Improving School Leadership
Policy & Practice in OECD Countries
1) **Context** of the OECD Improving School Leadership study

2) **Common challenges** facing OECD school systems

3) **Some policy responses** identified in our comparative study
1. Background
Background: The OECD Improving School Leadership activity (2006-08)

- OECD activity on teacher policy showed importance of school leadership for effective teaching and learning

- **School leadership can improve school outcomes**, by influencing the motivation and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment

- Pressing challenges in recruiting and training school leaders

- **Priority**: Improving School Leadership activity ranked #3 out of 29 activities for the OECD Education Committee Programme of Work (2007-2008).
Background: The OECD Improving School Leadership activity (2006-08)

An international perspective on school leadership policy and practice

Australia
Austria
Belgium (French)
Belgium (Flanders)
Chile
Denmark
Finland
France
Hungary
Ireland
Israel
Korea
The Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Portugal
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
United Kingdom (England)
United Kingdom (N. Ireland)
United Kingdom (Scotland)

Network of experts
International organisations
Objectives

To provide policy-makers and others with timely analysis to help formulate school leadership policies leading to improved teaching and learning:

- **Synthesize research and review national approaches;**
  - 22 country background reports

- **Identify innovative and successful initiatives;**
  - 5 case study reports (AUS, AUT, BEL, FIN, ENG)

- **Facilitate exchange and dialogue among countries;**
  - 3 conferences & 3 workshops

- **Identify policy options for governments to consider;**
  - Final comparative report
2. Common Challenges in School Leadership Policy and Practice
School leadership: the challenges

The role of school leaders has changed dramatically

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<th>Accountability for outcomes</th>
<th>Learning-centred leadership</th>
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<td>“Running a small business”</td>
<td>A new culture of evaluation</td>
<td>New approaches to teaching and learning</td>
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<td>Managing human and financial resources</td>
<td>Strategic planning, assessment, monitoring</td>
<td>Supporting collaborative teaching practice</td>
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<td>Adapting the teaching programme</td>
<td>Use of data for improvement</td>
<td>Raising achievement and dealing with diversity</td>
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The super principal?
School leadership: the challenges

Role expansion & intensification

- More and more tasks have been added to school leaders’ workload.  
  → How to define & prioritise core tasks?

- Most of the leadership tasks are carried out by one individual  
  → Need to redistribute tasks

- Insufficient preparation and training  
  → Need to provide more systematic professional development
School leadership: The challenges

Percentage of teachers whose school principal reported that the following teacher behaviours hindered the provision of instruction in their school a lot or to some extent (2007-08)

Lack of pedagogical preparation  Arriving late at school  Absenteeism

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of teachers reporting lack of pedagogical support as a factor hindering instruction.
Source: OECD (2009), Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS, OECD, Paris.
School leadership: the challenges

Diverse preparation and training

Approaches to leadership training and development (2006)
School leadership: the challenges

Unattractive working conditions

Difference between maximum teacher and principal salaries (2003)
School leadership: the challenges

Shortages in leadership personnel

- Few people are interested in moving up to leadership
- Application numbers are decreasing
- 15 out of 22 participating countries report difficulties in finding a sufficient number of qualified candidates
School leadership: the challenges

A “retirement boom”

Percentage of principals aged over 50

- Korea
- Belgium (Fr.)
- Denmark
- Netherlands
- Sweden
- New Zealand
- England
- Belgium (Fl.)
- Northern Ireland
- Finland
- Ireland
- Israel
- Slovenia
- France
- Chile
- Portugal
School leadership: the challenges

1. Lack of clarity about the core roles of school leadership
2. Role overload
3. Insufficient preparation and training
4. Concerns about recruiting new school leaders
3. Policy Options identified by the OECD study
School leadership: the policies

(Re)defining school leadership responsibilities

Distributing school leadership

Developing the knowledge and skills of school leaders

Making school leadership a more attractive profession
1) Redefining school leadership roles and responsibilities

- Provide autonomy coupled with support and clear definition of core responsibilities
- Develop leadership frameworks for improved policy and practice
- Frameworks should define the main tasks of leadership for improved learning:
  - Support, monitor and develop teacher quality
  - Goal setting, assessment and accountability
  - Strategic financial/HR management
  - Collaborate with other schools and institutions (system leadership)
2) Distributing school leadership responsibilities

- Adopt a broader concept of leadership
- Distribution as a strategy for succession planning
- Extend leadership training to leadership teams and middle management
- Recognise and reward distributed leadership
3) Developing knowledge and skills for effective school leadership

- Provide ongoing and career-staged training (preparation, induction, in-service)
- Ensure coherence and quality of provision by different institutions
- Connect training to experience: combination of learning and coaching and practice
4) Making school leadership a more attractive profession

- Plan for leadership succession
- Professionalise recruitment
- Provide adequate remuneration: salaries should reflect the high level of responsibility
- Provide opportunities for career development
Four policy levers to improve school leadership

1. (Re)defining school leadership
2. Distributing school leadership
3. Developing the knowledge and skills for effective leadership
4. Making school leadership a more attractive profession
School leadership: The Toolkit

Available for free from: www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership