, there is a greater likelihood that a shared commitment to the implementation of the school plans occurs. In a similar way, those involved in school planning can check that the school plans take into account the different aspects of the school environment.

The second implication of the findings relates to the need for school principals to have a professional development training programme and ongoing support to improve their understanding of school planning with an immediate focus on planning to improve the current provision and operation within existing schools. This might be a centralised training programme within the Solomon Islands or it might be organised on a province by province basis. The content of such a programme is critical and needs to be agreed upon by both facilitators and participants to meet the immediate needs. It is suggested that such a training programme should include an understanding of what a school plan is, what plans try to achieve for schools, how plans might be thought of as a contract between various stakeholders, how plans might be thought of as a shared vision, how principals and others carry out an audit of the school, and how a leader constructs, implements, monitors and evaluates a school plan. These will be the central components of such a programme.

The third implication relates to the way school reviews take place in the Solomon Islands. It is essential that school reviews include a greater concern for aspects of school planning in determining their effectiveness. Such reviews need to specifically suggest ways of improving planning practice in the local school context.

The final implication from this research concerns the timing of when teaching staff and school leaders begin to learn about school plans. Given the shortage of school leaders in the Solomon Islands, I am suggesting that some courses become part of the pre-service teacher training programme. Many school leaders do not go through an initial principal training programme. As a consequence, courses might be offered earlier in their teacher training programme. School planning might be taught alongside other planning aspects within a school, such as lesson planning modules or departmental planning and school development planning. Perhaps some links could be made between lesson planning and school planning at

different levels. It would be pragmatic to provide additional leadership training for teachers in teacher education programmes. This approach should assist teachers in becoming more prepared to take on school leadership roles with greater confidence when they are appointed to lead in schools.

Recommendations for further research

In this section I offer three recommendations for further research that might build on the findings of my research. The first recommendation is that action research projects be set up to monitor the establishment and implementation of a professional development training programme for existing and aspiring principals. The action research project would provide data on the best way to assist principals to grow in their understanding about school plans and the school planning process. These action research projects might be further enhanced with the use of questionnaires and surveys in monitoring the effectiveness and impact of these new professional development programmes.

Secondly, I would recommend further research be undertaken in the form of comparative research which explores practices associated with school planning internationally. What are the expectations of school leaders and how are these school leaders in other countries equipped for such a task?

The final recommendation is that existing principals be surveyed regarding their preferences for how they might wish, or would have wished, to experience professional development training regarding school plans. Would they prefer this professional development in a distance learning mode, or would they want it delivered face-to-face in a classroom environment? Surveys and questionnaires will become part of the research to address such questions.

The strengths and limitations of this study

The strength of this research is that we now have research, indeed current research, that considers the experiences and perceptions of school leaders in relation to the formulation and implementation of school plans in the Solomon Islands. Secondly, the research was conducted by an indigenous researcher who understands, from the inside, what the context of school planning feels like. Another strength of this study is that the interviews were conducted in a face-to-

face manner. As such, the interviews enabled qualitative, extensive, and descriptive data from participants in their context.

A limitation of this study might relate to the sample size. While a limitation may relate to sample size, the research project needed to be manageable with a realistic sample size.

Another limitation relates to the time allowed to carry out the research. In accord with the NZAID sponsorship, I was required to complete this study inside 12 months. I have done so and believe that the process and findings are pertinent to the educational context in the Solomon Islands. I would have welcomed the opportunity to critically reflect on the participant's stories and indeed, a greater number of stories for a longer period of time.

Concluding comments

Having been a school leader in Solomon Islands, I experienced firsthand the need and pressure to develop a school plan. My experience frightened me and I began to wonder; is this the experience of other school leaders in relation to school plans? This is the reason why I decided to conduct research in this area. I have learned that the school planning process, and the implementation of a school plan, is very complex. I am not the only leader who is struggling in coming to terms with the process of school planning.

In a rapidly changing world, with high expectations from stakeholders and a global financial crisis, it appears that everyone wants to measure schools in some way. One way to consider the operation and effectiveness of schooling is to use the school plans.

My experience in conducting this research has synthesised for me, the needs and experiences of existing school leaders, in order that specific differences can be made in the Solomon Islands context in the future. I look forward to seeing a professional development training being made available to existing and future school principals. To this end, this thesis will become a critically important document to such activities.

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide

<u>Background information</u>

Principal:………………………………………..

Training/ qualifications: ……………….................

Years of experience:………………………….....

    As a teacher………………………………..

    As a principal………………………………

    In this school……………………………….

School:………………………………………..

    Size of school………………………………...

    Number of staff……………………………..

    Number of students…………………………

<u>Research- related questions.</u>

1. **Can you share some of your experiences of working with a school plan?**

   a. **(**Do you have other experiences of school plans that you wish to share?)

2. **What experiences have you had developing a school plan?**

   a. How do you plan for the school as an organization?

   b. What aspects of the school need to be catered for in the school plan?

   c. What sources of information do you use to inform school planning?

   d. How are school resources used in relation to the school plan?

   e. Who determines the goals/targets that are to be achieved in the school plan?

   f. Who determines what direction is taken to achieving the goals?

   g. How is the school board involved in school planning?

h. Do the school plans need to be consistent with national goals?

3. **What experiences have you had implementing a school plan?**

   a. Is the school plan communicated to stake holders? If yes, how is this done?

   b. What strategies are used during the implementation stage to ensure that the school plan is successfully implemented?

   c. What benchmarks are used to measure the success or failure of the school plans?

   d. What resources does the school board allocate to the school to implement the school plan?

   e. Does the Local Education Authority allocate resources to facilitate the implementation of the plan? In what form are these resources?

   f. Who is responsible for monitoring the school plan once it has been approved for implementation?

   g. How do you monitor the progress of the school plan?

   h. What measures are used to improve areas which are not satisfactorily met in the school plan?

   i. Who carries the evaluation of the school plan?

   j. How is the evaluation report used?

4. **What do you see as some of the factors that influence the school plan in your school?**

5. **Based on your own experiences, how might school principals (and new principals) be assisted in terms of the development and implementation of a school plan?**

   a. What professional development do you think you need in order to plan effectively for your school?

   b. During the school planning process, were you assisted when you need it? How would like this assistance to be given to you?

   c. What are your suggestions for future improvement of school plans in community high schools?

Appendix B: Invitation Letter to participants

Principal

………………………..

9 Leeds Street
Silverdale
Hamilton 3216
NEW ZEALAND.

11th January2009

Dear Sir,

I am writing to ask you to participate in a research project I am undertaking as part of the Master of Educational Leadership programme I am taking part in through the School of Education at the University of Waikato.

The main focus of my research is to explore Community High Schools principals' experiences of school planning. My interest relates to factors that influence effective school planning and development. The research will involve participants in an interview that will be centred on the following research questions:

What are school principal's experiences with school plans in terms of their development and implementation?

What are some of the critical factors that influence the development and implementation of a school plan?

How might school principals be assisted to develop their competence and effectiveness in school planning?

I would like to start the interviews in May 2009. The interview will be conducted in English or the Solomon Islands Pijin. The interview will be tape recorded and transcribed soon after. Each interview is expected to last 45-60 minutes. A copy of the transcript will be sent to you so that you will have the opportunity to check its accuracy and to make suggestions and alterations.

Please be assured that your identity and that of your school will be kept confidential at all time throughout the research project. Your right to anonymity and privacy will be respected and each transcript will either be returned to you or appropriately disposed off. Any information shared will be solely used for academic purposes, unless your permission is sought for other purposes. Please note that, even if you initially agreed to take part in this research, you can withdraw your consent at anytime up to seven days after you confirm the accuracy of your interview transcript.

It is envisaged that the outcome of the study will be useful for the future preparation and support of school principals in relation to school planning and development based on the experiences of current school principals.

I fully acknowledge your busy schedule, especially at this time of the year, having been a principal myself. However I am hoping that you will consider being part of this research project.

If you have any queries about this request, please contact me on the following email address: sca5@waikato.ac.nz. Should you have questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor, Mr. David Giles on the following address;

David Giles
School of Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag
Hamilton 3105
New Zealand. Phone 0 7 838 4831
Email: dlgiles@waikato.ac.nz.

 I sincerely thank you for your consideration of my request and look forward to your favorable response. I would be most grateful if you could respond to this matter by the end of April 2009.

Yours sincerely

Samuel C Aruhu

Appendix C: Letter to Provincial Education Authority.

