



PRINCIPALS AUSTRALIA
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

EMPOWERED LEADERS CREATING THE FUTURE: The Impact of Profession Led Leadership Learning in NSW.

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ABSTRACT

There is currently a need for further evidence regarding professional learning methodologies that enable the development of school leadership effectiveness. There is also the opportunity to explore, the largely untapped, potential impact of professional association led professional learning.

This paper examines the effectiveness of professional learning strategies in supporting the development of current and aspiring school leaders. The paper places a particular emphasis on the impact of professional association led learning that includes the engagement of high performing principals as facilitators, the use of portfolios of evidence to validate learning, and the effectiveness of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* as the basis on which to frame impactful leadership learning. The impact of these factors is explored through the lens of the New South Wales Primary Principals' Association (NSW PPA) Principal Credential.

The NSW PPA Principal Credential (the Credential) is a professional learning program based on the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* and aligned to the key professional accountabilities of school leaders as they lead improvement, innovation and change.

INTRODUCTION

School leadership has a significant impact on school improvement. When leaders develop their capacity to improve the effectiveness of teaching, they enhance their impact on student learning. The desire to understand the way in which leaders influence improvement has resulted in increased research into the role of educational leaders in developing enabling policies and supporting the learning of teachers to improve outcomes. This has resulted in an emphasis on the importance of educational leadership rather than administrative management. (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009; Heck & Hallinger, 2010).

While research highlights the role of teachers as having the greatest impact of in-school variables on student learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009) and the potential to have a greater impact than students' socio-economic circumstances (Darling-Hammond, 2000), the actions taken by school leaders can have a significant impact on teachers' capacity to improve outcomes (Robinson, 2009).

The importance of leadership quality and the extent to which leaders influence teaching quality is a key element of school improvement. Understanding how the actions of principals impacts teacher learning and changes in student performance over time is of critical importance for school systems. The literature clearly links the role of school leadership and school improvement, and as a result systems to enable the development of school leadership capacity should not be left to chance.

There is a need for educational research that seeks to understand how evidence informed, contextually relevant school leadership capacity can be improved through collegial professional learning. The design elements of effective professional learning and the role of professional associations in the development of educational leadership capacity are explored in this paper through insights gained through the NSW PPA Principal Credential.

The NSW PPA is a provider of professional learning for current and aspiring school leaders. A cornerstone of this provision was the NSW PPA Principal Credential. This program was an initiative of the NSW PPA in response to the NSW Government reform agenda *Great Teaching Inspired Learning* (March, 2013) that emphasised the need for strong professional learning pathways for current and future leaders. The reform agenda was to enhance the capacity of current and future school leaders to lead improvement within their schools. This reform aligns closely with the Australian Government *Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes* (May, 2016) strategy to enable all new principals to develop a portfolio of evidence and certification process aligned to the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*.

Successful schools require excellent leaders. The commitment of the NSW PPA to the development of future leaders and the professional renewal of current leaders, demonstrates a deep commitment to enabling public schools across the state to thrive.

The NSW PPA is seeking to create new knowledge to enable the quality assurance of evidence informed, professionally relevant, association led leadership programs. This research aims to evaluate the impact of this strategy on both current and aspiring principals as well as the principal facilitators who operate as system leaders for the learning of their colleagues. The research is designed to provide information about the effectiveness of professional learning methodologies to support the development of current and aspiring school leaders. It also seeks to explore the effectiveness of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* as the basis on which to frame impactful leadership learning. The research specifically evaluates the design, delivery and efficacy of the NSW PPA Principal Credential.

Traditionally, principal professional learning has been led by people who are not currently, or have not, engaged in the complex work of leading schools. The principal associations have a wealth of expertise in the current context of school leadership and can be a powerful resource to strengthen the validity and the integrity of professional learning for principals.

While many reforms are short lived and focussed on school level change, the Credential aimed to build system leadership capacity within the NSW PPA. It aimed to provide a sustainable and scalable focus on improvement, through the development of high performing principal leaders as system leaders to enable their ongoing support of current and future school leaders.

The development of the Credential enabled the NSW PPA to engage with an academic partner to develop the program and also to negotiate a Masters level academic pathway that recognised the quality of learning within the program as well as the quality of practice that was evidenced by program graduates.

The potential impact of school leaders beyond the school can be seen through collegial professional learning as well as input into the design of system policies that influence schools' capacity to enable improvement.

The foundational premise for the facilitation of learning was the understanding that within the NSW PPA were leaders who were highly skilled and deeply committed to success for not only their own schools

and students, but also the students and schools led by their colleagues. This shared purpose created a professional bond that was evidenced through professional confidence and respect.

The aim was to build collective capacity within the NSW PPA to lead the professional learning of school leaders. The engagement of the association in the program provided a powerful catalyst to create a sustainable infrastructure for professional learning driven by, and for the profession. Importantly, the program was driven by a desire for on-going learning and improvement rather than a system mandated direction.

The NSW PPA established a professional framework through which leaders lead the development of the next generation of school leaders. This collaborative practice strengthens professional capacity whilst also enhancing collegial professionalism and system leadership.

A key element of the Credential is the engagement of high performing principals as facilitators for the learning of their colleagues. The program is unique in NSW in that the professional association and principals are leading the learning, and evaluating the evidence of practice of their current and future principal colleagues. The program co-design, provides a model for association led evidence informed professional learning for current and aspiring primary school leaders that is framed on the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*. The corresponding component of the Credential program is the creation of professional learning teams, comprised of participants, who are linked directly to a facilitator who has an active role to lead, guide, mentor and co-design the application of learning with the participants.

The professional learning teams have a shared focus on the development of leadership capacity for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. The collective capacity of the professional learning team develops as the participants consider the leadership actions and attributes that are required to improve practices within their schools. Through this interactive process, they develop a shared understanding of the contextual application of public education policy as well as the variation of school structures, geographic contexts and the socio-economic circumstances of students in NSW public schools. A key benefit of this process is the development of strong collegial connections between aspiring and current principals who have shared a common learning experience. Through this process the development of individual leadership capacity is enhanced through the high social capital of strong peer networks.

The NSW PPA designed and implemented a profession led professional learning program for current principals, as well as high performing school executive who are aspiring to school leadership roles. This program engages participants in rigorous evidence informed learning that aligns to the key accountabilities of their roles, whilst also enabling the development of evidence of leadership capacity.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

ABOUT NEW SOUTH WALES

“In New South Wales (NSW) there is a strong awareness that student outcomes are influenced by the systems that shape the work of teachers, the quality of teaching, the socioeconomic background of students and the need for strategies that help mitigate the impact of a student’s circumstances. At the heart of current NSW educational policy is a focus on both excellence and equity, underpinned by the fundamental democratic belief that all students are entitled to an education that will enable them to succeed and contribute to society.” (McIntyre & Burns, 2017 p.43).

New South Wales (NSW) is Australia's most populous state, with 7.5 million of the nation's 23.5 million people living in the state. The population is diverse with almost a third of residents being born overseas, and almost a third of the nation's people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, living in NSW (ABS, 2014). While NSW has a strong economy there is a considerable gap between the richest and poorest in the state with the income inequity and rates of poverty sitting above the national average (NCOSS, 2014). Despite this inequity, educational outcomes, as measured by PISA, are above the national mean although the differences in student results are closely linked to socioeconomic backgrounds. (McIntyre & Burns, 2017).

Education in Australia is provided through both government and non-government schools with all schools receiving public funding. Approximately two-thirds of students attend government schools and these schools have an inclusive enrolment policy. There is a broad socioeconomic gap between students from government and nongovernment schools with students from nongovernment schools tending to come from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. (McIntyre & Burns, 2017).

Whilst almost two thirds of the population of NSW live in the greater Sydney area, rural and remote schooling represents a challenge for education in NSW. Government Primary Schools vary from single teacher schools, to schools with a population nearing 1200 students. 10% of NSW government schools are regarded as being located in remote areas and 3% in very remote areas.

There is a strong focus in NSW that education has a role in breaking the cycle of generational education, health, and employment patterns of disadvantage. This includes the awareness that a child's background should not be the key factor in determining their future health, employment and educational outcomes. (McIntyre & Burns, 2017).

THE NSW POLICY CONTEXT

Two significant NSW policy reforms were introduced during the two years preceding the development of the Credential, these were *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* and *Local Schools, Local decisions*.

Great Teaching, Inspired Learning

The *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning (GTIL)* policy reform was developed to provide an evidence informed, holistic strategy to guide the development of the teaching profession, at all career stages, in all NSW schools. The strategy drew on both local and international research including NSW student learning, teacher professional learning, and teacher recruitment and workforce planning data to inform the key areas for change. The four phases of the reforms included:

- preparing our future teachers
entry, program quality, professional experience
- selecting and developing early career teachers
collaborative learning, mentoring, accreditation
- developing and maintaining professional practice
standards, professional learning, performance management
- recognising, sharing and learning about outstanding practice
identifying, rewarding and sharing excellent practice, researching

The *GTIL* policies also sought to strengthen teachers' professional practice by formally linking teacher performance and development plans to the *Australian Professional Standards for Teaching*. The policy suite also focused reforms on the development of school leadership capacity and the need to foster opportunities for professional collaboration and the sharing of effective practice (DEC, 2013a).

The development of the NSW PPA Principal Credential enabled the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) to begin to address a key action within the NSW government *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: A blueprint for action* reform agenda.

The *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* reform 15.3 outlines the government commitment to the provision of a credential pathway.

“New school leadership credentials will be developed to provide pathways to employment as a school leader.

School leadership credentials will be developed to support the preparation of high quality teachers for the role of principal. The credentials will be based on the principal Standard and could be developed as higher education degrees or allow articulation into appropriate degrees. The credentials could be used to access school leadership roles or provide leadership renewal programs for current principals. School authorities should work with universities and other relevant organisations to have the credentials available from 2014. School authorities could consider using the leadership credential as a requirement in applications for principal positions.” (DEC, 2013a)

Whilst the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* was endorsed by all Ministers of Education of the States and Territories of Australia in July 2011; the release of the *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: A blueprint for action* reform agenda in March 2013, marked the first time the standard was recognised in NSW policy.

Local Schools, Local Decisions

The *Local Schools, Local Decisions* reforms were designed to shift the responsibility for many areas of decision making from the system to the NSW government schools. Schools had already had flexible use of fully devolved professional learning funding since 2005. From 2014, funding was increasingly made according to a student equity allocated Resource Allocation Model. The introduction of this equity driven model was founded on the idea that in order to bridge the gap in student learning outcomes resources need to be targeted to the students who are most in need, and schools needed to have greater control over resources to improve outcomes. (McIntyre & Burns, 2017)

The fundamental purpose of the Resource Allocation Model was to address the disparity between educational outcomes that are closely related to socio-economic circumstances. Under the policy, principals were given authority to spend discretionary funding on the employment and professional learning of staff, as well as enhanced support for teaching and learning. The increased flexibility from devolved funding to schools carried with it increased accountability and new information technology systems to manage the transparent use of funding.

The *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* and *Local Schools, Local Decision* reforms, created the opportunity to reconceptualise school executive leadership positions. The traditional models of assistant principals and school executive leading stages and supervising teachers was changing. Within five years of introducing these reforms, 374 new executive positions called ‘instructional leaders’ were created. This introduced a category of school executive who were responsible for professional learning and curriculum, however, they did not have the role of supervising other teachers.

The policy reform agenda and shift of actions from system to school decision making, gave rise to an increased emphasis on management and accountability. With this shift came an expanding compendium of required measures to ensure appropriate compliance to policy guidelines. This renewed

focus on accountability was accompanied by a review of the role of the principal that had been articulated 16 years earlier in *Leading and Managing the School* (2000).

Whilst there was systemic acknowledgement that increased accountability of school leaders would require capacity building, the systemic emphasis was on management and compliance training, rather than leading school systemic change to enable continual improvement. The policy discussion focused on the question “does increased school decision making improve student learning outcomes”. The Credential program sought to address the question, “How can leaders act to enable increased school authority to improve outcomes.”

The leadership focus of the Credential program was seen as a priority by the NSW PPA, as during this time the Department of Education and Communities was supporting the implementation of the *Local school, Local Decisions* reform through the provision of technical, management and compliance training. Within this context, the Credential was designed to accelerate the development of aspiring leaders and to renew the learning of current school leaders. The program was not linked to either system funding or acknowledgement. The program operated on a cost recovery model with no funding supplied by the NSW DEC or the NSW PPA. Members of the NSW PPA provided in-kind support through the role of program facilitators and participants utilised school-based professional learning funding to engage in the program.

Professional Learning and Leadership Development within NSW Public Schools The NSW School Leadership Alliance and the NSW Professional Learning Continuum

The Professional Learning and Leadership Development strategy, developed in 2005 for NSW government schools was described in the *NSW Professional Learning Continuum*. The continuum mapped professional learning to build the capacity of teachers and school leaders at each stage of their career, from classroom teaching to school and system leadership. Each career stage was articulated in terms of the impact of the role for students. In this way teacher learning is framed as “making a difference in the classroom”, teacher leadership as “making a difference in the classroom next door”, school leadership as “making a difference in the school” and system leadership as “making a difference in the school next door” (DET, 2005).

Professional learning for NSW government schools was articulated within a standard referenced professional learning continuum utilising the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and the *NSW School Leadership Capability Framework*, and in 2011, the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*. The programs developed within the continuum focus on the key themes of quality teaching and leadership to develop capacity to improve student learning outcomes. (McIntyre & Burns, 2017)

The NSWPPA Principal Credential program was developed during a period in which the policy environment in public education in NSW was moving towards a more localised model of operation with reduced system support for professional learning for teachers and school leaders. Prior to the development of the program the professional learning for teachers and school leaders at each career stage was provided by the Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate of the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET). The funding for professional learning was held in schools to enable school teams to align their professional learning to their priorities and learning needs.

The Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate provided a comprehensive suite of programs that were aligned to the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*. Aligning career stages to the programs described in the *NSW Professional Learning Continuum*, enabled teachers and leaders at all career stages to identify

professional learning, described by the standards, and aligned to their needs. The programs focused on evidence informed practices to develop the capacity of teachers and leaders to improve student learning.

The programs were provided for all educators within NSW public schools with the support of the NSW Leadership Alliance. This alliance was formed from an agreement, developed in 2005 by the NSW DET Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate, the NSW Primary Principals' Association and the NSW Secondary Principals' Council. The NSW Leadership Alliance operated with a common sense of purpose committed to ensuring educators were well prepared for, and supported within, their leadership roles.

From 2005 to 2013, the NSW Leadership Alliance worked in collaboration to provide professional learning for school leaders across the state. The active engagement of the principals' associations in the design, provision and evaluation of the Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate programs was a critical factor in the success of the professional learning. This was most significant in ensuring that aspiring, current and experienced school leaders were able to engage in professional learning that recognised prior learning whilst focussing on contextually specific learning. This was achieved through the active engagement of experienced and highly credible school leaders who facilitated the learning of teams of participants. These teams were formed by participants in similar school contexts, due to type of school (primary, secondary, central, specific purpose schools), geographic (metropolitan, rural, remote schools) and socio-economic factors.

The NSW Leadership Alliance engaged in ongoing program evaluations that resulted in evidence informed program designs to address learning needs. The experience of the NSW Leadership Alliance raised the professional profile of school leadership within the NSW DET, and enabled the associations to play a significant leadership role in the development, implementation and evaluation of high-quality professional learning programs. As a result of a restructure, The NSW Leadership Alliance and the leadership professional learning programs ceased to operate after 2013.

The NSW PPA Principal Credential Program was co-constructed in 2014 by the NSW PPA and an academic partner, the former DET Director of Professional Learning and Leadership Development, Ann McIntyre. At the time of its development the program was a unique leadership professional learning provision, in NSW, for three key reasons. Firstly, as it provided evidence informed professional learning within a program that required evidence of participant learning to enable validation for graduation and the award of the credential. Secondly, it was the first program co-designed with the NSW professional association of primary principals and an academic partner that offered an academic partway to 50% of the Master of Education (Educational Leadership) degree. And finally, the program methodology incorporated the strong engagement of current principals as facilitators of participant learning in the program delivery. This strategy was designed to enable the integration of educational leadership theory and contextualised school practice.

The Australian Professional Standard for Principals

One of the most significant aspects of educational policy development in Australia has been the establishment of nationally agreed frameworks to describe and develop the professional practices and required attributes that enable school leaders to enhance their impact. The *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* was developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) in 2011 in recognition of the critical relationship between effective school leadership and teacher quality.

The *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* describes the five key leadership Professional Practices, as well as three Leadership Requirements. The Leadership Requirements underpin effective leadership in each of the five Professional Practices. The *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* provides a developmental framework through the *Leadership Profiles* that describe the five Professional Practices at gradually increasing levels of proficiency. The *Leadership Profiles* are intended to provide a framework to support the growth and development of school leaders.

Importantly, the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* and the *Leadership Profiles* do not describe school leadership as an administrative role. There is a significant focus on the role of the school leader in promoting, developing, and supporting teaching to impact student learning. (AITSL, 2014a). The *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* is being widely used to by professional associations as a framework for professional learning for current and aspiring school leaders, and is able to be used to support performance and development frameworks for school leaders.” (McIntyre & Burns 2017, p.22).

A key feature of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* is the strong evidence base that informed each of the professional practices and leadership requirements. The development of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*, incorporated both research evidence regarding the characteristics of effective school leadership and significant professional consultation with school leadership associations as well as employers. As a result, the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*, in providing a professionally agreed public statement describing what principals are required to know, understand and do to succeed in leading improvement within their schools, has been widely accepted within the profession.

The Australian professional standard for principals and leadership profiles

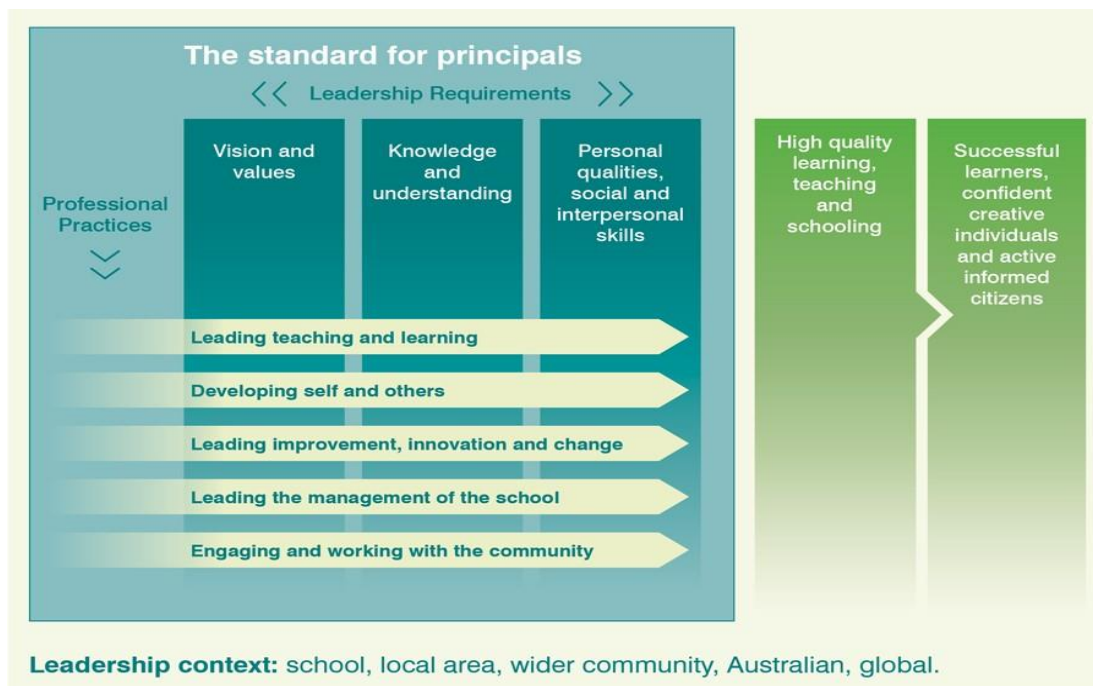
The standard sets out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to succeed in their work and to ensure their leadership has a positive impact. It takes full account of the crucial contribution made by principals in:

- raising student achievement at all levels and all stages
- promoting equity and excellence
- creating and sustaining the conditions under which quality teaching and learning thrive
- influencing, developing and delivering upon community expectations and government policy
- contributing to the development of a twenty-first century education system at local, national and international levels.

Research and a substantial and evolving body of knowledge inform the leadership requirements and the professional practices that are at the core of the standard and show that:

- effective leaders understand their impact
- leadership must be contextualized, learning-centered, and responsive to the diverse nature of Australia's schools
- leadership is distributed and collaborative with teams led by the principal, working together to accomplish the vision and aims of the school
- the practices and capabilities of leaders evolve as leaders move through their careers
- almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices and behaviors, with some key personal qualities and capabilities explaining a significant amount of the variation in leadership effectiveness.

(Source: *Australian Professional Standard for Principals and Leadership Profiles*, AITSL, 2014. P4)



(Source: *Australian Professional Standard for Principals and Leadership Profiles*, AITSL, 2014)

A key action in both informing and validating the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* in NSW, was the NSW pilot study, *Building Leadership Capacity for Tomorrow: Final Report of the NSW DEC pilot study to test the exposure draft of the National Professional Standard for Principals*. The study involved testing the validity and veracity of the exposure draft of the standard. The research engaged 240 primary, secondary and special school principals. “There was significant evidence from principals in the study that the standard accurately defined the leadership requirements and professional practices of effective principals and that the standard described effective leadership.” (DEC, 2011. p.7) “In relation to the use of the standard as a framework for professional learning, there was substantial evidence from principals in the NSW government school survey and focus group that the standard provides a framework for planning professional learning.” (DEC, 2011. p.8) This validation from principals and the active support of the Principal Associations provided strong support for the use of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* and the *Leadership Profiles* as the explicit framework for both the design of the Credential program and the validation process.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Credential;

- is based on the Australian Professional Standard for Principals
- is focused on the key accountabilities of the role
- is aligned to the core work of principals in schools
- is aligned to the individual learning needs of participants
- provides structured conferences and personalised learning
- incorporates explicit and systematic coaching with highly credible principal facilitators
- is accredited to the Masters in Education Leadership degree
- strategically addresses a key priority area 15.3 in *Great Teaching Inspired Learning*.

In developing the Credential, the NSW PPA sought to provide a credible, accessible, sustainable credential for both current and aspiring principals in public schools throughout NSW. The program is founded on the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*, is closely aligned to the key professional accountabilities of school leaders and focused on enabling leaders to enhance their impact on student and teacher learning. These accountabilities exist within the context of increased local school leadership authority, increased transparency of education processes and outcomes, and the increasing need to personalise learning to ensure all students irrespective of their circumstances are enabled to thrive in their future world.

The Credential was designed to provide a substantial pathway of learning for current and aspiring school leaders. It sought to engage leaders in current research through professional learning that is aligned to their key responsibilities and their role in leading improvement, innovation and change. The content and learning process was designed to enable leaders to focus their learning and their influence on the core business of teaching and learning, to enable them to have the greatest influence on student learning outcomes.

There are two pathways in the Credential. One pathway supports the preparation of high-quality school executive for the role of principal. The second pathway provides professional learning for current principals who seek to enhance their leadership impact through enabling improvement. Entry into the program was available, through an expression of interest, for current school principals who sought to refresh their learning through a structured evidence-informed profession led program of study that enabled them to focus on the core accountabilities of their role. The engagement of current principals in a rigorous program of professional learning, requiring validation of evidence of learning to enable graduation, demonstrates a strong commitment to ongoing professional learning and improved practice.

The program was also available for current school executive who were identified, by their principal, as demonstrating leadership potential. These middle leaders were nominated by their principal to engage in the Credential to further develop their leadership capacity and set them on a transparent and explicit career pathway to prepare them to lead a public primary school in NSW.

The *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* and the *Leadership Profiles* provided a useful scaffold to identify leadership practices at progressive levels of practice. This process was integral to the development of the personalised learning and the participants' Credential Learning Plan. The *Leadership Profiles* were also used to enable the review of the participants' Portfolio of Practice for the purpose of validating their learning for graduation.

Whilst the leaders entered the program with the foundation of pedagogical knowledge gained through teaching and leading stage teams, the program sought to further develop their capacity to lead improvement, innovation and change at a school level. The emphasis was on both the high level technical and interpersonal aspects of leading improvement. The learning opportunities provided through both conference sessions and learning modules are strengthened by the application of new knowledge and skills through the School Improvement Leadership Challenge and the Credential Learning Plan.

Within the program formal learning is provided through residential conference seminars and professional learning modules that enable access to international best practice, educational research and learning. The seminars include facilitated collegial learning and focused individual learning. This learning is scaffolded through a personalised professional learning plan that is informed by a needs analysis. Within the program, personalised learning is evidenced through the implementation of a School Improvement

Leadership Challenge and a Credential Learning Plan. The program is designed to align this process to the participant's Performance and Development Plan and the school improvement process.

Leading improvement, innovation and change is a key component of the program. The Credential involves the formal assessment of evidence of performance, and seeks to provide action learning that is evidenced through leading change and building school capacity for change. There is a program requirement that the cumulative knowledge and skills developed by the participant through the program learning and the on-the-job application of learning, is evidence informed and results orientated. The evidence of the application of learning and the impact of practice is assessed through the validation process.

Through engagement in these program elements participants develop an e-portfolio aligned to the Principal Standard and the key accountabilities of the role. Multiple evidence sources, that are designed to demonstrate the impact of the participants learning, contribute to the assessment of program validation. These include, the annotated e-portfolio, impact statements, an executive summary and presentation of program learning and referee reports.

Program validation leads to the recognition of leadership capacity and the award of the *NSW PPA Principal Credential*. Successful validation also contributes to higher education qualifications through the provision of credit for half of the Masters of Education (Educational Leadership) at the University of Wollongong.

The Credential program was completed within 18 months to allow time for personalised facilitated learning, authentic implementation of action research, and the gathering of a portfolio of evidence to enable validation of participant learning. The Credential program commenced early in 2014 with the first cohort completing their assessment validation and graduating in October 2015. The second program cohort commenced in 2016 and completed their assessment validation and graduated in October 2017. The third program cohort commenced in 2018 and participants completed their assessment validation and graduated in October 2019. The fourth program cohort commenced in 2020 and due to the pandemic, the program was largely delivered online. Participants from this cohort were not included in this study as they had not completed the program at the time of the data being gathered.

PROGRAM DESIGN, CONTENT and METHODOLOGY

EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DESIGN

School leaders' professional learning needs are highly varied and strongly influenced by role context and accountabilities as well as current career stage. The professional learning experience must be personalised and contextualised, with a clear alignment between the focus of the learning content and the structure of the learning experience and intervention. Effective professional learning programs require a strong scaffold of support whilst also enabling the flexibility to select topics and areas of intervention that are relevant to the needs of the participant within the context of their current role.

The contextual application of learning, that results in improved practice is the key to professional learning and reform. What matters most in improving practice, as Richard Elmore highlights, is that "improvement is more a function of learning to do the right thing in the setting in which you work" (Elmore, 2004, p.73). Transforming new understandings into contextually relevant actions, requires learning over time, with strong collegial support through collaborative professional learning teams.

The enactment of theory to practice ensures that participants' learning is linked to the day-to-day key responsibilities of their roles. The program methodology sought to bridge the gap that can emerge between engagement in research and theory and the application of contextually relevant practice.

RESEARCH INFORMING PROGRAM DESIGN

The program drew on evidence from three key sources. These were:

- Design elements of successful professional learning for teachers and leaders in NSW DET
- International research informing the actions of school leaders that impact school improvement
- Key learning needs of principals in the context of NSW DET policies, practices and contexts

The longitudinal research and evaluation of professional learning design elements within NSW DET and the NSW Leadership Alliance provided comprehensive data to inform the design of the NSW PPA Principal Credential. The data highlighted factors that would drive a serious examination of leadership practices and enhance the impact of the program for participants. The program methodology required the application of research to adaptive practice within the wide variety of contextual variables of schools throughout a highly diverse state. It also required technology solutions that lower the barriers to engagement whilst being respectful of time and location accessibility issues.

