

## Established Leaders

The word “established” is defined as; “something or someone who is well known, totally trusted and usually has a proven track record of success.”<sup>1</sup> There are many differing opinions on when educational leaders make the transition from newly appointed or emerging to established leaders. Generally, the first two years in the role are considered to be the induction phase, and the next three move the newly appointed leader into the emerging phase.

Reeves et al, (1997) outlined two stages, the settling into a head teacher post (up to two years) to feeling thoroughly settled (4-10 years).<sup>2</sup> Others like Elmore (2012), speak about the focus of established leadership:

“The focus of established leaders should be to act on behalf of the younger generation that follows. Our words, actions and attitudes are models to be emulated. In fact, we should be constantly mindful of the example we set for them. By the time we are “established leaders” our life is about preparing those who come behind us. It is no longer about our own success, profit margins, victories, or ego. It is all about getting the next batch ready. The first generation is about practising. The second is about preparing.”<sup>3</sup>

There is quite an amount of literature available on the characteristics of the established leader but evidence on the length of time it takes to become “established” is harder to source due to the fact that established leadership is highly dependent on the individual’s own strengths and leadership qualities, the context they find themselves in, the legacy of the previous leader and their openness to professional learning. Fink (2005) writes about school leaders’ main focus, that of leading learning:

“Leaders of learning... are not heroes, or even people uniquely blessed by the Almighty with leadership abilities.... Rather they are ordinary people who through extraordinary commitment, effort and determination have become extraordinary, and have made the people around them exceptional. Educational leadership is more art than science; it is more about character than technique; it is more about inspiration than charisma...”<sup>4</sup>

In the parallel world of business, The Hartford Business Journal describes the experienced leader or manager as follows:

“At this stage you have mastered the skills required of previous stages and can begin taking a holistic view of the organization. You understand there are competing dynamics among

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/established>

<sup>2</sup> Reeves et al (1997) cited by Draper, J (2003) “*Expectation and Experiences of Headship*” Chapter 3 in “*School Leadership*” Third Edition edited by Jim O’ Brien, Donedin Academic Press Ltd. London

<sup>3</sup> <https://growingleaders.com/blog/emerging-leader-established-leader/>

<sup>4</sup> Fink D (2005) *Leadership for Mortals*, Sage Publications, London

various departments and stakeholders and you are learning how to manage these for more optimal results.”<sup>5</sup>

However, consideration must also be given to the “established leader” who becomes established due to longevity in the role rather than from any real sense of development into it. Cambridge Assessment International Educational describes leadership in the following manner: “Most definitions of leadership imply that intentional influence is exerted by one person or a group, over other people or groups, to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organisation.”<sup>6</sup>

As far back as 2003, Bill Mulford writing for the OECD asked us to; “Consider strategies to maintain motivation and challenge for experienced principals, including their not remaining a principal until retirement”<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, the professional development and the system supports available to established leaders from the induction and emerging phases through to the established phase are critical to the effectiveness and success of their leadership, and as a result, to the success of the school they lead and the outcomes achieved by their students.

Effective established leaders are therefore those who have continued to work from a strong ethics and values base and are trusted by students, staff, parents and the wider school community to optimise learning and teaching opportunities for everyone in their schools.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.hartfordbusiness.com/article/20141020/PRINTEDITION/310179962/the-four-stages-of-leadership-development>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/images/271192-educational-leadership.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Mulford. B (2003) OECD commissioned paper school leaders: challenging roles and impact on teacher and school effectiveness, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania