

# **Springboard Trust Strategic Leadership for Principals Programme**

**Gaining insight into the experiences of  
Māori leaders and capacity partners**

**Hana Turner-Adams, Sheridan McKinley,  
and Rachel Bolstad**

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2022

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# Acknowledgement

We are very grateful to the seven principals and four capacity partners who found time in their busy schedules to talk to us about the Springboard Trust Strategic Leadership for Principals Programme.

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## Summary

Effective strategic planning is an integral part of a principal's role, but this is a skill for which many principals are largely unprepared. The Springboard Trust's Strategic Leadership for Principals Programme (SLPP) is a 10-month leadership development programme for principals in New Zealand. Participants must have 2 years of experience as a school leader to join the programme. Over a series of workshops spanning 10 months, SLPP explores the core elements of strategic leadership. This learning occurs with the support of a capacity partner, an experienced strategic leader who is paired with each principal. Principals and capacity partners work with a cohort of up to six other pairings under the guidance of an experienced facilitator and Springboard's programme managers.

This research study focused on the experiences of Māori principals and capacity partners to determine what aspects of the SLPP were working well and how the SLPP could be improved to meet Māori participants' needs and priorities.

The two research questions guiding this study were:

1. How well does the programme content and mode of delivery meet the learning needs and expectations of Māori participants?
2. How does or could the programme reflect Māori priorities or views of mentoring and leadership?

Seven principals and four capacity partners participated in semi-structured interviews and shared their experiences of the SLPP. All participants identified as Māori, but their backgrounds and experience were diverse. Years of experience as a principal ranged from less than 5 years ( $n = 3$ ), 5 to 10 years ( $n = 3$ ) and more than 10 years' experience ( $n = 1$ ). The geographical areas represented by the principals and the capacity partners were Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, Taranaki, and Canterbury.

Overall, principals and capacity partners rated the SLPP content and delivery very highly. For principals, designing and developing a strategic plan was a highlight of the programme. All principals finished the course with a plan they and their stakeholders were happy with and increased their skills and understanding of strategic planning. Principals also appreciated the support and guidance they received from their capacity partner, who offered a business perspective and helped them to look beyond education approaches to solve problems.

Networking with other principals in the SLPP was beneficial for many of the participants. They appreciated opportunities to collaboratively problem-solve, share ideas, and learn from other principals. Most principals, however, did not favour the idea of a Māori-only cohort. They enjoyed the diversity of Māori and non-Māori working together in the programme and learning from each other.

Principals and capacity partners did not think the SLPP reflected Māori priorities or views of mentoring and leadership. This was an area where participants felt the programme could be improved so that it was more attractive to Māori principals. Other suggestions for improvement included: employing more Māori staff; upskilling facilitators in tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori, and te reo Māori; and integrating Māori leadership frameworks and peer-reviewed research into the content of the programme.

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

Springboard Trust promotes education change in Aotearoa New Zealand, by developing strategic school leaders. After 15 years of operation and over 600 principals participating in their leadership programmes, their focus is on making Springboard a financially sustainable and permanent part of the education ecosystem.

Springboard Trust approached the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) to develop a strategic evaluation partnership to support the growth and development of impactful programmes for school leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through this partnership, a key priority was gathering feedback from Māori participants in Springboard’s Strategic Leadership for Principals Programme (SLPP). This small piece of research was designed to feed into Springboard Trust’s strategic work to support Māori.

## Te Takarangi Action Plan and Vision Statement

Springboard Trust’s first Māori Strategic Plan was developed in 2020 and has been progressively reviewed and updated through an engagement process involving the Pae Ārahi,<sup>1</sup> Te Rōpū Kaimahi Māori (Māori staff group), and Springboard Trust leaders and staff. This has led to a revised Te Takarangi Action Plan and new Vision Statement: “Growing exceptional Māori leaders and leaders for Māori, so all tamariki flourish”.<sup>2</sup>

Te Takarangi’s vision statement recognises that solutions to address and maximise Māori educational outcomes may require distinct and Māori-led solutions. The vision assumes that Māori school leaders are equally Māori community leaders, especially when viewed by Māori communities. It is inspired by mātauranga Māori including whakataukāki. For example, Whāia te iti kahurangi, ki te tuohu koe me he maunga teitei (seek the greatest treasure, if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain). A Māori lens, reflected in the Te Takarangi statement, acknowledges that there are layers of meaning in the one vision statement.

The Te Takarangi Action Plan 2022–2024 has three draft strategic goals (SG):

- Springboard Trust is the preferred strategic planning leadership partner and provider for Māori leaders and school leaders for Māori (SG1).
- Te Ao Māori informs our workplace culture and the way we do things at Springboard Trust (SG2).
- Māori skills, experience and leadership are valued and recognised Springboard Trust strengths (SG3).

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1 The Pae Arahi is the Māori Executive Lead and part of the Executive Leadership Team at Springboard Trust.

2 <https://www.springboardtrust.org.nz/news/te-takarangi-introducing-a-new-kind-of-strategic-plan-for-springboard>

## **Gaining insight into the experiences of Māori leaders and capacity partners in SLPP**

SLPP is “A transformative 10-month leadership development programme for Aotearoa principals”<sup>3</sup> Springboard Trust’s philanthropic funding primarily funds the SLPP. Participants must have 2 years of experience as a school leader to join the programme. Over a series of workshops spanning 10 months, SLPP explores the core elements of strategic leadership. This learning occurs with the support of a capacity partner—“a dedicated expert volunteer, with whom principals will build a trusted, high-empathy relationship that delivers outstanding impact”. Together, they work with a cohort of up to six other principal-capacity partner pairings under the guidance of an experienced facilitator and Springboard’s programme managers. SLPP is the “flagship” programme for the Springboard Trust, but additional programmes for rural school leaders and follow-up programmes for alumni of SLPP are also offered or being developed.

SLPP (and other Springboard Trust programmes) are not currently designed or explicitly delivered for Māori. Māori participants go through the same programme, content, and structure as other participants. However, because there is a strong relationship component to the programme (e.g., principals are carefully paired with a capacity partner to support their particular needs), this allows for some personalisation of the programme.

Māori participants who have gone through the programme tend to have high completion. In some regions, Springboard Trust has had high Māori principal uptake, while in other regions, fewer Māori principals have come through the programme. Springboard Trust is interested in how the programme is perceived and what might encourage or enable more Māori principals to see this programme as a favoured choice for their professional learning and development.

## **Research questions**

NZCER and Springboard Trust developed research questions to address critical areas of interest for Springboard Trust. The research focused on the experiences of Māori principals and their capacity partners to determine what aspects of the SLPP were working well and how the SLPP could be improved to meet Māori participants’ needs and priorities.

The two research questions guiding this study were:

1. How well does the programme content and mode of delivery meet the learning needs and expectations of Māori participants?
2. How does, or could the programme reflect Māori priorities or views of mentoring and leadership?

## **Professional learning and development for senior leaders and principals in Aotearoa New Zealand**

In addition to the Springboard Trust’s SLPP, principals can access a variety of other professional learning and development opportunities through Ministry of Education-funded programmes and privately-run organisations. Evaluation Associates<sup>4</sup> currently provides Ministry of Education-funded support for principals in the first 2 years of their principalship. This support includes personalised, one-to-one coaching and mentoring from a leadership advisor, support from a mentor, and regional

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.springboardtrust.org.nz/what-we-do/strategic-leadership-for-principals-programme>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.evaluate.co.nz/support-for-leaders/support-for-principals>

hui held once a term. Evaluation Associates also offer professional learning groups, coaching, and targeted support for all principals.

The Education Group,<sup>5</sup> a Ministry of Education accredited PLD provider, offers workshops for school leaders and principals. One of their courses, Senior Leaders—Leading for Impact, is a 3-day principal-funded course. The third day of the course includes, among other topics, “School-wide strategic planning and reporting, including enacting Te Tiriti of Waitangi, strategic planning processes, consultation, links with Local Curriculum”. On the other 2 days, topics include leadership styles and a personal leadership profile, cultural capability and culturally responsive practices, understanding and leading change, building relational trust, and maximising performance management.

### **Professional learning and development for Māori principals**

In addition, some organisations offer PLD that is specific to Māori principals. Te Akatea,<sup>6</sup> the New Zealand Māori Principals’ Association, offers a First Time Principals course for Māori principals in their first 2 years of principalship in any school setting (Kura Kaupapa Māori, Kura ā-iwi, English medium, dual medium, bilingual and Rūmaki Reo, rural and urban schools). The programme is delivered via wānanga, cluster meetings, online sessions (ako series), facilitator visits and mentoring.

The Māori Achievement Collaborative (MAC)<sup>7</sup> is a collaboration between Te Akatea, the New Zealand Māori Principals’ Association, the New Zealand Principals’ Federation, and the Ministry of Education. MAC provides a professional learning and development pathway for principals that focuses on improving educational outcomes for Māori students.

Some principals interviewed for this study had also experienced the other programmes described above. During interviews, principals were asked about their experiences with SLPP, and any other PLD experiences, models, or frameworks they felt were good examples for Māori.

## **Report structure**

The next section describes the methodology, and the three sections that follow outline key findings. Section 3 outlines how principals and capacity partners found out about the programme and their reasons for joining. Section 4 addresses the first research question: *What is working well for Māori participants in the SLPP?* Section 5 addresses the second research question, discussing aspects of the programme that participants perceive could be improved. Finally, in Section 6, we discuss the findings in relation to the existing literature on Māori leadership and professional development for principals.

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5 <https://educationgroup.co.nz/workshops/senior-leaders-leading-for-impact>

6 <https://pld.education.govt.nz/find-pld/te-akatea-maori-first-time-principals-programme/>

7 <https://www.mac.ac.nz>

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## 2. Methodology

### Participant recruitment and selection

To recruit potential participants, Springboard Trust contacted all eligible Māori participants to tell them about the research and advise that NZCER may contact them for an interview. Participants were asked to let Springboard Trust know (by phone, email, or in person) if they did **not** want their name and contact information passed on to NZCER.

Springboard Trust provided NZCER with the names and contact details of those Māori principals and capacity partners who had not declined the invitation. We selected potential interviewees based on Springboard Trust's goals of finding out about experiences from different regions and years of experience as a principal. We emailed the selected participants and sent the information letter and a link to an online consent form. Using this recruitment method ensured that Springboard Trust did not know which participants had been selected or agreed to an interview.

If a potential participant declined or was ineligible for the study, we selected and contacted the next person on the list until the sample size was reached. An email reminder was sent to participants who did not reply to the initial invitation after one week. Seven principals and four capacity partners agreed to participate in an interview.

### Study participants

Seven of the 11 participants interviewed for this report were school principals, and four were capacity partners. Years of experience as a principal ranged from less than 5 years ( $n = 3$ ), 5 to 10 years ( $n = 3$ ) and more than 10 years' experience ( $n = 1$ ). The geographical areas represented by the principals and the capacity partners were Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, Taranaki, and Canterbury.

All participants identified as Māori, but their backgrounds and experience were diverse. At one end of the scale were participants who were primarily brought up as Pākehā and referred to their Māori ethnicity in terms of blood quantum (e.g., one-quarter Māori). These participants were still on their journey of learning te reo me ōna tikanga Māori. At the other end of the scale, participants were fully immersed in te ao Māori and worked with or for their iwi or hapū. The remaining participants worked in contexts that were a mixture of te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā, often working in English-medium schools or Pākehā organisations.

### Semi-structured interviews

Participants were interviewed via Zoom during August 2022. Each interview took between 45 and 60 minutes, and all participants agreed to be recorded. The interview questions for principals and capacity partners are in the Appendix. The interviews were transcribed, uploaded to NVivo, and analysed using inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In this report, principal quotes are identified in the text with "principal" and a number from 1 to 7. Capacity partner quotes are identified by "CP" and a number from 1 to 4.

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## 3. Joining and accessing the SLPP

### Why participants joined the SLPP

Most principals (five out of seven) joined the SLPP via word of mouth, on the recommendation of peers, or through their principals' associations. Of the remaining principals, one found the programme online, and another received an email asking them to send an expression of interest.

The professional learning groups that I had been part of ... had all talked so highly of the professional learning that they had received as a result of being part of the programme. (Principal 1)

The primary reason principals joined the SLPP was to obtain guidance and support with strategic planning, goal setting, and their school vision, as these were the aspects of principalship for which they felt most unprepared. The promotion from teacher to principal involves a shift from a focus on curriculum and responsibility for students to strategic planning and responsibility for the entire school. Principals said that the SLPP provided them with a better understanding of developing a strategy and vision that reflected the needs of their school. They also had the opportunity to learn about leadership from someone outside of education. Many said that other professional learning programmes for principals did not provide strategic planning to the extent that Springboard did, despite this being an area of high need.

I knew nothing about strategic planning. I didn't have a clue ... Obviously we've been pretty good practitioners in the classroom ... to then move on to principalship ... I just knew nothing. (Principal 4)

I really wanted to do better at strategic planning and charter creation. I've been the principal here for seven years, and in that time, I created two charters, not really well or collaboratively ... I just didn't have that skill. So, it's something that I think is probably missing unless other people already know how to do those things. (Principal 2)

The biggest reason that I went into Springboard was I wanted to have a better understanding of developing a strategy [and] of understanding [and] how to, I guess, capture a vision, and share it and live it as a school. (Principal 6)

Capacity partners said they became involved with the SLPP to give back to their community or to contribute to education. One capacity partner said that the role suits those who have had a strategy function within their organisation. Capacity partners were often shoulder-tapped by current or previous colleagues to volunteer, and all of the capacity partners' organisations were supportive of their involvement in the SLPP.

I ran into [the facilitator] at the local supermarket one day, and she reminded me that I promised at one point to join Springboard. It was good timing, and my current organisation is very supportive of anything to do with the community. (CP2)

The firm's good with it. Typically, in a professional services firm, you're held to account by the time you code. We have internal codes where we're allowed to apportion our time ... that makes it more acceptable internally across the firm for us to be able to contribute. (CP1)

The mere fact of contributing to people who are in the education sector, especially principals [was supported by my organisation] ... There was never any issue. (CP4)

## Access to the programme

Participants were unsure how information about SLPP reached different principals or whether there was a systematic approach to promotion and recruitment. One capacity partner thought that Springboard tried to get a representative range of people from different schools and regions, but they were over-subscribed, which meant not every applicant would be admitted to the programme. Given their positive experiences of the programme, some participants were concerned that principals might only find out about the SLPP if they knew someone who had completed the programme, or in the case of capacity partners, they were asked to volunteer.

I talked about [the programme] to many of the principals that I know ... my brother didn't even know about it. So, there was a communication thing, and it's not a criticism. It's an observation. (CP4)

It's a little bit disjointed in how kura Māori are able to access some of that information. I was the one [Māori] in our cohort; I was the only Māori principal. (Principal 2)

I'm really surprised that not every principal gets an opportunity to do this, and unless they choose it for themselves. I think it's a must do situation for every single one of us, regardless of your teaching experience, and your time in the job. (Principal 1)

## Attracting Māori principals to the SLPP

The numbers of Māori principals and capacity partners in each of the SLPP cohorts differed between regions. Principals and capacity partners from the urban centres said they were often the only Māori in their course. This was reversed in the cohorts on the East Coast of the North Island or rural areas, where non-Māori were often in the minority.

To improve Māori principals' access to the programme, participants recommended that information about the SLPP be distributed and advertised more widely and that proactive strategies are used. They suggested that Springboard Trust could liaise with principals' associations, Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa, and send an expression of interest invitation to all new principals.

You can just put [the information] out, or you can actually make sure that people get an opportunity to go and get it. Generally, the second way is more successful. (CP4)

To attract more Māori principals to the programme, participants felt that Springboard needed to make a Māori focus more visible within the organisation. This would mean recruiting Māori to Springboard's Board of Trustees, in senior roles within the organisation, as advisors, and as SLPP programme leaders and facilitators. Other suggestions included inviting a panel of Māori alumni to provide feedback to Springboard regularly and adapting the SLPP content to reflect more of an Aotearoa flavour so that Māori principals could "see themselves" in the programme.

If you're serious about making a difference for Māori, then your recruitment has to reflect that ... having Māori in senior roles is important. It tells you a lot about that company ... You are often measured by the quality of your team and getting well-researched, evidenced, credible practitioners in those roles ... That's highly important ... Māori facilitators that have a strong standing in community ... not just coming out of institutions with no life experience in terms of actively participating as Māori. (Principal 5)

We don't have many Māori principals in Springboard, which is a pity because I think principals will benefit from it. It's not attractive because they don't see themselves in the training ... They see 'principals', but they don't see themselves as Māori in that forum. So, they're likely to go for forums where they can actually see themselves. (CP3)

If I was the Trust and I wanted more Māori principals on board, then I would get a Māori advisor. I would get them to work through how we have those presentations ... and change the way the programme is written so it has less of a corporate feel. (CP2)

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## 4. What's working well for Māori participants in the SLPP?

### A unique programme

Participants viewed the SLPP as a unique programme that was not offered elsewhere. Principals' other professional learning included the Aspiring Principals Programme, the First-time Principals' programme, and the Māori Principals' Conference. However, the participants did not think any of these programmes offered effective guidance on strategic planning.

They're pretty much orientated towards life as the principal, you know, how you manage your staff, the usual day-to-day things. And this is why I think Springboard is quite important because it gets them to focus beyond your day-to-day operational stuff. (CP3)

### Business perspective

Principals said the SLPP offered them a business perspective, which was a different way of thinking, working, and managing their schools. They felt that the business tools presented in the SLPP were transferable to the education context and helped them to look beyond their usual approaches for solving problems.

Sometimes I think we sit too much within ourselves in education. We don't look outwards about what works and what doesn't. We just recycle everything around and around and with the same groups ... I really valued that external perspective; having a business partner and a coach was outstanding. (Principal 1)

You had to look through a different lens and maybe change perspectives ... I mean, we know technically we're CEOs, and we know we're sitting on a board ... But I don't think we understand or are trained for how that functions better or how to improve some of those practices ... I found that really valuable. (Principal 7)

Capacity partners recognised that although they did not have education or school expertise, they understood the principal's role as a school manager. Some ways that capacity partners supported principals included: longer-term thinking, identifying priorities, and managing resources to ensure they met their goals.

### Strategic planning and vision

Participants identified the focus on strategic planning as a significant strength of the programme. Principals were conscious that although their teacher training had prepared them to be classroom practitioners, they were ill-equipped for the corporate aspects of managing a school. Before joining the SLPP, they had not received any training in strategic planning.

With some schools, I didn't even know what the strategic plan was. In other schools, we were just given it ... it was something that was just an aside ... I'm really passionate about making it a living document,

making it a true path so that everybody sees themselves, particularly from a Pasifika and Māori perspective. We are too often 'done to' and not 'with' in so many different things. (Principal 6)

Digging into our school vision as a staff was a really eye opening session for me ... I was a very, very firm believer in our school vision ... But [the session], it kind of opened my eyes ... I discovered we only really only had about 20% of the staff who knew the vision ... and none of our kids could state our vision. They could, once I prompted them, you know, but it didn't roll off the tongue. (Principal 3)

Overall, the SLPP taught principals to be better strategists. It gave participants clarity about the overall process, including the school vision, tools to set up processes, and ways to engage with stakeholders so that they were also involved and engaged. As a result of the programme, participants said that their confidence in strategic planning had increased, and they had moved beyond seeing the process as a "tick the box" situation.

The anchoring part for me is understanding the key components of all those areas from the vision right through to budgetary [decisions]. It wasn't really clear to me [before SLPP] how defined the budget was to be aligned to our strategic initiatives in our annual plan. No one talked to us about that [before the SLPP] ... Right through to our everyday actions, what we say and what's visible in our school, what we value and what time we spend on professional learning, for example, and the value that aligns to our goals ... That clarity, right the way through. (Principal 1)

I got the skills for the first time to be able to actually plan strategically, [to] really align everything in the kura ... from the vision, down to the values, down to our charter. (Principal 2)

I like how the programme really got you to internally review what it looks like and what's important to you as a school? Well, of course, te ao Māori is important to us as a school ... They encouraged us to really reflect ... Why is it important? What does it look like? What are you doing that's making a difference for your learners, and also that long-term vision ... Not just what does it look like for us this year? What do we want for [name of school] in five to 10 years? (Principal 4)

Another aspect of strategic planning that participants found useful was the "one-pager", which helped them focus on the key things that were most important for their school in the short-, medium-, and long-term. The one-pager was a condensed version of each school's strategic plan and included the school vision, mission, values, and three strategic goals/initiatives.

Springboard has helped [principals] to get it down onto one page, you know? What will you focus on for the next three years? ... How will you build capability ... What does effectiveness look like for you? (CP3)

The strategic one-pager was great. And I've built on that since, so it gave me a really good foundation ... you know, simple is good. Not trying to achieve too much. You've got to keep business as usual going while you're still driving, you know, three strategic initiatives. That was really good advice ... Just keep it simple and if you've got the right strategic goals, then you know, that's going to be the best thing for your school and your community. (Principal 5)

### Capacity partners

All principals, except one, were overwhelmingly positive about their capacity partner's support and expertise. Some principals said their capacity partner was the best part of the programme. Capacity partners offered a fresh, non-educational business perspective, asked challenging questions, and guided principals to solve problems.

I thought that when we met, [my capacity partner] was going to drive it ... that he's going to tell me what to do. But really, it was engaging in robust, challenging conversations. When I reflect on it, strategically, I came up with the answers ... So, it was his ability to question and to challenge. I think that is a really outstanding skill. (Principal 4)

One of the reasons that I was attracted to the Springboard stuff was the capacity partner. And the opportunity to work with somebody who thinks differently. Maybe not people who have been in education all of their career. (Principal 5)

The principal who did not have a positive experience was matched with a capacity partner who became stranded overseas due to the COVID-19 border closures and could not provide the level of support the principal needed. However, this principal saw the benefits of a capacity partner through the other principals on the course. When they saw other principals around the table with their capacity partners, they thought, “it would be nice to have a partner and bounce ideas off”.

## Cohort diversity

Notwithstanding the need to include Māori content and contexts in the programme (see Section 5), most participants did not support the idea of Springboard offering a “Māori-only” cohort. They felt that including diverse participants in the SLPP enabled Māori and non-Māori to learn from each other and that non-Māori would also benefit from a greater inclusion of Māori content in the course.

I think the more diversity you can have in a room, the better off you are in terms of your leadership growth ... I’m not a fan of segregating. I think our Māori tumuaki can learn just as much from our non-Māori as they can from us. (Principal 5)

I would hate for it just to be only for Māori principals ... if you only allow access for the Māori principals, it’s only going to be the Māori principals that actually live the value that you’re trying to share, or the knowledge that you’re trying to share. (CP1)

I don’t know if I would be singling out Māori principals in the area and saying, you know, it’s really good for you to do. I think it would just be good for all school leaders to be involved in it ... (Principal 3)

The desire for diversity, however, did not mean that participants wanted to be the only Māori principal or capacity partner in their cohort. Those participants who were the sole Māori said they would have liked to network with and have the support of other Māori principals or capacity partners. One participant thought it would be worthwhile for Springboard to have a Māori-only cohort and felt it would attract more Māori principals.

I would have liked to have another Māori principal there to form a relationship with them and bounce [ideas] off them. And find out how they were doing things in their kura ... That as a relationship would have been really good. (Principal 2)

One of my colleagues in my cohort had a Māori business mentor ... An opportunity for the future is maybe having some beautiful Māori business leaders present to Māori leaders. (Principal 1)

For one Māori capacity partner, questions about a “Māori perspective” were often directed to him:

I think both times, I was the only Māori CP, and so it kind of fell to me. That’s a lot of pressure for a CP when you’re not steeped in Māoritanga yourself. (CP1)

It appears that including more than one Māori participant in an SLPP cohort could alleviate situations where participants feel obligated to “speak for all Māori”.

## Networking and collaboration with other principals

Networking with other principals in the SLPP was beneficial for many of the participants. Principals appreciated opportunities within the course where they could collaboratively problem-solve, share ideas, and learn from other principals. Through modelling by their facilitators, principals learnt how to listen and effectively question their peers.

My favourite times were when we just got to wānanga, and put out ideas, and challenge one another. And, you know, those are the times where I remember going: Oh yeah, that was a really cool session. (Principal 5)

It was lovely to go out of school and have some really challenging conversations ... and to hear what others are doing ... We are all autonomous to our own kura, but it was good to see what others were doing, what worked, what didn't work. And I really liked that collaborative aspect. There are amazing principals out there ... we can just learn so much from others. (Principal 4)

We didn't try to fix each other's problems or say what you should do. It was more about teasing out from them, you know, what the different issues were, so that perhaps the answer would just become clear during the questioning ... It's just a bunch of people who have no other interest than trying to support each other and improve each other's schools. (Principal 7)

Following the introduction of each piece of course content, participants found it valuable to reflect on the content and what it meant for their or other principals' settings. Principals also felt a sense of community and camaraderie when others shared similar issues.

It gave me another outlet as well. When I would arrive at meetings, and we would open, the first thing was: What's on top everybody? I was in a room full of people [and] the same things were on top. So, it was kind of like, oh, thank God! I'm with people that are experiencing the same things. (Principal 5)

Networking has continued beyond the programme, with several participants continuing to meet regularly with their cohort or, in the case of capacity partners, with their principal.

I could ring anybody on my cohort and say, I need some help or something. Yeah, so that was really cool for me. (Principal 5)

I gained some lovely, trusted colleagues and friendships on the programme ... we solved problems together and we solutioned them and people shared great ideas, things that I never would have thought of in a million years ... We're still in contact, from time to time to ask each other questions or share a template for something. Those sorts of lasting relationships professionally, have been really powerful. (Principal 1)

### Positive impacts on learners

Participants reported that the SLPP had positively impacted on learners via the principals' enhanced knowledge and understanding of stakeholder engagement, strategic planning, and revisioning. In addition to improved educational outcomes and achievement, other positive impacts identified for learners included increased student voice, larger numbers of students enrolled in Rūmaki Reo and higher numbers of Māori students overall.

The result that it's had on our learners has been phenomenal, and I don't just mean in terms of academic achievement ... we now have student led conferences ... If you saw where we were at the start and the shift that has been ... It's a completely different school. Our learners look different. Our learners can articulate differently about where they are in terms of their learning ... And that is all because of the strategic planning and the direction of where our whānau want us to go ... (Principal 4)

For some principals, the impact on learners was yet to be determined or fully realised. However, they were optimistic that the positive impact of the SLPP on their leadership practices would flow into positive impacts on learners.