The longitudinal research identified professional learning programs that evidenced change in teaching and leadership practices and improved student learning, had five common features, these were:

- A clear focus on outcomes for leadership learning, teacher learning and student learning
- The implementation of active learning and collaborative inquiry
- Sustained action over time and pertinent feedback
- The alignment of teacher and school leadership learning
- Collective learning focused on impact (McIntyre, 2013)

The impact of each of these features was analysed and incorporated into the program design.

Program design was also largely informed by the strong evidence of effective professional learning that had been gained from program evaluations and impact studies within the NSW school policy context.

In designing the NSW PPA Principal Credential, the academic mentor drew on research regarding what school leaders and teachers do that impacts student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2002, 2010; Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2006; Gusky, 2002; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Harris, 2004, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2006, 2008; McIntyre, 2013; Mourshed et al., 2010; Robinson, 2009).

A key strategy in the development of the program was the incorporation of the principles of effective professional learning design through the co-design of a program with highly skilled current principals. The co-design process demonstrated strong cognisance of the diversity of school contexts and the need for personalised leadership pathways within the program.

The pathway from teaching to school leadership requires the development of practices that are not gained within classrooms. The difference in the professional practices of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* provides a clear illustration of the need for specific leadership professional learning.

Research conducted by the OECD highlighted that approximately 30% of principals in Australia entered the role without having received professional learning that was focused on leading teaching and learning or “instructional leadership”. (OECD TALIS, 2014) The importance of leaders being able to assess, influence and develop teaching and learning across the school, is of paramount importance.

“The quality of training principals receives before they assume their positions, and the continuing professional development they get once they are hired and throughout their careers, has a lot to do with whether school leaders can meet the increasingly tough expectations of these jobs.” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007)

The learning pathway of teachers and leaders varies greatly both across and within career stages. For this reason, professional learning should be personalised, future focused and integrated with the key accountabilities of the current and prospective roles of the participant.

The examination of longitudinal research conducted by the NSW Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate (2005-2012) demonstrated that there was significant variation in the learning needs of both, aspiring leaders entering the Principal Preparation Program, and principals entering the Principal Induction Program.

This variation was influenced not only by the leader’s career stage, but also by the context, accountabilities and experiences encountered through the participants’ executive leadership roles. This data highlighted the need to ensure that the NSW Primary Principals Credential program was designed to enable the personalisation of professional learning for both the aspiring and current leaders.

CORE PROGRAM CONTENT

The program content was explicitly aligned to the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* (the Standard). The three leadership requirements, articulated in the Standard, permeated each of the Professional Practices examined within the program.

LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENTS	CORE PROGRAM CONTENT
Vision and values Knowledge and understanding Personal qualities, social and interpersonal skills.	Leading with moral purpose for excellence and equity Leading a collaborative culture Leading actions and interactions Relational trust, engagement, shared ownership Educational expertise the core of effective leadership

The Professional Practices within the Standard were aligned to core content that was examined within the context of current educational research and leadership within NSW public schools.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	CORE PROGRAM CONTENT
Leading teaching and learning	Leading to improve teaching and student learning Assessment for learning and quality feedback Leading for high performance
Developing self and others	Effective professional learning Performance management Leading your learning Evidence and Validation of learning Standards, Expectations & Feedback

Leading Improvement, Innovation and change	Leading with impact, improvement by design Evidence informed goals and improvement Collaboration and strategic engagement Leading and evidencing improvement
Leading the management of the school	Leadership authority and decision making Leading school innovation Strategic planning and resourcing to achieve outcomes Enabling infrastructures for teaching and learning
Engaging and working with the community	Enhancing community engagement and understanding Enhancing aboriginal cultural understanding Challenges and opportunities in community contexts NSW case studies of successful leadership practices

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The *NSW PPA* Principal Credential consists of six integral elements.

Residential Conference Seminars

Within the program formal learning is provided through residential conference seminars that enable access to international best practice, educational research and learning. The seminars provide the opportunity to consider educational leadership research through keynote presentations from academics such as Professor Dame Pat Collarbone: University of London, Alma Harris: University of Bath, Brian Caldwell: University of Melbourne and Ann McIntyre: University of Sydney. They also provide the opportunity for policy perspectives to be presented by the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Department of Education and experienced principals. The program methodology utilised but was not limited to current policies and practices relating to principal and teacher effectiveness and school improvement. The seminars include facilitated collegial learning and focussed individual learning, as participants consider the application of research and policy in the context of their schools.

Professional Learning Modules

Professional Learning Modules were also provided to support participants to lead improvement innovation and change within their schools. The blended self-paced model supported the implementation of learning through the design and application of school-based strategies.

Professional Learning Team and Principal Facilitator

Participant learning is supported through collaborative engagement in professional learning teams with the leadership of an experienced principal facilitator who fulfils the role of learning facilitator, mentor and coach. The professional learning team and principal facilitator support participants to develop an understanding of ways to enhance the impact of their leadership within their context. Through engagement with their principal facilitator and professional learning team, participants also consider the implementation of policies and practices within the various school and community contexts represented by their team.

The facilitators play an integral role within the program, supporting the participant to scope their personalised learning through the Credential Learning Plan, as well as providing guidance and

feedback as participants applied their learning and developed evidence of practice through the School Improvement Leadership Challenge.

The facilitators are experienced principals who have demonstrated their expertise within their schools and have also demonstrated their desire to expand their influence to have an impact beyond their school through enabling the learning of other leaders. The selection of highly skilled current principals, and the extensive professional learning provided through a facilitators professional learning program, was a significant element contributing to the success of the Credential program.

Through the Credential, the facilitators became school-based system leaders, leading their schools as well as a collegial leadership learning network. The incorporation of the use of professional learning communities to strengthen the impact of change in the participants' learning and the schools they serve, also strengthens the learning of the principal facilitators.

The design aimed to enable the development of aspiring and current school leaders as well as highly experienced school leaders who had a track record of successful practice. The moral imperative of the principal facilitators is to enable the development of current and future school leadership capacity.

The facilitators were selected on the basis of three criteria. The first is demonstrated high quality educational leadership expertise as a school principal. The second is a demonstrated commitment to the professional learning of aspiring and current principals. The third is evidence of their commitment to the value of public schooling in promoting excellence, equity and opportunity for all students.

The collaborative culture of the NSW PPA provides the context for school leaders to enhance learning for students not only within their school, but also across schools and networks. Whilst the school leaders share common accountability and policy frameworks, the collegial nature of the program enables the focus of learning to move beyond compliance to deepening leadership capacity, to enable principals to support teachers to make a greater difference to student learning outcomes. This environment was seen to be important in enabling mutual respect, relational trust and an openness to deep authentic learning.

As the principal facilitators provide feedback and learn about the impact of their teams, they also become leaders of learning, participating in continuous improvement. Whilst the facilitators provide direct support to the participants within their professional learning team, the program academic mentor and the lead facilitators also support the development of the facilitators' system leadership capacity.

The Credential Learning Plan

The Credential Learning Plan provides participants with a scaffold to articulate, plan, implement and monitor the impact of the professional learning they undertake to enable their successful implementation of the School Improvement Leadership Challenge. The Credential Learning Plan enables participants to identify individual professional learning needs through a process that includes analysis of data, goal setting, professional learning design implementation, and feedback, as well as defining evidence of the impact of their learning. The Credential Learning Plan was framed by the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* and developed in the context of public education in NSW. In this way the participants were able to align their learning with their current and future roles. The application of learning within their current context provided the need to blend leadership theory with immediate workplace practice.

The *Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles* provided a scaffold through which the participants could identify their learning needs and design their Credential Learning Plan. This process was supported by their principal facilitator and professional learning team.

Participant learning is supported through the use of the Credential Learning Journal which is modelled on the *Leadership Profiles*. The Credential Learning Journal enables participants to record their learning, their actions and the evidence of their impact against the profiles. The Credential Learning Journal requires participants to consider and record evidence of their current level of practice in relation to each of the Professional Practices. In consultation with their principal facilitator, participants then consider where they can improve their practice and the learning opportunities that can support their development.

The School Improvement Leadership Challenge

The School Improvement Leadership Challenge provides participants with a framework to engage in sustained professional learning through the application of their leadership learning in practice. Through the challenge, the program is evidence and action orientated. The learning is designed to be rigorous, but not arduous, as leaders apply their learning to a current key improvement challenge within their school.

A key focus of the program was establishing strong understandings of the theory of change. Whilst knowledge of the theory of change does not guarantee success, it can provide a useful scaffold through which issues of implementation can be minimalised. The development of capacity was facilitated through each stage of the planning, implementation and evaluation process.

In this way the learning was both evidence informed, and highly contextually specific, leading to purposeful and disciplined engagement in the application of learning. This is supported through strong facilitation and collaboration as well as clear participant accountability for evidencing program learning. Through the School Improvement Leadership Challenge, participants identify and articulate an innovation and improvement project to implement throughout the program. They utilise the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* as a lens to guide their actions as they plan, enact and review the impact of their leadership practices.

The School Improvement Leadership Challenge provides an infrastructure to enable the development, selection and annotation of evidence of leadership learning in action. This evidence is used to construct an e-learning portfolio, annotated artefacts of practice, and an executive summary of learning gained through the program. These program elements are submitted by the participant to the validation panel for review to determine the outcome for graduation from the program.

Program Validation and the Use of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals in Developing Evidence

The degree to which professional learning is deemed to be effective is best understood when the intent of the learning is witnessed in improved practice. Evaluating the impact of professional learning through authentic evidence of improved performance is a key factor in determining the quality of both the program and the program graduates. The ultimate aim of the program is to enhance the leadership capacity of current and future school leaders to enable their schools to positively influence teaching quality and through this, student learning outcomes. The validation process needed to reflect this factor.

The use of evidence of practice aligned to the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* was informed by the experience of the implementation of the NSW teacher accreditation system. Whilst the *Australian Professional Standard for Teachers* was a widely accepted and regulated framework for evidence informed accreditation of teachers in NSW, the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* was used for professional learning but not aligned to the DET performance management policy and processes, or the principal selection process. Within this context, there was a need to establish a system for credible evidence informed validation of learning in practice.

The program validation process focused on demonstrating evidence of implementation and impact of improvement strategies, that were mapped to the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*. This process enabled the review of levels of practice and gaps within leadership practices against the standard through the *Leadership Profiles*. This review, accompanied by coaching with the principal facilitator, enabled the modification of the participant's Credential Learning Plan and, in turn, the opportunity for the enhancement of practices. This process was designed to support the development of evaluative thinking.

The validation process was integral to the program. The program elements were designed to enable the development of evidence of learning through mapping the application of learning against the scaffold of the standard. The validation process includes evaluative judgements that are made against the standard and referenced against the progressions described in the *Leadership Profiles*. The demonstration of learning is reviewed through a rigorous professional validation process, that demonstrates leadership growth and impact in context. This process includes the development and assessment of a school leadership e-portfolio that describes evidence of impact and includes the five elements.

Annotated Artefacts

Throughout the program participants select and annotate artefacts that are illustrative of their leadership, with the majority of the artefacts being drawn directly from the participant's actions in implementing the School Improvement Leadership Challenge and their Credential Learning Plan. These artefacts can include, for example, inquiry and evaluation data, a school contextual analysis, improvement plans, professional learning programs, and reports. The annotation process describing the relationship between the artefact and evidence provides a scaffold for self-analysis aligned to the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*.

The artefacts are drawn directly from the participant's current work, are aligned to the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* and demonstrate a strong evidence base. Examples of artefacts of evidence include, but are not limited to; plans, policies, programs, outcome data, reflections, evaluations, documentation and reports. The artefacts are annotated to include a context statement and to describe the relevance of the artefact to the leader's impact.

Executive Summary

Participants also provide a synthesis of their learning, through an executive summary paper that is shaped through the research presented in the program, and articulates developments in their leadership capability linked to the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*. The Executive Summary is the synthesis of the participant's key leadership learning, acquired and developed throughout their Credential journey. In this document, participants describe leadership professional learning and their associated impact on teacher or student learning. They are also required to demonstrate strong links to the *Australian*

Professional Standard for Principals and articulate a clear research/evidence base. This document serves as a basis for a short presentation that each participant provides to the validation panel.

Referees

Participants nominate two referees who are contacted as part of the validation process. The referees are required to speak to the participant's achievement within the School Improvement Leadership Challenge and the Credential Learning Plan. They are also asked to attest to the participant's capacity to lead school improvement. It is expected that the first referee is the participant's direct line manager. Participants may nominate their principal facilitator as their second referee.

Validation Panel

The validation panel assesses the submission provided by the participant. The submission includes the e-portfolio of evidence, the annotated artefacts of practice, the executive summary, a presentation of program learning and the nomination of two referees. The validation panel is comprised of two principal facilitators, who have been engaged in the program but have not facilitated the learning for the participant, and a moderator. Formal validation training is provided for the principal facilitator and a quality assurance process monitors the consistency of the validation process and outcomes. The validation process can result in either the award of achievement of the NSW PPA Principal Credential or an award of participation in the NSW PPA Principal Credential. An appeals process is available to assist in determining the outcome for any decision that is contested.

Graduation and Academic pathway

The NSW PPA Graduation Ceremony is held during the NSW PPA State Conference. This affords the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the professional achievement of the program graduates with their colleagues and senior officers of the NSW Department of Education.

Academic recognition of the learning within the Credential has been achieved through proactive engagement with a tertiary accreditor, the University of Wollongong. The partnership with the university has resulted in the Credential program alignment with, and fulfilment of, the requirements of 50% of the Master of Education (Educational Leadership) degree. Following graduation and award of the NSW PPA Principal Credential, the participant's details are forwarded to the University of Wollongong to enable the activation of the academic pathway. Maintaining academic accreditation involves ensuring that the quality of the Credential program content, the level of learning and the validation process, are aligned to the standards of the degree.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilised three key strategies to gather information to explore the research question. These strategies were a contextual analysis and program design description, questionnaire surveys for participants and facilitators and focus group interviews with participants, facilitators and system leaders. Initially the program purpose, content focus and professional learning design were analysed and described. This also involved a review of the context of school leadership in public education in NSW during the time of the program design and implementation.

Research questions were then explored through two questionnaires that were formulated through a co-design process involving key representatives from the NSW PPA and also Directors Educational Leadership, as the system leaders directly supporting schools.

The first questionnaire was designed to explore the research question through the perspective of program participants (Appendix 1). The questionnaire sought responses to questions regarding the impact of the program content and design, the use of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* and their career transition since completing the program.

The second questionnaire was designed to explore the research question through the perspective of the principal facilitators (Appendix 1). As a key aspect of the program design and implementation involved the facilitation of professional learning teams of participants, it was important to consider their perspective of the program's impact on both the learning of the participants as well as their own learning.

The questionnaires used a combination of rating statements on a 5-point Likert Scale, with one being the lowest score (strongly disagree) and five being the highest score (strongly agree). The opportunity to add a comment to each section of the survey was provided for both participants and facilitators. The questionnaire statements were grouped into four sections, these were designed to explore, the person's career trajectory, and their perceptions of professional growth against program outcomes, the effectiveness of the program design, and the value and usefulness of *the Australian Professional Standard for Principals*.

The questions relating to the career of the program participants and facilitators sought to establish the career progression from the role held at the commencement of engagement in the program to the role held at the time of the survey.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

The statements for the program participants were as follows:

Professional growth and impact

- The program developed my understanding of effective educational leadership.
- The program enhanced the way I lead improvement, innovation and change in my school.
- The program developed my capacity to be an effective educational leader.

The effectiveness of program elements

- The conferences provided key thinkers to stimulate my learning.
- The facilitation by an experienced leader supported my leaning within the program.
- My learning within the program was contextually relevant.
- The improvement challenge and learning plan enabled me to learn about leadership in practice.
- The program enhanced my understanding of how school leaders evidence their impact.

The value and use of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*

- The standard provided a strong model to frame my learning within the program.
- The standard provided a useful framework to evidence my learning as a leader within the program.
- I continue to use the standard to support my own ongoing leadership development.
- I continue to use the standard in supporting the leadership development of others.

PROGRAM FACILITATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

The statements for the program facilitators were as follows:

Professional growth and impact

- The program developed my understanding of effective educational leadership.
- The program enhanced the way I lead improvement, innovation and change in my school.
- The program developed my capacity to be an effective educational leader.

The effectiveness of program elements

- The conferences provided key learning to stimulate my thinking.
- The program has enhanced my skills to facilitate the learning of school leaders.
- The program enhanced my understanding of how school leaders evidence their impact.
- Facilitating the learning of others within the program enhanced my skills as a system leader.

The value and use of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*

- The standard provided a strong model to frame my facilitation of learning within the program.
- The standard provided a useful framework to support participants to evidence their learning.
- The standard provided a useful framework to guide coaching conversations.
- I continue to use the standard to support the learning of school leaders.

DATA GATHERING PROCESS

Both the participant and the facilitator questionnaire were distributed through an email invitation that provided a link to an online survey. The participant questionnaire was provided for all program participants from the first (2014-15), second (2016-17), and third (2018-19) cohorts.

The data from the cohorts was gathered in three groups to enable the variation in time since graduation to be considered separately for each cohort. This strategy also enabled program variations to be viewed. The facilitator questionnaire was provided for all program facilitators from all cohorts.

It is important to note that the timing of the distribution and return of the two questionnaires corresponded with the declaration of the pandemic and the subsequent closure of schools in 2020. During this time the majority of the survey participants were fully engaged in supporting the introduction of online learning for students within their schools, as well as designing and implementing well-being initiatives to support students, their communities and also their school teams.

FOCUS GROUPS

Following the return of the questionnaires, focus groups were conducted to further explore the research question. Questions for participants sought to gather further information regarding career path, program elements and program impact. Questions for facilitators explored their motivation in engaging in the role, key skills they required, and the influence of their engagement in the Credential on their role as system leaders. These questions included:

- Why did you seek to become a facilitator?
- What has been the impact of the facilitator's role on your learning?
- What attributes and skills have you found to be critically important in guiding the learning of current and aspiring school leaders?
- Has your engagement as a facilitator supported you to expand your sphere of influence as a system leader? How?

In the focus groups, facilitators highlighted the reasons for their engagement as being driven by the desire to support the collaborative learning of other leaders and the improvement of outcomes in public schools. They also highlighted the improved impact they had within their own schools as a result of their learning about leadership beyond their school. The facilitators highlighted the impact of the program on their increased capacity to improve practices within a wider sphere of influence.

“As a facilitator with the NSW PPA Credential, my leadership was significantly enhanced. I learned a great deal about coaching and mentoring methodologies and was able to strengthen my approach in facilitating improvement, innovation and change in the leadership capability of my Credential participants. Throughout the Credential, the leadership learning was without doubt, world class. My own leadership development has been significant and as result, I have been successful in gaining greater expertise in my roles as Principal, School Leadership and now Director with the NSW DOE.”

“The program is brilliant and I have benefited greatly. My skills in being able to identify high quality evidence of impact have really been enhanced. In the community we are now described as a school that uses research to inform our practices.”

Through ongoing explicit professional learning, the principal facilitators gained insight into the issues of practice in a wide variety of contexts. They were able to analyse, with participants, the impact of the linking of policies to practices across different types of schools and communities. This enabled them to identify barriers and opportunities for reforms at a scale that exceeded the learning they would have been exposed to within their own school contexts.

This collective learning by principal facilitators enabled the development of strong system leadership capacity. The impact of the principal facilitators extended well beyond the program as many of the facilitators were seconded into the DET system to support new policy design. In this way the system benefited from the input of educational leaders with deep understanding of assessing and validating evidence of excellent practice and the contextual variables that influence policy implementation in schools.

The recognition of the skills of the principal facilitators enabled them to work within and between schools as well as enabling the development and implementation of new policies. The presence of the principal facilitators in school improvement policy design and professional learning for leaders changed the way policy makers and principals interacted to create enabling systems for schools. The professional learning community that developed through the program had a strong influence on system reforms such as the development of the NSW DOE School Excellence Framework, the NSW DOE External Validation process and the programs of the NSW DOE School Leadership Institute.

At the time of the focus group analysis most of the principal facilitators were in system leadership roles as either Directors Educational Leadership or as senior officers in the NSW DOE School Leadership Institute.

PARTICIPANT AND FACILITATOR SURVEY DATA

Overall, there was an average of 70 participants in each cohort, of which approximately 25% were principals and 75% were executive. The validation rate was approximately 70%. The data below is drawn from participants and facilitators who completed the questionnaire.

Table 1 Participant Details

Career Trajectory	Cohort 1 n=48	Cohort 2 n=39	Cohort 3 n=75
What was your position at the beginning of the program?			
-Classroom Teacher		2	
-Assistant Principal	12	15	30
-Deputy Principal	7	10	28
-Teaching Principal	10	3	0
-Principal	19	9	15
Did your position change at any time during the program?			
-No	34	20	40
-Yes	14	19	35
What was your position at the end of the program?			
-Assistant Principal	7	7	18
-Deputy Principal	5	16	27
-Teaching Principal	8	2	3
-Principal	25	14	24
-System Leader	3	0	0
-Other	0	0	3
What is your current position?			
-Assistant Principal	3	3	17
-Deputy Principal	1	8	21
-Teaching Principal	4	4	3
-Principal	27	20	35
-System Leader	10	3	1
-Other	3	1	1
Did you receive validation at the end of them program?			
-No	4	2	10
-Yes	39	30	52
-Withdrawn	3	1	8
-Participation	2	6	5
What is your current Masters enrolment status with the University of Wollongong?			
-Not Enrolled	32	28	45
-Completed	9	6	0
-Future Enrolment	5	5	12
-Currently Enrolled	2	0	18

At the beginning of the program, across the three cohorts 35% of all participants were Teaching Principals or Principals. At the completion of the project 51% of participants were Teaching Principals, Principals or holding System Leadership or Instructional Leadership positions. At the time of completing the survey this figure had further increased to 69% of all participants.

This clearly demonstrates that during and subsequent to the Credential process, opportunities for career advancement and diversity were sought and a variety of enhanced leadership positions successfully obtained.

75% of participants received validation for the Credential and 22% have completed or are currently in the Masters of Educational Leadership degree at the University of Wollongong.

Table 2 Participant Evaluation on Likert Scale

Professional Growth against Program Outcomes	Cohort 1 n=48	Cohort 2 n=39	Cohort 3 n=75
The program developed my understanding of effective educational leadership.			
-Strongly Disagree	0	1 = 2%	0
-Disagree	1 = 2%	0	1 = 1%
-Neither Agree or Disagree	3 = 6%	1 = 2%	2 = 3%
-Agree	13 =27%	14 =36%	26 =35%
-Strongly Agree	31 =65%	23 =60%	46 =61%
The program enhanced the way I lead improvement, innovation and change in my school.			
-Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
-Disagree	2 = 4%	0	4 = 5%
-Neither Agree or Disagree	3 = 6%	3 = 8%	0
-Agree	16 =33%	14 =36%	23 =31%
-Strongly Agree	27 =57%	22 =56%	48 =64%
The program developed my capacity to be an effective educational leader.			
-Strongly Disagree	0	1 = 2%	0
-Disagree	1 = 2%	0	3 = 4%
-Neither Agree or Disagree	4 = 8%	3 = 8%	0
-Agree	11 =23%	14 =36%	23 =31%
-Strongly Agree	32 =67%	21 =54%	49 =65%

Overall evaluations were relatively consistent across all cohorts for professional growth against program outcomes. An average of 95% of participants reported an increased understanding of educational leadership and an average of 92% of participants stated that they enhanced their capacity for leading improvement, innovation and change as well as developing their leadership capacity.

Table 3 Participant Evaluation on Likert Scale

The Effectiveness of Program Design	Cohort 1 n=48	Cohort 2 n=39	Cohort 3 n=75
The conferences provided key thinkers to stimulate my learning.			
-Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
-Disagree	0	0	1 = 1%
-Neither Agree or Disagree	1 = 2%	1 = 2%	1 = 1%
-Agree	11 =23%	11 =28%	15 =20%
-Strongly Agree	36 =75%	27 =70%	58 =78%
The facilitation by an expert leader supported my learning within the program.			
-Strongly Disagree	1 = 2%	1 = 2%	2 = 3%
-Disagree	0	1 = 2%	3 = 4%
-Neither Agree or Disagree	5 =10%	1 = 2%	4 = 5%
-Agree	13 =27%	11 =29%	15 =20%
-Strongly Agree	29 =61%	25 =65%	51 =68%
My learning within the program was contextually relevant.			
-Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
-Disagree	1 = 2%	0	0
-Neither Agree or Disagree	2 = 4%	1 = 2%	2 = 3%
-Agree	14 =29%	13 =33%	25 =33%
-Strongly Agree	31 =65%	25 =65%	48 =64%

The improvement challenge and learning plan enabled me to learn about leadership in practice.			
-Strongly Disagree	0	0	1 = 1%
-Disagree	2 = 4%	1 = 2%	1 = 1%
-Neither Agree or Disagree	1 = 2%	2 = 5%	3 = 4%
-Agree	16 =33%	10 =26%	23 =32%
-Strongly Agree	29 =61%	26 =67%	47 =63%
The program enhanced my understanding of how school leaders evidence their impact.			
-Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
-Disagree	1 = 2%	1 = 2%	1 = 1%
-Neither Agree or Disagree	3 = 6%	1 = 2%	4 = 5%
-Agree	14 =29%	11 =29%	21 =28%
-Strongly Agree	30 =63%	26 =67%	49 =66%

Overall evaluations were relatively consistent across all cohorts for program design, elements and implementation. 98% of all participants indicated that the key thinkers that presented at the Credential conferences stimulated their learning.

An average 90% of participants stated that the facilitation by an expert leader supported their learning within the program. However, this question had the greatest variation between cohorts, with cohorts one and three rating 88% and cohort two rating 94%. While still an overall strong positive response, the average response to this question concerning the impact of facilitators is lower than for the other questions in this category and also provided the most negative responses.

This is supported by participant comments describing individual variations in facilitator engagement in the program and their experience in the principal's role. The need for continuity and quality of facilitators was highlighted along with the importance of a respectful trusting relationship. Participants also identified the importance their network of peers in the program and the strength of these support structures.

An average of 96% of participants found their learning within the program contextually relevant. An average of 94% of participants indicated that the improvement challenge and learning plan enabled them to learn about leadership in practice. An average of 94% of participants indicated that the program enhanced their understanding of how school leaders evidence their impact.

Table 4 Participant Evaluation on Likert Scale

The Value and Usefulness of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.	Cohort 1 48	Cohort 2 39	Cohort 3 75
The standard provided a strong model to frame my learning in the program.			
-Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
-Disagree	0	0	0
-Neither Agree or Disagree	3 = 6%	2 = 5%	0
-Agree	18 =38%	14 =36%	25 =33%
-Strongly Agree	27 =56%	23 =59%	50 =67%
The standard provided a useful framework to evidence my learning as a leader within the program.			
-Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
-Disagree	0	0	0
-Neither Agree or Disagree	2 = 4%	3 = 8%	2 = 2%
-Agree	18 =38%	14 =36%	22 =30%
-Strongly Agree	28 =58%	22 =56%	51 =68%

I continue to use the standard to support my own ongoing leadership development.			
-Strongly Disagree	2 = 4%	0	0
-Disagree	0	0	1 = 1%
-Neither Agree or Disagree	5 = 10%	1 = 2%	2 = 2%
-Agree	14 = 29%	14 = 36%	28 = 38%
-Strongly Agree	27 = 57%	24 = 62%	44 = 59%
I continue to use the standard in supporting the leadership development of others.			
-Strongly Disagree	1 = 2%		0
-Disagree	0	1 = 2%	1 = 1%
-Neither Agree or Disagree	3 = 6%	3 = 8%	7 = 9%
-Agree	15 = 31%	12 = 31%	26 = 35%
-Strongly Agree	29 = 61%	23 = 59%	41 = 55%

There were variations between cohorts in their overall evaluation of the value and usefulness of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* (The Standard) as well as differences within cohorts for degree of positive responses to individual questions. An average of 96% of participants indicated that the Standard provided a strong model to frame their learning in the program, with Cohort One rating 94%, Cohort Two 95% and Cohort Three 100%. An average of 95% of participants indicated that the Standard provided a useful framework to evidence their learning as a leader within the program, with Cohort One rating 96%, Cohort Two 92% and Cohort Three 98%.

