

Briefing report

Education Review Office (ERO): ERO Leadership Partners Initiative

Date	12 November 2020
Security Level	N/A
ERO Priority	Medium
ERO Reference	M20-41
Date requested	ERO initiated
Date due	ERO initiated
Proactive release	Recommended

Addressee	Action sought	Deadline
Associate Minister of Education with responsibility for the Education Review Office	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) note ERO's progress in piloting a Leadership Partners initiative for 2019/20. b) note that the initiative continues to receive support from key sector groups and the wider sector. c) note ERO's intention to rapidly expand the programme in 2021. d) note Appendix 1 – Leadership Partners Action Planning e) agree to forward a copy of this briefing paper to the Minister of Education. f) note that this briefing is recommend for proactive release. 	

 Attachments:

**Education Review Office (ERO):
ERO Leadership Partners Initiative**

 Comments:

Minister's Office to complete	
Noted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referred to:	
Date signed by Minister:	

Our Ref: M20-41

12 November 2020

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education
with responsibility for the Education Review Office

ERO Leadership Partners Initiative

Purpose

1. This paper responds to your request for details about ERO's Leadership Partners Initiative.

Background

2. ERO has a strategic priority to enhance sector leaders' confidence and trust in education evaluation. The Leadership Partner Initiative arose from discussions with sector groups about their playing a bigger role in school evaluation. The sector has suggested that more reciprocal engagement through the review process between ERO and the sector could be beneficial to all parties.
3. The Leadership Partners programme provides experienced and successful school leaders with an opportunity to join ERO evaluations as partners in ERO's external evaluation process. The initiative is intended to build strong enduring partnerships and networks, build school leaders' understanding of evaluation for improvement, and enhance the review process for both schools and ERO.

Leadership Partners

4. The Leadership Partners programme is a joint initiative between ERO and the sector and has been well supported by the sector. An establishment board (the Board) includes representatives from the Secondary Principal's Association of New Zealand, the New Zealand Principals' Federation, Middle and Intermediate Schools Principals, and the School Trustees Association. The board has met twice during the pilot phase.
5. The programme is a unique professional learning opportunity for leaders and ERO which provides successful school leaders with the opportunity to train and join reviewers as partners in ERO's external school evaluation process.
6. In developing the programme, the establishment group saw opportunity for it to build strong enduring partnerships and networks between ERO and the sector, build school leaders' understanding of evaluation for improvement through upskilling practitioners in ERO's work, and enhance the review process for both schools and ERO. We see the programme as bringing more diverse expertise to the evaluative process and allowing ERO to benefit from the valuable insights and expertise of current practitioners.

7. The Leadership Partners initiative is evidence based and founded on similar initiatives undertaken within ERO and internationally.
8. The Board saw the following benefits as likely to impact on improving outcomes for the sector and children:
 - Enhancing career pathways, building capacity and capability for leadership. The initiative has the potential to promote system- wide leadership for partners and provide opportunities for senior leaders within and across schools.
 - Developing reciprocal professional learning and development opportunities for principals/leaders and ERO. The initiative has the potential to extend the evaluative thinking of leadership partners and extend the understanding of current pedagogy in action for reviewers.
 - Strengthening partnerships will provide greater potential to identify good practice and build evaluative practice across the sector.
 - Building networks across the sector that could lead to colleagues building educationally powerful and professional relationships that support improvement in practice at the school and system level.
 - In relation to benefits for ERO it may also encourage some school leaders to see education evaluation as a possible employment pathway for themselves or other senior colleagues.
 - Increasing diversity across ERO in relation to expertise, experience and knowledge. Some schools that are reviewed by ERO have additional complexities, for example, specialist institutions. The benefit of a leadership partner on these reviews could support the review team to navigate these complexities and maintain a strong evaluative focus on what contributes to improved outcomes for students.
9. The Board also identified potential risks that needed to be taken into account in the policy to practice phase. The Board considered how each of the risks identified could be mitigated to ensure ERO's reputation, the professional safety of the leadership partners and the schools being reviewed, and the ongoing smooth running of the leader's school in their absence.

