

BIAC Discussion Points on School Leadership

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3rd Workshop of Participating Countries**

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The Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC) appreciates the opportunity to provide views of business on issues relating to school leadership in support of the OECD project on this subject.

The following paper addresses a range of issues relating to school leadership including to address the profile of school leaders, selection and accountability of School Directors, qualifications and evaluation of today's school leaders, issues relating to authority of school leaders, and sustainable leadership.

School Leaders of Today

1. Managing and leading a school has become a highly responsible profession in itself. The leader of a school, or the School Director/Principal should be an educational leader as well as an expert in administrative management and human resource development. School management should be based on sharing values and communicating with teachers and parents about the mission and profile of the school. To develop responsive and dynamic leadership, it is important to minimize the distance between the school management and the governing body. School managers need special qualification to equip them for their important task. They should be carefully selected and evaluated on a regular basis.
2. It is the responsibility of school management to create the condition for changing the school into a dynamic organization that can offer challenges and development opportunities for teaching professionals. A second task for school management is to consider the more complex demands on today's schools and to determine, in consultation with teachers, the School Board, parents and pupils, a strategy and a profile for the school. National regulatory frameworks should allow for such a process.
3. Schools do not always evolve and learn themselves as institutions. Too often their organisation is basically the same as it was decades ago. To make schools more flexible and dynamic and to offer challenging and motivating career possibilities within education, school organization has to be modernized. There is a need for more flexibility and differentiation in the job profiles of school leaders. This may be characterized by new mixes of teaching and non-teaching activities to meet the needs and competencies of teachers in the different phases of their career (junior, experienced, senior) professional human resource management, including the setting up with the team of a school development plan and agreement at individual level on personal development plans.

4. There are many ways of implementing the new mission for schools. In education, as in other service sectors, there is an increasing variety of demands and preferences. Giving teaching professionals the freedom to meet these demands and preferences in a flexible and dynamic setting rather than obliging them to continue working in static, uniform, and often over regulated environments would challenge and motivate them. Such a renewal requires schools to be given more autonomy to manage themselves and to be more responsive to the diversity of demands. At the same time, schools must recognise they are accountable for their results.
5. To this end, every school should work with a quality improving management system. The key to this is a cycle of internal evaluation, feedback and improvement. The results of external evaluations of school performance provide valuable additional input for the school's system. Schools who improve their results should be rewarded. A percentage of the school budget should be set aside for incentives/rewards for teams or individual teachers who make a significant contribution to quality improvement.

Profile of the School Director (Principal) and His/her Main Commitments

6. Schools require a high standard of management because educating young people is different from producing biscuits or cars. A School Director should ideally meet two main criteria: He/she should possess educational leadership skills as well as experience in administrative management and human resource development. Work organization in education is more than just a technical matter; it also involves professional beliefs and shared values.
7. Based on the school profile and development strategy, School Directors should formulate clear demands and expectations to be fulfilled by the school team and at the same time support, inspire and challenge individual teachers, groups of teachers and the entire school team to play their part in the school's development. They should ensure that teachers have sufficient professional autonomy to meet demands and expectations.
8. School Directors need to create the conditions to facilitate the professional development of teachers. This requires a combination of human resource management and management of school facilities, such as ICT equipment, software for designing course material, and workplaces. As this will inevitably entail making important choices, the directors should consult teachers and parents on possible strategies and the pros and cons of those strategies.
9. As a general rule, but particularly where there is a shortage of qualified teachers, school management should realize that demand for teaching staff is linked to work organization in the school. Not all the activities in the school have to be carried out by qualified teachers. It is also important to take into account the interrelationship between budget, class sizes, quality of learning materials, and ICT tools and the demand for qualified teaching staff.

Selection and Accountability of School Directors

10. School Directors should be selected by school's governing bodies or by the local authority of the region. They should be accountable to the governing body for their school's performance. School Directors should also be subject to regular evaluation. The governing body should give a strong mandate to the School Director, but this high level of responsibility must result in good school performance. In this respect the judgment of the

governing body should always be fair but nevertheless firm where there is a failure to deliver results.

11. To create such direct accountability between school management and the school governing body possible and to minimize the distance between the two, there is a need for some form of decentralization of school governance from the central national level to the regional/local level (for example to local authorities, municipalities, school boards or foundations running several schools.)
12. Qualification criteria for School Directors is also needed. The school board should decide certain qualification criteria to be fulfilled by applicants when recruiting School Directors. (See Box 1) Good candidates who may wish to reinforce certain competencies should take special courses.

Box 1

“A School Leader’s Profile”¹

- A really talented and motivated educational leader with excellent didactical and organizational experience.
- Able to put in place and inspiring pedagogical management, able to create the right conditions within the framework of national regulations for the development of the Students, able to support, inspire, and challenge teaching staff and support teachers in their professional development.
- Committed to ensuring that the school carries out its tasks in the best possible way and in accordance with the targets and framework of educational legislation.
- Able to develop a school profile that is attractive for young teachers, parents and children, and that will retain teachers by offering possibilities for professional diversity and development.
- Skilled in human resources management and working with the teaching staff to make important decisions on the mix of teachers to be used (class size, ICT support, composition of job profiles in the schools, mix of instruction and coaching of learning, etc.
- Capable of selecting new teachers in accordance with the school targets and school profile.
- Able to raise the profile of the school and make it open to the community in such a way that it makes a contribution to the development of the community.

Qualifications and Evaluation of Today’s School Leaders

13. Today school leaders have broad and dynamic responsibilities, covering both academic responsibilities and management of the school itself. This requires experience in both education and management. Below are a number of qualifications suggested by business for school leaders.

- 5 years teaching experience

¹ Empowering the teaching Profession and Modernising School Management: The Employers’ Perspective, July 2003. p. 17.

- In favor of some specialized education management training or qualification
 - Ideally should be recruited by the Board of the single school
14. Evaluation of the principal should be done by the relevant School Board and the evaluation process should aim to bring improvements over the long term.
15. Working “conditions” that is the shaping of their contracts, should be commensurate with their roles and responsibilities in their schools, and with respect to those teachers and staff with which School Directors work and manage. The following points are suggested guidance for School Director contracts.
- School Directors should be granted 3-5 years contracts renewable by the relevant School Board
 - School Directors should be remunerated according to the dimension of the school and complexity/environment of the local conditions

Authority of the School Director/principal

16. School leaders should have exclusive responsibility of the management of the school but report to and remain under the control of the School Board.
17. In the context of his responsibility as “manager of the school” a School Director should have the authority to choose and approve the Vice principal and other teachers and middle managers. He/she should manage the finance and instrumental tools.
18. With respect to teachers, the School Director should be able to nominate and recruit teachers and non teachers (among people with titles). He/she should have the right to give incentives or rewards for special work to his teachers within the budget limits and not more than 20% of their salary.
19. The School Director should also be responsible for the evaluation systems of his personnel.
20. The School Director should manage the relation with unions where necessary.
21. The principal is responsible for medium term development planning of the single school for 3-5 years, including to be responsible for operational planning and budget, and Responsible and the budget allocated by the school.

Sustainable Leadership

22. The goal of school leaders should be to share a common vision with the middle management of schools and to work together to build up management team for sustainable leadership – that is to say leadership focused on the development and quality of the school in the years ahead.

Proviso - Conclusion

23. BIAC notes that across OECD countries there are different approaches regarding school leadership and the roles of School Boards and local authorities.

24. The above points made regarding the roles and responsibilities of School Directors are greatly dependent on the existence of a good School Board.
25. The local authorities and/or School Board should provide strategic direction and control of the school.
26. It is important that with respect to both the School Board and local authorities that the School Directors have their respect and their authority recognized.