An average of 94% of participants indicated that they continued to use the Standard to support their own ongoing leadership development, with Cohort One rating 86%, Cohort Two 98% and Cohort Three 97%. The relatively lower response from Cohort One could be partially due to in-depth use of the Standard not being widespread at that time and also reflect those participants who subsequently moved out of the principal role into a system leadership role.

An average of 91% of participants indicated that they continued to use the Standard in supporting the leadership development of others, with Cohort One rating 92%, Cohort Two 90% and Cohort Three 90%. Although this is the lowest overall response in this category, comments from participants attest to their continued valuing and use of the Standard in their support of the growth of development of others. This result may also relate to the context of leaders and the opportunity to develop others.

Table 5 Facilitator Details (Group size n = 33)

What is your current position?	
-Principal	14
-System Leader	15
-Other	4
What other formal positions have you held since the commencement of your involvement as a facilitator in the program?	
-Principal School Leadership	15
-Director Educational Leadership	6
-System Leadership Role	4
Were you a past graduate in the Credential program?	
-No	18
-Yes	15
What is your current Masters enrolment status with the University of Wollongong?	
-Enrolled	3
-Not Enrolled	27
-Completed	3

At the commencement of the Credential, all facilitators were in principal positions drawn from diverse, representative primary schools across NSW, including rural and remote. Principal classifications ranged across the spectrum from teaching principals to principals of large city schools. 45% of facilitators were past graduates of the program.

During and subsequent to their involvement in the Credential, 76% of facilitators held or were seconded to high level system leadership positions within the Department of Education (DOE). Focus group comments endorse that in these system roles the facilitators leading the design and implementation of professional learning for school principals and the design of system-wide school improvement validation processes. At the time of completing the survey 58% of facilitators continued to hold system leadership or other high level leadership positions.

Table 6 Facilitator Evaluation on Likert Scale (Group size n = 33)

Professional Growth and Impact

The program further developed my understanding of effective educational leadership.	Agree 4 =12% Strongly Agree 29 =88%
The program enhanced the way I lead improvement, innovation and change in my school.	Agree 5 =15% Strongly Agree 27 =82% Neither 1 = 3%
The program developed my capacity to be an effective educational leader.	Agree 6 =18% Strongly Agree 27 =82%

There was very strong support from facilitators for their own professional growth and the positive impact of their facilitation of the Credential on their own leadership development. All facilitators agreed or strongly agreed with all statements in this section of the survey except for one neutral response (3%) for leading improvement, innovation and change. 88% of facilitators strongly agreed that the program further developed their understanding of effective educational leadership, 82% strongly agreed the program enhanced the way they lead improvement, innovation and change in their school and 82% strongly agreed that the program developed their capacity to be an effective educational leader.

Table 7 Facilitator Evaluation on Likert Scale (Group size n = 33)

The Effectiveness of Program Elements

The conferences provided key learning to stimulate my thinking.	Agree 6 =18% Strongly Agree 27 =82%
The program has enhanced my skills to facilitate the learning of school leaders.	Agree 7 = 21% Strongly Agree 26 =79%
The program enhanced my understanding of how school leaders evidence their impact.	Agree 8 =24% Strongly Agree 25 =76%
Facilitating the learning of others within the program enhanced my skills as a system leader.	Agree 4 =12% Strongly Agree 29 =88%

All facilitators agreed or strongly agreed on the effectiveness of all aspects of the program elements. 82% strongly agreed that the conferences provided key learning to stimulate their thinking, 79% strongly agreed that the program enhanced their skills to facilitate the learning of school leaders, 76% strongly agreed that the program enhanced their understanding of how school leaders evidence their impact and 88% strongly agreed that facilitating the learning of others within the program enhanced their skills as a system leader. The very strong support for the enhancement of system leadership skills correlates with enhanced career opportunities as discussed in Table 5.

The relatively lower strong agreement for understanding how school leaders evidence their impact could reflect that at this time this was an emerging area of discussion within the profession.

Table 8 Facilitator Evaluation on Likert Scale (Group size = 33)
The Value and Usefulness of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

The standard provided a strong model to frame my facilitation of learning in the program.	Agree 3 = 9% Strongly Agree 30 =91%
The standard provided a useful framework to support participants to evidence their learning.	Agree 4 =12% Strongly Agree 29 =88%
The standard provided a useful framework to guide coaching conversations.	Agree 5 =15% Strongly Agree 28 =85%
I continue to use the standard to support the learning of school leaders.	Agree 6 =18% Strongly Agree 27 =82%

All facilitators agreed or strongly agreed on the value and usefulness of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*. 91% strongly agreed that the standard provided a strong model to frame their facilitation of learning in the program, 88% strongly agreed that the standard provided a useful framework to support participants to evidence their learning, 85% strongly agreed that the standard provided a useful framework to guide coaching conversations and 82% strongly agreed that they continue to use the standard to support the learning of school leaders. The slightly smaller percentage of strong agreement for the future use of the standard could be a function of the current role of facilitators, and the development of concurrent and alternative DOE system tools and processes.

Comparison of Program Outcomes for Participants and Facilitators

Of those who completed the survey, both data sets of responses show similar amalgamated high levels of positive support for the Credential program at *Agree* and *Strongly Agree* on the Likert Scale of the survey.

There are the same categories and similar questions for both facilitators and participants particularly in the areas of Professional Growth and use of the *Australian Standard for School Principals*. However further sub-analysis of the data into the proportion of the two groups ranking *Strongly Agree* on the Likert Scale, shows a greater discrepancy between participants and facilitators.

The survey questions relating to professional growth and the personal impact of the program were similar for both participants and facilitators. 88% of facilitators strongly agreed that the program further developed their understanding of effective educational leadership, 82% strongly agreed the program enhanced the way they lead improvement, innovation and change in their school and 82% strongly agreed that the program developed their capacity to be an effective educational leader.

This compares to participant average data which shows that 62% of participants strongly agreed that the program developed their understanding of effective educational leadership, 59% of participants strongly agreed the program enhanced the way they lead improvement, innovation and change in their school and 62% strongly agreed the program developed their capacity to be an effective educational leader.

On the similar question in the category of program design, on the effectiveness of conference speakers, 82% of facilitators had strong agreement that the conferences provided key learning to stimulate their thinking compared to an average 74% of participants who had strong agreement that the conferences provided key thinkers to stimulate their learning.

The Value and Usefulness of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* was another category of the survey with some similar questions for facilitators and presenters. 91% of facilitators strongly agreed that the Standard provided a strong model to frame their facilitation of learning in the program, 88% strongly agreed that the Standard provided a useful framework to support participants to evidence their learning, 82% strongly agreed that they continue to use the Standard to support the learning of school leaders. This compares to participants, where an average of 61% strongly believed that the Standard provided a strong model to frame their learning in the program, 61% strongly believed that the Standard provided a useful framework to evidence their learning as a leader within the program and 58% strongly believed that they continue to use the Standard in supporting the leadership development of others. These discrepancies between participants and facilitators need to be interpreted with caution. The groups are not directly comparable. By definition, facilitators were more experienced, with proven success in the principal role and a history of leadership achievement. This was especially true for Cohorts One and Three where facilitators were chosen against rigorous criteria.

In addition, some participants identified no in-school support, not currently working in a school, and the range of experience and contexts within each facilitation group as being limiting factors. In relation to personal growth and impact of the program, participants might have been more cautious in their assessment of their own growth and development as at that moment in time. Participant comments do not necessarily reflect this, with strong endorsement of the program and evidence of future career path progression.

In relation to the value and use of the Standard, another differentiating factor is that facilitators were more experienced in using the Standard in multiple contexts over time and at greater depth for school improvement and system leadership development. They certainly had greater knowledge of the elements of the Standard, its practical application and greater opportunities to use it in their roles. This could partially explain facilitators higher rating on this category.

PROGRAM IMPACT and KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE SURVEY COMMENTS

Participants found that engagement in the program enabled personal growth and was professionally rewarding. They developed a greater understanding of educational leadership leading to direct action and sustainable change within their context.

Participants identified, valued and found useful that the program:

- was based on high quality research and evidence
- was practical and contextually relevant
- was rigorous and multi-faceted
- provided a springboard for higher professional qualifications through validation and the pathway to the Master Educational Leadership, Wollongong University
- provided opportunity for self-reflection, skill development and to put theory into practice
- led to the creation of sustainable, supportive collegial networks
- provided access to expert presenters, facilitators and mentors
- utilised the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* as a model and framework for evidence of efficacy.

Quotes from Participants

“Coupled with the Masters of Educational Leadership, I feel like the Credential added depth and a level of theoretical understanding to my leadership. The calibre of the lecturers and coursework was fantastic and I believe really respectful of the professional standards of the participants.”

“As both a participant and a facilitator, with different perspectives, I can highlight the benefits of the program in leadership development of self and others. The program has provided significant and profound depth in leadership learning aligned to the professional practices, leadership requirements and leadership emphases of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals. My growth as principal and leader has been enormous as a result of participating and then acting as facilitator in the program.”

“The Principal Credential was one of the best professional learning courses that I have done. It provided rigour, time to reflect on professional practice with leading academics from world class universities as well as provide professional networks for professional dialogue, collaboration and sharing of ideas. Working with an experienced principal/ facilitator provided opportunities for group discussion and segmenting theory into practice within a school context. The principal credential was practice and I could see the link between research, evidence-based practice and instructional leadership. The Credential provided me with the opportunity to investigate further tertiary studies as I had more confidence to do so. I had not studied for many years and the Credential empowered me to go back to further study.”

