

School Self-Management – Strengths & Challenges

Cathy Wylie

NZ Principals' Federation Conference, 2015

“When she was good she was very,
very, good

and when she was bad she was
horrid”

My vision:

New Zealand has the conditions
that bring out the best of
school self-management

Strengths

- ✓ School framed as a community
- ✓ Particularity is respected
e.g. principals & teachers are not assigned by seniority or cost
- ✓ Fertile ground to take the initiative
- ✓ Generally an understanding (not always willingly) that change will not come unless schools see its value

Challenges that can undermine those strengths

- Insularity
- Isolation
- Re-invention of wheels
- Expecting universal availability of capability
- Expecting individual schools to solve systemic issues

Expectations of self-managed schools

“It will lead to improved learning opportunities for the children of this country. The reformed administration will be sufficiently flexible and responsive to meet the particular needs of Maori education.”

David Lange,

foreword to *U*

In 2012

“This will require lifting achievement across the education system and in particular, addressing **system failure** of learners who are Māori, Pasifika, have special education needs, and/or are from low socio-economic backgrounds”

Hon Hekia Parata, Minister of Education

Why “system failure”?

- Gains in secondary qualifications
 - only after NCEA gave better framework for teaching & learning.
- Unsteady gains for primary students on literacy and maths measures
- Gaps related to social and historical inequalities remain

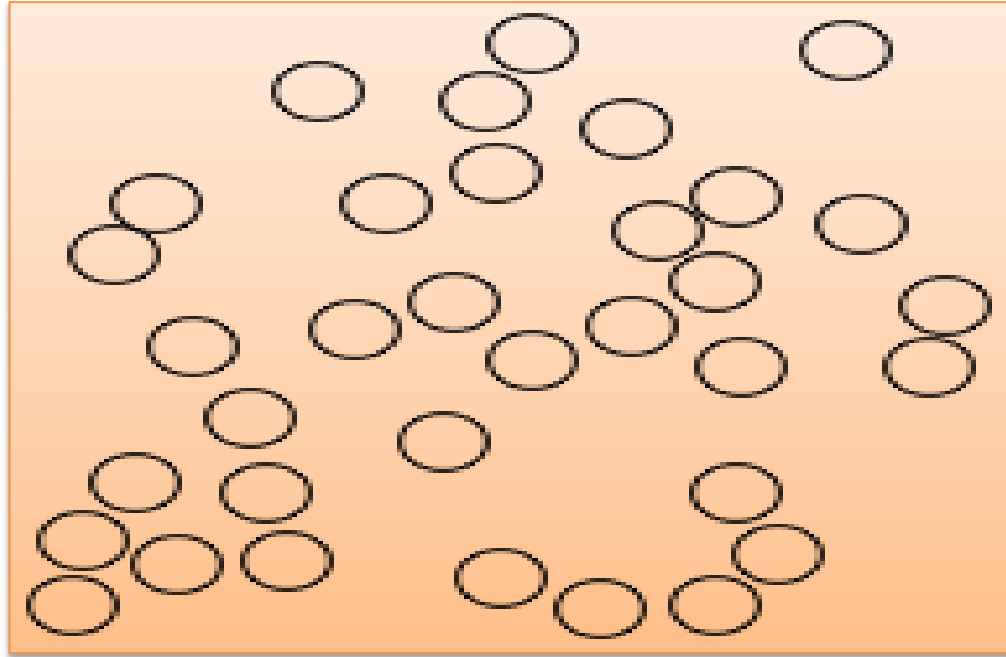
Great Expectations

- Greater than at any time in NZ education
- All students meaningfully engaged
- Qualification and pathway success for almost all
- Education seen as key to economic & social development

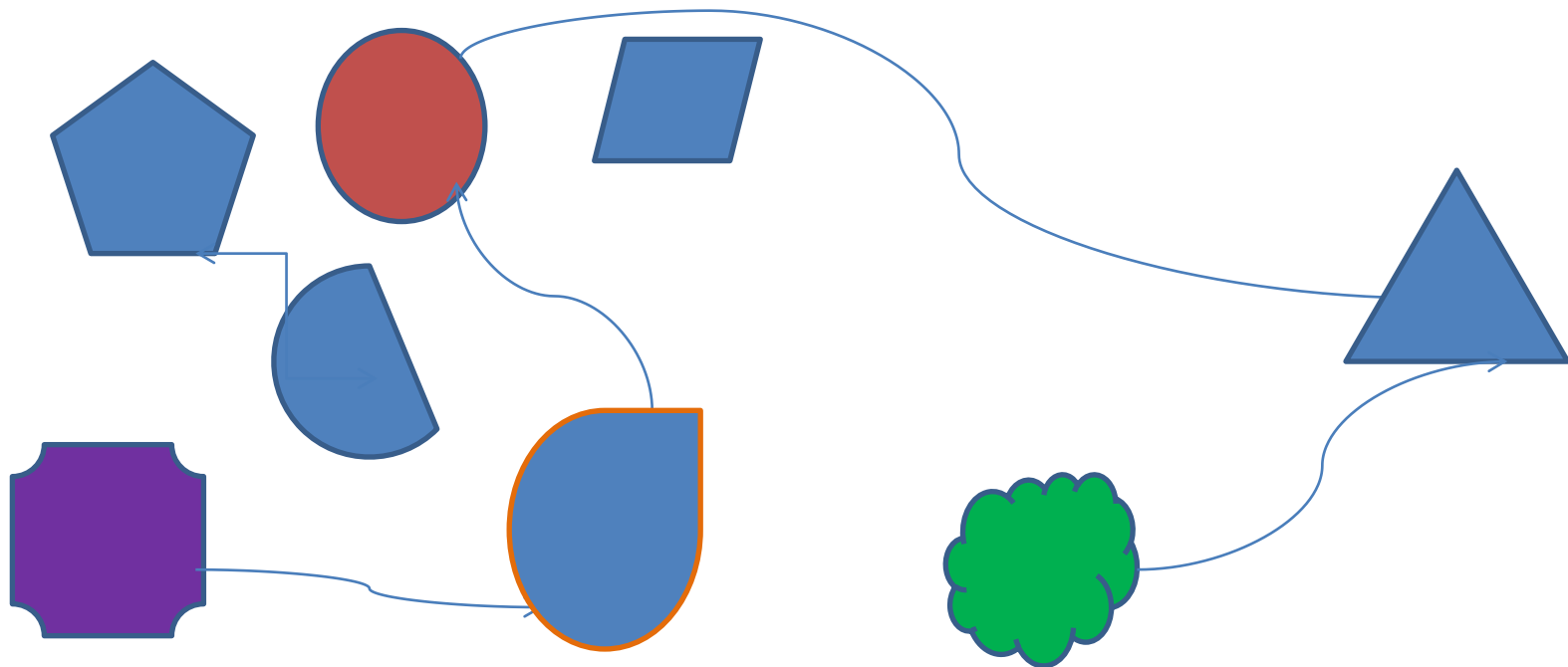
As well:

- Increasing diversity of learners
- Around a fifth living in hardship
- Increased socio-economic segregation

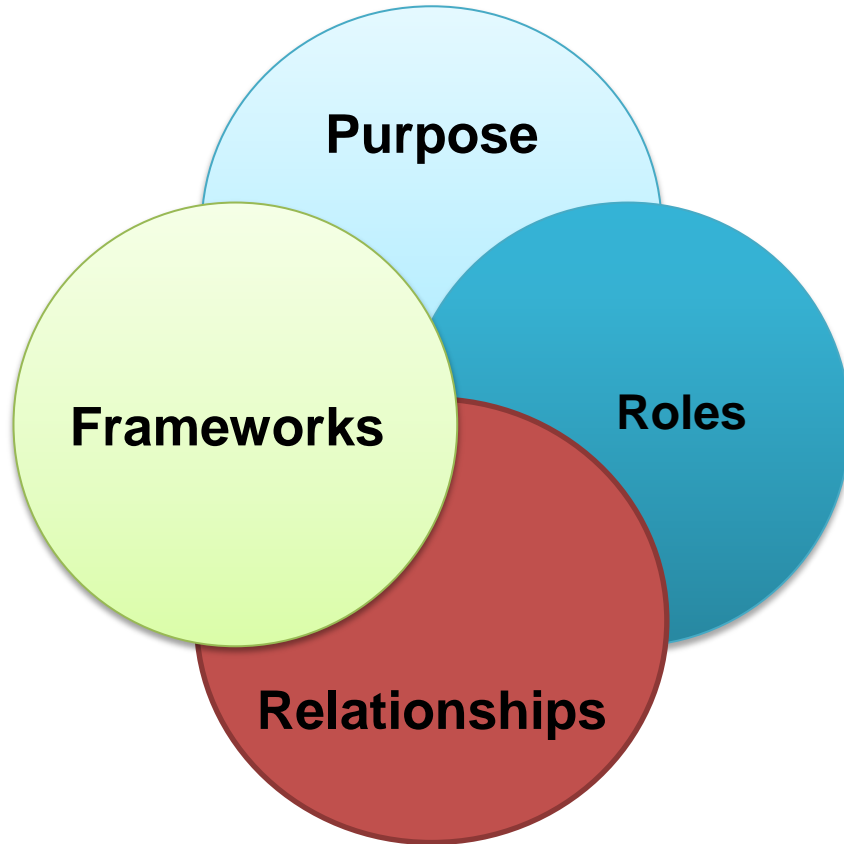
What *is* our system?