Recruitment and Selection

10. We advertised through the Education Gazette for expressions of interest from senior school leaders. We also garnered support from organisations on the establishment board to promote the programme with their members.
11. Over 90 school leaders applied for places in the pilot programme. As we have engaged the sector over recent months - many more have signalled a desire to be involved in the programme.
12. To maintain trust and credibility in the programme, the following criteria was used to support the selection process. These criteria are not exclusive and were used on a case by case basis.
 - a. The leadership partner will be an experienced principal/senior leader. It is recommended the leadership partner has at least 5 years in a principal/senior leadership role.

- b. Previous ERO reports for the schools that leadership partners are drawn from will have indicated well placed or strong.
 - c. Leadership partners will have a willingness to commit to a minimum of 2 weeks work a term with ERO.
13. ERO began the pilot programme in January 2020 with a first tranche of six senior leaders, selecting participants to balance gender, ethnicity, geographical location, school size and type and skills and expertise. A second tranche of seven leaders was notified of their successful application and invited to join the programme later in 2020. A mix of principals and senior leaders comprise both groups.

Programme Information

14. While undertaking this professional learning opportunity, Leadership Partners work with ERO based on a written agreement with their employer, the school's governing board of trustees. They remain in the employment of their school board while on review with an ERO team. ERO covers costs associated with Partners attending the National Induction programme and travel, accommodation and actual and reasonable costs incurred when working alongside ERO during the weeks of review. The salary for the partner continues to be met by the partners school's board.
15. Those selected to work with us were provided with a 3-4 day professional learning and development programme.
16. Leadership Partners receive statutory designation as Review Officers under the Education and Training Act, with associated powers, for one year following their induction.
17. Review officers (evaluation partners) are selected to work alongside leadership partners. Ongoing training, reflection and development of evaluation practice happens regionally, with the leadership partner shadowing their evaluation partner, and fully participating as a review team member, over the course of the year they are designated for.

Pilot Experiences

18. Leadership Partners have worked as part of school review teams in Term one 2020 and have also joined ERO during our interim methodology to learn about responses to the COVID lockdown. They are joining an ERO partner in the trial team, as part of our new approach to school reviews in Term 4 of this year and then into 2021.
19. Early feedback has been that external partners play a valuable role during ERO evaluations, bringing more diverse expertise to the evaluative process and allowing ERO to benefit from the valuable insights and knowledge of current practitioners.
20. Our pilot leadership partners have benefited from the chance to develop deeper insights into their own schools through contributing to the review of others. One partner has commented that the ERO induction process "was some of the best professional learning they have ever had".
21. Many of the leaders chosen are very active in their school communities and for some, their knowledge, brokering and facilitation skills have been called upon by other principals following the review they have been actively part of.

Next Steps

22. The pilot programme will be evaluated with a view to refining and rapidly expanding the programme in 2021 (see Appendix one).
23. We hope to develop a large pool of skilled Leadership Partners that will contribute to effective school evaluation within our new operating model and will be able to share their increased knowledge and understanding about evaluation across their school networks and communities.
24. A further matter to be reviewed is payment for leadership partners' services. At the pilot stage the Board felt that schools could cover limited costs for the leader's absence, in return for the professional development opportunity provided by the initiative. However, this is a matter that we will return to when the pilot programme is evaluated, as it relies on the goodwill and capacity of each board to fund the initiative.

Recommendations

25. It is recommended that you:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| a) note ERO's progress in piloting a Leadership Partners initiative for 2019/20. | noted |
| b) note that the initiative continues to receive support from key sector groups and the wider sector. | noted |
| c) note ERO's intention to rapidly expand the programme in 2021. | noted |
| d) note Appendix 1 – Leadership Partners Action Planning | noted |
| e) agree to forward a copy of this briefing paper to the Minister of Education. | agree/disagree |
| f) note that this briefing is recommend for proactive release. | noted |



Nicholas Pole
Chief Review Officer



Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education with responsibility for the Education Review Office
2011 120