“My engagement in the program exposed me to strong educational research of which I had not been exposed to previously. This was a catalyst for me in regards to becoming a far more reflective leader for whom evaluative thinking about my leadership impact directly on others and indirectly on students, is now at the core of my leadership. Ongoing engagement in research ensures I am a leader who is research and evidence informed. I credit this significant shift in my leadership approach to my engagement in the PPA Leadership Credential beginning in 2014.”

“This leadership program, provided me with high impact professional learning in practice, current research and knowledge on leading school improvement effectively. Having an advocate and mentor through the Principal School Leadership was valuable as it built my capacity as a leader by challenging my thinking, supporting me and inspiring me. This course provided opportunities for collaboration, collegiality and network to build capacity across schools. I have continued these relationships and have found value in building our school networks. I would recommend this program to all aspiring leaders.”

“The opportunity to be coached/mentored by substantive dedicated principal facilitators and colleagues aspiring in their journey was so unique, contextual, individualised and I valued this highly.”

“The improvement and innovation challenge linked to the Principal Standard empowered me to lead a whole school initiative centred on students by building the capacity of teachers through high impact instructional practices and a culture of efficacy. I have continued to use the standard to support my learning and to lead others across several school settings.”

In addition to the above, facilitators identified, valued and found useful that the program:

- led to personal and significant professional growth for themselves and others
- enabled them to develop and use effective coaching and mentoring skills
- allowed them to develop a broader and deeper understanding of change processes
- enhanced their system and educational leadership skills with practical application in their current roles
- provided them with the opportunity to analyse, have a comprehensive understanding of and extensively use the Australian Professional Standard for Principals both as facilitator and in their current role.

Quotes from Facilitators

“Facilitating the learning of school leaders with a contextualised emphasis on school improvement, connected to evidence and research, and with a focus on self-reflection has also enhanced my leadership development as a principal and a systems leader.”

“An outstanding, innovative and highly relevant Professional Learning program tailored to the delivery of quality 21st Century Principal leaders. This is achieved through a repertoire of core leadership practices, behaviours, personal qualities and capabilities which are grounded within a sound research framework.”

“Having the opportunity to work with leaders outside my school has developed my skills in building relationships, especially trust. It is a different skill set to build trust with those we do not work with day to day and this assisted me greatly when I moved into a PSL role. Additionally, having professional conversations with colleagues from a wide range of schools has given me a broader and deeper understanding of NSW Public Schools.”

“As a facilitator I became more adept at interrogating evidence supplied by participants to establish impact. Since, I've been leading as a principal continually seeking impact on student outcomes or impact on teacher capacity. The rich discussions evolve the more experienced you become as a facilitator and improve your effectiveness in your own school and beyond.”

“The program design is exceptional and intuitive, an outstanding example of high impact professional learning, the learning communities created in facilitator groups, the expert input at the highest level through conferences, the self-direction through a leadership challenge, incredible design and impact on me and those I've mentored. Every time the feedback affirms this, to the great surprise of the participants, they repeatedly say and I have experienced, this is the greatest PL I've ever been a part of.”

“Using the standard as the framework for engagement in the Credential proved very successful and highly effective. It provided a useful scaffold for personal development for both facilitators and participants alike. Following involvement in the Credential, I continue to engage deeply with the Principal Standard in my work quite frequently and have used it many times as I coach and mentor others in their leadership development.”

“The Standard has provided an effective framework to support my ongoing development as a leader, as well as those that I have coached and mentored. It articulates the complexity of the role of principal in a way that easily accessible to school leaders, and provides a platform for self-reflection and growth. Leading the learning of others within this frame continues to deepened my leadership learning.”

Several participants and facilitators through survey comments, focus groups and in follow up conversation have stated that participation in the Principal Credential has been the best professional learning they have done. The multifaceted model of the program, the interweaving of research and practice, the development of collaborative relationships, the practical relevance to an educational context and the quality of program delivery and personnel are identified as critical elements of the Credential design. Many participants and facilitators attest to the transformative and sustainable nature of their learning.

Notwithstanding the above, it is worth noting the factors which impacted effective engagement in the program for some participants. These include:

- variability within groups of expertise and experience in the principal role, ranging from aspiring to experienced
- changes in facilitators and mentors and the time they spent face to face with participants
- difficulty for non-school based participants to complete the learning challenge
- challenges at a school level impacting on efficacy
- completion of the validation process was influenced by individual personal and school circumstances and the process and requirements were not fully understood.

FINDINGS

The program enabled learning through:

- high contextual relevance with the application of theory to practice
- peer collaboration within a professional learning team, facilitated by learning alongside experienced school leaders
- enabling evidence informed improvement of practice and validated learning
- a future focus on developing transferable leadership skills

That professional principals' associations are uniquely positioned to provide high quality, impactful professional learning for current and aspiring school and system leaders. This provision can be further strengthened through academic partnerships.

When principals support the professional learning of others, they also learn. Leading collaborative learning enables and intensifies their understanding of what works in improving student and teacher learning in a variety of contexts across the state. Engaging strong school leaders in the facilitation of current and future school leaders further develops their capacity as collaborative impactful system leaders.

That personalised professional learning is powerful, particularly when facilitated by experienced and highly capable current principals who have the capacity to guide, mentor and coach to help other leaders to bridge the gap between theory and practice within their school context.

Effective professional learning must be focused on outcomes that are closely aligned to the key accountabilities of the role. A significant element in maximizing the value of professional learning programs is the incorporation of strategic action, feedback and evidence of impact. The efficacy of this process is intensified through collaborative professional learning teams, the validation of learning, and the provision of an academic pathway at graduation.

That the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* provides a valid framework to describe and develop leadership practices and professional learning within the broad context of public schools in NSW. The *Leadership Profiles* are a key enabling feature of the Standard, providing the scope for principals identify leadership practices at progressive levels, to map and evidence their current practice, and to plan their future learning.

This process was integral to the development of the participants Credential Learning Plan. The leadership profiles were also used to enable the review of the participants Portfolio of practice for the purpose of validating their learning for graduation.

That professional associations and high performing principals are well positioned to provide authentic validation of evidence of practice when mapped against the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*.

That the authentic use of professional standards is best enabled when used as a guide for professional learning and action. The standard is best used as a coherent integrated framework to examine learning in action, and the evidence of leadership impact on school improvement.

That the provision by principal associations of high level, validated professional learning leads to increased system recognition. Principal leaders of learning become impactful system leaders, increasing their sphere of leadership to influence system policy and school improvement and professional learning design.

The concluding comments about the impact of the design of a professional learning program that is aligned to the key accountabilities of the principal's role and the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*, may be best left to a participant who entered the program as an Assistant Principal and a Highly Accomplished Teacher, became a Principal Facilitator within the program, and is now Director Educational Leadership and an outstanding system leader.

"I have learnt to stop and think, what is the data that is helping us to understand what we need to do and why, what is the evidence that informs me of the best next steps to take, and how can we work together in collaboration to ensure that in the end we are able to make a real difference for our students. I understand that our context matters greatly and that we need to establish a model for our team and work out how we can align our resources to achieve what we need to achieve.

We have been breaking down those classroom walls to see teachers as leaders of learning, working together to make a difference with our children. We are now able to work together and study our work, use our learning continuum and we now provide each other with feedback. We needed to develop trust and focus on our learning together. The teachers can now clearly state what they are learning from their collaborative examination of their teaching. For teachers to go beyond their school gate and learn from other teacher in other schools is a great source of professional learning. I have had this opportunity to connect with other teachers in other schools through this program and the power of these professional networks for my learning has been great and I want other teachers to have this opportunity.

One of the key elements of this program has been the leadership challenge. The challenge has provided a focus that I needed to see through, and though implementing the challenge, I have needed to focus on my growth as a leader.

If you want to grow if you want to be accountable and if you want to be forced to examine your practice this is the program for you. This program has been connected to action and to seeing things through. It has been different to being accredited at Highly Accomplished as this program has been connected to action rather than placing individual evidence against standards.”

(Statement from Jodi Bennett Oxley Park School made within her presentation to the NSW PPA Credential Validation panel on August 24, 2015 by Video Conference at Australian Technology Park). (McIntyre & Burns, p.114)

NOTES ON THE AUTHOR

Ann McIntyre M.Litt, B.A., Grad. Dip. LCD, Dip. T., CF, FACE, FACEL

Ann McIntyre is Adjunct Professor at the University of Sydney and is the Australian researcher for the International Teacher Policy project with the University of Stanford.

Ann is an experienced principal, superintendent, and NSW state policy leader who is internationally recognised for her deep understanding of quality teaching, leadership, and school and system improvement. She has designed system innovations, reforms and programs that significantly enabled teachers and leaders to have a greater impact on student learning.

Her research and publications explore the interrelationship between research, policy and practice in examining how high performing educational systems empower teachers and leaders to achieve strong results.

Ann’s contribution to education has been recognised through numerous professional awards including, the Australian Council of Educational Leaders National Gold Medal, the Australian Council of Educational Leaders Fellowship, the Australian College of Educators Fellowship and the Churchill Fellowship.

Ann is highly sought after as an educational advisor, program designer and presenter. She is the Chair of the University of Sydney Teacher Education Advisory Board and is an expert advisor to a number of organisations including the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, the NSW Department of Education Curriculum Reform Program and the School Leadership Institute.

As the Academic Partner to the NSW Primary Principals Association, Ann Co-designed and presented the NSW Primary Principals Credential Program. She has also co-designed a number of other programs for the NSW Department of Education including programs for the NSW Curriculum Reform Program and the NSW School Leadership Institute.

Ann is committed to living in a world in which all children, irrespective of their background, receive an education that enables them to thrive.

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