9 Leeds Street
Silverdale
Hamilton 3216
NEW ZEALAND

10 February 2009

Provincial Secretary (Name of province)

Attention: Chief Education Officer

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to request your permission to undertake a research project in the Community High Schools on Makira as part of the Master of Educational Leadership programme I am taking part in through the School of Education at the University of Waikato.

The main focus of my research is to explore Community High Schools principal's experiences of school planning. My interest relate to factors that influence effective school planning and development. The research will involve participants in an interview that will be centred on the following research questions:

What are school principal's experiences with school plans in terms of their development and implementation?

What are some of the critical factors that influence the development and implementation of a school plan?

How might school principals be assisted to develop their competence and effectiveness in school planning?

I would like to start the interviews in May 2009. They will be conducted in English or the Solomon Islands Pijin and will be tape recorded and transcribed soon after. Each interview is expected to last 45-60 minutes.

 I fully acknowledge how busy your schools principals are, especially at this time of the year, having been a principal myself. However I am hoping that this research provides useful information for the future preparation and support of school principals based on the experiences of current school principals.

If you have any queries about this request, please contact me on the following email address: sca5@waikato.ac.nz. Should you have questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor, Mr. David Giles on the following address;

David Giles
School of Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag
Hamilton 3105
New Zealand. Phone 0 7 838 4831
Email: dlgiles@waikato.ac.nz.

 I sincerely thank you for your consideration of my request and look forward to your deliberations. I would be most grateful if you could respond to this matter by the end of April 2009.

Yours sincerely

Samuel C Aruhu

APPENDIX D: Participant Consent Form

Before you sign below, please read the following.

I have read and fully understand the information provided about this research project.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary.

I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at anytime up to seven days after the confirmation of the accuracy of the interview transcript, without being disadvantaged in any way.

If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.

I agree to take part in this research.

I wish to receive a summarized copy of the research report (please circle one) Yes NO

Participant's
signature:…………………………………………………………………………..

Participant's name:
…………………………………………………………………...........

Participant's Contact details (if appropriate)

…………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………..

Date……………………………………………………….

References

Ackoff, R.L. (1981). *Creating the corporate future: Plan or be planned for*. New York: John Wiley.

Akao, S. M (2008). *Seen but not heard: Women's experiences of educational leadership in Solomon Islands secondary schools.* Unpublished masters thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Aronson, J. (1994). A Pragmatic view of thematic analysis. *The Qualitative Report, 2*(1), (http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/BackIssues/QR2-1/aronson.html)

Bass, B. (1999). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 8*(3), 9-32.

Beare, H., Caldwell, B., & Millikan, R. (1989). *Creating an excellent school.* London: Routledge.

Beare, H., Caldwell,B., & Milikan, R. (1997). Dimensions of Leadership. In M. Crawford, L. Kydd, & C. Riches, (eds.), *Leadership and teams in educational management* (pp. 24-39). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Begley, P. (2006). Pre-requisites to authentic leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration, 44*(6), 570-589.

Bell, J. (1993). *Doing your Research Project: A guide for first- time Researchers in Education and Social Science* (2ⁿᵈ ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bell, J. (1999). Doing *your research project: A guide for first time researchers in education and social science* (3ʳᵈ ed.*)*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bell, J. (2004). *Doing your Research project: A Guide for the first time researchers in Education, Health and Social Science*. (4ᵗʰ ed). England: Open University Press.

Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project: A guide for first time researchers in education and social science.* (4th ed.). Maidenhead, UK: Open University.

Bell, L. (1992). *Managing teams in secondary schools*. London: Routledge.

Bell, L. (1997). Staff teams and their management. In M. Crawford, L. Kydd, & C. Riches (eds.), *Leadership and teams in educational management* (pp. 119-129). Buckingham: Open University Press

Bell, L. (2004). Strategic planning in primary schools: a tale of no significance? *British Educational Leadership, Management & Administration Society; 18*(4), 32-36.

Bell, L., & Chan, W, K. (2005). Principals leadership and strategic planning in primary schools in Hong Kong and England: A comparison. *ISEA, 33*(3), 2-21.

Bennis, W., & Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge.* New York: Harper & Row.

Best, J., & Kahn, J. (1993). *Research in Education (7th ed)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Bishop, R. (1997). Interviewing as collaborative storying. *Education Research & Perspectives, 4* (1), 28-47.

Blackmore, J. (2002). Leadership for socially just schooling: More substance and less style in high-risk, low-trust times? *Journal of School Leadership, 12*, 198-222.

