European Policy Network On School Leadership

(EAC/42/2010)
Grant Agreement EAC-2010-1388
Specific Agreement number: EAC-2010-1388/1

State of the Art Review

Deliverable 2.1

Version: Final, Date: July 2012

Work Package:	No. 2 –The State of Affairs on School Leadership in Europe
Deliverable:	No. 2.1 – State of the Art Review
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Status, Version No.	Final
Submission date:	<u>24/7/2012</u>
Start Date of the Agreement:	25 July 2011
Duration of the Specific Agreement	12 Months
Dissemination Level:	Public
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Financing:	With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union

Abstract

This report is developed in the frame of the Network's second work package.
The goal of this report of the European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL) work is to highlight the academic underpinning on school leadership and, on such a base, highlight the discourse on School Leadership as a means to improve educational performance.

The report discusses the themes of
(1) Trends and tendencies in external expectations: policies, culture and governance (Philip A. Woods)
(2) Translation of external expectations into internal meaning and direction (Andrej Koren & Lejf Moos)
(3) Understanding and empowering teachers and other staff (Peter Earley)
(4)   Structuring and culturing schools (Olof Johansson & Jacky Lumby)
(5)   Working with partners and the external environment (Mac Ruairc & Michael Schratz)

as stand alone parameters. These constituted the stimulus for discourse on the first PLA held in Munich on February 6 and 7, 2012, which concluded with '*Policy recommendations on School Leadesrhip*'.

The report is divided in two parts. The first highlights the academic underpinning and the second presents policy implications on School Leadership in Europe.

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Overviews of themes

These texts are a review which highlights key issues and trends: an interpretation of the literature relating to school leadership: something that meets the aims of WP2: *"a review of literature … undertaken so as to enhance the current policy orientation with supportive evidence".* A key aim of each 'chapter' is to generate a conceptual framework that would be helpful to the country report authors and would be reflected in the set of headings. Space would limit the extent and depth of discussion of the various contested and diverse views and research findings on the issues and trends that came under each theme. However, the reviews highlight certain important or fundamental divisions of thinking, as well as less contested themes. An example could be 'top-down' cf 'participative' approaches to developing the culture of schools.

Headings

Each overview concludes with a set of headings: 'a set of factors or review of the regulatory… ' (WP2) which comprise key sub-themes and aspects of school leadership concerning which descriptive information and (where appropriate) data should be given in each country report. The answers in the country reports would not necessarily be straightforward or be without interpretations, and in some instances countries may not have information on a heading. However, they would form the standard framework for country report authors.

The purpose of the template is thus to develop a manageable and concise frame for writing country reports that develop and build on shared understanding of core concepts. The template thus undertakes the task, on the basis of research on school leadership, to describe the core concepts and their relations as clearly and distinctive as possible so as to facilitate the writing of an Outline and country reports.

The set of themes is built on a basic distinction between school *leadership* and school *leader*. The first part of the template looks at school leadership and builds on and re-works the Framework of Reference developed in the Comenius Project entitled The Making of Leadership (2011, forthcoming) that in turn was built on school leadership research, see for example (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). The structure facilitates exploration of leadership functions (what is it that is expected of school leaders). It includes introductions to the national policies and governance of schools and the following themes. (In brackets names of authors)

(1)   Trends and tendencies in external expectations: policies, culture and governance (Philip A. Woods)
(2)   Translation of external expectations into internal meaning and direction (Andrej Koren & Lejf Moos)
(3)   Understanding and empowering teachers and other staff (Peter Earley)
(4)   Structuring and culturing schools (Olof Johansson & Jacky Lumby)
(5)   Working with partners and the external environment (Mac Ruairc & Michael Schratz)

The sixth theme looks at school leaders:
(6) School leaders preparation and development

Part A: State of the Art Review on School Leadership

1. Trends and tendencies in external expectations: policies, culture and governance

Abstract

In this theme we ask for descriptions and analysis of current trends in policy and governance. One example would be to describe main tendencies of the policy development over the past 30 years: In many places we see development from a welfare state thinking, that build on participation and democracy, towards a competitive state thinking, that acknowledge being part of the Global competition. In other places we see policy developments from very strong state governance towards more de-central governance.

Introduction

This chapter provides an analytical overview of trends in governance. It does not claim to be the only way of representing changes in how schools are governed and in the associated expectations of schooling, but does aim to highlight key aspects of the evolving relationship between schools and their political and cultural contexts. Modes of governance and the historical, social and cultural contexts of schooling within Europe are diverse. There are, accordingly, complex variations in the governance of education across Europe involving varying degrees of decentralisation and delegation to schools and local government (Horner et al 2007). It is not possible then to neatly classify schools and school systems into abstract models. The discussion below offers, rather, conceptual landmarks by which to consider the trajectory of school governance in particular countries, recognising that these trajectories may include one or more directions of travel towards competing, complementary and/or contradictory governance models.

The overarching government role: From government to meta-governance
This refers to trends away from the control-and-provide role of central government towards more of a steering role (meta-governance). A summary of the different overarching government roles is given in Figure 1 (from Woods 2011), which reflects governance changes charted by an immense amount of literature and research. (See, for example, Kooiman, 2009, Osborne 2010, Woods 2011).

Figure 1: From government to meta-governance

	welfare	marketising meta-governance	organic meta-governance
organisational regime	bureau-professional	bureau-enterprise	holistic-democratic
mindset	compliant / professional autonomy	entreployee	democratic consciousness
dynamic	administrative distance /professionality	business / social entrepreneurialism	self-organising, co-operative, democratic entrepreneurialism

Reproduced from Woods (2011: Figure 5.2, p66)

Welfare state governance represents the provision of welfare by governmental authorities within the context of stipulated aims to achieve certain traditional public values, such as greater equality, democratic principles and procedural fairness. It has been associated with a bureau-professional regime (Clarke and Newman 1997), with professionals and administrators having their own spheres of expertise, giving rise to both a mindset of compliance within traditional hierarchy (based in an administrative culture which values distance and bureaucratic procedures) and claims to professional autonomy (constructed around conceptions of professionality).

