Implementation Questions for Principals

Principals are encouraged to consider the following implementation issues:

Starpath is a process of change.

- It challenges status quo.
- It questions established practices.
- It is likely to bring additional work and increased surveillance.

Equity Politics: As Principal and Senior Leadership Team you need to be:

- Unambiguous in making your view of the importance of change explicit to the staff.
- Focused on challenging practices and behaviour that perpetuates inequalities.
- Prepared to pick up challenges to staff beliefs and values.

Leadership Challenges: As Principal

- How will you make a persuasive case for change?
- You will need buy-in from all participants: parents/caregivers, students, Board of Trustees, teachers. You may also need acceptance from community and employers.
- How will you manage skepticism and resistance (this may occur some way into the project)?
- How will you frame and communicate student achievement and equity issues within your school?
- How will you communicate the importance of data in diagnosing problems and finding locally effective solutions?
- What is your experience in using different forms of data to probe deeply into school structures and dynamics that contribute to inequities?
- Are you willing to act as a role model in respect of reflection, critical review and questioning past practices? How will you build the trust required for critical reflection?
- How will you provide appropriate support to your school and those leading change?
- How will you ensure that Starpath is seen as the school's core business rather than an add-on or an optional extra?
- How will you ensure that Starpath is not seen as a short-term intervention?

Building capacity, confidence and trust

Starpath found that schools face a number of issues:

- Teachers and school leaders needed greater knowledge and expertise in computing and IT, data analysis and presentation, knowledge of curriculum pathways and possibilities, academic counselling skills and parent-student-teacher conferencing skills (involving unfamiliar content and aims).
- Teachers have a lack of confidence in data management and lack of skills handling SMS systems. Teachers and the school should not rely on one or two key people to produce and interpret data.
- Teachers need to have a deep and sound knowledge of NCEA and its requirements for different level qualification and different curriculum subjects.
- Building trust around the use of student data beyond the individual classroom.

Resources

Starpath found that schools face a number of resource issues:

- Teacher workloads – it is important that staff appreciate that much of the work they are asked to do is a different way of approaching work they are already doing.
- How will you manage industrial issues that may arise re Collective Agreement?
- Changing roles – to pick up some of the Starpath tasks a teacher may need to let go of a current task or a current practice. This can lead to a degree of uncertainty and apprehension.
- Staff changes – it is important that the school leadership consider the effects of staff mobility.