

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT: THE PRINCIPAL - BOARD OF TRUSTEES RELATIONSHIP

DOMINIC O'SULLIVAN¹

M.Phil. Candidate

Department of Political Science and Public Policy

University of Waikato

ABSTRACT *This paper considers Tomorrow's Schools with particular reference to its central theme of decentralisation and devolution of power, along with its implications for power relationships and divisions of responsibility within school communities. It also considers the practical implications of the fact that while schools are required to function under a state prescribed model of partnership, its components, governance and management are not clearly defined. It is argued that if Tomorrow's Schools is the management model society wishes to adopt then it must be clear about the roles and responsibilities of each of the actors involved with the governance and management of the school.*

INTRODUCTION

Power is at the heart of society's functioning and administration. Its distribution can effect policy outcomes both positively and negatively, depending on the organisational, institutional and administrative frameworks under which that power is exercised. If devolution of power from the centre to local structures is genuine then it can have positive democratic outcomes. However, the transfer of a number of the responsibilities of regional education boards to school communities was not a genuine empowering of parents. Rather, Tomorrow's Schools created a system of governance that allowed for community participation but only "according to approved formats within an overall government policy and framework" (Quirke, 1988, p. 18. Quoted in Smyth, 1993).

The development of Tomorrow's Schools began in 1984 when David Lange's Fourth Labour Government swept to power. It inherited a public sector well known for its rigidity and excessive bureaucracy and under its Finance Minister Roger Douglas the new government quickly embarked on a programme of structural reform of both the state sector and the highly protected and regulated economy. Initially this reform agenda focussed on the trading arm of the state and the creation of a multitude of commercially oriented State Owned Enterprises.

Before the 1987 general election, the government announced its intention to work on improving the quality of social service delivery should it win a second term in office. The government was returned with an increased majority and

¹ Dominic O'Sullivan is a former staff trustee and acting Principal of Bishop Edward Gaines Catholic School, Tokoroa, New Zealand.

Prime Minister Lange's decision to take the education portfolio himself signalled an intention to move quickly to reform the education sector.

Supermarket manager Brian Picot's report *Administering for Excellence: Effective Administration in Education* became the blueprint for reform. It advocated the devolution of much of the administrative and policy functions of the regional education boards to local communities, who would govern schools through a Board of Trustees. Boards would appoint a Principal to look after the day to day management of the school and to act as the board's Chief Executive (Picot, 1997, p. xi).

This has become Tomorrow's Schools. It is the regime under which all New Zealand state, and integrated state schools are governed and managed. Picot envisaged that these roles of governance and management would be carried out as a partnership between schools and their communities with the boards of trustees being the vehicle through which the partnership might be achieved. (Picot, 1997, p. xi).

Tomorrow's Schools is problematic. It has imposed a uniform model of governance and management on all schools regardless of size, type or community. The extraordinary vagueness of the partnership notion which the model requires has also created serious difficulties. The components of the partnership, governance (arguably the province of the board) and management (the province, albeit qualified, of the principal) are not clearly defined. "The expression governance and management is used in the National Administration Guidelines but is nowhere satisfactorily or officially defined" (Education Review Office, 1997 p. 18). This issue will be explored in some depth, and some of the interpretations of its practical application considered.

The first sections of this paper set the scene for the arguments to be presented by placing the issue of the reorganisation of school administration within the context of the government's general commitment to administrative reform and devolution across the public sector. Secondly issues of policy provinces will be considered as this theme of what is properly the domain of the board and what is properly that of the principal recurs throughout the paper.

Power relationships among boards, principals, school staff, the Crown and the wider school community are then discussed because it is through these relationships that the various actors compete for whatever power and influence over policy development and implementation is available.

The final section deals with implementation in the context of the board as implementer of government policy, as opposed to implementer of its own agenda. The reasons why it is fallacious to see boards as policymakers in their own right are also considered.

POWER AND DECENTRALISATION

The basic principle behind Tomorrow's Schools was the devolution of power within the school system from the central bureaucracy to the school community itself. Picot clearly had it in mind that power would lie with school communities, and that it would be a devolution of substance. However, Kelsey (1995, p. 222) has suggested that the government's intention was otherwise:

In the name of devolution, the state had divested itself of responsibility and accountability for the delivery of educational services. Failure to meet parent, student and community expectations became the problem of the school boards.

Kelsey also suggests that Picot's reporting to the Ministers of Finance and State Services as well as Education indicated that the "restructuring of education would be driven primarily by the Treasury and State Services Commission" (Kelsey, 1995, p. 219).

The theme of where power lies within the education system is critical. It is, however, also important to consider power not only within the education system itself but also within society as a whole. For if power is distributed unevenly between the different communities which form boards of trustees then the outcomes in terms of their effectiveness as trustees will differ. Consequently, educational outcomes may differ between communities; but only if the system itself gives boards the power to make a real difference. For the most part boards do not have that power because power is widely dispersed within the system and generally no one actor dominates, but several are important. The importance of each varies from time to time in accordance with the relative strengths of the personalities, institutions and the offices involved. Boards are limited by both their legal and practical competence.

There is also a close relationship between power and issues of formulation and implementation of policy. Hogwood and Gunn (1993) provide examples of how various actors can alter or even subvert policy outcomes as a result of the power they hold at various locations between the point of formulation and delivery. It can also be effected by institutional, cultural, legal, political and industrial factors. Professional capture is one example that has concerned the Education Review Office (Education Review Office, 1994, p. 6). The power of teacher professional organisations to influence how and to what effect policy is implemented can be significant. These themes underpinned the Tomorrow's Schools reforms and are fundamental to an analysis of them.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

Tomorrow's Schools officially came into existence on 1 October 1989, one year after the publication of the Picot Report. The regime was consistent with the devolutionary thrust of government social policy and had parallels in health and Maori Affairs in particular. However, dissatisfaction with school administration had been around for some time before 1984 along with a growing influence of Treasury thinking over the direction of social policy delivery. Over some considerable time:

A series of reports claimed that the system was flawed by a high degree of centralised control of finance and curriculum by the Department of Education, a multiplicity of delivery agencies under different systems of governance, and an inadequate involvement of parents and the wider local community in the administration of education (Martin, 1991, p. 282).

Because schools were centrally controlled by a rigid bureaucracy they had limited opportunity to make even the simplest of decisions relating to their day to day management. Therefore, there was considerable sense in the Picot view that "An effective administration system must be as simple as possible and decisions should be made as close as possible to where they are carried out" (Picot, 1988, p. xi). The extent to which Tomorrow's Schools actually does this varies considerably. At one extreme there is centrally controlled pay fixing arrangements and a legally prescribed national curriculum, to which all schools must adhere. At the other boards have absolute authority over staffing and the setting of expenditure priorities within their state provided operational grants. These logical inconsistencies reflect the complexity of the issues involved and have serious implications for the power relationships among actors in the education policy and administrative arena.

Decentralisation across the school sector as a whole was a very new concept when introduced in 1989. Nevertheless:

A model of direct educational administration between each individual state school and the Department of Education without intervention by an intermediary body such as an education board had existed in New Zealand since 1867. This was the system of Maori state primary schools... It was a system... which many people working in the Maori schools service preferred. They credited it with putting headteachers of Maori schools 'really in charge' (Barrington, 1990, p. 193).

Who is "really in charge" is fundamental to the operation and effectiveness of Tomorrow's Schools. Boards of Trustees are in charge to the extent that they appoint staff and set budgets, while principals are in charge in that they manage the systems and processes under which children learn. Classroom teachers are in charge in that in spite of the politics and legal structure theirs is the influence that actually makes a difference to children. They, with the child control the extent and nature of the learning that takes place within the classroom.

The Ministry of Education and its Minister are in charge in that it is they who allocate budgets, determine the National Education Goals, which includes the National Curriculum, and approve school charters. The Education Review Office is in charge in that it is with reference to its interpretation of these requirements that schools' performances are evaluated and monitored. This makes control of the evaluation process critical, as schools are inclined to develop policies and procedures in line with the evaluator's perception of sound governance and management rather than give thought to how they themselves wish to serve their communities. This is of very serious concern indeed because it undermines and threatens the self managing schools philosophy supposedly central to the system. The ability of the evaluator to undermine community democracy is intensified by the inseparability of evaluation from policy development at a national level.

