Improving School Leadership
Policy & Practice in OECD countries

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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 issues of attracting, training and developing the next generation of school leaders.

What brings us together?

Today’s presentation:

Some background on the OECD Improving School Leadership activity

Common challenges in school leadership policy and practice

The policy options identified in our comparative study
Background: The OECD Improving School Leadership activity (2006-08)

An international perspective on school leadership policy and practice

Network of experts

International organisations

Australia  Korea  
Austria   The Netherlands  
Belgium (French) New Zealand  
Belgium (Flanders) Norway  
Chile   Portugal  
Denmark  Slovenia  
Finland  Spain  
France  Sweden  
Hungary United Kingdom (England)  
Ireland United Kingdom (N. Ireland)  
Israel United Kingdom (Scotland)
To provide policy-makers and others with timely analysis to help formulate school leadership policies leading to improved teaching and learning:

**Background: Activity objectives**

- 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
School leadership: the challenges

The role of school leaders has changed dramatically

School autonomy
- "Running a small business"
- Managing human and financial resources
- Adapting the teaching programme

Accountability for outcomes
- A new culture of evaluation
- Strategic planning, assessment, monitoring
- Use of data for improvement

Learning-centred leadership
- New approaches to teaching and learning
- Supporting collaborative teaching practice
- Raising achievement and dealing with diversity

The super principal?
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

Insufficient 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
School leadership: the main challenges

Lack of clarity about the core roles of leadership

Role overload

Insufficient preparation and training

Concerns about the recruitment of future leaders and unattractive working conditions
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)
School leadership: the policy

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
School leadership: the policy

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
School leadership: the policy

(Re)defining school leadership responsibilities

Distributing school leadership

Developing the knowledge and skills of school leaders

Making school leadership a more attractive profession
OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)

- Survey design: 24 countries, 200 schools/country, 20 teachers/school
- Analysis of prevailing roles & styles of school leadership
- Association between leadership styles and teaching & learning environments, e.g:
  - Evaluation and accountability frameworks
  - School climate
  - Teaching approaches
  - Development and support for teachers

Next steps: Filling the data gaps
A ‘Toolkit’ for Policy Makers and Practitioners

- Facilitate interpretation of OECD findings
- Move from recommendations to policy formulation and practice development
- Make connections between OECD findings and users’ own experience and context
Thank you for listening.

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www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership