

# Vision, Principles and Values

This guide is the first in a series that provides you, as a school principal, with suggestions for preparing to lead the implementation of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC). It contains practical suggestions intended to help you develop and/or revise your school's vision, principles and values.

The work your school community undertakes this year on reviewing your school's vision, principles and values provides you all with an opportunity to renew a shared sense of purpose and direction. Constructing or revising them together will help to promote learning and develop a collective responsibility for the school. As a result of this work you will be able to develop strategic plans that help bring your vision to fruition.



- **What is a vision statement?**

This briefly describes the future the school community sees for itself, and what students who are confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners are expected to be like.

- **How do principles guide practice?**

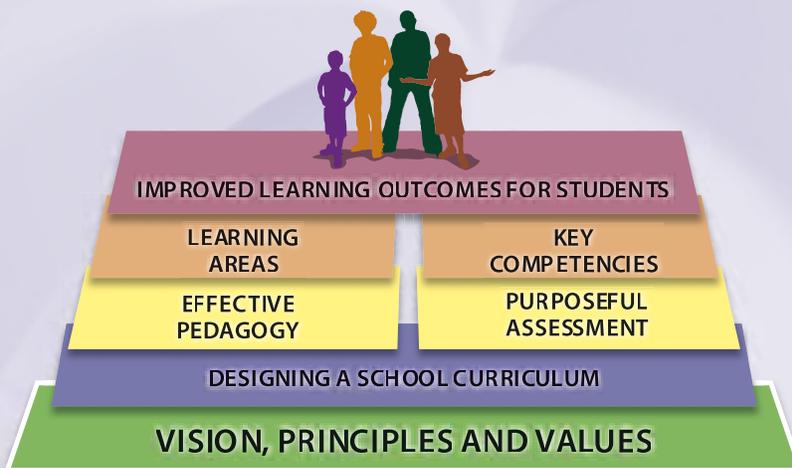
These underpin the way you design and implement the curriculum, and indicate how your students experience the curriculum.

- **Why are values statements important?**

These express your beliefs about what your school community considers most important for its learners so that they will thrive in our diverse communities.

## What's In This Guide?

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“ A shared vision is not an idea ... it is rather a force in people's hearts ... at its simplest level, a shared vision is the answer to the question 'what do we want to create?' – Peter Senge ”

# Vision, Principles and Values:

The draft New Zealand Curriculum provides an overarching **vision**, along with **principles** and **values** for education in New Zealand. These have emerged from national and international research about what successful school leavers need to participate fully in and contribute to a sustainable, enterprising and socially just society. This year

you are likely to be leading the discussion and decision-making processes through which your school community will develop its own statements about how the vision, principles and values will underpin curriculum design and implementation. This section of the guide suggests some ways you can open up those discussions.

## Informing Yourself

Take some personal time with a board member. Together reflect on ways to support your teachers and students to reach their potential, and to gain the competencies they need for further study, work and lifelong learning.

Invest time in thinking and writing about your community's vision for its school and the kinds of young people they would like to see leaving it. These questions may help you get started:

- How clear is the school's current vision statement? Is it a statement that has learning at its heart?
- What academic, social, cultural, and systems aspirations and needs does your school have to help meet the requirements of its students over the next decades?
- Is this vision for the future shared by everyone in your community? How do you know? How can you ensure a shared vision?



- When your community develops or revisits statements about the school's vision, principles and values, what impact will this have in terms of preparing students for the future? How might this change the way you teach and learn?

Consider the kinds of consultation and decision-making processes you might use to prepare your school for implementing the NZC in 2008. What key shifts will you and your school need to make to turn the vision, principles and values of the draft into improving teaching and learning outcomes for the teachers and students in your school? What level of change management might this need\*?



“A 21<sup>st</sup> century school must be responsive and flexible enough to ensure every young person can achieve their potential and is set up for lifelong learning.  
*Let's talk about: personalising learning.*  
Ministry of Education, 2006.”