Marketising meta-governance represents a break with this. It is about controlling from a distance so as to steer education in the direction of people-formation for the economic system. It includes strong regulatory powers by central government - exercised through legally required curriculum content, increased student testing and school inspections, as well as active socialisation of teachers and school leaders through training, professional development and government command of dominant discourses about the aims and needs of education. Marketising meta-governance blurs public–private boundaries, simulates markets within a public sphere, which is increasingly influenced by market values, and advances managerialism that promotes innovation and impassioned commitment to policy goals. Hence the motivations and outlook of entrepreneurialism provide a guiding dynamic, encouraging bureau-enterprise cultures (Woods 2011) in which the model organisational actor is encapsulated in the idea of the 'entreployee' (a combination of 'employee' and 'entrepreneur') (Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009: 185, 186).

Arguably what can be seen occurring in a number of countries currently is an *evolution of marketising meta-governance.* The practical experience of marketising meta-governance and 'third way' policy has led to a number of critiques. For example, its claims to successful 'delivery' are greater than that which is actually attained and it is unable in particular to reduce social and educational inequalities. A key limitation is that its strong regulatory powers amount to micro-management which is ineffective in bringing about sustained improvement - hence trends to develop a different approach within the steering role of the state. Developments in education governance are described, for example, by Woods (2011) as the growth of 'plural controlled schooling' (see below), part of a decentralising logic which values professional responsibility, less central direction, local control and community/public involvement, negotiated relationships, values and goals, and bottom-up innovation.

Organic meta-governance represents a possible further stage, based on the proposition that possibilities for more democratic and holistic education are opened by the evolution in marketising meta-governance. It incorporates the distant (steering), but not inactive, governmental role, though with a very different vision and values than marketising meta-governance. It explicitly seeks to nurture democratic ways of working and the development of people's 'substantive liberty' – that is, the flourishing of all their capabilities as human beings.The favoured organisational approach is that of holistic democracy (Woods 2011), with a recognition that there are degrees of democracy. Progress is not reducible to narrow, measurable metrics, but involves deep reflection on meaning and purpose as well as the organisation and techniques of learning. The mindset fostered is democratic consciousness and the dynamic is innovation and change that are shaped by self-organising energies and democratic entrepreneurialism. Its pluralism protects against dominance by an economised state and imposition of orthodoxies. Organic-meta-governance is potentially encouraged by trends towards 'new public governance' characterised by negotiation of accountability, values, meaning and relationships, recognition of power inequalities in networks, greater involvement of users of public services as co-producers, and new modes of accountability that build on social accounting (Osborne 2010).

Models of governance

The models of governance are ideal types of governance strategies which are constituted by specific laws on education, the modes of financing schools, the rights and institutional arrangements for participating in the running of schools, the processes for evaluating and inspecting schools, regulations on who can set up new schools, and so on. The models occur within the overarching government role (whether welfare or meta-governance) and a system may be characterised by more than one model. They do not necessarily meld together to form harmonious combinations, but can be characterised by tensions and contradictions between them. Five models of governance have been formulated, drawing from work by by Glatter and Woods (1995), Glatter (2003), Woods and Broadfoot (2008) and Woods (2011):

quality control model: in which government seeks 'to secure some control over the quality of key school processes and products' through bureaucratic 'laid-down rules and requirements' and 'set procedures, controls and monitoring arrangements' (Glatter and Woods 1995: 161)

competitive market model: the creation of a market-like environment in which schools are intended to act more like small or medium-size businesses responsive to consumer preferences (Glatter and Woods 1995)

local empowerment model: which enhances opportunities for parents and the local community to be involved and participate in decision-making (Glatter 2003)

school empowerment model: whereby authority is devolved to the school on finance, staffing and other issues (Glatter 2003)

plural controlled schooling model: characterised by multiple sources of control and influence on education. Whilst central government retains significant levers of control, there is also a multiplication of educational players and partners, drawn from business and other sectors.These are not necessarily or typically local community stakeholders. Many have their roots beyond the community in which the school is situated. This is distinctive, therefore, from the local empowerment model (Woods 2011).

Variations across Europe

Aspects of these trends are apparent in numbers of European countries. Klijn notes that 'the rise of governance networks originates more from northern Europe, specifically the Scandinavian countries, the UK and the Netherlands, than from southern Europe, although one can also find evidence of trends towards such governance in France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany' (p516). National and local cultures heavily influence developments in governance. For example, network governance has developed in the UK, Netherlands and Germany (as well as elsewhere) but with different approaches according to the history and culture of the countries (Kooiman 2009: 105). Thus in the UK, network governance is associated with the 'hollowing out of the state' and in the Netherlands with interdependent interactions between local actors, whilst in Germany network governance is located 'on the borderline between state and society' and a drive for greater participation by 'societal groups' (ibid). Klijn (2010) suggests that governance networks in the UK have a 'more strongly instrumental/managerial and vertical flavour' (p515), as compared with Scandinavia or the Netherlands. But such traditionally welfare-orientated countries are experiencing change. For example, there is evidence in Scandinavian countries of 'the tradition of striving for equity through centralized welfare state governance... changing... towards a school policy based on choice, deregulation, evaluation and managerialism' (Moller and Schratz 2008: 343).

One of the themes running through the governance trends is that of control and autonomy: namely, the degree to which central direction of education is loosened, or (paradoxically) intensified, whilst other organisations and actors in the school system (such as schools and principals) are apparently empowered.

These trends play out in varying ways according to their context and national histories. England has experienced successive reforms combining more devolution of powers and responsibilities to schools within a strongly market-orientated policy of meta-governance (Woods 2011). Countries such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland have been taking steps to align local systems nationally and increase self-evaluation in schools as a way of making them more accountable, whilst former East European countries have experienced moves both to greater school autonomy and development of national standards as benchmarks of reform (Moller and Schratz 2008). All of these trends and changes take place in contexts in which to varying degrees groups and organisations in civil and economic society seek to influence or provide school education. These include faith groups, cultural organisations, employers' associations and organisations such as the co-operative movement, emphasising that school education and its governance are contested concepts.

Please note that a separate response form has been provided to provide answers and comments on these questions.

Questions

1.1 Describe trends in the overarching role of the central government with regard to school education, i.e. in what ways it has a welfare, 'control-and-provide' role and in what ways a more distant, steering role?

1.2 State with regard to school education (i) the powers that central government have over local government, and (ii) the powers that local government have independently of central government.

1.3 Briefly state the main central laws and regulations reflecting the models of governance defined above in relation to schools:

> quality control
> competitive market
> local empowerment
> school empowerment

plural controlled (laws and regulations that give diverse people and organisations, drawn from business and other sectors)

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2. Translation of external expectations into internal meaning and direction

Abstract

This theme takes as its point of departure that schools are built on relations with the outer world and that school leaders have a responsibility to bring external expectations into the school and to implement them by cultivating acceptance, while adjusting and adapting them to the internal sense of meaning of the school.

Leading is the major task of school leaders. Leadership, however, does not work in a vacuum: There are many legitimate and legal expectations from stakeholders outside and inside schools that create, limit and direct the work. Many of the expectations contradict each other and many external expectations, demands and structures can seem strange and meaningless to professional cultures. This puts the school leader in a position where she/he needs to interpret, translate and mediate these external demands in order to facilitate sense-making and the creation of a shared direction inside school.

Introduction

The basis for this description of the major function in school leadership is, that schools are run by societies in order to achieve societal, cultural and political purposes. Schools are based in societies and are meant to serve society's' needs for raising and educating next generation to take over at some point in the future. Relations between society and school are thus fundamental and depend on the society at hand. Therefore there are many diverse models of society- and state- to school relations and therefore of how school organisations are structured.

Schools in many societies have, in one way or the other, been given more autonomy (e.g. financially autonomy: schools are given a lump sum of money and the discretion to manage major parts or most of their economical needs within that budget). Another example of decentralisation is when regulatory or governance couplings between the state, local authorities and schools have been loosened (e.g. less prescriptive aims or curriculum). When any of those things occur, there is a need for, on the one hand to create a position that is accountable for schools actions and on the other hand responsible for carrying the external expectations into the school; for implementing demands and expectations into a professional organisation and culture. Thus the need for leadership in schools has grown over the past 20 – 30 years.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary *lead* can mean: 1) 'show the way' e.g. lead the way to somewhere; it can mean 2) 'connect two things,' lead from something to something, e.g. the wire led to the speaker or it can mean 3) 'a path' e.g. to go in a particular direction. Leading is the major task of school leaders in the sense of 'leading the way …' and 'being at the head of …'. Leadership is an interactive practice, say Leithwood and Day (2007, p. 4). While agreeing with Woods (2005, p.115) when he writes: *"… the essence of leadership is not the individual social actor but a relationship of almost imperceptible directions, movements and orientation having neither beginning nor end."* And they go on: 'while reciprocity is fundamental to such relationships, the defining contribution to an organisation is an emergence of a shared sense of direction with *perceptible* influence, eventually, on teachers to move in that direction. Direction and influence are at the core of most conceptions of leadership.'

Setting the direction: Translating expectations

Extensive analyses (Leithwood *et al.*, 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005) of research, point out that 'setting the direction for their school' as a major leadership practices.' This understanding is implied in the concept of leadership that is understood as: 'lead the way …' and 'be at the head of …' It is also understood in this way in the research (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005) where it is found that successful principals are setting the direction for their schools: *"… successful leadership creates a compelling sense of purpose in the organizations by developing a shared vision of the future, helping build consensus about relevant short-term goals and demonstrating high expectations for colleagues' work."* (Leithwood, 2006).

Leaders, however, do not work in a vacuum: schools are built on relations with the outer world and that means that school leaders are responsible for bringing external expectations into the school and to implement them by cultivating acceptance, by adjusting and adapting them to the internal sense of meaning of the school. There are many legitimate and legal expectations from stakeholders outside and inside schools that create, limit and direct the work. Many of the expectations contradict each other and many external expectations, demands and structures can seem strange and meaningless to professional cultures. This puts the school leader in a position where she/he needs to interpret, translate and mediate these external demands in order to facilitate sense-making and the creation of a shared direction inside school.

Governments and local, educational authorities make policies, plans, principles and strategies for education in school. Some parts of those are accompanied by social technologies (e.g. test, manuals, standards) and some parts are declarations of intend: descriptions of aims or values. This can be formed as soft governance that leaves room for school discretion, interpretation and room for manoeuvre when they choose ways and methods. The intentions are of course to have schools develop according to the general aims and directions as they are described in 'organisational ideas' (Røvik, 2007). Røvik describes the difficulty in having ideas implemented into existing organisations in effective ways, that change and form their practises and thinking. Therefore he argues that much more attention needs to be given to the phase where the idea meets the organisation: The idea needs to be understood and accepted by the organisation, leaders and teachers, in order to have effect on practice and thinking. Ideas need to be translated so the fit into the mental models or the worldviews of professionals. In this aspect of school life leaders and leadership are pivotal players: They get the information and demands from the outside while they also know the organisation, it's culture and the professionals in it. They are better positioned than anybody else to translate, reformulate and negotiate the direction of what needs to be done so it makes sense to teachers.

This insight is supported by the research done by Cynthia Coburn (Coburn, 2004; Coburn, 2005; Coburn & Stein, 2006). She finds that some aspects of leadership are important in order to make external initiatives work in schools: There should be agreement between the life views of teachers and the new idea; there is a need for intense and coherent knowledge and opportunities to try new practices out. All of the aspects build on knowledge to both 'sides': the external expectations, the idea, and the internal culture and expectations. A position, that school leaders have.

An illustration

As an example with limited validity the 'International Successful School Principal Project' (ISSPP)(Day & Leithwood, 2007; Moos *et al.*, 2011) has been investigating how school principals further student success in school in educational systems in Australia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, England and USA (Moos & Johansson, 2009, p.771). After having visited the schools in 2002 and again in 2008 we found that the leadership practice had changed in some cases. In Denmark, Norway and Sweden, there is a growing attention to the external demands following the growing national goal setting and accountability-demands. The trend of governments tightening the curriculum couplings with schools through the use of more detailed and strict social

technologies like testing, comparisons, rankings and bench marking is showing results in that most of the principals are more focused on the effectiveness and 'back-to-basic' trends. At the same time they are trying not to neglect or let teachers neglect the comprehensive, holistic goals.

One school leadership brings the external demands to the teachers saying: *'Let's see how we can use this in a productive way. Can national tests and student plans be used to legitimize the school to parents? Can we couple the new plans with what we used to do: the student portfolio? Tests are mostly rituals and the results are difficult to use for educational purposes.'* The principal needs to be loyal to the political demands and at the same time make teachers accept the new demands. So, he says, let's do it and use it for our own purposes. It seems to be a genuine transition period kind of arguments: Let us see the old in the new.

