

RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

Final meeting of the OECD Activity on
Improving School Leadership
Copenhagen, Denmark April 14 and 15, 2008

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LEADERSHIP ROLES

- There was general agreement at this meeting that responsibilities in the four areas of:

Teacher Quality

Goal setting and Accountability

Strategic Management of Resources

Collaboration with a Wide Range of Partners External to the School

are central to improved leadership.

- However it was argued that these four areas of responsibility do not necessarily have to be the responsibility of one person. They provide a framework for **school leadership**, not necessarily for an individual school **leader**. The concept of “co-responsibility” for shared leadership is relevant in this regard.
- Of the four key areas, concern for Teacher Quality is deemed to be the most important. Of high priority is the need for leaders to motivate teachers; to give teachers the opportunity to learn in systematic ways throughout their careers; and to create a climate, culture and ethos that promotes effective teaching and learning and in which teachers are valued and acknowledged.
- It should be noted that there are some concerns in the overlap of areas of responsibilities identified in the OECD report. For example, there is a need to balance the leader's role in evaluating teachers with the need to respect teacher autonomy. An excessive emphasis on evaluation can impact on quality teaching, trust and collegiality.
- Among the four areas of leadership responsibility, of increasing importance is collaboration with external partners. This relates not only to parents. It is also important that leaders are able to attend to the political underpinnings of change and in this respect, engagement by leaders with politicians at every level is vital to engender political will and support for school and learning improvements.

AUTONOMY

- School autonomy is usually linked to the accountability system used by the authority that has delegated autonomy to the school but it is important that the accountability system is fair and not so rigid as to constrain the development of new approaches to learning and teaching. There should be a balance between what the school is given authority to control and how school results are evaluated. School Outcomes should not be defined more narrowly than the official aims for schools set by local and central governments.
- Policies should not be put in place to make school leaders more accountable for learning if they are already overwhelmed by administrative tasks. Moreover increased autonomy should not be seen as part of a calculated strategy to give school leaders the responsibility for how budget cuts should be made in a time of fiscal restraint.
- Increased autonomy must be about a genuine re-distribution of power and responsibility designed to enhance learning. Supportive measures must be in place to enable leaders to prioritize their decision making in areas central to teaching and learning.
- PISA data alone should not play such a dominant role in assessments of the quality of education systems in specific country contexts. Accountability frameworks and approaches must achieve a balance between national concerns for international comparative performance and what works best in promoting learning in the particular national, regional and school setting. The key concern is improving student learning.

LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORKS and STANDARDS

- There is sufficient experience now across OECD countries to suggest that frameworks can help to achieve coherence and to clarify expectations regarding leadership but the development of frameworks must be a collective effort engaging all constituents in the education system.
- In addition to roles and responsibilities, values and commitments must be incorporated into frameworks.
- How frameworks are developed is central. Among the issues to be considered are the system inhibitors. Most leaders want to be leaders of learning but the task must be do-able in the context of other demands and expectations associated with running a school.
- There are two important dimensions to consider in developing leadership frameworks: autonomy and skill. Where there is high autonomy and low skill there is the potential for great risk. Where there is high skill and low autonomy there is the potential for great frustration.

- Frameworks must align responsibilities, skills, knowledge, qualities, values and commitments in a schema that has relevance now and in the future for the education system, for students, teachers and for leaders across the career cycle.
- Underpinning all this is the importance of trust, shared understandings, consistency with existing legal and industrial frameworks and the importance attached to the intrinsic value of learning for students, teachers, parents and for leaders themselves.