## Linking These Ideas With School-based Curriculum Planning

Your vision, principles and values clarify important points of reference for your school community. When you begin work on school-based curriculum planning, you should be able to test your curriculum decisions and planned initiatives against them, asking, “if we do this, how will it reflect the vision, principles and values we have determined for our school?”

# Exploring Ideas

## Discussing With Others

In discussion with your senior staff, board members, or other support people take a two-hour meeting slot to further develop your community's thinking about the vision. Talk through what level of change management might be needed, and what decision-making processes you might use to make the vision happen. For example:

- **Ask meeting participants** to contribute their thoughts about and priorities for the school's future. Consider how these thoughts relate to your school's particular context, circumstances and needs.
- **Work out what information** gathering and data collection processes you require to establish the needs and strengths of your students and the school's community.
- **Consider how the vision**, principles and values need to be developed so that they look ahead to the decades to come and clearly focus on what you as a school community want your students to be in the future.
- **Discuss the change processes** enacting these will require. For example:
  - Will you need to identify key people (early adopters\*) who can assist leadership of the curriculum implementation?
  - What professional learning opportunities and support might your staff need?
  - What issues or barriers can you foresee around changes in curriculum implementation? How might you support people's capacity to change? How will this be managed? Are you dealing with first order or second order change\*?
- **Critically review** your recent decision-making processes in the school. How much have they been about shaping the future? How will they contribute to developing a shared vision, principles and values? Do you need to make any changes to the ways in which you have been operating? For example:
  - How do your current decision-making processes reflect the vision, principles and values that you want for your school?
  - How do you initiate discussion, encourage participation and communicate decisions?
  - What is your time frame? This process is likely to be a lengthy one in order to gain quality engagement and outcomes.



## Testing Your Ideas

Gather data and other information to find out the answers to these questions:

- What do your students value about their experiences at your school?
- What do they think it is important to learn, and why?
- What is the connection between their experiences at school and what they want to do beyond it? How do you know?
- Does what your students think resonate with what you think about the vision, principles and values of the school?
- Do the staff agree? Do the board members? Do your families or whānau and community agree?

## Key Terms (\*)

- **Levels of change management** – school leaders need to identify what needs changing, consider what the level and focus of the change will be, and how it needs to be managed.
- **Early adopters** – used to describe those staff who are respected and known to lead opinions. They are keen to try out new ideas carefully. They are helpful allies during times of change leadership. Rogers, E. M., (1995)
- **First and second order change** – are concepts which distinguish between the kinds of changes that may be introduced (Marzano et al. 2005).
  - **First order change** is incremental and perceived as an extension of the past. It is consistent with what is already happening in the school and can be brought about using existing resources.
  - **Second order change** challenges key practices and underlying values and is perceived as a break with the past. It requires new and different resources, including the development of new knowledge and skills.

# Revisiting Your Vision Statement

You probably already have a clear vision statement for where your school is heading. This is likely to form part of your annual report, along with your mission statement and a statement of your community's values. In this part of the guide, you are invited to revisit that vision in light of the vision section on page eight of the draft New Zealand Curriculum.

The vision that you develop from the NZC statement will guide and focus the direction, quality of your thinking and strategic planning as you implement the curriculum in your school. Michael Fullan (2006) reminds us of the importance of coherence or focused effort in a school if we are to improve student learning school-wide. The effectiveness of the vision statement is also

## Leading Discussions

Begin by asking different groups (your staff, the students, the board of trustees, families, local community groups and businesses) for their views on the following points:

- **How do we want** our school to be in the future? How different might it be from how the school was five years ago?
- **What characteristics** will our school need for its students to feel confident, connected, lifelong learners who are actively involved in school life?
- **Does the vision statement** that we currently have set the direction for the way we want our school to be?