Bolam, R. (2005). Professional development and professionalism. In M. Coleman, & P. Earley (eds.), *Leadership and management in education: Cultures, change and context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bolman, L. & Deal, T (1997). *Reframing organisations* (2nd ed). San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.

Borko, H., Liston, D., & Whitcomb, A, J. (2007). Genres of empirical research in teacher education.. *Journal of Teacher Education, 58*(1), 3-11.

Boubee- Hill, L, C. (1998). *Teacher's perceptions of unit standard assessment in mathematics.* A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of the master of education, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Bouma, G. D. (1996). *The research process* (3rd ed.). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Bray, M. (ed.). (1991). *Ministries of Education in small states: Case studies of organization and management.* London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Burns, J. (1978). *Leadership.* New York: Harper and Row.

Burns, R. (2000) *Introduction to research methods* (4th ed.). Frenchs Forest NSW: Pearson Education.

Burstein, L., McDonnell, L., Van, W. J., Ormseth, T. H., & Guiton, G. (1995). *Validating national curriculum indicators.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Bush, T. (2003). *Theories of educational management and leadership.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2003). *School leadership: Concepts and evidence.* Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.

Caldwell, B. J. (2006). *Re-imagining educational leadership.* Victoria: ACER Press.

Caldwell, B., & Spinks, J. (1988).*The self-managing school*. Sussex: Falmer Press.

Caldwell, B., & Spinks, J. (1992). *Leading the self-managing school*. London: Falmer Press.

Campbell, C., Gold, A., & Lunt, I. (2003). Articulating leadership values in action: conversations with school leaders. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 6*(3), 203-221.

Clark, J. (1997). *Educational research, politics, philosophy, ethics.* Palmerston North: Massey University Press.

Codd, J. (2005). Teachers as managed professionals in the global education industry: The New Zealand experience. *Educational Review, 57*(2), 193-206.

Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Cohen, L., & Manion, L. (1994). *Research methods in education.* London: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed). London: Routledge.

Coleman, M. (2002). *Women as headteachers, striking the balance.* Stoke on Trent: Trentham.

Coleman, M. (2005). Theories and practice of leadership: An introduction. In M. Coleman, & P. Earley (eds.), *Leadership and management in education cultures, change and contexts* (pp. 6-26). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cranston, N. (2008). Leading Queensland schools: What some of the research can tell us. *ISEA, 36* (2), 7-21.

Crawford, M., Kydd, L., & Riches, C. (1997). *Leadership and teams in educational management*. Burkingham: OpenUniversity Press.

Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative research approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill.

Creswell, J, W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches.* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Cuckle, P., & Broadhead, P. (2003). Developments in development planning in English primary schools: 1994- 2001. *School Leadership and Management; 23*(2), 229-240.

Davies, B. (2003). Rethinking strategy and strategic leadership in schools. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership, 31*(3), 295-312.

Davies, B. (2006). *Leading the strategically focussed school: Success and sustainability*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Davies, B. (2007). Developing sustainable leadership. *British Educational Leadership, Management & Administration, 21*(3), 4-9.

Davies, B., & Anderson, L. (1992) *Opting for self-management: The early experience of grant maintained schools.* London: Routledge.

Davies, B., & Ellison, L. (1997). *School leadership for the 21st Century: a competency and knowledge approach*. London: Routledge.

Davies, B., & Ellison, L. (1998). Introduction: Rethinking strategic approaches to school leadership and management. *School Leadership & Management, 18*(4), 447-448.

Davies, B., & Ellison, L. (1999). *Strategic direction and development of the school*. London: Routledge.

Davies, B, J., & Davies, B. (2006). Developing a model for strategic leadership in schools. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership, 34*(1), 121-139.

Davies, L. (1994). *Beyond authoritarian school management: The challenge for transparency*. Derbyshire, United Kingdom: Education: Now Books.

Day, C., Harris, A., Hadfield, M., Tolley, H., & Beresford, C. (2000). *Leading schools in times of change.* Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Day, C., Leithwood, K., Harris, A., Hopkins, D., & Sammons, P. (2006). *Successful school leadership: What it is and how it influences pupil learning.* Research Report, University of Nottingham.

Desimone, M, L., & Le Floch, C. K. (2004). Are we asking the right questions? Using cognitive interviews to improve surveys in education research. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis, 26* (1), 1-22.

Dimmock, C., & Walker, A. (2002). Moving school leadership beyond its narrow boundaries: Developing cross-cultural approach. In K. Leithwood & P.

Hallinger, (eds). *Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration.* Dordrecht: Kluver.

Doherty, D, G. (2008). On quality in education. *Quality in Education, 16*(3), 255-265.

Donaldson, G, A. (Jr). (2006). *Cultivating leadership in schools: Connecting people, purpose and practice.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Drucker, P. (1993). *Post-capitalist society.* New York: Harper.

Duignan, P. (2006). *Educational Leadership: Key challenges and ethical tensions.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Earley, P., & Weindling, D. (2004). *Understanding school leadership.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Eisenhart, M. (2006). Representing qualitative data. In J. Green, G. Camili, & P. Elmore, (eds.), *Handbook of complementary research methods in education research.* Washington: American Educational Research Association.

Evans, R. (1996). *The human side of school change: Reform, resistance and the real- life problems of innovation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Everard, K. B. (1986). *Development management in schools.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Everard. B.K., Morris, G., & Wilson. I. (2004). *Effective school management.* London: Paul Chapman.

Fidler, B. (1997). School leadership: Some key ideas. *School Leadership and management, 17*(1), 23-38.

Fidler, B., Edwards, M., Evans, B., Mann, P., & Thomas, P. (1996). *Strategic planning for school improvement.* London: Pitman.

Fiedler, F, E., (1967). *A theory of leadership effectiveness.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Fiedler, F. E., Chemers, M. M., & Mahar, L. (1977). *Improving leadership effectiveness: The leader match concept*. New York: John Wiley

Fullan, M. (1991). *The meaning of educational change*. London: Cassell.

Fullan, M. (1992). *What's worth fighting for in headship?* Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change (3rd ed.)*. Toronto: Irwin Publishing.

Fullan, M. (2003). *The moral imperative of school leadership*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (eds.). (1991). *Teacher development and educational change*. London: Falmer Press.

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1992). *What's worth fighting for in your school?* Hawthon: ACEA/Ontario Public Teachers Federation.

Fullan, M. G., & Miles, M. B. (1992).Getting reform right: What works and what doesn't. *Phi Delta Kappan, 73* (10), 744-752.

Gardiner, J. J., (1988). Building leadership teams. In M. F. Green (ed.), *Leaders for a new era: Strategies for higher education* (137-153). New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.

Gardiner, J. (2006). Transactional, transformational, and transcendent leadership: Metaphors mapping the evolution of the theory and practice of governance. *Leadership Review, 6*, 62-76.

Gewirtz, S., Ball, S. J., & Bowe, R. (1995). *Markets, choice and equity in education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Gibson, A. (2005). The role of the principal in leadership in teaching and learning. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Leadership, 20*(1), 65-78.

Giles, D. L. (2008). *Exploring the teacher-student relationship in teacher education: A hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry*. Unpublished PhD thesis,

Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, http://hdl.handle.net/10292/537.

Gillham, B. (2000). *Case study research methods*. London: Continuum.

Glanz, J. (2006). *What every principal should know about collaborative leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Glatter, R., Woods, P., & Bagley, C. (1997). *Choice and diversity in education*. London: Routledge.

Glover, D., & Law, S. (2000). *Educational leadership and learning: Practice, policy and research.* Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Glover, D., & Levacic, R. (2005). Financial material resources for learning. In M. Coleman, and P. Earley (eds.), *Leadership and management in education cultures, change and contexts* (pp.167-186). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gold, A., Evan, J., Earley, P., Halpin, D., & Collarbone, P. (2003). Principled principals? Values-driven leadership: Evidence from ten case studies of outstanding school leaders. *Educational Management & Administration*, *32*(2), 127-138.

Goleman, D., Boyatzi, R., & Mckee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: Realising the power of emotional intelligence*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Gronn, P. (1999). *The making of educational leaders*. London: Cassell.

Gronn, P. (2000). Distributed properties: A new architecture for leadership; *Educational Management and Administration, 28*(3), 317-338.

Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis, *Leadership Quarterly*, 3 (13), 423-451.

Gronn, P. (2003). *The new work of educational leaders*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Gunter, H. M. (2001). *Leaders and leadership in education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Gunter, H. M. (2008). Policy and work reform in England. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *36*(2), 253-270.