Is this a 'system'?



System elements



Coherence is key

- Policy truly focused on learning
 - NZC can be the jewel in the system crown
- Coherent leadership development

Why NZC can strengthen our system

Purpose of education: school has to step back, discuss, decide, fit together values & goals

Focus on the *whole* learner

~ interweaving of knowledge with key competencies

ç " k p v g t y g c x k p i " y k v j " n g c t

Inquiry lens

~ making things more explicit

~ stepping back to see how progress and actions relate

~ openness to change on the basis of analysis

To illustrate - Changes evident 2007 to 2010

•(NZCER primary national surveys)

More collective practices
that support student
achievement

More teachers with
enough time to plan &
discuss work together

Improvement in NZC-
related learning
opportunities in classes

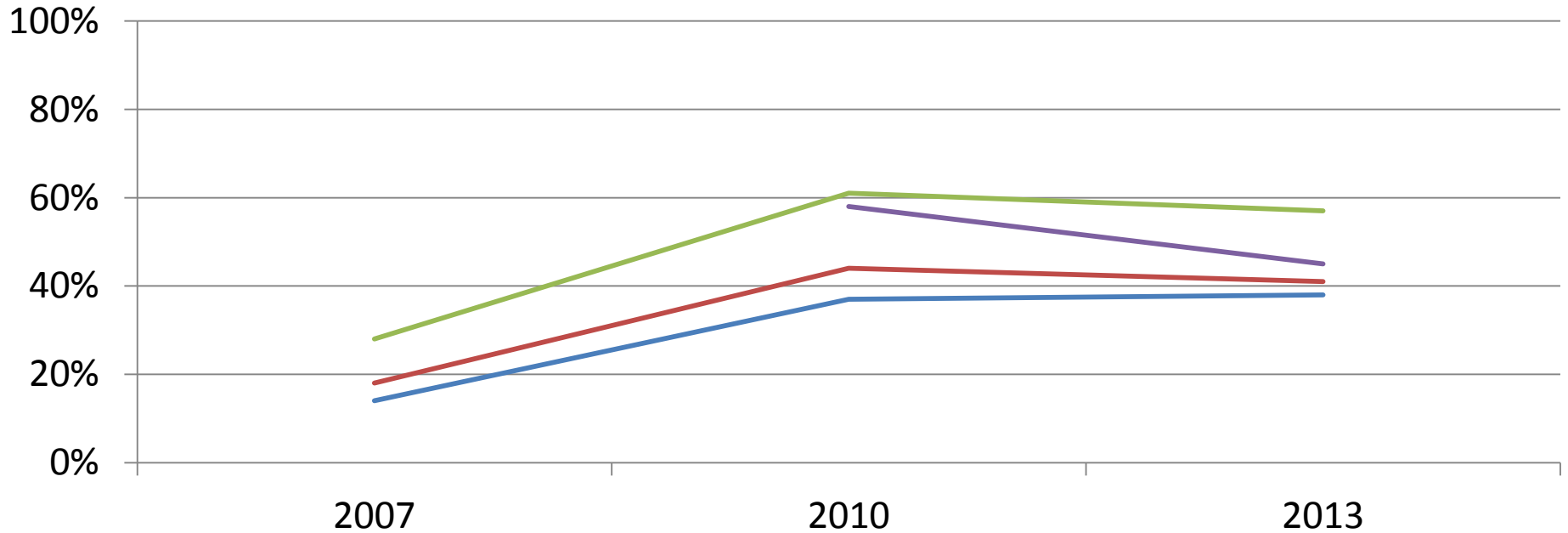
More E-learning
opportunities

More reports of
increased student
achievement

Increased teacher
morale & job satisfaction

Drop in identification of
principal's leadership as
issue for the school
(20% to 12%)

Promising Trajectory – and way to go



- Sharing ideas to improve student performance
- Analysis of student achievement to guide teaching & learning
- Enough time to work together
- Good opportunities to observe effective colleagues

How strong are our self-managing schools professional learning cultures?

NZCER 2013 primary national survey

- Teacher Sharing 46% very good/generally happens
- Timely Support 39%
- Improvement Focus in Work Together 28%
- Coherence in School Professional Culture 11%
- Useful Feedback 10%

Professional learning and workload

- Good opportunities to learn from others 64%
agree or strongly agree
- More use of inquiry 53%
- Workload manageable 53%
- Practical help in PLD to engage priority learners & parents 28%
- Good access to external advice 26%

More likely to have these capacity building experiences where

- Good leadership
- NZC 'drives what we do'
- Inquiry PLD

Big picture:

Progress stalls 2010-2013

- In-school collective work
- NZC learning in classes
- E-learning in classes

Principal morale and workload 2013

72% good or very good morale
87% in 2010

48% high stress levels
37% in 2010

47% have a manageable workload

46% can schedule enough time for educational leadership
38% in 2010

16% could access MoE funded leadership support

64% have enough support to do their job effectively
77% in 2010

Why?

- Ground shifts with National Standards
- Disruption and cutback in access to PLD
- Leadership development thinned
- Loss of dialogue
- Retreat to individual resources & needs
- Heightened sense of competition
- Heightened sense of 'reputation' & 'risk'

Turning to each other in 2013

86% of principals connect with their peers in networks or groups

- Increase amongst those who do in

Attending meetings (86% now)

Discussing common issues (79% now; up from 62% in 2009)

Attending conferences (71% now, up from 62% in 2009)

Provide mutual support (75% now, up from 56% in 2009)

Learning from each other

20% mentor another principal

23% have a critical friendship
using structured school visits

20% part of inquiry project to
improve practice

6% active part in online
discussion forum.

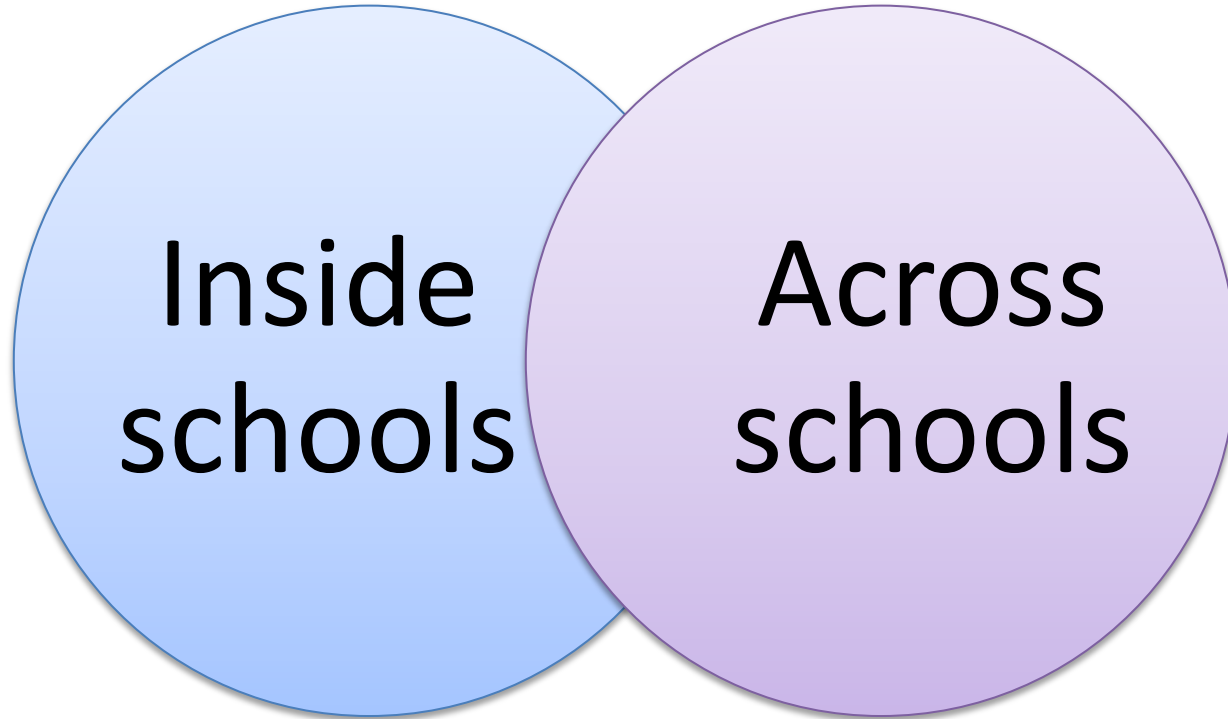
Obstacles to circulating learning

59% of primary schools
in direct competition

41% take a fifth or more
of their students from
outside their school zone

52% of principals would
like career options
beyond the principalship

Making the most of school self-management



Inside schools

- Time allocation – this is not set in stone
- Inquiry to improve practice, not to tick off for appraisal
- Openness valued

Across schools

- Recognising shared purpose, challenges
- Openness valued to learn from each other
- Inquiry valued
- Identification of strengths in one school that others can learn from
- Power of collective to make more of resources

Making the most of school self-management



**Resetting the
role &
relationships
of the
Ministry of
Education**

**Sound
connective
learning
infrastructure**

Sound connective infrastructure

- Knowledge is more than digital resources
- National nodes of knowledge linked into localities
- Deliberate development of reliable local knowledge infrastructure
- Openness integral
- Inquiry core

Ministry of Education

- Openness and inquiry integral
- Ongoing joint work with sector & infrastructure leaders on 'policy' and system learning
- Ongoing joint work at regional level
- Anchors NZC and system learning

Shared responsibility through and for learning

