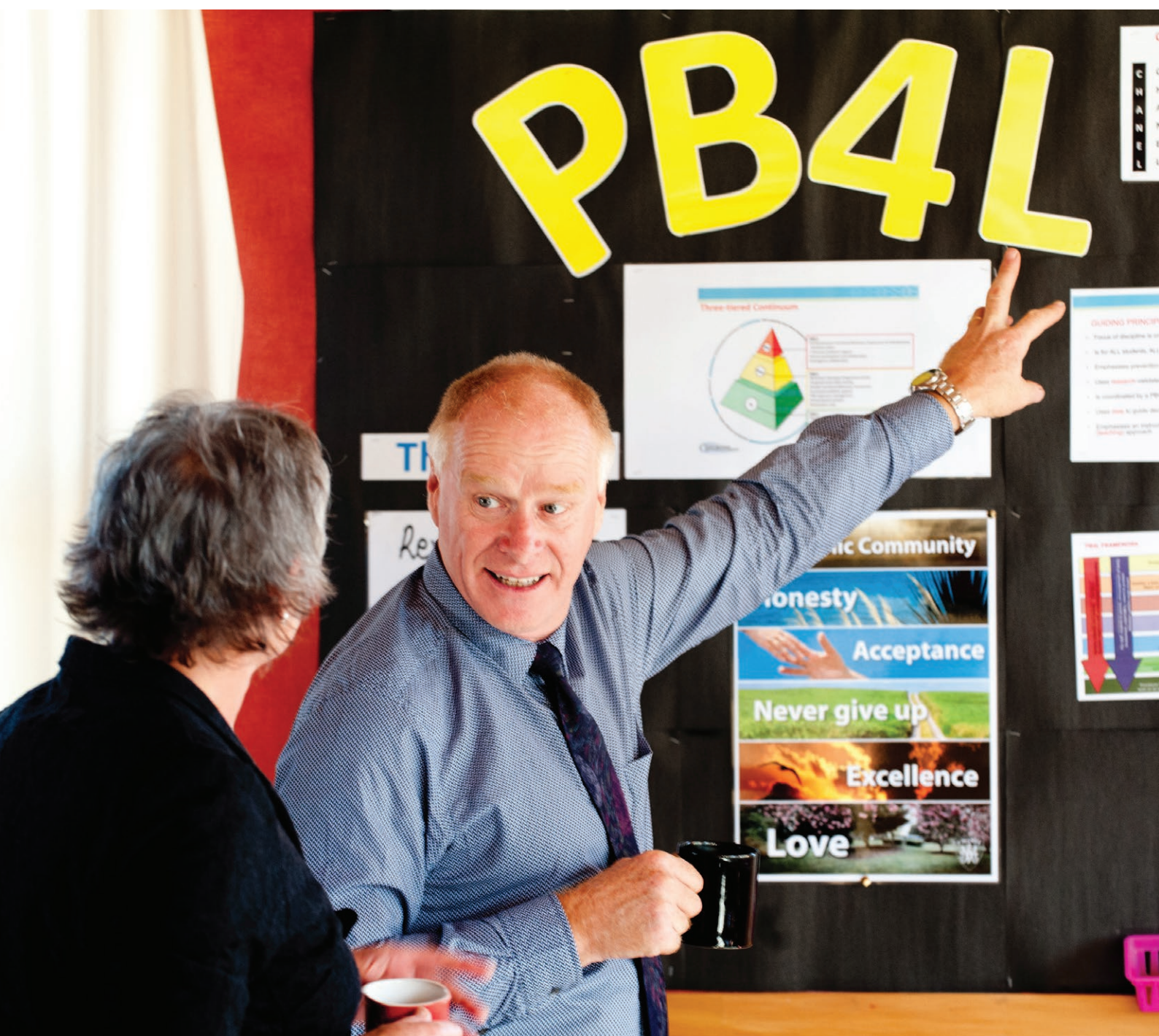


SECTION 2

SUSTAINING PRINCIPAL COMMITMENT



Section 2: Sustaining Principal Commitment

Sustaining principal commitment



It appears indisputable that the ... principal is the key to any major school-wide staff development activity. Consequently, any school improvement or reform effort needs to have solid and clearly defined support from the principal for the endeavour to succeed.

Colvin, 2007, page 32

Principal commitment requires the school's principal and senior leaders to participate in the implementation of PB4L-SW and to provide support and strong leadership for it. They are more likely to do so if they understand the value of PB4L-SW for the school community and they can see how their role in the initiative aligns with New Zealand understandings about effective leadership.

2.1 PB4L-SW AND NEW ZEALAND'S BEST EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS ON SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Transformational leaders are able to inspire their people with a vision that energises them and encourages them to work collaboratively towards a common goal.

Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009, page 85

This section describes the qualities required of the PB4L-SW school leader in relation to the leadership dimensions identified within New Zealand's Best Evidence Synthesis *School Leadership and Student Outcomes*.

ESTABLISHING AND COMMUNICATING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

Effective leaders are able to support goal setting as a key task for moving their school forward. When they commit to implementation and believe in the capabilities of their school community, PB4L-SW principals are better able to communicate high expectations in relation to achieving the goals that have been set. Their optimism and positive, strengths-focused outlook help the school community to maintain a goal-oriented approach in which behavioural and academic progress and success are shared and celebrated and challenges are viewed as opportunities.

RESOURCING STRATEGICALLY

PB4L–SW principals need to ensure that resources – people and material – are allocated in purposeful, goal-focused ways. Most PB4L–SW outcomes are achieved through the creative, constructive thinking and actions of the people involved, rather than through material resources. However, the principal must pay particular attention to the strategic use of time, to allow key people to train, meet, plan, read, share information and stories, and reflect on the challenges and successes of implementation.

PLANNING, COORDINATING, AND EVALUATING TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM

Quality teaching is essential for the successful implementation of PB4L–SW because of its impact on student engagement and motivation. Effective PB4L–SW principals have oversight of planning processes in which teaching priorities are identified based on behavioural data. They promote the ongoing monitoring of teaching and other strategies and interventions to support positive behaviour, encouraging the use of evidence to evaluate effectiveness.

PROMOTING AND PARTICIPATING IN TEACHER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Effective principals engage in and model enthusiasm for ongoing professional learning and development. PB4L–SW principals promote, nurture, and participate in a learning community where staff, students, and community identify challenges in the implementation of PB4L–SW and work together to solve these. They encourage creative, new thinking that helps staff to use data to solve problems and improve practice within cycles of collaborative action and reflection (Timperley et al., 2007).

PB4L–SW principals promote, nurture, and participate in a learning community where staff, students, and community identify challenges in the implementation of PB4L–SW and work together to solve these.

ENSURING AN ORDERLY AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

PB4L–SW principals support the development of systems in the school that make it easier for staff to implement PB4L–SW practices. They provide regular feedback and encouragement to staff, students, and the wider community that motivates participants and makes them feel that their efforts are noticed and valued. In these ways they help to “create an environment that is conducive to success” (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009, page 42).

CREATING EDUCATIONALLY POWERFUL CONNECTIONS

Effective leaders work to create inclusive schools and improved outcomes for all students. PB4L–SW principals are able to articulate the vision of the school with clarity and enthusiasm and in ways that are accessible to diverse audiences. They are focused on creating educationally powerful connections that support culturally responsive school practices. They value partnerships with families and whānau and ensure that all school community members have a voice.

ENGAGING IN CONSTRUCTIVE PROBLEM TALK

The PB4L-SW principal helps staff to use data to identify and prioritise those aspects of school systems and practices that need to be strengthened or changed. Data-based decision making is a key feature of PB4L-SW, and principals can take a lead role in promoting the use of data to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and identify next steps. The principal can also model strength- and solution-focused discussions aimed at challenging theories and examining beliefs, moving staff beyond subjective responses or deficit thinking with regard to the student behaviours that challenge them.

In order to build communities that learn, leaders may need to challenge and change well-established aspects of teacher culture.

Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009, page 128

SELECTING, DEVELOPING, AND USING SMART TOOLS

Smart tools are tools that help teachers to achieve their intended purpose; the smartest tools are those that have been derived from sound research (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). PB4L-SW makes use of a wide range of tools that research has shown to be effective in helping schools to achieve a positive school-wide climate. Effective PB4L-SW principals know these tools and work with staff to ensure that everyone understands what they are telling the school about student behaviour and the implementation of PB4L-SW.



2.2 LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR CREATING CHANGE

Most educators agree that principal support is necessary for any effective initiative. The principal determines the time, focus, and resources. The strategies below, suggested by Colvin (2007), further define the role of the principal in PB4L–SW’s development and implementation.