School governance and management, is in this way a complex set of interrelated processes and power structures, that are not always clearly defined, but all have a bearing on what actually happens in classrooms on a day to day basis.

As a result of Tomorrow's Schools some decisions are made much closer to the point of delivery than they were in the past. However, this was not an original idea of Picot or of the Treasury. A general idea, which had been long argued, became possible because it was consistent with the structural and administrative reform agenda of Roger Douglas (Kelsey, 1995).

POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROVINCES: GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, AND THE RESPECTIVE DOMAINS OF BOARDS OF TRUSTEES AND PRINCIPALS

Schools are governed and managed pursuant to a range of Acts of Parliament, Orders in Council, regulations and guidelines. The most significant of these is the Education Act 1989. Section 75 of the Act states:

Except to the extent that any enactment or the general law of New Zealand provides otherwise, a school's Board has complete discretion to control the management of the school as it thinks fit.

However, these theoretically extensive and broad ranging powers need to be examined in relation to the powers of the principal which are described in Section 76 in this way:

1. A school's principal is the Board's chief executive in relation to the school's control and management.
2. Except to the extent that any enactment or the general law of New Zealand provides otherwise, the principal-
3. Shall comply with the Board's general policy directions; and
 - a) Subject to paragraph (a) of this subsection, has complete discretion to manage as the principal thinks fit the school's day to day administration.

The Act is vague, and unnecessarily so. The board's province appears to be management, while the principal's is day to day management. There are a number of publications which attempt to make distinctions between the two. According to the Act management is not the sole domain of the principal, although day to day management quite clearly is (Ballard & Duncan, 1989; Harrison, 1993; and Ministry of Education, 1997).

All three publications provide useful advice, but they are nothing more than that, as they are based on no legal authority beyond the unclear distinctions that can be drawn from Sections 75 and 76 of the Act. Indeed, the Ministry of Education has a potentially dangerous attitude towards these distinctions. Its most recent advice to boards and principals is that:

The board's role is to make sure that its school is achieving charter goals through good management practices. It should not be involved in the day to day running of the school. Therefore, it is important that the board and principal agree on roles and responsibilities and determine what constitutes day to day, operational aspects in the management of the school (Ministry of Education, 1997).

The expression should not, rather than must not, indicates that the Ministry is articulating only an opinion, not a legally established requirement.

The recent Employment Court case *Hobday v. Timaru Girls' High School Board of Trustees* dealt with a costly and time consuming personal grievance that might have been avoided had clearer lines of demarcation between the province of the principal and board been in place. In his judgement Palmer J. helpfully outlined some broad parameters within which both boards and principals might operate. However, the judgement also indicates that the serious repercussions of inadequate understandings of governance and management roles require some clarification of the two by Parliament. The alternative is for policy to develop from judge made law, resulting from future disputes:

Policy formulation was and is, I stress a fundamental governance role of the board. In my view if the board had focussed appropriately upon these core obligations instead of frequently, confrontationally and unreasonably engaging in time consuming evaluation and re-evaluation of management issues which were primarily the responsibility of the principal, then the defaults by the board in its policy making role would have been much less aggravated (*Hobday v. Timaru Girls' High School*, p. 132).

In the absence of clearer legislative guidelines, this Court judgement is the most authoritative source of direction available. Boards do have a governance role, and policy formulation is a fundamental part of that role. The Act states that principals must comply with and implement those policies. "But subject to his or her so doing, has complete discretion to manage... the schools day to day administration as he or she thinks fit" (Harrison 1993, p. 74). Management issues are primarily, but not exclusively the domain of the principal. So the question remains, where do the different provinces begin and end and in what ways do they overlap?

On behalf of the Ministry of Education Ballard and Duncan give some advice on this question. However, because boards have absolute discretion to control the management of the school, as they think fit, they may if they wish carry out their responsibilities under policies which broaden or narrow the principal's day to day management domain to whatever degree they wish. Subject of course, to the very general requirements of the Act. In light of the narrow approach of *Timaru Girls' High School* and the difficulties that caused this flexibility is unwise:

The Board of Trustees has a policy role. The board will establish school policy and priorities to support the charter. A key responsibility of the board is approving and monitoring a budget designed to achieve the

charter objectives. We are not suggesting that the Board will actually do the budgeting... The board will establish the policies within which budget priorities would be set... (1989, p. 2-3).

They go on to suggest that "the school principal and staff will be responsible for planning, developing and implementing school and classroom programmes... and that the principal has three functions:

- **Executive** the principal will contribute to and implement the policy of the board so as to achieve the objectives of the charter.
- **Instructional Leadership** this involves leading the school staff in the implementation of school programmes.
- **Reporting** on the achievements of the school" (Ballard & Duncan, 1989, p. 5-6).

Ballard and Duncan describe a model which clearly distinguishes between the responsibilities of a board and its principal. Yet departures from this Ministry of Education inspired model are certainly envisaged by the Education Act 1989. Indeed, "there is an implicit requirement in the legislation for boards to define their own role, particularly in relation to that of the principal" (Education Review Office, 1994, p. 4).

This supposed freedom has little merit. It is a freedom to mismanage and misgovern as in the case of Timaru Girls' High School. Alternatively it is a freedom to avoid responsibility through excessive delegation to principals and staff. Clearly defined provincial boundaries would enhance the ability of all schools to deliver to the seemingly forgotten "consumer" of Tomorrow's Schools education, the child.

One area in which the roles of actors are explicitly defined is that relating to the suspension of a child from a school. It is interesting that it is in this area the legislature has seen fit to depart from the logic of requiring boards to determine their own roles. School discipline is a subject of public interest and often the recipient of media attention. Suspension can also have a marked influence on a child's future educational opportunities. Therefore, an aggrieved child is more likely to seek legal redress than is a dissatisfied party to the petty power plays the legislation allows of other aspects of school operations.

Section 13(1) of the Act empowers a principal to suspend for a specified period of not more than three days, or an unspecified period. Section 14 "requires that the Principal give a full written report to the board about the suspension as soon as is reasonably practicable." Under Sections 16 and 17 of the Act the board of trustees has powers to lift or extend the suspension of a student... "suspended by the principal" (Breakwell, 1993, p. 107).

Conflict between actors in school governance and management contributes little to the nature and quality of the education a school might provide. The freedom to determine provincial boundaries has little to do with quality of educational outcome. It merely sets the scene for time consuming, but often irrelevant conflicts, in the name of the ill-defined notion of partnership.

POWER RELATIONSHIPS

There are two categories of power relationship that require examination. The first is that between the Crown and individual schools and their communities. The second is between school boards and their principals. Bacharac and Baratz (1993, p. 67) argue that:

... power is exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A.

It is a process 'which confines decision making to safe issues.' (Bacharac & Baratz in Ham & Hill, 1993, p. 67).

This is the nonsense of Tomorrow's Schools. The parliament, that is A, claims to have devolved power to local communities. However, in its creation of the institutional practices that allow this to happen, the school charter, over which it retains considerable control, the legislature has limited this feature of the political process to issues that are relatively innocuous to it.

Seemingly, what is not innocuous to the government is that which is described in the National Education Guidelines as they form the mandatory components of the charter of any school. The Guidelines have three parts. The first is the ten National Education Goals which are the government's very broadly stated objectives for the school sector. Secondly, and most importantly, are the National Curriculum Statements of which there will be seven, one for each of the government determined essential learning areas. As each curriculum statement is promulgated in the *New Zealand Gazette* its implementation is required of all Boards of Trustees. Finally, there are the National Administrative Guidelines, which are very prescriptive in nature, and cover six government determined areas of school administration. These are curriculum requirements, employer responsibilities, financial and property management, documentation and self review, health and safety and administration (Ministry of Education, 1997).