Hall, A. (2001). Professionalism and teacher ethics. In C. McGee, & D. Fraser, (eds.). *The professional practice of teaching* (2nd ed.). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.

Hargreaves, A. (1997). Rethinking educational change: Going deeper and wider in the quest for success. In *Rethinking educational change with heart and mind*. ASCD yearbook. Retrieved 18 March 2008, from: http://www.ascd.org/

Hargreaves, D., & Hopkins, D. (1991). *The empowered school.* London: Cassell.

Hargreaves, D., Hopkins, D., Leask, M., Connolly, J., & Robinson., P. (1989). *Planning for development*. London: Department for Education and Science.

Harris, A. (2002). Effective leadership in schools facing challenging context. *School Leadership and Management*, *22*(1), 15-26.

Harris, A. (2003a). Distributed Leadership in Schools: Leading or misleading? *Management in Education, 16*(10), 10-13.

Harris, A. (2003b). Teacher leadership as distributed leadership: Heresy, fantasy or possibility? *School Leadership and Management, 23*(30) , 313- 324.

Harris, A., & Chapman, C. (2002,). Democratic leadership for school in challenging contexts. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning, 6(17)*. Retrieved 16th January 2009 from http://www.ucalgary.ca/~iejll.

Harris, A., Day, C., Hopkins, D., Hadfield, M., Hargreaves, A. & Chapman, C. (2003), *Effective leadership for school improvements*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

Hatcher, R. (2005). The distribution of leadership and power in schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 26* (2), 253- 267.

Helm, C. (2005). Why we need to plan and why we don't: Conquering the myths and mistakes of planning in uncertain times. *Momentum, 36*(3), 23-26

Hodgkinson, C. (1991). *Educational leadership: The moral art.* Albany, New York: SUNY Press.

Hopkins, D. (2001). *School improvement for real*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Hopkins, D., & MacGilchrist, B. (1998). Development planning for pupils achievement. *School Leadership & Management, 18* (3), 409- 424.

Hopkins, D., Ainscow, M., & West, M. (1994). *School improvement in an era of change*. London: Cassell.

Horner, M. (2004). *Leadership theory reviewed.* In N. Bennett, M. Crawford, & M. Cartwright, (eds). *Effective educational leadership.* London: Open University.

Hunt, J. G. (1996). *Leadership: A new synthesis.* Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Hutchinson, B. (1993). The effective reflective school: visions and pipedreams in development planning. *Educational Management and Administration*, *21*(1), 4-8.

Jesson, B. (1999). *Only their purpose is mad: The money men take over New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

Kaufman, R. (1992). *Mapping educational success: strategic thinking and planning for school administrators*. New York Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Kedian, J. (2008). *Educational Leadership: Organizational development* [Lecture notes]. Hamilton, New Zealand: University of Waikato.

Kelep - Malpo, K. D. (2003). *Gender and school leadership in the Papau New Guinea public school system.* Unpublished PHD thesis, Victoria University, Wellington.

Knoff, M. H. (2005). *Building strong schools to strengthen student outcomes*. Arkansas: Department of Education.

Kotter, J. (1996). *Leading change.* Boston: Harvard.

Kumar, R. (1996). *Research methodology: A step-by-step for beginners.* Melbourne: Wesley Longman.

Kydd, L., Anderson, L., Newton, W., & Open University. (2003). *Leading people and teams in education*. London: Open University in association with Paul Chapman.

Lambert, L. (1998). *Building leadership capacity in schools*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Lambert, L. (2005). Leadership for lasting reform. *Educational Leadership*, *62*(5), 62-65.

Leithwood, K. (1992). The move towards transformational leadership. *Educational Leadership, 49*(5), 8-9.

Leithwood, K. (1994). Leadership for school restructuring. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 30*(4), 498-518.

Leithwood, K. (2005). Understanding successful principal leadership: progress on a broken front. *Journal of Educational Administration, 43*(6), 619-629.

Leithwood, K., Begley, T, P., & Cousins, B. J. (1992). *Developing expert leadership for future schools*. London: Falmer Press.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2000). The effects of different sources of leadership on student engagement in school. In K. Riley, & K. Seashore Louis (eds.), *Leadership for change and school reform: International perspectives* (pp. 50-66). London: Routledge Falmer.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2005). Tranformational leadership. In B. Davies (ed.), *The essentials of school leadership* (pp.31-43). London: Paul Chapman.