Principals in the Australian, American and English cases are still very clear in their direction setting, encompassing both narrow subject matters and more comprehensive competency matters.

In all places there seem to be a growing awareness of the importance of leading through personal sense-making, setting the scene and the agenda (producing the premises) and in making connections to decision-making in the everlasting, on-going interactions with teachers and in developing new and appropriate social technologies for those purposes, like teams, annual plans etc. Therefore there is more attention to the social structures, technologies and cultures of schools.

In countries other than those included in this research project there are other practices and EPNoSL shall find and describe them.

Questions

2.1 How do school leaders mediate external requirements with internal meaning?

2.2 How do school leaders negotiate and communicate meaning, vision and mission statement?

2.3 How do school leaders secure fostering ethical purpose like ensuring fairness, equity, justice and democracy?

2.4 How are policies being implemented in schools?

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3. Understanding and empowering teachers and other staff

Abstract

Recognizing the fact that teachers are the most important persons in schools when it comes to assisting and furthering student learning school leaders should therefore work hard to provide optimal teaching conditions for teachers.

This means that the primary aim of school structures and cultures are to support teachers' practice, capacity building, and learning. School leaders can have general and structural influences here, for example in implementing continuous personal development or providing in-service training opportunities for teachers, in developing the pedagogical project and vision of the school, in implementing quality assurance, and also in interacting actively on a daily basis with teachers and teacher teams.

Introduction

Educational leaders have responsibilities for ensuring that the organisation's human resources are effectively managed, led and developed. They need to understand and empower their staff – all staff, both teachers and support staff. Leaders' areas of responsibility are wide-ranging and will vary depending on the degree of institutional autonomy and financial delegation. They may include the planning, implementation and evaluation of staff selection and recruitment, induction, appraisal, reward, mentoring and development for improved performance within the workplace. Leaders need to motivate and inspire all who work within the organisation if effective learning is to occur. People must be led and managed for effective learning at all levels within the organisation – student learning, adult learning and organisational learning.

The approach to managing and developing people – Human Resource Management and Human Resource Development - can be categorised into 'hard' and 'soft' dimensions. The 'hard' aspects of HRM relate to managerialism, New Public Management, cost effectiveness and value for money, whilst the 'soft' aspects relate to the empowering and motivation of staff, the less tangible and systematic aspects of managing and 'empowering resourceful humans'. Whereas 'hard' approaches relate primarily to task-oriented structures, policies and procedures (human *resources*), 'soft' HRM is concerned with unleashing the potential of staff to be resourceful and enterprising (resourceful *humans*). Leaders need take account of their staff as emotionally intelligent people who need to develop as persons as well as employees. This approach is underpinned by theories of developmental humanism compared to the hard approach of instrumental utilitarianism (Oldroyd, 2005).

The leadership of people development has been found to be an essential element of institutional improvement (Bubb and Earley, 2010; Robinson, et al 2009; Robinson, 2011) and acknowledges the importance placed on ensuring a highly proficient school workforce at a time when there is a high level of educational change and system reform.

How school leaders improve student learning and support teachers' competence development in subject matters, pedagogy, classroom management, etc

There is a growing consensus about the importance of staff and teacher quality to system improvement. A recent analysis of the top performing school systems in the world entitled 'How the World's Best Performing

School Systems Come Out on Top' (Barber and Mourshed, 2007) pointed to three key factors for success. Firstly, attracting good quality people to become teachers, secondly developing them in their roles and thirdly making sure that the education system worked for every child. The authors highlighted the role of the principal in improving the quality of teaching:

> *Being a teacher is about helping children to learn. Being a principal is about helping adults to learn. (Barber and Mourshed, 2007, p31)*

Research analysing school based influences on student learning show, unsurprisingly, that the factors that are closest to student learning, such as teacher quality and classroom practices, tend to have the strongest impact on student achievement (Hattie, 2009; Leithwood, et al, 2006). There is now broad agreement that, while background characteristics are the most important source of variation in student achievement, the teacher effect is the most significant school related factor in improving student learning and outcomes. Sustainable improvements in the quality of learning depend on the action taken by teachers and several recent studies have shown that teaching quality is at the heart of improving pupil outcomes (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2006; Matthews, 2009; Wiliam, 2009).

We now know far more how school leaders influence pupil learning through their actions (Matthews, 2009; Day et al, 2010). In this major English study particular reference is made to the importance of the principal "to the level of expectation, aspirations and well being of staff, the importance of teaching and learning conditions and the well being and achievement of pupils".

Frost and Durrant (2003) are also clear that 'schools need to embrace diverse forms of leadership, in particular those that include teachers in school leadership, 'teacher leadership'', and that this concept is illuminated by three key words: values, vision and strategy. The central challenge and a test of school leadership is to create a culture of distributed leadership where it is established that, whilst in an organisation power may not be evenly distributed, certain rights and responsibilities do apply to all.

Researchers conclude that 'the more leaders focus their relationships, their work and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning the greater their influence on student outcomes'. The degree to which school leaders, at all levels within the organisation, are enabled to do this is a key question. Fink and Markholt (2011, p231) refer to the ability of leaders to analyse teaching and learning and use their pedagogical knowledge and understanding to devise effective development that will impact on pupil learning in classrooms.

How school leaders create a culture of professional learning

Teachers need to be given and themselves take on and construct optimal conditions for learning. This means that the primary aim of school structures and cultures are to support teachers' practice, capacity building, and learning. School leaders have a key role in shaping organisational culture; they can exert influence, for example in implementing continuing professional development or providing in-service training opportunities for teachers, in developing the vision of the school, in implementing quality assurance and performance management systems, and also in interacting actively on a daily basis with teachers, support staff and their teams. In this way the school culture might be described as 'learning centred'.

The development of the learning-centred culture of the school relies on close professional relationships that allow teachers to talk openly with one another about what is going well in their classrooms and in what areas they would welcome some help and advice. A teacher being able to give and accept constructive feedback is essential to the success of this learning-centred culture (Bubb and Earley, 2007, 2010).

Leading professional development

Continuing professional development (CPD) is central to the success of any school and its effective leadership and management a key attribute of learning-centred schools. Professional development has been defined in many ways but essentially it encompasses all formal and informal learning that enables individuals to improve their own practice.