While schools have freedom to implement these requirements as they see fit, this must be done in ways that meet the very prescriptive provisions of the Guidelines. Therefore in practice these self managing schools have very little control over the substance of their affairs, as Barrington (1990, p. 208) identifies:

Many school trustees confronting the extensive nationally mandated non-discretionary guidelines emanating from the new Ministry of Education, the prospect of review by the Education Review Office, and doubts about the extent to which the central bureaucracy has really been reduced either in size or influence, may well be wondering how real the diminution of bureaucratic authority is.

This lack of control at the school level is most notable in the area of curriculum, which is presumably still the primary reason for the existence of a school. Also, the Ministry of Education, through Orders in Council that determine school staffing, and through its determination of the public money allocated to each

school remains very much in control of the freedoms that boards have in meeting their obligations to the Crown.

The types of freedom to make policy that boards do have are indeed innocuous as the following suggests:

A board... should be clear on the purpose of the activity about which they have developed policy. In other words, we believe the board must think about why it regards a programme in science teaching might or might not have a priority over a fitness programme... careful consideration should be given to the principal's views on such instructional matters during the deliberations of the board (Ballard & Duncan, 1989, p. 7).

This is not power of great moment. Indeed as it should be, the debate referred to is irrelevant. Science and Health and Physical Wellbeing are both among the seven essential areas of learning. Therefore, programmes in both are mandatory. Neither takes priority over another as they both contribute towards the required balanced curriculum. The question is, therefore, one of routine organisation, not high level policy making. The suggestion that an education system requires over three thousand statutory bodies to make this kind of decision for it, is more indicative of excessive bureaucracy than it is of genuine devolution of power and enhanced democracy.

Ballard and Duncan imply that their example is a matter for the board and therefore outside the parameters of the principal's control of day to day management. Therefore, it is in the area of management, rather than in the substance of education delivery that boards are powerful. The result of Ballard and Duncan's interpretation is a ridiculously narrow, yet under the law quite legitimate, definition of day to day management. Fortunately most boards seem a little more far sighted. Certainly a recent Post Primary Teachers' Association study suggests this. The study showed that while boards have extensive management powers, most either formally, or at least in practice delegate these to the principal to the extent that "teachers rarely saw boards as being instrumental in their lives, and more than 75% of staff respondents ... thought that the real power in the school lay with the principal" (Capper, 1994, p. 55).

This finding is particularly significant. While there is undoubtedly potential for boards to seriously restrict the power and authority of a principal, few actually do. Gordon, Boysak and Pearce (1994, p. 13) found from their study of four Christchurch schools that:

... initially school based trustees appeared to have more power due to their fuller knowledge of school operations and educational processes... Much more equitable power relations are evident within the schools now...

This indicates a situation of statutory power in reality being secondary to the power of professional knowledge and expertise, obtainable by principals, staff and perhaps student trustees by virtue of their location within the policy arena. Legislative powers are meaningless if one does not have the knowledge and skill

to use them. Professional capture which Gordon, Boysak and Pearce draw attention to is a further dimension of power relationships. The possibility of professional capture of boards of trustees is of concern to the Education Review Office. The Office's concern arises out of an ideological commitment to the provider/client split which is fundamental to the administrative reform agenda within which Tomorrow's Schools was established. In describing amendments to the Education Act 1989, the Office comments that a restriction was placed:

on the appointment of further employees of the board as trustees apart from the one elected staff representative. This means that teachers who are also parents of children at a school are prevented from becoming parent elected trustees. In this way the balance between provider and client is protected. There is still the possibility, however, that the balance between professionals and parents may be upset by parents on the board who are teachers at other schools (Education Review Office, 1994, p. 6).

The Act properly excludes teachers from their own school's board in capacities other than staff representative because of the potential for conflict of interest. However, the Review Office's extension of the argument is indeed odd. Their suggestion is that the principle of partnership does not exist with respect to parents who by chance are also teachers (albeit of other schools). Furthermore, the democratic ideal associated with partnership extends only to the election of parent trustees approved of by the Review Office. Teachers are not approved of, despite the fact that they can only become parent trustees if elected by parents. The Office's model of democracy provides for partnership only to the extent that it does not interfere with the neo-liberal philosophy on which Tomorrow's Schools is based.