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Steinbach, R. (1999). *Changing leadership for changing times*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2005). What we know about successful school leadership. In W. Firestone & C. Riehl (eds.), *A new agenda: Directions for research on educational leadership* (pp. 22-47). New York: Teachers College Press.

Levacic, R. (1995). *Local management of schools*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Lipham, M. J., & Hoeh, A. J. (1974). *The principalship: Foundations and functions*. New York: Harper & Row.

Louis, K., & Miles, B. M. (1990). *Improving the urban high school*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Lumby, J. (2005). Vision and Strategic Planning. In M. Coleman & P. Earley (eds.), *Educational leadership and management in education: Cultures, change and context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MacGilchrist, B. (1996). Linking staff development with children's learning, *Educational Leadership*, *53*(6), 72-75.

MacGilchrist, B., Mortimore, P., Savage, J. & Beresford, C (1995). *Planning matters*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

MacGilchrist, B., Mortimore, P., Savage, J. & Beresford, C. (1997). The impact of development planning in primary schools. In M. Preedy, R. Glater, & R. Levacic (eds.), *Educational Management: strategy quality, and resources* (pp. 234-246). Buckingham: Open University Press.

MacGilchrist, B., Myers, K., & Reed, J. (1997). *The intelligent school*. London: Paul Chapman.

Malasa, D. P. (2007). *Effective school leadership: An exploration of the issues inhibiting the effectiveness of school leadership in Solomon Islands Secondary schools*. Unpublished masters thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Marks, H., & Printy, S. (2003). Principled leadership and school performance: an integration of transformational and instructional leadership; *Educational Administration Quarterly, 39* (3), 370-397.

Mather, I. (1998). Rethinking school planning: A case study of Southlands Community College. *School Leadership & Management, 18*(4), 475-484.

Maynard, M. (1994). Methods, practice and epistemology: The debate about feminism and research. In P. S. Maykut, & J. Purvis (eds.), *Researching*

women's lives from a feminist perspective (pp. 10 - 26). Portsmouth, UK: Taylor & Francis.

Merriam, S, B. (1988). *Case study in education: A qualitative approach.* California: Jossey-Bass.

Morgan, G. (1989). *Riding the waves of change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mutch, C. (2005). *Doing educational research: A practioner's guide to getting started*. Wellington, N.Z.: NZCER Press.

Nias, J., Southworth, G., & Campbell, P. (1992). *School school curriculum development in the primary school*. London: Falmer.

Nias, J., Southworth, G., & Yeomans, R. (1989). Staff relationships in the primary school. London: Cassell.

Noonan, S. J. (2003). *The elements of leadership: What you should know.* Maryland, MD: Scarecrow Press.

O'Leary, Z. (2004). *The essential guide to doing research*. London: SAGE.

Olesen, V. L. (2003). Feminisms and qualitative research at and into the millenium. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (2nd ed., pp. 332 - 397). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Olssen, M., & Matthews, M. K. (1997). *Introduction*. In M. Olssen, & K. Morris Matthews (eds.), *Education policy in New Zealand: The 1990s & Beyond*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

Peters, T. (1987). *Thriving on chaos*. London: Macmillan.

Philips, P. A., & Moutinho, L., (2000). The strategic planning index: A tool for measuring strategic planning effectiveness. *Journal of Travel Research, 38,* 369-379.

Pollard, A. A. (2000). *Givers of wisdom, labourers without gain: Essays on women in the Solomon Islands*. Honiara, Solomon Islands: Institute of Pacific Studies and University of the South Pacific Centre in Solomon Islands.

Puamu, P. (1998). The principalship in Fiji secondary school: A critical post - colonial perspective in leadership in crisis? In L. Ehrich, & K. Knight (eds.), *Restructuring principled practice essays on contemporary educational leadership* (pp. 152 - 166). Brisbane, Australia: Port Press.

Ramoni, J. M. (2000). *Solomon Islands Report of Education for All (EFA)*. Honiara, Solomon Islands: Department of Education and Human Resources Development, Ministry of Education.

Ransom, S. (1996). Markets or democracy for education. In J. Ahier, B. Cosin, & M. Hales (eds). *Diversity and choice*. London: Routledge.

Reeves, D. B. (2007/2008). Making strategic planning work. *Educational Leadership, Dec/Jan,* 86-87.

Ryan, J. (2006). *Inclusive leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schein, E. H. (1985). *Organization culture and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Sergiovanni, T. (1991). *The principalship: A reflective practice perspective* (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Sergiovanni, T. (2000). Changing change: Towards a design science and art. *Journal of Educational Change, 1*(1), 57-75.

Sikua, D. D. (2002). *The decentralisation of education in a developing country: The case of community high schools in Solomon Islands.* Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Smyth, J. (1991). *Educational leadership*. London: Falmer.

Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, (1978). *The Solomon Islands Education Act 1978, No.26*. Honiara: Government Press.

Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, (1982). *Research Act, (1982). The statutes of Solomon Islands, 1982, No. 26.* Honiara: Government Press.

Solomon Islands Ministry of Finance. (1998). *National Census Report 1998*. Honiara. Government Press.

Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, (2004). *Education Strategic Plan*. Honiara: Government Press.

Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, (2005). *2004 Annual Report*. Honiara: Government Press.

Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, (2006). *2005 Annual Report*. Honiara: Government Press.

Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, (2007a). *2007 School establishment start*. Honiara: Government Press.

Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, (2007b). *Teaching Service Handbook*. Honiara: Government Press.

Solomon Islands Ministry of Provincial Government. (1981). *The Provincial Government Act 1981*. Honiara: Provincial Government Press.

Southworth, G. (1995). *Looking into primary headship: A research based interpretation*. London: Falmer.

Southworth, G. (1997). Primary headship and Leadership. In M. Crawford., L. Kydd, & C. Riches (eds.), *Leadership and teams in educational management* (pp. 40-60). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Southworth, G. (1998). *Leading improving primary schools: The work of headteachers and deputy heads*. London: Falmer Press.

Southworth, G. (1999). *Lessons for successful leadership in small schools*. Reading, UK: University of Reading, School of Education.

Southworth, G. (2005). Overview and conclusions. In M. J. Coles, & G. Southworth, (eds), *Developing leadership: Creating the school of tomorrow*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

SDPI, (2001). *Guidelines for second level schools*. Retrieved 7th May 2009 from http://www.sdpi.ie/guidelines/Unit0401.html

Spillane, J., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. (2001). *Towards a theory of leadership practice: A distributed perspective – Working paper.* USA: Northwestern University Institute for Policy Research.

Starrat, R. (1986). *Excellence in education and quality of leadership. Occasional paper No.1.* Tasmania: Southern Tasmania Council for Educational Administration.

Stoll, L., & Bolam, R, (2005). Developing leadership for learning communities. In M. J. Coles, & G. Southworth, (eds), *Developing leadership: Creating the schools of tomorrow* (pp. 50-64). Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

Stoll, L., & Fink, D. (1996). *Changing our schools: Linking school effectiveness and school improvement.* Philadelphia: Open University Press

University of Waikato. (2007). University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Regulations. Retrieved 15 January 2007, from http://calender.waikato.ac.nz/assessment/humanresearchethics.html

Waddel, D., Cummings, T, J., & Worley, C. (2000). *Organisation development and change.* Nelson: Pacific Rim Edition.

Wallace, M. (1994). Towards a contingency approach to development planning in schools. In A. Hargreaves, & D. Hopkins (eds.), Development planning for school improvement. London: Cassell.

Wallace, M., & Hall, V. (1997). The dynamics of teams. In M. Crawford., L. Kydd. & C. Riches (eds.), *Leadership and teams in educational management* (pp.130-143). Buckingham: Open University Press

Weindling, D. (1997). Strategic planning in schools: some practical techniques. In M. Preedy, R. Glatter, & R. Levacic (eds), *Educational management: Strategy quality, and resources* (pp. 218-246). Buckingham: Open University Press.

West-Burnham, J. (1997). *Managing quality in schools.* London: Pitman.

West-Burnham, J. (2004). *Leadership development and personal effectiveness.* Retrieved from:

http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media/759/58/leadershipdevelopment-and-personal-effectiveness.pdf

Whitaker, P. (1998). *Managing schools*. London: Butterworth Heinemann.

Whitty, G., Power, S., & Halpin, D. (1998). *Devolution and choice in education: The school, the state, and the market*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Wright, N. (2001). Bastard leadership and managerialism: Confronting twin paradoxes in the Blair Education Project. *Educational Management & Administration, 29*(3), 275-290.