The development of GOOD SCHOOL LEADERS

We have devoted most of this edition to two feature articles dealing with the issue of school leaders and their development. The first is a fairly detailed summary of McKinsey & Company's 2010 publication 'Capturing the leadership premium: How the world's top school systems are building leadership capacity for the future', which provides useful insights into the kinds of programmes that some of the world's best education systems are putting into place in an effort to support and develop the current and future school leaders. The second is a recently released draft policy document with the title 'The South African Standard for Principalship', which was published with a call for comments as a General Notice in a *Government Gazette* of 7 August 2014. The South African Standard for Principalship document consists mostly of long lists of things that it suggests principals should be expected to know and do. Given the extent of these lists and the range of issues that they suggest principals should be expected to address in their schools, it should come as no surprise to the department that few people want the job. What is more concerning about this document is that it appears to be more the product of a brainstorming session by departmental bureaucrats who have never sat in a principal's chair than the product of careful research of best international practice or of dialogue with principal's organisations and people with expertise in this field. Given the fact that the quality of school leadership accounts for as much as 30% of within school factors that influence learner performance, getting these standards right should be a departmental priority. The limited period that the notice allowed for comment – the date of publication was 7 August with the closing date for comment 29 August – is probably insufficient for many people who may otherwise have been in a position to contribute meaningfully to improving its content and structure.

Also in this edition is an article with the title 'The worth-your-time test', which we hope will help busy principals and other school leaders to better manage their in-trays. It provides some useful advice on decision-making about the kinds of things that may end up in your in-tray but that probably belong elsewhere. We hope you will find it useful.

For the first time in SM&L we also carry a book review based on a Kindle edition of a book purchased through Amazon. For those who don't use Kindle editions or eBooks that can also be read on tablet computers, we would like to recommend this reading format, particularly for books of this nature. Not only is it cost-effective – the Kindle edition cost just $9.07 (about R100) – but it also is more green because there is no paper involved. The author of the book, Simon Sinek, has also presented a TEDx talk on the same topic, which you can download on YouTube. The download details are provided at the end of the book review.

Enjoy the read.

Building
LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Over the past decade McKinsey & Company, an international consultancy, has produced a number of noteworthy reports on education-related issues, with perhaps the most significant of these being their 2007 publication 'How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top'. Their November 2010 report 'Capturing the leadership premium: How the world's top school systems are building leadership capacity for the future'[1] provides fascinating and important insights into the way in which some the world's public education systems are working to identify and develop the leadership capacity of prospective school principals. This emphasis on school leadership is not surprising given the significant evidence from research that identifies school leadership as a key driver of learner performance and school success.

The three authors of the report, Sir Michael Barber, Fenton Whelan and Michael Clark, are all highly regarded authorities on schooling and school systems, and the report is a summary of their findings from the International Review of School Leadership that they undertook during the course of 2010 on behalf of McKinsey & Company and in collaboration with the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, which is based in Nottingham, England. The review represented one of the first attempts to compare school leadership across a range of high-performing educations systems. The review included interviews with experts, policymakers and leaders of school systems, together with a survey of 1 850 leaders from eight countries. Those surveyed included leaders of high-performing schools, leaders who worked in district or local authority offices and randomly selected school leaders. The research team also completed a thorough literature review of research associated with the nature and impact of school leadership.

In preparing the report the authors deliberately avoided direct comparisons between school systems and they point out in their introduction that contextual differences between systems mean that it is not possible to identify 'best practice'. They acknowledge, however, that the evidence suggests that good leadership is the same irrespective of context and that what works in leadership is surprisingly consistent across systems, with their studies covering systems as widely dispersed geographically and socially as those of Australia, Pakistan and Africa.

Although their literature review covered schooling systems from across the globe, the focus of their review were eight schooling systems that either perform strongly on international tests or that have shown good improvement on international tests and that they identified as demonstrating good school leadership practices. The authors describe these eight schooling systems as collectively being 'geographically diverse and structurally mixed', with a balance between 'centralized and devolved' systems. A table summarising some of the features and statistics of these schooling systems appears below.

Table 1: Overview of the selected school systems (Based on Exhibit 1)

	Alberta (Canada)	England (UK)	Netherlands	New York (USA)	New Zealand	Ontario (Canada)	Singapore	Victoria (Australia)
Population *(millions)*	3.5	50	16.5	8.4	4.4	13	5.0	5.4
Subdivisions	62 school boards	150 local authorities	12 provinces	5 boroughs/ 12 districts	None	72 school boards	None	9 regional offices
Number of schools[1]	2 000	17 200 3 300	7 500 650	1 600	2 600	4 026 897	174 154	2 279
Average school size	272	239 973	250 1 350	688	308	350 1 000	1 524 1 298	370
Number of learners *(millions)*	0.6	4.1 3.2	2.6	1.1	0.8	2.1	0.5	0.9
Number of teachers	39 535	201 000 209 400	220 000	80 000	38 312	120 000	25 624	40 000
Learners per teacher[2]	15.2	17.8	11.8	13.8	20.9	17.5	19.5	22.5

NOTES

1. Where there are two numbers, the top number represents the number of primary schools and the bottom number represents the number of secondary schools.

2. We calculated this by simply dividing the number of learners by the number of teachers. This number is therefore not an indication of class size.

The review process focussed particularly on the following elements of school systems and school leadership:

- The importance of school leadership
- The role of school leaders
- The identification and development of potential leaders
- The selection and placement of school leaders
- The development and opportunities available to serving school leaders
- The role and development of middle-tier leaders.
- These are individuals who hold leadership positions in district offices and who have some level of responsibility in the appointment and development of the principals of their schools.

A summary of the findings of the review in these elements is given below.

1. The importance of school leadership

Evidence supporting the significance of the impact of good school leadership on school success was very strong, and the perceived value of school leadership as a driver of school improvement efforts has grown over the past ten years. One Singaporean official summarised their perspective on school leadership thus: 'One of the key revelations over the past ten years is that school leadership is not just an HR issue – it is a strategic issue.' The issue of school leadership is considered to be a top priority in Singapore, with district officials looking to ramp up their efforts to develop school leaders and improve the leadership capacity of those currently in office.

Other evidence cited in the review included:

- An analysis of Ofsted school inspection results in England, which showed that for every 100 schools identified as having good leadership and management, 93 also had good standards of learner performance; while for every 100 schools identified as having poor leadership and management just one will have good standards of achievement
- Evidence from quantitative studies in the United States that show that the only variables that have a greater influence on learner performance than school leadership are socio-economic factors and the quality of teaching. One of the more recent studies found that approximately 60% of a school's impact on learner achievement is attributable to the effectiveness of the principal together with that of the teachers. Teaching quality was calculated as contributing 35% to this success and the leadership qualities of the principal 25%. It is worth noting in this regard that teaching quality, simply defined as what teachers do

in the classroom, is heavily dependent on the leadership qualities of the principal and that the principal's contribution may well be greater than the calculated figure of 25%.

- A survey undertaken by the OECD in 23 countries, which showed that better instructional leadership by principals resulted in significantly benefits in schools
- Research on low-cost private schools in India, Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya, which showed that determined and accountable school leaders had a greater influence on learning than school contexts or other inputs
- Findings from a study of improving schools in England that found that 'there are statistically significant empirical and qualitative robust associations between heads' educational values, qualities and their strategic actions and improvement in school conditions leading to improvement in student outcomes'.

One interesting comment made by the authors of the report is that while the significance of leadership in the performance of organisations is now taken for granted in 'business, politics, the military and almost every other area of public life', it is still a subject of debate in education.

The authors also make the point that school leadership is likely to become an even more critical issue in the future, and they base this on two trends:

- An international trend toward the devolution of leadership and management authority to the level of the school (as opposed to centralised or district-level authority)
- An increase in the complexity of the skills and knowledge that children are required to master for the 21st century together with the growing range of educational issues that schools are expected to address in what is becoming an increasingly complex and diverse world.

They also note that no one country or schooling system has yet managed to establish a model that is able to deliver consistent quality leadership across the system, a model that makes it possible to develop and select the best leaders.

2. The roles that school leaders play

In their report, the authors list eleven practices and six beliefs, attitudes and personal attributes that are a common feature of the manner in which successful school leaders do the business of leadership. These are listed below. In addition to these there is one leadership activity that stands

out in terms of the effect it has on student learning and that is the ability of the principal to develop his/her teachers. The strong link between teacher development and learner performance that has been established through research should make teacher development the number one priority for all school leaders.

Practices:
- Building a shared vision and sense of purpose
- Setting high expectations for performance
- Role-modelling behaviours and practices
- Designing and managing the teaching and learning programme
- Establishing effective teams within the school staff, and distributing leadership among the school staff
- Understanding and developing people
- Protecting teachers from issues that would distract them from their work
- Establishing school routines and norms for behaviour
- Monitoring performance
- Connecting the school to parents and the community
- Recognising and rewarding achievement.

Beliefs, attitudes and personal attributes:
- Focussed on student achievement; puts children ahead of personal or political interests
- Resilient and persistent in goals, but adaptable to context and people
- Willing to develop a deep understanding of people and context
- Willing to take risks and challenge accepted beliefs and behaviours
- Self-aware and able to learn
- Optimistic and enthusiastic.

The authors also reported that their findings on the roles that effective school leaders play re-confirmed what is already known about the patterns of behaviour that are associated with good leadership across school contexts and systems. These include:

- The perspective of most principals that setting vision and direction, supporting the development of staff, and ensuring that effective management processes are in place are the key drivers of success in their schools.
- The view that all principals and particularly high performers are motivated by their ability to make a difference in their schools. It was also

found that experience of leadership and exposure to role models has a big influence on the leadership development of high-performing principals.

- The finding that high-performing principals focus more on instructional leadership and on developing their teachers. These principals also tend to hold the view that their ability to coach others and support their development is a critical skill for effective leadership.
- The finding that high-performing principals are more likely to report that they greatly enjoy teaching.
- Evidence that high-performing principals are distinguished less by who they are than by what they do, although both are seen as being important. High-performing principals also tend to work similar hours to those worked by their less well-performing peers, but spend more time working with the people of their school. These people-related activities include walking the corridors of their schools, coaching their teachers and interacting with parents, pupils and district staff.
- Evidence that high-performing principals are mostly enthusiastic supporters of the idea of assisting other schools and are also more likely to become involved in principal and school support processes.

Interestingly, in terms of differences between high performing principals across the systems studied, the principals of Singapore and New York stood out across a number of dimensions. They found that principals from these two schooling systems:

- Spent less time in their offices
- Focussed more on the coaching and development of their staff
- Were promoted faster and with less experience than in most of the other systems studied.

3. The selection and placement of school leaders

The manner in which principals are selected and appointed varies considerably across the eight education systems that were studied. In most of the systems the selection decision on who to appoint was made either by some form of selection committee, which would include district official and elected community members, or elected school boards as is the case for public schools in this country. Typically the selection process follows some form of interview of the candidates but may also include some form of presentation by the applicants and a question-and-answer session. Candidates in Alberta are required to complete a written test. For most of the systems studied the applicants apply

for and are appointed to a specific school as is the case in South Africa. In terms of qualifications, most of the systems prescribe a minimum qualification level for principal applicants but there is no minimum prescribed qualification in New Zealand, the Netherlands or Victoria (Australia), although one must assume that the applicants would all at least have a teaching qualification, which is again similar to the requirements for principal applicants in this country. Two of the systems (Alberta, Canada and New York, USA) require a minimum of a Masters degree and three of the systems have the requirement that prospective principals must have completed some form of Professional Qualification for principals (England, New York and Ontario). Of the eight systems studied, the one that is most different in terms of its requirements is Singapore, where selection decisions are made by the Ministry of Education, which also matches principals to schools. Candidate principals in Singapore are selected on the basis of their record of service, a 360° assessment, observation at the National Institute of Education, the completion of a set of 'situational' exercises and a panel interview.

4. The identification and development of potential leaders

One of the common themes of the report is the extent to which these highly-rated education systems work to identify and develop potential leaders early on in their teaching careers rather than through a selection process. This was emphasised by a quote from a system leader in New York, who remarked as follows: 'The best way to select principals is to watch them work. After six months, you know who you want.' This model of leadership development mirrors that used by many of the world's best corporates, which work to identify potential leaders early in their career and then track and manage their progress to ensure that they develop the detailed knowledge and full package of skills that they will need to succeed at the highest levels of the organisation.

Examples of the kinds of leadership development programmes that are used by these education systems are the following:

• In Ontario (Canada) all districts are expected to have succession and development plans for school leaders.

• New York (USA) has established a New York Leadership Academy. Amongst other projects this offers an Aspiring Principals Programme, which is a 14-month programme that includes both theory and experiential learning. The instruction takes place in three phases:

  - A six-week summer simulation of school leadership challenges (this takes place during the long summer break that is characteristic of the American public school system)
  - A ten-month school-based residency where

the aspiring principal works under the guidance of an experienced high-performing head

  - A pre-placement planning session, which once again takes place during the summer break prior to the start of the school year and is used to help the newly appointed head make the transition into the school that he/she has been appointed to.

In addition to these measures, the New York Leadership Academy also runs tailored coaching programmes for experienced school leaders and trains principals to open small schools in high-need areas.

• In Singapore schools are responsible for identifying potential leaders, with these potential leaders normally identified during the first five years of their teaching career. Those identified are put on a 'leadership track', which provides them with opportunities to take on additional leadership opportunities together with appropriate formal training to help them develop their leadership skills. These potential leaders are also expected to be 'apprenticed' to the leaders in their schools. Vice-principals are also offered the opportunity to participate in a six-month course designed to help them build their strategic leadership skills. Part of the reason for this is that vice-principals in Singapore mostly perform administrative roles.

• Public schools in England are the responsibility of their local authority and it is the local authorities that are expected to develop some form of succession planning for their schools. They are supported in this by the National College of School Leadership, which is highly regarded internationally for the quality of the training that it provides.

One of the positive features of these principal-development programmes, besides the improvement in the leadership qualities of the principals that they produce, is the extent to which principals who have completed the programmes and who have subsequently gone on to take up headships, acknowledge the benefits of the training and support that they received. Most described it as a major contributor to their development. These leaders also reported that being 'identified as a potential leader' and being provided with 'opportunities to take on leadership responsibility' also contributed significantly to their development and their willingness to accept appointments as heads of schools.