A further issue concerning power relationships, which the government needs to clarify, is the nature of its own partnership with schools. As the funder of all state and state integrated schools the government quite properly interests itself in how that allocation of public money is spent. However, true partnership requires a more honest expression of the extent to which the state is prepared to allow flexibility and freedom in decision making at the community level. Responsibility has been devolved to a large degree, while accompanying authority has not. The process by which this was done was and remains dishonest. Smith and Smith (1996, p. 227) describe it in this way:

Education and schooling reform was sold to parents on the promises: more control over schools, more say in children's schooling, more school choices.

While parents have gained management responsibility of schools, real power and control remains within a streamlined central bureaucracy... An example is the way in which funding to schools has been controlled and by directly diminishing parental influence over the learning domain by prescribing almost 90% of school charters in non negotiable regulations... what parents have in fact got is more

responsibility and accountability upon themselves; the central bureaucracy has neatly abdicated this role without relinquishing power, control and authority.

The idea of decision making at the point of delivery exists only in a very limited way under Tomorrow's Schools. This is a situation that is not unique to New Zealand. Devolution of this kind is an international phenomenon and John Smyth (1993, p. 5) argues that in a number of countries including New Zealand there "has been a rhetoric of devolution in a context of centralism."

Boards may appoint principals and staff which is an important function once carried out by the regional education boards. While one should not underestimate the significance of this power, boards do little else of great importance. They may determine their spending priorities, as long as they spend in a way that allows them to meet their almost entirely nationally prescribed charter objectives. Given that the only trustees with the knowledge to make this kind of decision are the principal and staff trustee, the system is flawed. The board will either accept the recommendations of the principal because it does not have the information to develop an alternative set of spending priorities, or it will make an ill informed decision to reject the principal's advice. In so doing it is likely to provoke unnecessary and unproductive conflict with its chief executive. Boards that have the skill to see this, effectively make themselves irrelevant, but are likely to have a well-managed school. This is because in such a school management decisions will in fact be made at the point of implementation by a professional educator, rather than by a collection of amateurs. Boards which do not have the wisdom to let their principal's manage would do well to reflect on the Timaru experience.

Under current legislation, boards of trustees are at best of limited relevance and at worst a hindrance to the efficient management of a school. This is not to say that individual trustees do not make invaluable contributions to schools in their private capacities. However, they do not need the office of trustee to allow them to do this voluntary work that many would do anyway. If boards are merely managers, they fulfill a role that might be brought closer to the point of implementation if it were formally given to a principal. If they are governors they must be given the power to govern. Tomorrow's Schools provided an opportunity for that policy debate over the extent to which governance decisions should be made at the school level to take place. In this way society might have determined the degree to which, if at all, there should be flexibility and choice in schooling. That opportunity was missed because:

The whole charter exercise, has not, in practice, been a joint exercise between the government and the boards. The national guidelines and objectives referred to in the reports are, in fact, the charter... The job was done for them before they were even allowed to think (Sexton, 1990, p. 25).

The ultimate power resides with government, while the legal power of management lies with boards of trustees. In practice not all boards make full use of their powers because if they have used their ability to appoint a principal effectively, the principal will assume management responsibilities and carry them out efficiently.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

An examination of some of the theoretical literature on policy implementation suggests that the Tomorrow's Schools model is in a number of ways fundamentally flawed. Boards are limited in their ability to implement policy because:

... some obstacles to implementation are outside the control of administrators because they are external to the policy and the implementing agency... be they political... (or) unacceptable to interests which have the power to veto them (Hogwood & Gunn, 1993, p. 238).

The most significant obstacle to the development and implementation of policy of a board's choice is ironically its own charter. Although the charter might in law be a board's contract with the Minister of Education the major part of its content is external to the board, the implementing agency. Boards do not have any input into pay fixing arrangements, largely due to the effective veto of the teacher professional organisations. A strong principal, especially where there is a weak board may also have an effective veto over policy and implementation decisions. Furthermore, the Education Review Office by virtue of its role as evaluator has immense power which can give it an opportunity to veto in fact, although not in law. This occurs as boards shape their policy decisions and implementation procedures in ways which meet the suggestions of the evaluator:

Policies which are physically or politically feasible still fail to achieve stated intentions... politicians sometimes will the policy 'end' but not the 'means'. (Hogwood & Gunn, 1993, p. 239).

Schools are the implementer of the government's National Education Goals. The extent to which they can implement this policy and the freedoms they have in doing so are heavily influenced by the school's government-provided operations grant.

Under Tomorrow's Schools, the policy "end" was apparently self governing schools, responsive to the individual needs of their respective communities. The legislative "means" has not been provided.

Under this regime policy is effectively made by the central bureaucracy. The documents referred to by schools and by the Ministry of Education as policies are in fact nothing of the sort. They are merely management guidelines, often copied from another school in recognition of the fact that the requirement to document procedures is little more than a bureaucratic nuisance with no practical influence on a school's operations and effectiveness. Examination of curriculum policies from a number of schools certainly indicates this. Boards are the managers of implementation with the substantive decisions having been made for them. It is very much a policy making and implementation relationship that fits Ham and Hill's (1993, p. 104) argument that:

Any system in which policy making and implementation are clearly separated... by a division between levels of government provides opportunities for the promulgation of symbolic policies.

Tomorrow's Schools is such a symbolic policy. For that reason boards of trustees can in reality be seen only as managers, not as governors.

The role of the classroom teacher, as a street-level bureaucrat, in the implementation of the centrally made policy is far more significant than that of the board of trustees. The source of the "street-level" bureaucrats power is "the inescapable exercise of discretion. Inescapable, because street level bureaucracies require people to make decisions about other people" (Hudson, 1993, p. 388). There is no escaping the reality that the basis of teacher professionalism is the teacher's requirement and ability to make decisions frequently and without persistent referral to higher authority. It is because it is impractical and undesirable for teachers to refer routine decisions to the board of trustees that boards are fairly insignificant at the point of delivery. For this reason the fact that boards have the power to intrude on the domain of teacher and principal, does not make such practice at all desirable.

Palmer J. (Hobday v. Timaru Girls' High School Board of Trustees 1994, p. 41) is quite clear that this power exists, while Brown and Angus (1997, p. 45) are equally clear on its foolishness. When concerns are brought to a board:

... the board might... develop and formulate policy which would address the particular concerns. In this event, the principal and staff would be obliged to implement such policy, notwithstanding that it materially impinged upon the principal's day to day management of the school (Hobday v. Timaru Girls' High School Board of Trustees 1994, p. 41).

This potential for intrusion on and interference in the professional work of a principal or teacher is unwise and conflicts with sound educational practice.

Teachers require sufficient autonomy to exercise professional judgements. Their standing declines as the level of external constraint on their work increases. It is through using professional judgements to choose from a repertoire of possible responses to particular situations that teachers come to develop a sense of pedagogy and to understand the complexity of the relationship between teaching and learning (Brown & Angus, 1997, p. 45).

This remains so in spite of Education Review Office attacks on the role of the teaching profession in the management of the implementation process. The Office's attitude towards the existence of teachers as parent representatives on boards of schools other than their own, from which they are excluded is evidence of this. The Office also states that one of the aims of Tomorrow's Schools was "to alter the balance of power between the providers and the clients of education" (Education Review Office, 1994, p. 5).

This balance of power is unclear and inadequately defined which makes Tomorrow's Schools problematic.

CONCLUSION

The devolution of many of the functions of the regional education boards to school communities took place under the guise of empowering schools with greater influence over the direction and management of their affairs. However, this was more a devolution of political rhetoric than it was a devolution of real power. It was only decision-making power over the government-determined "safe issues" that became the domain of school Boards of Trustees. The central bureaucracy retains, to a significant extent, power and control over curriculum, pay fixing, management systems and finance. While there may be strong arguments for central control of some of these, the existence of that control leaves little room for boards of trustees. Boards occupy a space in the policy arena that is largely irrelevant to the effective functioning of a school and they operate under administrative arrangements which do not meet the Picot objective of enhanced community democracy. Indeed, they only become relevant when they intrude on professional issues. For the reasons discussed and from the examples drawn from *Hobday* these intrusions are unlikely to be of constructive benefit to a school.

Central to the problem is the Parliament's unwillingness to clarify more explicitly which powers and responsibilities properly lie with which actors. Society has not given adequate consideration to what might be the proper distribution of power between the central bureaucracy and school communities, or to how power is dispersed within those communities. Tomorrow's Schools is in need of reappraisal with these issues being the focus of the questions policy makers might address.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Administering for Excellence*. (1988). Report of the Taskforce to Review Education Administration, Wellington.
- Ballard, Russell & Duncan, Peter (1989). *Role of the Principal and Trustees in Tomorrow's Schools*. Implementation Unit, Department of Education, Wellington.
- Barrington, John, (1990). Historical Factors for Change in Education. In P. McKinlay (ed.). *Redistribution of Power? Devolution in New Zealand*. Victoria University Press, Wellington.
- Breakwell, Jan, (1993). Control and Management of Schools-Disciplinary Powers of Boards of Trustees. In *Education and the Law in New Zealand*. Legal Research Foundation, Auckland.
- Brown, Lynton & Angus, Lawrence. (1997). Reconstructing Teacher Professionalism in Victoria's Schools of the Future. *Curriculum Perspectives* 17(1), 45-56.
- Effective Governance: School Boards of Trustees*. (1994). Education Review Office, Wellington.
- Gordon, Liz, Boysak, Debra & Pearce, Diane (1994). *Governing Schools: A comparative analysis*. Education Policy Research Unit, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

- Ham, Christopher & Hill, Michael (1993). *The Policy Process in the Modern Capitalist State* (2nd ed.). Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead.
- Harrison, Rodney, (1993). Powers, Duties and Accountability of School Boards of Trustees. In *Education and the Law in New Zealand*. Legal Research Foundation, Auckland.
- Hobday v. Timaru Girls' High School Board of Trustees* (10 June 1994). Employment Court, Christchurch Registry.
- Hogwood, Brian & Gunn, Lewis. (1993). Why perfect implementation is unattainable. In Hill, Michael (ed.). *The Policy Process: A Reader*. Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead.
- Hudson, Bob, (1993). Michael Lipsky and Street level bureaucracy. In Hill, Michael (ed.). *The Policy Process: A Reader*. Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead.
- Kelsey, Jane. (1995). *The New Zealand Experiment: A World Model for Structural Adjustment?* Auckland University Press, Bridget Williams Books, Auckland.
- Lukes, Steven. (1993). Three Distinctive Views of Power Compared. In Hill, Michael (ed.), *The Policy Process: A Reader*. Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead.
- Martin, John. (1991). Devolution and Decentralisation. In Boston, Jonathan, Martin, John, Pallot, June & Walsh, Pat (eds.), *Reshaping the State: New Zealand's Bureaucratic Revolution*. Oxford University Press, Auckland.
- Ministry of Education. (1997). *Governing and Managing New Zealand Schools: A Guide for Boards of Trustees*. Learning Media, Wellington.
- Ministry of Education. (1995). *School Governance and Management*. Unpublished paper.
- Sexton, Stuart. (1990). *New Zealand Schools: An Evaluation of Recent Reforms and Future Directions*. New Zealand Business Roundtable.
- Smith, Graham Hingangaroa & Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. (1996) New Mythologies in Maori Education. In P. Spoonley, C. Macpherson & D. Pearson (eds.), *Nga Patai: Racism and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand*. The Dunmore Press, Palmerston North.
- Smyth, John. (1993). *A Socially Critical View of the Self-Managing School*. Washington D.C, Falmer Press.
- The Professional Leadership of Secondary School Principals* (1997). Education Review Office, Wellington.