I'm unsure about that ... The encouragement that I've given Māori teachers and Māori learners, have definitely had an impact. And taking part in the strategic leaders training with Springboard will definitely have improved my thinking and, therefore, improve how successful I am in the role. Perhaps that will have an impact on our Māori learners ... I hope it has an impact. (Principal 7)

I just really want kids, when they first come in through the gate, apart from our name you know, [school name], which is the biggest clue that we're a school in Aotearoa. Just, you know, to have a stronger representation of our bicultural kind of nature and heritage here ... So that when our whānau and our Māori students come into school, they can kind of see their culture quite strongly represented. (Principal 3)

Most of our kids are Māori, so I'm hoping it's made a difference for all of them ... I think there is a deliberate shift for all of our leaders and kura to be doing more for Māori and better. (Principal 5)

## Stakeholder engagement

Through their engagement with the SLPP, principal participants learnt skills and strategies for better engaging with school stakeholders, including their senior leaders, teachers, students, whānau, and the wider community. These strategies included asking stakeholders the right questions to ensure strategic planning was a collaborative process that captured their voices.

... it can be overwhelming, especially as a beginning principal. You think, well how do you initiate engagement? What does that look like? How do you gather stakeholder voice? If you've got 160 learners, do I have to go around and gather voice from 160 learners? Then, there's their respective whānau. Do I have to get voice from every whānau? And of course, [Springboard] put it in perspective, to make it manageable and to make it realistic ... (Principal 4)

## Whānau engagement

Principals reported improved engagement with whānau as a result of the strategies and tools they learnt during the SLPP. When principals took the time to find out and listen to what was important to the community and what whānau wanted and needed from the school, whānau felt more included in the school's decision-making. Some ways that principals engaged with whānau were through student-led conferences or holding whānau-focused events. Other schools set goals for whānau as part of their strategic plan, such as learning te reo Māori. Principals reported that they had stopped assuming they knew what their whānau wanted without first talking to them.

I think that we actually managed to find what was important to our community ... I think te reo was a big focus for our families as to why they chose us ... lots of our whānau want to learn te reo. And they realised that is something that they need to do to help the tamariki here at kura ... they know that we're actually designing a strategic plan around helping them do that. (Principal 2)

Last term, we had two Tamatoa and Wāhine toa breakfasts ... After we'd all shared kai, the kids go play, and we keep the dads or the mums ... I had put together a really rough vision: *Together, we will inspire our children to reach their full potential.* That was it. And so, I put that back out to the whānau ... and eventually, what we landed on was: *Together, we learn, we grow, we succeed* ... I had parents coming up to me and saying, thank you, and that they had never been involved with anything like that. They felt heard ... (Principal 6)

... digging deeper around our community voice ... what our parents need and want, not just what we assume ... Springboard asks you to look really closely at what's working and what isn't, and also asking the real questions of your people ... (Principal 1)

Principals reported increased collaboration with their senior leadership teams and boards of trustees due to the SLPP. Some participants also identified ways to build leadership capacity, where leaders from their teams each led one aspect of the school's strategic plan. The differentiated leadership led to increased buy-in from their teams.

#### 4. What's working well for Māori participants in the SLPP?

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I worked really closely with my senior management team ... I think for the first time, we've actually created a charter that's fit for purpose. It involves all of our thoughts and whakaaro ... we had days out of class where the whole senior management was just together talking about this: Our vision, our values, our charter, our strategic goals, and strategic planning ... And then we took it to the board ... I followed exactly what we were doing in the workshops. We'd do the workshop and then I'd come back, and I'd do it with my staff. That was really valuable for us. (Principal 2)

I've had some really good robust discussions with the leadership team around our school vision. So that's been really, really valuable. I think it's helping us to have a lot more of a shared language around where we want to get to in terms of the space ... [I'm] really keen to have more of our board participation in this space as well. (Principal 3)

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## 5. How could the SLPP better meet the needs of Māori participants?

### Māori priorities or views of mentoring and leadership in the SLPP

Overall, principals and capacity partners did not think the SLPP reflected Māori priorities or views of mentoring and leadership. Participants acknowledged that the programme was premised on a Western business model that did not prioritise Māori knowledge and that the lack of focus on Māori content reflected the corporate environment in which the programme, facilitators, and capacity partners operated. Indeed, one capacity partner reported that Te Tiriti obligations in school policies, such as the Education and Training Act 2020, are largely missing from the corporate environment. Furthermore, participants did not perceive that facilitators had the depth or knowledge to know how to incorporate mātauranga Māori or tikanga Māori into the programme, even where they may have tried.

I feel mean saying that because they were both amazing. So, I mean that with love and care. (Principal 5)

The structure is very much what I would expect ... it's a consultant feel or style. So, I wouldn't say it really reflects that. (CP2)

It's not mentioned during our day ... you are predominantly hearing a lot more around the corporate side of things and the way that maybe leadership is done in the corporate world ... I don't know whether there exists frameworks or anything in there for Māori within a corporate framework. Whether that exists or not, the people that are leading it; I haven't heard them mention it or have knowledge around knowing about those things. (Principal 3)

The principals indicated that they, rather than the facilitators, introduced Māori content into the programme. Although some participants said that their Māori culture and knowledge were respected and valued, other principals reported that they sometimes felt misunderstood or dismissed by others in the programme.

I had to spend a bit of time describing, you know, what it was like being Māori. (Principal 4)

When we brought up some of our experiences, ideas, or strategies to do with leadership, other members of the group couldn't see it from our perspective ... they would either talk over us or discount some of our ways of thinking. (Principal 7)

... when we had our presentations, we presented our plan on a page ... I talked about being on the waka: 'He waka kotahi' and 'Kia mau ki te hoe' (those kinds of concepts). And I tried to incorporate that, like a historical kind of view of our kura ... we were a native school ... It was all about, you know, our iwi and being able to find a place to survive and thrive. Anyway, at the end of the presentation ... I was quite disappointed [with the feedback] ... The person who was the business mentor for our course, I don't think he really understood where I was coming from ... He came in from [city name] ... maybe areas that they don't come into contact very much with Māori. (Principal 2)

One capacity partner thought it was up to principals to identify if Māori students or culture were a priority in their schools. Furthermore, he felt that Springboard only needed to include Māori content if there were more Māori principals in the programme, and he did not think the SLPP had many Māori principals. This reflects a potential knowledge gap for capacity partners. Springboard may need to consider upskilling capacity partners in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in education and the requirement for all schools and principals to honour the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand.

... when you talk about reflecting Māori priorities, you know, or anything to do with Māoritanga, unless it sits within the principal [as a priority], it wouldn't be discussed [with capacity partners or in the SLPP]. (CP1)

Participants thought a balance was needed between teaching corporate skills, such as strategic planning, and understanding the Māori contexts in which principals lived and worked. Additionally, participants thought Springboard's facilitators, programme leaders, and some capacity partners could benefit from increasing their understanding of te ao Māori and the principals' school and community contexts.

... It'd be helpful for them in their own professional world, you know? They're there to help us and they bring their knowledge around the corporate world ... And that's what we're looking for, because that's something that we don't have ... [But], we deal with people. We don't deal with a number or a product that we're trying to sell. We are all about people; it's not about the numbers. And so that's why culture is so important to us. (Principal 6)

Furthermore, an increased understanding of te ao Māori could support Springboard programme managers and facilitators to incorporate more relevant and context-appropriate content in the SLPP.

### **How could Springboard Trust include more Māori content in the SLPP?**

Although participants were generally happy with the current content in the SLPP, they thought it could be improved by increasing or integrating Māori content. One capacity partner reported that although the key ideas presented in the programme were useful, they needed reworking and revising to make them more accessible for Māori principals.

Instead of saying 'shop front window' ... how do we get somebody to come into our school? For our principals, I say, okay, what's the marae going to look like? What draws us back into marae? ... what are the key things that bring us back to our marae, and use that kind of analogy as opposed to a shop front window. (CP3)

### **Māori leadership frameworks and research**

Including Māori leadership frameworks and research was a suggested area for improvement, as it was largely missing from SLPP; Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1998) was one exception. The programme content predominantly referred to Western leadership models, but a session on women in school leadership highlighted to one principal that Māori leadership approaches could also have been included.

At the outset of our first meeting, there was quite a lot of talk about quite feminist approaches to leadership and how important it was for women in school leadership to sort of think more like a man or, you know, promote some of those things that are more associated with masculine leadership. And I did think to myself, that same conversation could almost be had about Māori leaders. How do we position ourselves, or how do we work on our natural or cultural skills? (Principal 7)

Several participants suggested Tū Rangatira: Māori Medium Educational Leadership (Ministry of Education, 2010) as a framework that the Springboard Trust could embed into the SLPP. Some of the concepts and principles of leadership could be woven into or aligned with the current SLPP content.

You know, our Tū Rangatira document? It would have been really lovely to align some of this [Springboard] work around that ... around te reo and tikanga Māori; some of the local stuff ... I just think it would be lovely if they had some connection to some of the Māori concepts ... when they deliver the programme, they could think about how it connects ... (Principal 1)

I think [Tū Rangatira is] a really good document around leadership ... It would support Māori leadership if you were to make some connections ... Connection around the visionary is quite an easy link ... You talk about a school principal being in the role of 'He Kanohi Matara', the visionary. When you're doing the vision session, I think it would be quite easy to thread some of that in. [You could] talk about the networker, when you're looking for consultation ... around your key stakeholders within your school ... I think there's definitely scope there for it to be more threaded through the programme. (Principal 3)

Other suggestions for leadership frameworks or Māori research from principals included Jarod Haar and colleagues' research from the University of Waikato (Haar et al., 2019) and Cherie Spiller's (2016) wayfinding leadership. Alignment with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Educational Leadership Capability Framework (Wylie & McKinley, 2018) were also suggested.

I did bring up some of the stuff I had read in regard to some of that navigational leadership and you know, the wayfinding leadership and things ... I had hoped that there might be a section of it in in the actual programme, but there wasn't ... I know there was that study at the University of Waikato [Haar, et al., 2019] that identified the five values for Māori leadership. It was manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga, whanaungatanga and tikanga ... and whakaiti. (Principal 7).

During one of our sessions, one of the facilitators brought up Papa Mason Durie and Te Whare Tapa Whā. And I guess that is a part of what we do ... because of who we are. It's like when people say: How do you embed the Treaty of Waitangi? You know, what does that look like? But we are the Treaty of Waitangi ... It's what we breathe every day. It's who we are being Māori. (Principal 4)

## Improving the delivery of the SLPP

### Programme structure

Participants noted that the SLPP is an intensive course with a heavy workload. There are scheduled workshops, with time between the sessions for principals to apply the new content in their school contexts before the next workshop.

The structure that it has is very much: We've got this very short period ... we've got to get this done to get through each step and to get it done within the timeframe we've got ... (CP2)

You've got your set times, starting with the vision, and then you're moving on to strategic planning, and you're doing a road map and ... presenting my plan on a page, which is a document which sums up our vision and everything on there. (Principal 3)

Suggestions for improving the format of the SLPP included allowing more time for discussing and problem-solving the content with other principals. This suggestion aligns with networking, which participants identified as one of the positive aspects of the programme.

They give us the content, you know, and I realised we're all kind of busy, crazy people, and you have to rush back to school, but it would be nice if they carved out an hour of time just for the group to be together to problem solve ... supporting each other. (Principal 1)

Other participants would have appreciated more information about the course expectations and content before the programme started. The information could be provided as a course overview, pre-reading materials, or a questionnaire highlighting the areas where participants needed to review or gather information. Equally, a pre-course questionnaire or a pre-course school visit could help the facilitators to better tailor the programme for the participants based on their school contexts, challenges, and learning needs.

I have felt behind the bus the entire course ... Even though I'm sitting in on a session, and we're talking about road mapping ... I'm not at that stage yet. I'm still sorting that preliminary stuff ... (Principal 3)

If there was something done before the course started: When did you last do a check up on your vision? How long have you had that vision for? ... If I'd gone through there first and discovered that I had to do some work around getting my vision correct, I might have delayed joining the project. I know that it's tough because the first session we get the content and the understanding around that vision aspect. You don't know that until you know until you're in it. So, I think that would be a good help. (Principal 3)

We could probably do a little bit more around just really understanding the principals ... and what stage they are at. And how do we fit this programme to the stage the school is at? Because if you're a new principal and the school has just gone through a strategic process ... or you've heard about the course and jumped on, you might not be in a position where you can use these tools ... (CP2)

I think it would strengthen the programme if there was a chance for [Springboard] to come and maybe visit your school for a bit of a walk round, a bit of a look and to talk about your current priorities and what you're seeing. (Principal 3)

Some participants expressed that they would have liked a more flexible or modular approach, where they could opt into workshops where the topics were unfamiliar or where they needed additional support. Conversely, principals would have liked to be able to opt out of workshops for which they already had expertise, so they could focus more time on areas where they had knowledge gaps.

Yes, especially if I could indicate that this part, I don't know or understand much or any. So, I'm going to need maybe two days on that ... And this part here, I'm all over this. So perhaps, can I either not attend that or you know just have a give a quick overview of that ... It was kind of just tailoring it a bit more I guess. (Principal 7)

For people who've been through the course, some shorter modules that are directed at situations or issues ... some of that could be done online and/or offline. And then, just come together every now and again to collate, debate, and then summarise ... (CP4)

Some principals had completed the SLPP during COVID-19 lockdowns and found the synchronous online workshops particularly challenging. It was suggested that if the SLPP is delivered online in the future, the workshops could be split into a few shorter sessions.

Maybe if they have broken it into sizable chunks. I know that one meeting went from 9-2, That was pretty brain sapping ... They did try to break it up and we had little gaps and breaks and things. I suppose they tried their best to make it [work online]. And it's probably better to try and make it work than to just not do it. (Principal 2)

### **Tikanga Māori**

Participants acknowledged that the programme facilitators tried to incorporate tikanga Māori into the SLPP in small ways. For example, most participants reported that karakia was used to start and end each session and that kai was shared. Some participants suggested that the tikanga and Māori concepts currently being used in the programme could be highlighted and made more apparent.

I guess it's just not explicitly named, you know? ... we share kai together so that's always been a strong component ... If we visited another teacher's school ... You know, talking about extending manaakitanga towards us ... There is a feeling of whanaungatanga in the way that when you are listening and hearing other people's stories, people are really empathetic to what people are going through, the challenges that we're facing. So those feelings come through quite clearly, you know? Maybe not named as such, but it exists within the group when we do meet. (Principal 3)

I think some of their protocols for engaging the group really have a lovely sort of bicultural feel to them, in a natural way, not a forced way ... just because you do karakia doesn't make it Māori. (Principal 1)

The first part of the programme [could be] about understanding tikanga and the importance of appreciating and understanding the cultural leadership practices for your staff and for your students and for yourself, whether or not you have Māori ancestry ... It's very important in New Zealand for us all to have a good understanding, so that tikanga can be followed in every school setting. (Principal 7)

Other participants thought the facilitators' understanding of tikanga and te reo Māori needed improvement. For example, when some facilitators tried to do a karakia, their pronunciation of te reo Māori was poor. Part of understanding tikanga is an awareness of who else is in the room. For example, there might be someone else in the course, such as a principal or capacity partner, who has the knowledge and expertise to lead the karakia or deliver the opening mihi instead of the facilitator.

While they did their best, and there was karakia and things like that at the beginning. It was a little forced. That wasn't overly natural for them. I'm in the room, so it might be a good idea to ask if I would lead karakia ... I mean, we do this every day in my kura. It's first nature for us. (Principal 5)

So, when you open with a karakia, generally, you would say, "I'd like us to start with a karakia; would anyone like to lead?"... And give people opportunities to lead, because unless you practice it, you won't get better at it ... Every principal should know a karakia. (Principal 6)

One of the ladies was doing a karakia ... and I'm a stickler for pronunciation. I encourage people to do a mihi in Māori and a karakia in Māori, but I think if you've got somebody already there ... either a Māori principal or me, for example, then it might pay, you know, to check to see whether or not we may have a karakia that we may want to do. So, it's more collaborative rather than Springboard, taking responsibility for everything. (CP3)

Participants also felt facilitators needed to understand the relevance of pepeha and whanaungatanga for Māori participants.

Whakapapa and pepeha are really important ... our principals want to not only know who you are, but basically where you're from, so that they can make the connection between themselves and you. And that's really important, you know. People take it for granted that when they get up and do a pepeha that they're just going through a patter, but in actual fact, what Māori principals are doing is establishing the kinship ties between themselves and the person speaking ... things like that would be important for Springboard to know. When you're in this kind of climate, learn what makes a difference for people. Learn the terrain, learn the climate, and that will draw people in. (CP3)

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## 6. Discussion

This research provides insights into the experiences of Māori principals ( $n = 7$ ) and capacity partners ( $n = 4$ ) who participated in the Springboard Trust Strategic Leadership for Principals Programme (SLPP) in recent years. Findings revealed that participants viewed the programme positively and were satisfied with the content and delivery overall. The programme's main strengths included its strategic planning focus, business mentors (capacity partners), networking with other principals, and stakeholder engagement.

Despite participants' general satisfaction with the SLPP, they felt that the programme contained little in the way of Māori-focused content, models of leadership, tikanga, or te reo Māori. Furthermore, some participants found the programme structure overly demanding and inflexible. Suggestions for improvement included providing more information about the course to participants in advance of the starting date and a pre-course questionnaire or school visit to ensure the programme was tailored and personalised to the needs of the participants. Finally, participants suggested a modular approach, where they could opt in and out of workshops based on their learning needs.

This section summarises key findings about SLPP's strengths and potential areas for improvement, framed against other literature on principal professional learning and development and Māori leadership.

### Strategic planning

Strategic planning was an area for which all principals in the study needed support, and it was the main reason that each participant had joined the SLPP. Many were early in their careers as principals. Previous research has found that novice principals were more likely to focus on teaching and learning goals rather than school improvement goals such as strategic planning (Meyer et al., 2019). The findings of this study indicate that strategic planning is a skill that principals may not possess or access early in their careers. Other programmes targeted at beginning principals, such as the First Time Principals' Programme, do not appear to offer strategic planning guidance. Therefore, Springboard could target novice principals to ensure they learn these strategic skills early in their principalships. This could occur by directly recruiting novice principals into the SLPP or adding strategic management skills to the leadership programmes directed at aspiring leaders or school leadership teams.

### Capacity partners

The capacity partners were essential to the SLPP, as they provided personalised learning and tailored support to each principal. The Springboard model differs from other mentoring programmes for principals (e.g., First Time Principals' Programme) because they engage mentors from a corporate or business environment. Typically, mentors for principals are more experienced or retired principals (Service & Thornton, 2021), but the success and effectiveness of that approach are mixed. Prior research has found that while many principals appreciated and benefited from their principal mentor's support, others expressed dissatisfaction with their mentor's expertise and availability. A

participant in Service and Thornton's (2021) research with secondary school principals said: "You've got this busy principal given to you who you didn't necessarily know, or you hadn't chosen, and they weren't someone you necessarily had a connection with" (p. 86). Daresh and Playko (1990) also argued that experience as a principal does not automatically make someone an effective mentor and should not be the only criteria for selection. The principals in the Springboard Programme expressed high satisfaction with their business-based mentors. Targeted mentoring support and the expertise to deliver it appears to be an effective mentoring model that is unique to the SLPP.

## Networking and collaboration with other principals

Most principals who completed the SLPP benefited from the networking opportunities provided via the programme and continued their relationships once the programme ended. Principals valued the chance to wānanga, have challenging conversations, and support other principals. In her study with experienced principals, Smith (2007) found that a peer mentoring group, similar to the networking and collaboration that took place within SLPP cohorts, was advantageous for principals. Like the SLPP cohort groups, the principals' peer mentoring group in Smith's study provided a safe haven for principals away from their school sites and supported their personal and professional development. The Educational Leadership Capability Framework (Wylie & McKinley, 2018) also supports "individual and collaborative learning in a network of leaders" (p. 16). They recommend the use of "critical friends to discuss leadership and extend their knowledge and capability" (p. 10) and maintaining "personal and professional relationships that nurture and stretch them" (p. 10). Although participants in the current study had continued meeting with other principals from their SLPP cohort, these were often informal gatherings. Therefore, setting up a more formalised group at the end of an SLPP course might be a future consideration for Springboard Trust.