The McKinsey & Company report on their international review of school leadership development and practice provides valuable insights and useful models and approaches drawn from some of the most successful education systems globally. Our own public education

system could learn a great deal from this report, particularly if it were to follow up with more in-depth investigation of those systems that were found to be particularly successful in developing their principals. Disappointingly, it would appear that those people who should be responsible for formulating policy for leadership development in our public schools, something that is sorely needed, have done very little research on the topic, if their recently released draft policy regulation the 'South African Standards for Principalship' is anything to go by. The regulation was published by the Minister as General Notice 636 of 2014 in *Government Gazette* No. 37897,

published on 7 August 2014 together with a call to comment on the draft regulation. The closing date for comments was 29 August 2014, allowing very little time for a proper study of and response to the document. We carry a brief summary of the main points of the draft regulations below.

NOTES

1. The report can be downloaded from http://mckinseyonsociety.com/capturing-the-leadership-premium/

The South African Standard for Principalship

On 7 August 2014, Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, released a new draft policy document with the title 'South African Standard for Principalship'. The regulations were published together with a call for comment on the said standards as General Notice 636 of 2014 in *Government Gazette* No. 37897.[1] The closing date for comments was 29 August 2014, allowing very little time for a proper study of and response to the document.

Although the deadline has passed, we have listed the main points of these draft regulations not only as we believe that they are of interest to our readers but also because we have a concern about the manner in which they are couched and of their value if they were to be signed into policy in their present form.

In the introductory paragraphs to the document the DBE sets out why it sees the need for a document of this kind, which includes the following points:

• 'an imperative to establish a clear and agreed understanding of what the South African education system expects of those who are, or aspire to be, entrusted with the leadership and management of schools'. They make the point that there is no clear current job description for principals, neither are there performance standards, although some definitions of the work of principals are included in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) and Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) documents.

• The 'South African Standard for Principalship' document is an attempt by the DBE to address this need in a way that 'fully defines' the role of school principals, together with expectation in relation to the key elements of professionalism, image and competencies.

• Once the job description and performance standards have been clearly defined, these will

be used by the DBE to help identify and address the professional development needs of principals. Once the roles, responsibilities and performance standards for principals have been clearly articulated, these can then be used to formulate a policy framework that can be used to establish a co-ordinated programme for the development of aspiring school leaders.

Included in the introductory paragraphs is an acknowledgement by the DBE that the transformation of an education system requires 'profound change in the culture and practices of schools', and that in this country there are additional constraints that make the achievement of this change more difficult. These include a range of complex economic, political, social and health factors that impact on communities in different ways. This diversity of needs impacts on the manner in which principals and other school leaders must operate and in the way in which they are required to exercise their leadership and management skills. In order to address these differing requirements, the DBE, together with their provincial counterparts, intend to provide principals and other school leaders with differing forms of support. These will include:

• training to enhance the skills and competencies of current principals

• improvements in the manner in which principals are recruited and selected

• the introduction of mentoring for newly appointed principals

• programmes for the professional development of deputies and middle managers

• the twinning of newly appointed principals with experienced principals.

The 'South African Standard for Principalship', as set out in the document, comprises four elements:

1. The core purpose of principalship

This is defined as follows: The core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high-quality teaching and learning take place and which promote the highest possible standards of learner achievement.

2. Educational rights and social values

These are described as: Those values, both national and context specific, which underpin all that happens in the school and which inform everything that the principal does in leading and managing the school. The document suggests that while some of these educational rights and social values would derive from the local context of the school, most would be drawn from the South African Constitution and those set out in the Department's own 'Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy', which was first published in 2001. The 10 items listed in the document are provided in the panel below.

Educational rights and values

- The centrality of learning as the core purpose of all that happens in the school
- The potential of the school to inspire in its learners a commitment to learning as a lifelong process
- The right of all learners to have access to relevant and meaningful learning experiences and opportunities
- Belief that the school and its learners are capable of continuous improvement
- Responsiveness to the diverse needs of the school community and the wider community that it serves
- The right of all members of the school's
- community to active participation in the life of the school
- The right of all stakeholders to the quality of service delivery to which they are entitled, anchored in the principles of Batho Pele
- The right of all members of the school community to be treated with respect and dignity
- The right of all members of the school community to be safe and secure in a nurturing environment
- The importance of fostering the well-being of all learners within their school and the wider community

3. Key areas of principalship

Eight key areas, drawn from the QMS document are listed. These, the document suggest, provide a generic description of the role of principals and that these need to be interpreted in a manner that ensures that principals perform their duties so that the particular context of the school and the priorities of the South African schooling system are accommodated. The document elaborates on each of the eight key areas by providing what it describes as 'illustrative' indicators of the 'particular knowledge requirement' that 'underpin and inform actions'. We assume that these descriptors are the 'Standard of Principalship from which the title of the document is derived. 'However', despite a careful reading of the document we remain unclear about the specifics of what is encompassed by the Standard and were not helped by the note on page 15, which reads as follows: 'The Standard identifies some typical actions that principals need to take and provides some illustrative indication of related knowledge requirements. However, it would be possible, if required, for programme designers, and those making use of the Standard for other purposes, to expand and reconfigure variously the action and knowledge components into "practical", "foundational" and "reflexive" competencies in line with the Norms and Standards for Educators document: *Government Gazette* no. 20844 Feb 2000.'

The eight key areas of principalship as listed in the document are:

- Leading the learning school
- Shaping the direction and development of the school
- Managing quality and securing accountability
- Developing and empowering self, others and the wellness of staff
- Managing the school as an organisation
- Working with and for the immediate school community, as well as the broader community
- Managing human resources (staff) in the school
- Management and advocacy of extramural activities.

We have provided an example of one of the sets of illustrative indicators (Leading the learning school) in the panel below. The illustrative indicators for each of the eight key areas are grouped for each key areas under the headings 'Knowledge' and 'Actions'. Taken together they form an extraordinary list of items, which, according to the document, represent some but not all of the elements of the 'Standard' of principalship. As one colleague put it after a brief perusal of the list, the only elements that he could think of that had been omitted were the ability to walk on water and to raise the dead!

Leading the learning school

Knowledge requirements
(Curriculum management; Teaching; Information promotion: Technology (ICT) in learning; Human resource support):

The school principal needs to know about:

- The National Curriculum Statement and the values and goals that shape it

- Practices of effective teaching and learning that support the delivery of the National Curriculum Statement

- Strategies for the effective monitoring and evaluation of performance in relation to the National Curriculum Statement

- Methods of accumulating data, and of data analysis, relevant to monitoring and evaluating performance in relation to the National Curriculum Statement

- Using evidence derived from research and practice to inform the improvement of teaching and learning and the enhancement of a learning culture

- Using technology to support teaching, learning and assessment

- Accessing and utilising resources to support teaching and learning

- Strategies and approaches for the development of a learning culture in the school and for raising levels of achievement and excellence in any context

- Building and developing a nurturing and supportive environment for effective teaching and learning

- Approaches and current trends in building and developing the school as a learning organisation

- Social, political, economic and health conditions of the school and wider community that impact upon individual learning behaviours, needs, attendance and well-being

- Approaches to managing specific learning needs, learner behaviours and attendance

- Approaches to ensuring equity in learner access to high-quality teaching and learning

Actions

The principal is able to:

- Demonstrate and model a personal commitment to learning and the maintenance of high standards

- Promote strategies to encourage high expectations and to set challenging targets for achievement

- Challenge underperformance, ensuring appropriate corrective action and follow-up

- Facilitate the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all classroom practice

- Ensure that sound data at class and school level is collected and used to inform the continuous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, together with learner progress and achievement

- Keep up to date with thinking and current debates through reading professional books, journals and publications

- Share and transmit ideas and stimulate discussion on pedagogic and welfare issues with all staff

- Ensure that educators have a full understanding of the National Curriculum Statement and possess attendant skills related to teaching, monitoring and evaluation

- Encourage ongoing debate among staff on the development of teaching and learning in the school and about effecting improvements

- Promote a positive learning culture and ethos within the school and demonstrate an understanding of the principles and practice of effective teaching and learning through effective curriculum management

- Ensure that teaching and learning are at the heart of the school's strategic planning and management of all resources

- Continuously strive to build and develop the school as a learning organisation

- Ensure that educators have opportunities to access quality professional development in order to improve their teaching

- Work with the school's community to assure a school environment that is safe and secure, promotes well-being and is conducive to effective teaching and learning
- Demonstrate leadership through engaging with staff and sharing knowledge of effective teaching and learning in the context of the South African curriculum documents
- Lead others so that school plans and objectives are achieved
- Provide advice and guidance to professional staff on educational issues

- Promote achievement of the school Mission Statement
- Act in accordance with the Constitution of South Africa, Laws, Regulations and Code of Conduct for learners and educators
- Initiate and manage changes necessary for the development of the school
- Identify problems and challenges that affect teaching and learning
- Maintain good discipline in schools

4. Personal and professional attributes

The personal and professional attributes are essentially a set of statements that describe the manner in which principals are expected to exercise their leadership and management responsibilities. The document makes it clear that although the list that it provides is presented as an 'illustrative' list, the items listed are deemed to be those that 'are considered necessary in all contexts for *all* principals'. The list is of items provided in the panel below.

The document suggests that taken together, these four elements help determine the manner in which principals exercise their leadership and management responsibilities and are likely to determine:

- Why a principal takes a particular course of action
- What the main functions of principalship are
- How these main functions are effectively fulfilled.

Personal and professional attributes

These attributes are those that *all* principals are expected to display in *all* contexts:

- Demonstrates a commitment to the core values and vision of the school and of schooling in South Africa and models these consistently
- Demonstrates a commitment to the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of school life and to the building of a safe, secure and healthy learning environment
- Thinks and acts strategically, creatively and insightfully and communicates effectively
- Inspires, challenges and motivates others and is committed to the development,

empowerment and support of all within the school's community
- Encourages participative decision-making, teamwork and team-building
- Demonstrates integrity and fairness in all dealings with people and in the management and deployment of financial and other resources
- Exhibits fair-mindedness, patience, empathy, compassion, respect and humility in all dealings with others and in the promotion and protection of the interests of educators and learners
- Shows adaptability and responsiveness to

We have tried in this article to provide a relatively brief but sufficiently detailed overview of the Standard of Principalship document for the benefit of our readers who have not had an opportunity to peruse it. We have real concerns about the extent and nature of the document and hold the view that it will achieve very little in its present form. Our hope is that organisations such as the South African Principals Association and the teacher unions, together with the education faculties of our universities have taken the time to comment on it and that these will result in a re-think about its structure and content. In our view, the purpose of a document of this kind would be better served if it were briefer and more focussed on the key areas of principalship that have the greatest impact on teaching quality as this is where our schooling system is most deficient. A good place to start would be a thorough study of how the principals of the world's best-performing school systems spend their time. For more about this we suggest you read our summary of the 2010 report by McKinsey & Company with the title 'Capturing the leadership premium: How the world's top school systems are building leadership capacity for the future'.[2]

change and has resilience and political astuteness in situations of ambiguity, adversity or opposition

- Makes professional and managerial decisions based on informed judgements and takes decisive action
- Exhibits self-confidence, maturity and courage in decision-making and action and shows resourcefulness, initiative and determination in seeking solutions to problems
- Shows the ability for self-reflection and a commitment to ongoing personal and professional self-development

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Department of Basic Education, The South African Standard for Principalship: call for comments on the South African Standard for Principalship, Government Notice 636 of 2014, *Government Gazette* No. 37897 (7 August 2014).

2. The full report can be downloaded from http://mckinseyonsociety.com/capturing-the-leadership-premium/

The WORTH-YOUR-TIME test

In a blog posted on the *Harvard Business Review* website, blogs.hbr.org/peter-bregman, Peter Bregman, the CEO of Bregman Partners (a global leadership development and change management firm), provides salient advice on how best to deal with the increasing demands on our time and on the manner in which to best manage these demands. The advice he provides was in response to a survey of the top 400 leaders of an organisation that employed approximately 120 000 people. Nearly 95% of these leaders identified three items that wasted their time most. These were: unnecessary meetings, unimportant emails and prolonged PowerPoint presentations. He also makes the point that working with people takes time, at least partly because every person that you deal with will have a different set of priorities and that although their priorities may be of interest to you they are unlikely to be the same as your particular set of priorities. However, as a leader, you have a level of responsibility to support a colleague, particularly if he or she requests assistance.

His proposal for dealing with these kinds of demands is to ask yourself three questions:

- Am I the right person?
- Is this the right time?
- Do I have enough information?

If the answer to any of these questions is 'no' then don't acquiesce. Instead either pass the task on to someone else – 'the right person'; reschedule the task/meeting for another time – 'the right time'; or postpone the decision until you have the information that you may need to respond appropriately – 'I have enough information'.

The kinds of requests and interruptions that Bregman describes are typical of the kinds of interruptions that principals routinely face on a daily basis and that prevent them from focussing on their priority tasks of ensuring that teachers are providing learners with a high-quality learning experience for every lesson of every day.

However, before principals can implement the proposals that Bregman has suggested, they need to get their own house in order. This includes the establishment of an appropriate management structure within the school, with the roles and responsibilities of those who occupy management positions within the school clearly defined and properly delegated. It is neither fair nor constructive to direct a person who has approached you with a request to another member of your management team if he or she is either incapable of assisting and/or lacks the capacity or authority to do so. If this happens, you are likely to end up with a worse problem and one that is likely to play out like this: Person 'A' approaches you for help. Having used Bregman's three-question 'worth-my-time' test, you refer 'A' to person 'B' who, in terms of the school's management structure, should be the person best equipped to deal with the request of person 'A'. But because person 'B' is either not competent to help 'A' or is not sure whether she has the authority to assist 'A', she comes to you for help. The net result is that one request for help has now become two requests for help for the same issue. If this is happening in your school, you need to undertake a thorough review of your management structures and the manner in which individuals have been allocated to the position that they fill. You also need to review the way in which you delegate duties to ensure that every member of your management team is both

competent to perform the duties that have been assigned to them and that they understand the scope and limits of their authority.

The second question relates to the issue of time and the manner in which you schedule your time. Frequent interruptions, whether they involve phone calls, the checking of messages on your cellphone or responding to emails, are all enormous time-wasters, and although people who multitask think that they are being efficient, research shows that multitasking is a myth and that what we are actually doing when we 'multitask' is task-switching. People who focus on one task and work on it until it is completed before moving on to the next are far more efficient in their use of time than those who multitask, but there is one proviso to this and that applies to whatever you do: focus your time on those aspects of your job that bring the biggest rewards in terms of the time and effort that you devote to them. For teachers and principals this means devoting time and effort to tasks that will help learners achieve their potential, both academically and as caring, participating citizens of this country.

The third question tests the issue of how you and your school collect, store and manage information, including data and information held in documents such as department circulars, CAPS documents and mark schedules. If you are constantly being approached for requests about information that is already available within the precincts of the school, be it in the store room, which may be located in your office, in paper-based files or stored electronically on your or your secretary's computer, on the school intranet or on the wider internet, including district, and departmental websites/portals, you need to find ways to make this information and/or data more readily available to teachers and members of your management team who may need it. For data of whatever type to be useful it needs to be accessible, and the best measure of the efficiency of any data storage system is not how much data it stores but rather on its availability in a format that is meaningful and simple to interpret and use. So if you are approached for assistance by a member of your team for help with information you should not only reschedule the meeting for a time when you have the information that they require but also consider whether there is a need to provide the individual with directions on how to locate any similar information that they may need in the future.

Remaining focussed on one's primary responsibilities is a challenge for all principals because schools are such people-intense organisations. Peter Bregman's suggestions for managing requests for help provide one way of addressing the challenge of the constant interruptions that are part and parcel of every principal's working day.
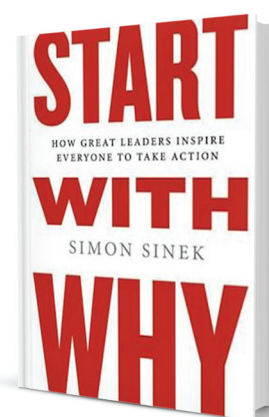

BOOKREVIEW

The review copy was a Kindle edition from Amazon.com and cost $9.07.
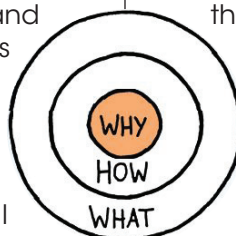
START WITH WHY

HOW GREAT LEADERS INSPIRE EVERYONE TO TAKE ACTION

by Simon Sinek

In this, his first book, best-selling author and motivational speaker Simon Sinek explores the nature of leadership and, in particular, why it is that we are inspired more by some people, messages and organisations than by others. Based on his own observations and his study of the behaviours of inspirational leaders and their impact on the people that they lead, he has devised a leadership model that he calls the 'Golden Circle', which he uses to explain what these inspirational leaders do and why it is that their actions inspire commitment to their cause or products. He provides some insight into his view of leadership in a brief foreword to the book, which reads as follows:

- There are leaders and there are those who lead.
- Leaders hold a position of power or influence.
- Those who inspire us.
- Whether individuals or organisations, we follow those who lead not because we have to, but because we want to.
- We follow those who lead not for them, but for ourselves.

In his introduction to the book he makes it clear that the book was written as a guide for those who are interested in developing their own leadership capacity by helping them understand what it is that makes individuals loyal followers of a product or brand, or commit to a cause. The choice of leaders that Sinek uses to explain his model is interesting, not simply because of who they are but also because each of the leaders he has selected worked, at least initially, with a close ally and trusted partner. So, for example, he discusses Wilbur and Orville Wright, whose inspiration produced the first aircraft to carry a man in flight; Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs, the cofounders of Apple Inc., who first turned personal computers into must-have commodities of simplicity and style; Dr Martin Luther King and Ralph Abernathy, the friend and mentor of Dr King, who together inspired the civil rights movement in the USA; and Walt Disney and his elder brother Roy, who together created the Disney film and entertainment empire.

Sinek classifies inspirational leaders – those who are able to galvanise people into action to follow their dream – as what he calls 'Why-type' leaders. They are the visionaries who are able to use words and metaphors to conjure up ideas that capture our imagination. They do this, not by appealing to our sense of reason and logic, but to our emotions. Using some of the latest research from the neurosciences, Sinek explains that it is the limbic section of our brain, which in evolutionary terms is also the most ancient part of our brain, that governs and projects our emotional being and is responsible for feelings such as trust and loyalty. The limbic section of the brain exerts a powerful influence over our neocortex, which evolved more recently and is responsible for rational and analytical thought and for language. Sinek postulates that one of the reasons humans find it so difficult to express their emotions in words (language) is because the part of the brain responsible for emotions is not the same part of the brain responsible for language. It is the power of the limbic brain that drives desire for certain objects and products and the decision to purchase them despite the fact that logically we may neither need them nor be able to afford the cost of them. It is also the limbic brain that produces

the emotional response that leads people to follow inspirational leaders. They follow these leaders not because of who they are but because of the emotional appeal of the idea or concept that they promote or represent. Sinek calls this the 'Why' and Dr Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream ...' is a perfect example of the point Sinek makes. Dr King's followers were drawn to him not because of who he was but because they wanted to be part of and share in his dream and the hope that it gave them of a better future.