## Possible Strategies

If you intend to revisit or completely redevelop your vision statement, here are some strategies you could use to collect responses to these points and follow up on them:

- Let people know that you want the vision statement to represent the views of the whole community.
- Send out a questionnaire.
- Invite people from each of the groups in the school community to meet and discuss the questions above.
- Encourage the different groups to hold their own meetings and to send their responses back to you.
- Provide feedback in the form of a draft vision statement to the people who respond. Show how you have taken account of their views. Invite their feedback on the draft.
- Publish the final version around the school, in the newsletter, in classrooms. Talk about it in assemblies. Explain to students how this statement shapes where the school is headed.
- Make a date to review the vision statement regularly, for example every three years.

## School Story

### Vision Coherence

In 2005 we began the process of developing a vision. We wanted it to be a central driving statement for our school, one that was known and understood by our whole school community. This process involved full consultation with all stakeholders over two terms. The end result was a statement that contained four key elements that would give our school direction.

The next thing we needed to do was to be clear about what each of these elements really meant. This involved briefly elaborating on each.

Our vision is now displayed throughout the school including in all classrooms. Our strategic plan is structured around our vision statements. Our planning and assessment are driven by our vision and our student reports



### Key Term (\*)

- **Effective Collaboration** – Fullan and Sharratt's research (2006) describes effective collaboration as beginning with a vision which creates a clear sense of priority and purpose for the changes to be undertaken. From this and as a result of system wide discussion, targets are set for improvement, along with an investment of resources and time. A strong and united coordinating team is needed to drive the projects, using research evidence (data) to provide feedback on the progress and monitor outcomes.

linked to the ability of the school leadership team to build a collaborative culture and structure that brings the school community together\*. This will take time to achieve.

You might begin revisiting your vision statement by thinking of ways in which the entire school community can be involved in

discussions about the curriculum and pedagogy used in your school. Shared beliefs are more likely to emerge when the quality of the consultation process has been strong. The more that beliefs are held in common or shared, the greater the ongoing effort of people to sustain it and the more efficient the process will be (adapted from Fullan, 2006).

show clear links to our vision. We now believe that our vision does meet our original objective of being a central living statement. We are also acutely aware that as a living document it is subject to change, and already in 2007 we are looking at making some minor adjustments.

In 2006 as part of our triennial review ERO wrote, "The vision statement within the board's charter clearly connects school values with learning competency and thinking skills. ... This provides continuity and coherence to school operations".

*Murray Cain, Ranzau School*

See also *Developing a Vision for Red Beach School - a digital story*. [http://www.tki.org.nz/r/nzcurriculum/schl-curriculum-design/red-beach-school\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/nzcurriculum/schl-curriculum-design/red-beach-school_e.php)

“What happens today in education profoundly influences the lives of individuals and the health of whole communities for decades to come. Yet, educational decision-making is mostly about dealing with pressing immediate issues or seeking more efficient ways of maintaining established practice, rather than about shaping the long-term.”

*Think Scenarios, Rethinking Education*  
Ministry of Education, 2006.

## Preparing For Consultation

Leadership and management advisors can provide particular support for first-time principals in helping them to think through strategies for managing community consultation and holding community meetings.

## Testing Your Ideas

Think about making the vision a reality in your school. What impact will the vision have on the day to day functioning of your school? Consider working with your senior management team on these questions.

- What changes will you need to make to your school documents such as reports on students' progress, your planning documents etc?
- What changes will it make to your strategic planning, reporting and self review processes?
- Will the redeveloped vision have implications for your appraisal systems?
- Will target-setting be changed, and how will that affect resource allocation?
- Will you need to review the NAGs in light of changes to your vision for the school?



# Applying Principles

Your school's vision will be strengthened by broad principles like those described on page nine of the draft document: excellence, learning to learn, cultural heritage, equity, connections and coherence. In their final form, the revised principles will guide curriculum implementation and practice in your school. This part of the guide provides some ideas for how you might lead the thinking about and discussions around how principles relate to your school community and context. It will help to focus your planning on meeting the future needs of your students.