The types of CPD activity or formal and informal learning opportunities can be wide ranging and may include numerous forms (e.g. mentoring, coaching, shadowing, undertaking a higher degree, going on a course) and there has been much work over the last decade into what constitutes effective CPD, especially as it relates to enhancing teacher quality and in turn student outcomes. Research evidence suggests coaching and mentoring have a big impact on improving teachers' practice from 'Evidence for Policy and Practice Information' (EPPI, 2003; Lewis and Murphy, 2008) along with development activities taken over a period of time (Bubb and Earley, 2008). How CPD can be deployed to improve teaching and learning and to develop leadership capacity is summarised in Bubb and Earley (2010) and professional development provision within 18 European counties is mapped out in the OECD 'Teaching and Learning International Survey' (TALIS) report on professional development (TALIS, 2010).

In England a recent report from inspectors compiled following visits to schools where practice in staff development had been judged good or outstanding found that:

> *...the most distinctive feature in the schools visited was the commitment of leaders at all levels to using professional development as the main vehicle for bringing about improvement. (Ofsted, 2010, p7)*

Not only can school leaders bring about positive changes to teachers' classroom practice through their leadership of professional development, they can also have a direct bearing on pupils' progress in learning and their attainment.

Performance management, assessment and evaluation

Performance management can be defined as an interlocking set of policies and practices, which have as their focus the enhanced achievement of organisational objectives through a concentration on individual performance. Formal systems to appraise, evaluate or manage teachers' (and other staffs') performance are found in many education systems, take a variety of forms and have different purposes or functions. The literature shows there are two main approaches to PM: the first emphasises holding staff to account for their performance in the light of internal or externally imposed standards or criteria of 'good' performance (the 'hard' aspect of HRM), whilst the second puts emphasis on identifying a range of motivational strategies aimed at encouraging staff to perform at their best ('soft' HRM). The aims of performance management are four-fold: performance review, rewards review, potential review and development review. The use of 'rewards review' or performance related pay (PRP) has proved problematic when applied to education and there is a large literature exploring this issue. Governments often see PRP as a mechanism to raise teacher motivation and enhance performance but there are few examples where this has proved successful (Bangs, 2009; Sclafani, 2009).

Questions

3.1 How do school leaders improve teaching and support teachers' competence development in subject matters, pedagogy, classroom management, etc?

3.2 How do school leaders create a culture of professional learning?

3.3 How do they lead professional development?

3.4 How do school leaders ensure performance management, assessment and evaluation?

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4. Structuring and culturing schools

Abstract

Given the fact that teaching, learning and leading take place in organisations, it is therefore an important task for school leaders: "To structure and culture schools." The main responsibilities are to adjust structures to the intentions and culture of teaching and learning where possible so that they support instead of hinder the work.

Schools are organisations, held together by structures, but if they are to be effective and successful, they must also be communities, held together by a sufficiently shared sense of identity and by sufficiently common norms. Classrooms and schools are social fields, and education and learning take place in those social fields.

There are thus two aspects of this work, a structural and a cultural one. The structural aspect comprises work on planning and managing human and material/financial resources. And it includes building optimal procedures of communication and decision-making. The cultural aspect focuses on the creation of a corporate identity.

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the leadership of structure at school level. Schools need to achieve both academic and social goals, preparing children and young people to be economically independent and to function socially within families, communities and as citizens of a democratic society. The purpose of school structure is to maintain an environment in which pupils can develop in all of these ways. Each school will have a formal structure and also less formal structures shaped by culture and micropolitics. Schools can therefore be seen both as bureaucracies and as communities (Moos, 2011). The relationship between the formal and less formal structures is unpredictable. Schools are 'loosely coupled systems' (Weick, 1976: 1) where what happens does not always closely reflect what was planned or intended. Evidence of the relationship between specific organisational structures or cultures and the achievement of academic and social goals is variable in extent. This chapter uses existing research to provide an overview of leading first, formal structure and second, culture in schools.

School structure

The formal structure of schools may be analysed by considering:

- The range of staff roles
- The responsibilities of each role
- The relationship between roles
- The decision-making processes
- The degree of autonomy overall and at each node of the structure
- How instruction is organised

There has been no comprehensive mapping of staff roles and responsibilities in schools in Europe. Nor is much evidence available indicating how roles relate to each other within a formal bureaucratic structure. More effort has been expended on researching the decision-making processes of schools. Changes have

taken place in Europe since the 1990s in the degree of autonomy vested in the whole school leadership and particularly in the principal. A general trend has been a move away from teachers managing schools cooperatively to investing greater control in the principal and in middle managers such as heads of subject department. Some argue that the emphasis on a distributed style of leadership suggests a different model with more staff involved in leadership (Harris, 2007), though this idea is contested (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2008).

In some countries, there is variation in the role of the principal. Glatter & Harvey (2006) distinguish 'executive heads who have responsibility for more than one school' and 'co-headships, where two heads jobshare the leadership of the school, or dual headship where two full-time heads lead the school' (pp. 3-4). As a consequence some schools may have a principal or two principals on site, some only an executive principal who may be based elsewhere. Such changes are generally designed to alleviate recruitment problems and increase partnership working, rather than directly to improve instruction or achievement. The most common pattern remains a single principal based in the school.

Decentralisation and site-based management has been driven by the belief that greater autonomy at school level will lead to improvement by allowing schools discretion to meet local needs (Caldwell, 2008). While there is general agreement that a relationship exists between leadership and student achievement, the evidence on a relationship between the level of the principal's autonomy and achievement is complex and contested (Maslowski et al. 2008; OECD, 2010). Equally the evidence of whether the degree of autonomy extended to other staff in the school has a positive effect on achievement is unclear (OECD, 2010; Harris, 2007; Youngs, 2009). There is evidence that most principals have autonomy only in some areas because many states control key areas such as teacher's salaries. There is also evidence that some teachers believe that they have too little autonomy, for example in Slovenia (Trnavčevič, & Vaupot, 2009) and Germany (Huber, 2011).Though inconclusive, overall evidence indicates that autonomy invested in the principal by the state and in other staff by the principal can be helpful in raising achievement. Greater autonomy implies a flatter organisational structure with few hierarchical levels controlling decision-making and with decisions taken by those, as Cardno (1998) suggests, who have jurisdiction, expertise and to whom the outcome is relevant. However, such a collaborative approach is not necessarily helpful for all decisions or in all circumstances (OECD, 2010).

The evidence on the impact of school structure related to instruction is summarized by Leithwood et al (2010), who stress that structure designed to give the greatest time spent on learning is key.