PROVIDE STRONG SUPPORT

- **Make public statements of support:** The words and actions of the principal are powerful. Schools participating in the PB4L–SW initiative work to develop a purpose statement, which defines why PB4L–SW is important and needed. The principal then follows through by making the PB4L–SW work visible to staff, students, whānau, and the community.
- **Support the PB4L–SW team members:** Team members take on a big responsibility and time commitment for providing PB4L–SW leadership to the school. The principal can support the team members by recognising, privately and publicly, the effort of each team member. In addition, the principal needs to be sensitive to members’ workloads and limit their participation in other committees and school activities.
- **Support the PB4L–SW team meetings:** The most important thing a principal can do to support the PB4L–SW team is to consistently attend its team meetings. If an assistant or deputy principal (with delegated authority to make decisions) attends meetings instead, the principal should work closely with the delegate and still attend meetings when possible to show support and unity for PB4L–SW.
- **Provide recognition for staff and teams for their work:** Showing sincere gratitude for the efforts of faculty and team members is greatly appreciated and helps all to continue with the work needed to plan and implement PB4L–SW.
- **Serve as the contact for school-related groups:** An important role of the principal is to communicate progress on the goals of the PB4L–SW initiative. The principal is a key contact point for school and community groups such as the parent-teacher organisation, the board of trustees, and student bodies.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

- **Maintain standards in evidence-based practice:** Principals must lead staff toward research-based initiatives and reject the myriad of practices and programmes that may not be efficient and effective in meeting school improvement goals. By serving as the ‘gatekeeper’, the principal can maintain standards in evidence-based practice throughout the school.
- **Guide the decision-making process:** One leadership role the principal can provide is to teach and guide the team and entire staff through a process for making decisions. Voting and building consensus are decision-making processes that the principal can lead.
- **Monitor implementation activities and provide feedback:** Principals have an important role as instructional leaders in PB4L–SW. They need to learn about the skills that their staff require to implement PB4L–SW. They can then acknowledge their staffs’ achievements in PB4L–SW and, when staff members are not meeting their PB4L–SW responsibilities, help them to understand expectations and to identify any support they may need.
- **Take a leadership role in problem solving:** When problems need to be solved especially quickly, the principal may need to step in to lead the group to a workable solution.

ENSURE EFFECTIVENESS OPERATIONALLY

- **Establish the PB4L-SW team securely:** Establishing a PB4L-SW team helps the principal to gain staff support for implementation. To ensure that the team represents the school, its members should reflect the various stakeholders involved (teachers, teacher aides and other support staff, parents, students, and so on). The principal must be a member of the team (or have a delegated representative present) and ensure it has the required time and financial resources; but he or she shares leadership with the entire team.
- **Make a time commitment:** The principal must understand that it takes time to bring everyone on board and to implement the PB4L-SW plan. This initiative is not a 'sprint'; it is a 'long-distance run'. To sustain it, the principal must patiently and persistently continue to provide support and leadership. As the principal goes, so goes the school.
- **Review data and provide feedback regularly:** Data collection, synthesis, and review are essential components of PB4L-SW. The principal should provide the necessary resources for collecting and using data for decision-making support and support the individual on the PB4L-SW team with the responsibility for data monitoring. In addition, other staff may need support to create and update efficient data charts and reports for regular review by the principal, management, and team.
- **Ensure the innovation is sustained:** The principal plays a crucial role in sustaining PB4L-SW over time. Staff interest and attention to the initiative may wane if too many other initiatives are introduced or if overt problem behaviours have been resolved. Changing or enhancing culture takes time. The principal must be diligent in keeping all staff focused on the PB4L-SW purpose and goals and in informing new staff, students, and whānau about the school's PB4L-SW work. He or she should ensure PB4L-SW is included in the school's charter and annual plan and actively engage the board of trustees. (The board in turn must ensure that an incoming principal strongly supports PB4L-SW, so that efforts are sustained.)

The principal must be diligent in keeping all staff focused on the PB4L-SW purpose and goals and in informing new staff, students, and whānau about the school's PB4L-SW work.

The principal of a North Island high school has been a cheerleader for PB4L-SW from the outset. She promotes the initiative at staff meetings, at parent gatherings, and in the community, ensuring it has continued visibility and a prominent status. She ensures that the coach has the support, status, and time to do his job, with regular supervision meetings, advice, and encouraging pep talks.

The principal sees PB4L-SW as a vital underpinning for all school programmes, providing a positive environment where staff and students can be safe, settled, and successful in their work. She ensures that implementation problems don't become barriers that slow the impetus. She is aware that initial interest and enthusiasm can diminish – so she is quick to notice when spirits are flagging, and she uses data to motivate staff and to identify areas where refocused energy and attention are needed. Even small improvements are noticed and celebrated, and staff and students' efforts are acknowledged at assemblies, at staff meetings, and on the school website.



ANZAC Display

If you have any Memorabilia (COPIES ONLY) of "our" stories coming in from parents please make an extra copy so that they can be put up in the HALL. We will add to this leading up to Anzac Day

Major

Titchi Rav School

2.3 SYSTEM SUPPORTS, PRACTICES, AND DATA

PB4L–SW is most powerful when systems, practices, and data are working together and given equal emphasis (see section 1.4). The following table presents examples of these three key interactive elements for the essential feature 'Sustaining principal commitment'.

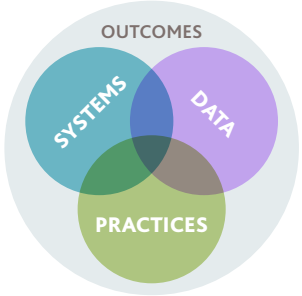


Table 4: Examples of system supports, practices, and data for sustaining principal commitment

SYSTEM SUPPORTS FOR STAFF	PRACTICES SUPPORTING STUDENTS	DATA FOR DECISION MAKING
<p>Support for PB4L–SW via regular communications from the principal to staff, students, whānau, and community</p> <p>A representative PB4L–SW team with active support from the principal</p> <p>The gathering of student, parent, and whānau voices</p> <p>Time for the PB4L–SW team to meet at least monthly</p> <p>Regular PB4L–SW updates during staff meetings and to the board of trustees and wider community</p> <p>Staff professional development</p>	<p>Principal support and involvement in acknowledgments (e.g., at assemblies and staff meetings)</p> <p>Communicating with students about school-wide initiatives</p>	<p>Staff, student, whānau, and community perceptions of the school's safety, culture, and discipline (e.g., from the school's Well-being at School survey, Ruia School-whānau Partnerships self-review, Inclusive Practices tools report)</p> <p>Written reports on implementation progress from the PB4L–SW team (e.g., TIPS minutes)</p>

2.4 STEPS FOR SUSTAINING PRINCIPAL COMMITMENT

The table below offers steps for your school principal and senior management to consider in order to support PB4L–SW and maintain its momentum. Alongside each step are examples of evidence and sources of data for evaluating its outcomes. The discussion in section 2.2 provides more information on what principals can do to ensure the success of PB4L–SW.

Table 5: Steps for sustaining principal commitment

STEPS	EVIDENCE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT
1. Establish the PB4L–SW team with representatives from teachers, whānau, students, and support staff; support it to meet at least monthly.	PB4L–SW team membership list PB4L–SW team meeting schedule
2. Provide frequent public support for PB4L–SW via regular communications and updates with staff, students, whānau, the board of trustees, and community.	Letters, website, newsletters A list of ways in which staff are expected to implement PB4L–SW PB4L–SW materials in staff and student handbooks Minutes from staff meetings
3. Monitor and assist with data gathering and implementation activities and provide feedback.	Reports from evidence-based tools (e.g., the Ruia School-whānau Partnerships tool, the Well-being at School tool, the Inclusive Practices tools) Completed whānau engagement checklist (see section 3.11) Reports from PB4L–SW tools such as SET and EBS (see Table 6 in section 3.1).
4. Support the PB4L–SW team in problem solving and decision making.	Delegated authority to make decisions – to the principal's representative on the team (if applicable) and to team members (when appropriate) Modelling of effective problem solving and decision making in meetings run by the principal
5. Provide staff professional development.	Staff professional development plan

ACTIVITY: STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FROM SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Review this strategy from section 2.2:

Make public statements of support: The words and actions of the principal and board are powerful. Schools participating in PB4L–SW develop a purpose statement, which defines why PB4L–SW is important and needed. The principal and board then follow through by making the PB4L–SW work visible to staff, students, whānau, and the community.

Discuss how your principal, board, and senior management currently make public statements of support for initiatives in your school. Are these effective? Where, when, to whom, and how can your senior leadership provide effective public statements of support for PB4L–SW?

Where?

When?

To whom?

How?

EXAMPLES:

- *Where?* – at board of trustee meetings, staff meetings, with whānau and community groups
- *When?* – regularly! Ensure that principal support actions are part of the action plan.
- *To whom?* – all relevant stakeholders
- *How?* – via regular features in school newsletters, the school website, reports to parents, and so on



The template for this activity is available as a PDF and Word document online at <http://pb4l.tki.org.nz/PB4L-School-Wide/Support-material>.

ACTIVITY: TEAM ACTION PLANNING

Find the team action plan template for 'Sustaining principal commitment' in Appendix 4. From your ideas in the above activity, draft one or more goals and complete the corresponding columns in the template. Below is an example of what this could look like for one goal.

1. SUSTAINING PRINCIPAL COMMITMENT						
Goals	Steps and resources	Who is responsible?	When will it be started?	Evaluation measure or evidence	Review status	
			When will it be completed?		Date	Status
Show public support by communicating about PB4L-SW.	Add PB4L-SW section to school newsletter and put on school website. Resources: space in newsletter and on website	Principal and Communication Co-ordinator	Start: Feb 2016 Completed: May 2016	School newsletter posted on website		