But Why-type people are typically dreamers and may not always have their feet planted firmly on the ground, which is why they need what Sinek calls 'How-type' people to help them achieve success. How-type people are typically much more grounded in reality. They are well organised and have the ability to build the structures and systems that are needed to bring the vision or dreams of their more creative partners to life.

Steve Wozniak was the engineer that designed the kind of desktop computer that Steve Jobs dreamed of and who helped put in place the business systems and processes that were to become first Apple Computer and then Apple Inc. when Apple moved from being a manufacturer of desktop computers that were both stylish and simple to operate to a company that made sleek and stylish devices designed to make our lives easier. A good example of their effectiveness in this regard is when they launched their mp3 player with the slogan '1 000 songs in your pocket'. It is worth noting in this regard that Apple were not the inventors of the mp3 player.

Ralph Abernathy, long-time friend and mentor of Martin Luther King, engineered the huge gatherings and civil disobedience campaigns that gave the Civil Rights Movement the momentum it needed to bring about the changes that followed in the USA. But it was Martin Luther King's ability to articulate his dream that brought the people together. They believed in the dream and wanted to be part of the change that he spoke of so eloquently at the Lincoln Memorial.

As Sinek explains, 'We are drawn to leaders and organisations that are good at communicating what they believe. Their ability to make us feel we belong, to make us feel special, safe and not alone is part of what gives them the ability to inspire us.'

The third and final layer of Sinek's model is the 'What' layer and he emphasises the point that for organisations to be successful, the 'Why', the 'How' and the 'What' need to speak to each other. 'Why' we do things is the dream or vision, 'How'

we do things represents the processes we follow in order to turn the dream into a reality, while the 'What' represents our actions. Importantly, the way in which people act in fulfilling or representing that dream must properly demonstrate what it stands for. The Civil Rights Movement chose to use non-violent forms of civil disobedience and protest, a form of protest that helped reinforce what Martin Luther King stood for. Apple continues to market its products as desirable devices for people who value their individuality.

Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action is a fascinating read, full of ideas and stories about leaders and leadership that are likely to challenge the way you think about leadership and the kinds of strategies that leaders use to inspire and motivate their organisations and teams. It may also help you to re-examine the way in which you sell your school to your parents, your learners, your teachers and your community.

At $9.07 (approximately R100) for the Kindle edition, it's a good buy.

For a taste of what Sinek has to offer you can also download his TEDx talk 'How great leaders inspire action' from http://www.ted.com/ talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_ action?language=en

Join our
WRITING TEAM
and earn R500!

Like most magazines of this nature, those who send us material for possible publication get to see their name and their work in print, but receive no monetary incentives for material that we publish.

We are planning to change that in the future in the hope that we may be able to attract more contributions from our readers. As an incentive, we are offering a small honorarium of R500 for every article that we publish.

Our preference is for articles that focus on the theory and practice of school leadership and we are particularly interested in publishing material that deals with new and innovative teaching methodologies that schools have implemented and how the implementation has been managed from a leadership perspective.

We prefer articles of between 800 and 1 200 words in length and have in-house editors who will clean up your grammar and spelling if you have concerns about that kind of thing, so why not give it a try?
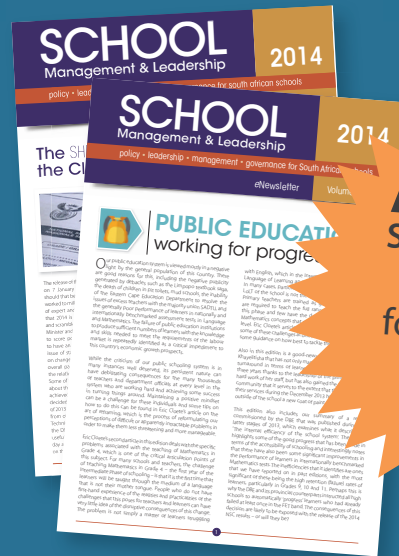
Alan Clarke
General Editor

SUBSCRIPTION **FORM**

JUTA

To subscribe to
School Management & Leadership, contact us
by telephone, email, post or fax:

JUTA CUSTOMER SERVICES

Postal: PO Box 14373,
              Lansdowne, 7779

Tel: (021) 659 2300 | Fax: (021) 659 2360
Email: cserv@juta.co.za

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION is R300 for 10 COPIES emailed from February to November.

Title: _____

Leadership position: (eg. Principal) _____

First name: _____

Surname: _____

Telephone: (   ) _____ Fax: (   ) _____

Email: _____

Cell: (   ) _____

Postal address: _____

_____

_____

_____

Suburb/City: _____ Postal code: _____

Institution (if linked to an institution): _____