School resource management

Principals generally have control of some resources, but which varies across Europe. The majority do not control teacher's salaries. Equally, capital spending on the physical infrastructure like building and furniture is not controlled by the principal in most schools. Though there is variation, in many schools principals manage the recruitment and development of teachers and other staff and the budget which purchases resources to support learning. Linking both the quantum and the allocation of the budget to learning outcomes is problematic (Wilkins 2002). In some countries benchmarks of the percentage of the available resource spent on a range of categories such as teachers' salaries, learning materials, technology, and grounds maintenance has the potential to be linked to value added learning outcomes (Levačic, 2000). As yet such potential remains largely unfulfilled. The financial decision-making process may be rational or micro political. Levačic suggests that the former is more effective in supporting learning, but the evidence of a relationship between resource allocation and achievement is not conclusive (Vignoles et al, 2000).

Structure, Culture and Leadership: Prerequisites for successful schools?

There are very few studies that offer empirical evidence of a relationship between student learning and school culture. School cultures are harder to change than school structures (Höög & Johansson, 2011). The literature on principal's decision-making makes connections to both culture and structure. Concepts like site-based management, flat structures and hierarchies describe both an organisation's structure and its culture. In the same way, the principal's work can be described in relation to both the external and internal structures and cultures of the school (Björkman, 2008; Ärlestig, 2008). This makes it difficult to make a clear distinction between the two concepts, suggesting a conclusion that both culture and structure are prerequisites for successful leadership (Törnsén, 2009). Other arguments about structure suggest that there are varying roles of principal and senior leadership teams in relation to the school situation or circumstances. Distributed or shared leadership or adopting collegial or democratic modes of decision-making are promoted as solutions to declining learning outcomes, that is, culture may be improved through structural changes. School leadership in successful schools in Norway is described as the team on top (Möller et al., 2011) which is another way of describing the link between culture and structure in relation to distributed leadership.

The presence of a school culture focusing on student outcomes is seen as a powerful shaper of learning in the literature (Fullan, 2010; Spiro, 2010). The argument is often based on a belief that the school structure created by the principal supports a certain way of looking at social and civic objectives in the school. It can be described simply as the internal environment for learning.

Leadership links structure and culture. Through leadership the principal can both provide a fundamental structural context and a school culture that establishes a context within which successful learning can take place. What successful schools look like varies over time and from one country to the next; it varies within a country and also within a single school district. How we define successful schools has a clear ideological dimension. Conservative parties generally argue for a traditional school culture and structure with a focus on academic merit. Parties on the left side of the policy continuum more often argue for a school culture and structure which supports a dual focus on social and academic goals. This difference in ideology leads us to the question; are a successful school and an effective school the same? The parties holding the more traditional perception of what a school is would argue for effective schools in relation to academic achievement but the more progressive perspective would argue that successful schools can show success in both academic and social achievement.

Questions

4.1 How do school leaders create organisational and communication culture?

4.2 How do school leaders build appropriate organisational structures?

4.3 How do school leaders plan and manage human and material/financial resources?

4.4 How do school leaders undertake decision-making?

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5. Working with partners and the external environment: Systems leadership

Abstract

Schools do not only rely on the expectations from the outer world, they also need to collaborate with institutions, agencies and authorities in order to fulfil their educational tasks. There are variable levels of dependence between schools and different aspects of their environment depending on the political, administrative, community-related, professional or cultural nature of the relationship.

Consequently it is important for the school leaders to manage and conduct relations with the outer world and. understand and interpret signals and expectations from many stakeholders. While it is important for schools to account for the work they do through league tables, inspection reports or through political negotiations with stakeholders, it is equally important for school leaders to argue for a much great recognition of the broader tasks of schooling that support students in ways that are not always amenable to the neo-liberal techniques of measurement.

School and their external stakeholders need to recognise their mutual interdependence and in this context build partnerships with parents, policy-makers, social, educational and cultural institutions at many levels: locally, nationally and internationally. School leaders need to be able to develop relations that are favourable for the school and its pupils and develop relations with the community they serve, and which themselves are beneficial to both the school and the community

Introduction

Mapping of effective practice (OECD, 2008) provides a useful starting point in engaging with the notion of systems leadership and examining the impact of such work. Broadly speaking, this scholarship supports the view that the development of positive patterns of engagement between school leaders and the external environment is desirable. However the exact nature of these relationships and the processes and practices that feed into developing this domain of practice requires significant development both theoretically and empirically. A case in point is the lack of evidence on the exact nature of the impact of this type of leadership activity on student engagement and the overall, broadly defined outcomes of schooling.

The Policy Context

The contemporary European environment has witnessed a widely acknowledged paradigm shift in education and policy that has grown apace in the 21st Century to meet the demands of the concept of lifelong learning (Pont et al, 2008). Furthermore, it is widely acknowledged that achievements and attainment of children and young people are closely bound with their lives beyond the classroom (Carpenter et al, 2011). As a result of these growing challenges, the complexity and range of tasks facing school leaders in recent years, it has become even more important to extend and deepen the focus of the study of leadership in schools. The broadening of the scope of the work of the school leader beyond the confines of their own schools is one dimension of policy that is the subject of more examination that heretofore. While collaboration and inter-agency working have been commonplace in education, historically policy and practice have taken on a range of forms across countries. In many contexts, the expansion of support services to schools and a number of different, yet related developments in relation to student diversity have provide imperatives for school leaders to engage with a broad range of professions including curriculum advisors, psychologists, speech and language therapists, special needs coordinators etc. It could be argued therefore, that practice in this field has evolved over time and it is timely that the current state of play is reviewed (Mac Ruairc 2009). Evidence

of collaborative working beyond the level of the child and to support local improvement is evident in Flanders, England, Scotland and Finland (OECD, 2008) The development of NMS schools in Austria directed at horizontal (among schools, school heads, learning designers and vertical level (between the actors on the different levels of the system, such as ministry, regional co-ordinators, school heads) further reflect the changing policy context of shared leadership. According to Schratz (Improving school leadership in central Europe,)

> "The schools involved have been built into a professional network which demands co-operation and collaboration among school heads and learning designers exchanging ideas, experiences and practices with a view towards system development at the regional level"…

The growth of collaboration between and across schools has grown apace in recent years with school leaders recognising that sharing learning, excellent practice and innovative ideas supports school improvement whilst simultaneously supporting school improvement in other schools (Hopkins, 2009) Debates in relation to school autonomy, centralisation and decentralisation between and within countries has further impacted the scope of collaborative working. Decentralisation in particular has opened up new paradigms in education, particularly for leaders to develop strong networks and collaboration skills (Pont et al, 2008; Sugure and Solbrekke, 2011)

In order to explicate how this dimension of leadership activity is developing it is worthwhile exploring some likely domains of current practice with respect to involvement with external stakeholders in order to illustrate differing degrees of engagement. Some of the key domains that are shared across different jurisdictions include.