## Impact on learners

Most principals reported that their involvement in the SLPP had positively impacted learners. Most positive impacts were related to increased student voice and improved educational outcomes or achievement. However, some principals also referred to more specific outcomes, such as an increasing school roll and larger numbers of students enrolling in Rūmaki Reo (Māori medium) classes. Existing research on the relationship between educational leadership and student outcomes or achievement has found that instructional leadership's impact is greater than that of transformational leadership (Robinson, 2008); however, this may reflect what measures of impact are used. As strategic planning, an aspect of transformational leadership is the main focus of the SLPP, further investigation and measurement of these concepts are required before a direct or indirect impact between leadership and student achievements can be made. As some principals indicated that they were unsure whether the SLPP had impacted learners, a focus for future iterations of the course could include ways for principals to measure the programme's impact on their learners. Our study suggests this should consist of a broad view of impacts on learners, including but not limited to:

- belonging and connection
- feeling their culture and identity is valued
- sense of agency
- relationship quality between school and whānau
- attendance
- reduction in behaviour management incidents.

## Stakeholder engagement

The SLPP taught principals better strategies for engaging with their stakeholders. Principals learnt how to “ask the right questions” of their school community to ensure that strategic planning was a collaborative process that captured the voices of students, whānau, teachers, senior leaders, and the wider school community. The engagement process challenged principals’ beliefs and assumptions about their parent community, and principals also used the data collected to transform school events, such as parent–teacher interviews and whānau breakfasts. Research has demonstrated positive outcomes associated with actively inviting whānau participation in decision-making, including increased attendance and whānau involvement with schools (Rubie-Davies et al., 2018). Although stakeholder engagement in the SLPP was used to encourage collaboration in the school’s strategic plan and vision, its positive contribution spread much further.

## Māori priorities of mentoring and leadership

Both principals and capacity partners agreed that Māori priorities of mentoring and leadership were missing from the SLPP. Some participants suggested retaining the current programme’s core concepts but adding or integrating a Māori “flavour”; for example, topics and contexts could be made more relevant for Māori. Other participants suggested that Māori concepts were already present in the programme, but they needed to be more explicit.

It may be possible to align some Western and Māori concepts (such as whakawhanaungatanga and relationship building, for example). Indeed, it is common in education for traditional Māori concepts to be reimaged; for example, see *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* (Education Council New Zealand | Matatū Aotearoa, 2011). However, it can be problematic because instead of centring Māori educational leadership concepts and acknowledging their distinctiveness, the focus may remain on the Western leadership framework (Hohepa, 2013), which has not changed or evolved except for the addition of some Māori terminology. Instead, introducing Māori educational leadership frameworks separately from Western models could enable Māori and non-Māori participants to see Māori frameworks as legitimate and valid leadership models. Furthermore, if Springboard Trust is serious about attracting Māori principals to the SLPP, then a kaupapa Māori lens and worldview must be evident in the content and delivery. Otherwise, they risk making surface-level changes while the programme’s core and philosophy remain Western and Eurocentric.

Several participants suggested that Tū Rangatira: Māori Medium Educational Leadership (Ministry of Education, 2010) is a framework that Springboard Trust could embed into the SLPP. Although Tū Rangatira was developed for principals in Māori-medium schools, it is well-regarded by Māori principals and equally of value to English-medium educators. Tū Rangatira also aligns with the Educational Leadership Capability Framework (Wylie & McKinley, 2018), against which New Zealand principals are appraised.

## Conclusion

Springboard Trust’s Strategic Leadership Programme for principals is meeting the needs of Māori principals through its focus on strategic planning, support from capacity partners, improved stakeholder engagement, and networking opportunities for principals. Strategic planning, in particular, appears to be a unique offering amongst the professional learning programmes offered to principals and could be extended beyond the SLPP to allow more principals to access these important skills.

The SLPP could better meet the needs of Māori principals by including Māori leadership frameworks and research, and upskilling facilitators in tikanga and te reo Māori. Taken together, the findings from this study indicate that the current content does benefit principals. However, to attract more Māori principals to the programme, consideration should be given to the increased inclusion of Māori content, language, and knowledge to enable Māori leaders to see this programme as a favoured choice for their professional learning and development.

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## APPENDIX

# Interview questions

### Interview questions—Māori capacity partners

1. What appealed to you about the Strategic Leadership for Principals Programme (SLPP) – why did you want to be a Capacity Partner in this programme? (What is your background/career/experience?)
2. Has your organisation been supportive of your involvement in this programme? (if applicable)
3. What do you think the principal(s) you have worked with have gained from SLPP?
4. Have you worked with Māori principals as a capacity partner?
5. What do you feel you have gained from being a Capacity Partner in SLPP?
6. Springboard Trust is wondering how well the programme content and delivery of SLPP are working well for Māori participants and whether there are things that could be improved. From your perspective as a Māori capacity partner, what's working well in terms of:
  - programme content?
  - programme delivery?
7. How could the content or delivery be improved?
8. To what extent does the programme reflect Māori priorities or views of mentoring and leadership? (If nothing)...
9. How could the programme reflect Māori priorities or views of mentoring and leadership?
10. What kind of principles or values from te ao Māori should a programme such as this embody?
11. Are there any other programmes, frameworks, models, or other professional learning experiences that you think are good examples that work well for Māori?
12. Would you recommend being a capacity partner in SLPP to other Māori leaders? Why/why not?
13. If you could give Springboard Trust advice about supporting Māori principals over the next ten years, what would it be?
14. Is there anything else you would like to say?

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## Interview questions—Principals

1. What appealed to you about the SLPP—why did you choose this programme? (What is your background/career/leadership experience?)
2. What do you feel you have gained from participating in the SLPP as a leader?
3. Springboard Trust is wondering how well the programme content and delivery of the SLPP are working for Māori participants and whether there are things that could be improved. From your perspective as a Māori school leader, what's working well in terms of:
  - programme content?
  - programme delivery?
4. How could the content or delivery be improved?
5. How useful or important has the relationship with your capacity partner been in supporting you as a Māori school leader? (prompt: were you working with a Māori capacity partner?)
6. To what extent does the programme reflect Māori priorities or views of mentoring and leadership? (If nothing)...
7. How could the programme reflect Māori priorities or views of mentoring and leadership?
8. What kind of principles or values from te ao Māori should a programme such as this embody?
9. Are there any other programmes, frameworks, models, or other professional learning experiences that you think are good examples that work well for Māori?
10. What impact(s) do you think your participation in SLPP has had or will have for Māori learners?
11. What are your aspirations in terms of leadership as a result of having participated in the programme?
12. Would you recommend SLPP to other Māori school leaders? Why/why not?
13. If you could give Springboard Trust advice about supporting Māori principals over the next ten years, what would it be?
14. Is there anything else you would like to say?