## Informing Yourself

With your board members and senior management team, take some time to consider if and how a commitment to principles, like those suggested in the draft document, might change the design and/or implementation of the curriculum in your school.

## Leading Discussions

Run a series of meetings with the different groups in your school's community (your staff, the students, the board of trustees, families/whānau, local community groups and businesses).

- **Ask them to discuss** the principles suggested in the draft document, and give examples to show how these draft principles might influence the teaching and learning in your school.
- **Invite them to suggest** ways in which the whole school community could become more aware of the importance of these draft principles, and of their impact on school practices.
- **Ask them to suggest** how the application of the draft principles would make a difference for students who are currently not achieving their full potential at school.

Provide feedback to the groups showing how you have taken account of their views.

Establish some criteria for each of the principles which will indicate the impact they are having on school practices.

After the draft curriculum is published in its final form, make a date to review the principles and their impact on practice.

### School Story

## Influencing Our School Practices

We wanted to make our school philosophy or vision very transparent and linked to the personal experiences of the staff and students. In 2004 the senior management team invited staff to share their vision for the school. We also used our newsletter to communicate with the wider school community to get their views. This took some time, but in the end we all owned the philosophy.

We invited the senior prefects who are part of our community of school leaders, to run an assembly each week for six weeks where they presented their understandings of the vision of our school to the students.

They focused on how the vision would influence what happened in the school. They used skits and music and other forms of presentation to get their ideas across to the kids. It was fantastic how well they did, and how the kids really enjoyed the assemblies.

All of this consultation enabled us to write our 2007 goals for the school - eight in total – which we have made very public all around the school. This means that everyone can see where we are going, check on what we are doing, and be involved in their review.

*Simon Lamb, Takapuna Grammar School*



# Developing Values

## School Story

### Considering Values: A School's Approach

We were able to use our existing structures to address the new challenges. We asked the School Council to discuss what values they thought underpinned their fund-raising work. For example, how did they choose the recipients?

Then we invited them to discuss the values page from the draft New Zealand Curriculum, to tease out how much they thought the school used those values already and to suggest ways in which the school needed to change in order to incorporate them better into the delivery of the curriculum. Reps from the Council presented their ideas to a staff meeting, and then the staff spent some time working on them, and selected three areas (integrity, care for the environment and respect) to focus on for 2007.

We decided that both staff and the Council would evaluate our progress at the end of the year. The staff are particularly committed to evaluating their progress in terms of showing respect to the students.

*John Heyes, Mangere College*

“Visions (principles and values) cannot be routinely mandated by bureaucratic authority or inspired by personal style. Instead they need to be discovered or forged as a consequence of everyone learning, problem solving, striving to reach a higher moral level of operation and finding sense and meaning ... This process promotes learning and encourages a collective responsibility for the school.”

*Adapted from Sergiovanni, T. (2001).  
Leadership: what's in it for schools?*

The vision is further supported by a set of values (deeply-held beliefs). The values outlined on page 10 of the draft document will help to shape your thinking. These values should be developed by schools to reflect the beliefs of their own community.

Schools have a moral purpose to provide every student with experiences that enable each one to achieve to the best of their ability, and to have their cultural values and background acknowledged so that their identities are affirmed.

This part of the guide provides some ideas for how you might lead the thinking about and discussions around the values that are important to your school community.

## Informing Yourself

Take some time to think about the values you think should underpin day-to-day curriculum implementation in your school. What would teachers and students be doing differently if those values were at the core of the school community?

## Leading Discussions

Run a series of meetings with the different groups in your school's community (your staff, the students, the board of trustees, families, local community groups and businesses):

- **Ask them to discuss** what they think the fundamentally important values are for students in your school to understand.
- **Invite them to consider** how much better the school would function and how much better the students would be achieving if those values were guiding curriculum practices in the school.
- **Ask them to suggest** ways in which the whole school community could become more aware of the values and their potential for improving students' outcomes.

Provide feedback to the groups in the form of draft values. Invite their feedback on the draft.

Publish the final version of the values around the school, in the newsletter, in classrooms.

Make a date to review the values, the extent to which they continue to reflect the deeply held beliefs of the community, and their impact on practice. How do they contribute to making the vision real?

# Planning, Timing and Resources

## A Suggested Time Line

Plan your time line for consultation, discussion, writing and collective decision-making. Some schools may prefer to run the process for revisiting their vision, principles, and values separately. Others may run them concurrently.

Some schools have convened a day retreat to begin these discussions.

This may be easier to organise in smaller schools. Other schools have used their regular, scheduled meetings or hui times to engage in the consultation process.

This suggested time line is shown as a process of stages. Individual schools will determine how long each stage might be. The process will take time.

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform yourself</li> <li>Initial meeting with key support group (see page 3)</li> <li>Send out information and invitations to staff, students, board members, whānau and community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange meetings (or use questionnaires) with each group to listen to their views.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with your key support group (and ancillary help) to coordinate the submissions and develop a draft statement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send out the draft statement, inviting feedback via email, post, phone call, note, or face-to-face (kanohi ki kanohi).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take the final, revised version to staff and board members before publication and display around the school and community.</li> </ul>

### School Story

## From Vision To Implementation

Spring Creek School has a bridge of the Wairau River as its logo. We use this as a metaphor to mean that the school is bridge for learning. During 2006 we had a leadership team discussion on how to link this metaphor to the new draft New Zealand Curriculum to develop a coherent vision for the school.

This resulted in a retreat for all of the staff, teaching and non-teaching, and the board of trustees.

We developed a set of six "bridges to learning" that would underpin the delivery of the school curriculum. The bridges are:

- **Whanaungatanga**, working as a three-way family partnership child, school and family
- **Mohiotanga**, the basics of literacy and numeracy
- **Manākitanga**, character education, building concern for others, respect, truthfulness, kindness, responsibility, compassion
- **Hauora**, physical, emotional and mental health
- **Whia te mātauranga**, personal excellence across all the learning areas
- **He aha**, the what if? enquiry approach, learning to think and thinking to learn.

The staff and board found that this approach fitted perfectly with the areas suggested in the draft document, and it put a commitment to bicultural issues in place. During 2007 we are trialling and reviewing implementation of the concept using a cooperative planning approach. Our next plan is to work out school-wide benchmarks, or learning outcomes, to match the bridges, and to reflect what is important to the community.

Andrew McFarlane, Spring Creek School

## Communicating

You will need to let your community know what processes you will be using to consult them about implementing the NZC. Use your school newsletter to provide the following information:

- The relevant sections of the draft NZC for people to read. For the vision, principles and values they will need pages 8, 9 and 10 of NZC (draft).
- Explain the purpose of the consultation. For example, when a school has a shared and focused vision students' outcomes are more likely to improve.
- Describe the process that you will use, and what their roles will be.
- Provide a time line for the process.
- Indicate how the feedback will be handled.
- Explain how the outcome of the consultation will be published.

## Some Useful Resources

- **Brewerton, M.** (2004). Thoughts on what students need to learn at school Paper prepared for Ministry of Education. [http://www.tki.org.nz/r/nzcurriculum/references\\_e.php#b](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/nzcurriculum/references_e.php#b)
- **Fullan, M., and Starrat, L.** (2006). "Sustaining Leadership in Complex Times: An individual and system solution". In Davies, B. (Ed). *Sustaining and Developing Leaders*. London: Sage.
- **Keown, P., Parker, L., Tiakiwai, S.** (2005) "Values in the New Zealand Curriculum: a literature review". Prepared for the Ministry of Education. <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=7010&data=1>
- **Marzano, R., Waters, T. and McNulty, B.** (2005). *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results*. Alexandria and Aurora: ASCD/McREL.
- **Rogers, E. M.** (1995). *Diffusion of Innovations*. (4th ed). New York: The Free Press.