- Governing bodies
- Parents and community
- Education support/evaluation professions
- Inter school policy (e.g. council)
- There are varying degrees of penetration into each of these domains of activity/ practice as a result of factors including, specific features of each national context, levels of expectation based on established practice and sometimes-individual leaders preference in terms of preferred priorities. Many of the current models of practice had evolved as a pragmatic response to policy development and school and systemic needs.

Systems Leadership

A core assumption underpinning the most recent examination of system leadership is based on the view that the outcome of systems leadership will lead to "system wide school improvement by encouraging school leaders to work beyond the school borders for the benefit of the system as a whole" (Pont et al, 2008 p3). In this way it is argued "system leadership can build capacity in education; share expertise, facilities and resources; encourage innovation and creativity; improve leadership and spread it more widely; and provide skills support" (ibid, 3) where "the collective sharing of skills, expertise and experience will create richer and much more sustainable opportunities for rigorous transformation than can ever be provided by isolated institutions" (ibid, 3). Other case studies included in the OECD report provide a very limited evidence base of the claims they make regarding the effectiveness of this form of leadership.

Contextual factors are central to examining effective educational leadership in this arena and there is considerable evidence which points to the limitations in replicating best practice models across schools (Higham et al,2009; Gunter 2006; Wrigley 2008; Trupp and Willmott 2003) This type of perspective / analysis leads to the continued normalization of discourses of exceptionality (Gronn, 2003a) and the

development of 'leadership by design' frameworks (Gronn 2003b) that do not transfer well to a more generalized field of enquiry..

Despite the OECD advocating a systems leadership approach and the notion of providing a panacea to effective educational leadership, disentangling the research evidence is complex and a range of criticisms have been directed towards systems leadership by Higham and Hopkins (2007).

The first is centred around the limited guidance on how leaders undertake this role because of the diversity of issues involved in this extended role. If we explore a well-established field of practice such as school/community involvement the complexity of what is involved in coming to terms with the components of system leadership are explicated to some extent (Smyth, 2009). While it is clear that what is needed in order to understand what extending leadership to this domain encompasses is a much more robust interrogation in terms of, identity, collectivity, power relations and contact relations, historical relations with state institutions etc. (Rose, 2000), all too often policy perspectives take an essentialist, idealized notion of the community (Niesche, 2011) failing to capture its complexity of the notion of community.

Secondly, there is a lack of evidence regarding the effectiveness of systems leaders. If it is, as some would suggest, simply part of the autonomy/accountability dynamic it is difficult to see how it will add to the core task of schooling precisely because many of the models of high stakes accountability regimes are already viewed as having a largely negative impact (Alexander, 2010). There is a strong possibility that more activity with the external environment may limit the work of schools by creating an even broader range of outcomes which must be incorporated into leadership activity in an instrumentalist technicist fashion. In this way the range of disciplinary power which frames the work of school leadership is broadened thus extending the effect of the panoptic gaze on practice (Foucault, 1972).

Thirdly, there is a capacity building issue within schools experiencing challenging circumstances where Research in this field has contributed to our knowledge on the potentially problematic nature of cross-boundary working. Effective collaboration involves more than coming together and the meeting of minds, it involves compromise, clarification and a joint vision in meeting the needs of children and young people.

Finally there is an issue relating to how to ensure that skills, experience and support are in place in order for system leaders to be effective and finally creating the balance between collaboration and accountability systems that are central to the policy focus on added value. A related issue in this instance is the danger that government led initiatives prescribing systems leadership could potentially stifle innovative practice and reduce the task to a bureaucratic and managerial exercise. Conversely, inter-school co-operation has the capacity to concentrate on managerial and administrative issues and lessen the school leaders' administrative workload (Hopkins, 2008). The question is clearly whether systems thinking alone and action can consistently provide solutions to effective leadership and solve on-going systemic problems. Clearly research evidence across many areas of this leadership are preliminary and more systematic evaluations are necessary to continue the development of contemporary school leadership.

Questions

5.1Who are the main stakeholder that participate in this aspect of leadership activity?

5.2 What are the main policy imperatives that frame the external relationship/ interagency/ inter-stakeholder work of school leaders?

5.3 What structures are in place to enable this work?

5.4 What are the expected outcomes of this activity on the part of the different participants?

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6. School leaders' recruitment, preparation and development

School leaders are not born but raised and educated, and as the expectations towards their work are changing rapidly, they need to be able to develop their leadership as well as personal competences on a continuous basis.

The themes/functions in which development should be ensured are outlined above, but school leaders and the educational system need to describe the relevant and appropriate professional and personal competences, and to construct and utilize learning opportunities on a long-term and daily basis. Development opportunities can take a variety of forms, like formal leadership study programmes or more informal networks or teams.

Questions

6.1 What are the regulations and required qualifications concerning progression to becoming school leaders?

6.2 How are school leaders recruited?

6.3 Is equity of gender and ethnicity intended and how is it addressed?

6.4 How do potential leaders gain experience and professional learning opportunities before taking up leadership posts?

6.5 How are leadership competencies developed and maintained through continuous professional development (CPD)?

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Part B: Policy Implications on/for School Leadership in Europe

The following are the most prominent themes that surfaced and were discussed during the PLA:

The recurring tension between autonomy and accountability – with an increased level of both comes a significant change in respect to what is expected of school leaders. These changes reflect educational systems undergoing quite fundamental and often rather drastic adaptations to the way in which they operate.

The general concern about the degree to which School Heads are individually held responsible for all the failings in schools and how they can be personally victimised on occasion. This is linked to an increased emphasis on notions of failure and success in relation to individual schools and school systems. Is this leading to a system whereby shame is decentralised and praise is recentralized? Do head teachers need specific training in how to handle the attention they sometimes receive from, e.g.. the media.

The increased role of politicians and external agencies in the school system which ranges from the soft governance approach by, for example, directly linking school activities and performance to factors like employability to more direct intervention in policy. This is linked to a reduction of resources generally in the system, which is leading to a pressure on school leaders to do more for less.

The concerns around *connections between effectiveness and school leadership* – can we prove this? Should we prove it and what if this connection is not clearly made? In addition, common and agreed definitions of effectiveness are not always available. Many people believe that there is a fundamental link between the level of teaching and learning in a school which is the responsibility of the school leader and the overall quality of the education provided.

The value of *networking and sharing of experience* – a desire to raise standards in school leadership in all countries linked to an awareness of the significant differences that exist across nations in Europe when it comes to school leadership. Lack of information and hard facts in some cases on what school leaders actually do; perception of added value of learning from others in networks like EPNoSL.

Effectiveness should be about more than measuring results in league tables. The rapid and dramatic changes in our societies are leading to dramatic changes in what is required of school leavers – this means that skills and abilities other than those measured in exams are being demanded by society – but is the school ready and able to support this change in emphasis?

Participants noted *various tensions*: between a societal context that is becoming more complex with current economic downturns, an increased level of multiculturalism and a rapid change in the demands placed upon today's schools while at the same time there is *an increasing demand for universal standards and solutions.*

There is a call for improvements in school leadership across all levels of school which will result in the *overall improvement of school systems and not just individual schools*. Improvements in single schools may have value for those already in such schools but will not in any way improve the overall performance of the school system.

The concern for *an increased level of professionalization* – more work needed in clearly identifying the competences and skills that are required by school leaders in today's changing circumstances and finding

ways to make the necessary training and competence development available to school heads. School principals need to recognize the need for them to continue to learn throughout their career – self-development programmes are very important.

The belief that *school leadership should be nurtured at all levels of school activity and as a concrete element in all pre-service training schemes*. This is related to a debate as to whether school leadership competencies should be taught to everyone or only to those who are already appointed as school principals.

An interest in ideas related to *distributed/shared leadership* with the question as to whether this is genuinely a new way of leading or has always been there and is simply a new way of looking at leadership.

Concern for *more equity in the system* both in terms of school leaders reflecting the diverse communities in which most people now live and in addressing the gender imbalance which still persists – the desire for there to be less emphasis on effectiveness and more emphasis in equity. There is a related concern however that moving towards more inclusive systems can sometimes favour those already engaged rather than bringing in the disengaged.

The general concern that *school leaders are under a huge degree of pressure* which is resulting in problems in the system illustrated by *a shortage of head teachers* now in countries like Germany and the UK.

A recurring theme related to *the distinction between activities which are defined as being purely administrative* and less important in the view of many, *to those which are described as more managerial* and untimely *to those which are described as being related to leadership*. These distinctions lead to a situation whereby some argue that purely administrate tasks should be reduced as far as possible allowing the school principal more time for higher order leadership tasks. For others the distinctions are less important.

The role of parents in the school system and how they are involved in discussions related to the changing roles and responsibilities of school leaders.

Leadership unlike management or administration as a concept can be difficult to define – what *exactly does a leader do*? And yet leadership when in place can have a significant impact even if only on conditions which give rise to a more enriching school environment, *sometimes leadership is like beauty – you only know it when you see it.*

Policy conclusions

The overall objective of the PLA is to discuss direct and indirect ways that School Leadership can influence educational outcomes and to derive policy conclusions from this exchange of ideas, research findings, information and experiences. Through a process of discussing current trends and concerns in School Leadership, including how project networking has added value to the process, participants arrived at a better understanding as to how to School Leadership may by a means to improve education and which questions still need to be addressed. Their main conclusions are set out below.

Balance needs to be struck between *school autonomy and accountability*, in cases where both are increasing in the context of extreme changes within the educational system.

Revisit the notion of *school failure and success* and to what extent school heads are blamed for school failings and are not given sufficient praise for successes. Consider communications training for leaders under pressure to respond to attacks from the media.

Review whether *increased interest among politicians and external bodies* in linking school performance to such factors as employability and intervening in school policy is leading to a reduction in resources for leaders to work with.

Come to an *agreement on the operational definition of "effectiveness"* and whether the current evidence supports that effectiveness is linked to leadership and quality education.

Widen the definition of effectiveness beyond what is normally measured in league tables as the school needs to be prepared for new societal demands on skills, abilities and competencies required from students.

Increases in knowledge of own systems is enhanced through *leadership networks*, where good practices and comparisons can be carried out. These activities should be valued and supported.

Place *universal standards and one-size-fits-all solutions in the context of increasing complexity of society* in order to better adapt to these social and economic complexities such as economic downturns and multiculturalism/population flows.

Focus on comprehensive *system-level improvements* to raise general standards long-term rather than limiting reforms and short-term improvements to individual schools.

School Heads need to acknowledge their own needs for *continuing professional development*. The skills and competences required of leaders need to be updated and redefined in clear terms so that training can be effective.

That *leadership involves all levels of school activity should be a feature of pre-service training*; countries should consider whether leadership training should be offered to all school personnel rather than restricting it to School Heads only.

Draw upon previous thinking on *shared leadership* and reflect on how/if the present approach differs.

Continue efforts at *increasing equity* (i.e., gender, ethnicity, social groups) as a partner to effectiveness within school leadership.

Address *reasons behind shortages of school leaders* in some countries. High stress levels have been identified in some cases, but further exploration is needed and ways to reduce excessive burden on leaders.

Consider reducing *(redistributing) administrative tasks of the school leader/head* to allow time for higher order tasks, which appear to be becoming more complex, where relevant.

Study how *parents as stakeholders are involved in discussions related to the roles and responsibility of school leaders* in order to enhance the legitimacy of the system.

Follow the emerging picture of "leadership" – however difficult to grasp and define – by locating *the conditions which give rise to a more enriching school environment*.

Conclusion – School Leadership as a means to improve education

This Peer Learning Activity looked at current trends and issues in School Leadership, within the context of locating strategies for the improvement of educational outcomes and the educational system as a whole. EPNoSL members were able to build upon previous research and praxis, notably findings of the network experts and the perspectives of professionals engaged in school management, drawing upon examples from individual country members.

The understandings built by a selected group of participants on the PLA are demonstrated in the EPNoSL website www.schoolleadership.eu