

## Chapter 2

# PROMOTING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

This chapter discusses the roles and responsibilities of school leaders. Based on data from the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), it presents a profile of today's school principals: their background and education, and the professional tasks they find the most rewarding. The chapter also examines the importance of sharing leadership responsibilities (distributed leadership) and providing guidance to teachers (instructional leadership).



The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that a substantial proportion of students in OECD countries now attends schools that are highly autonomous in different areas of decision making. PISA also finds that high-performing and equitable school systems tend to grant greater autonomy to schools in formulating and using curricula and assessments. In some countries, the main expression of school autonomy is when schools develop and adapt curricula. In others, autonomy is manifested in the management and administration of individual schools, even while, in some cases, education systems are moving towards more centralised governance of curricula and standards. Beyond questions of autonomy, many schools are confronted with increasing social diversity in the classroom, students with special needs, high dropout rates, and relatively large proportions of students who leave school without the basic knowledge and skills necessary to be able to participate in an increasingly competitive global economy.

What schools need to meet these challenges are effective leaders who can make evidence-informed decisions, provide the instructional leadership that teachers need to help all their students succeed in school, and create a collaborative school environment in which teachers take part in school decisions. Analysis of TALIS data finds that in-school relations have a significant impact on teachers' self-efficacy (their confidence in their own ability to teach) and job satisfaction. In 20 countries, teachers who agreed that the staff at their school is provided with opportunities to participate in decision making reported higher self-efficacy scores (OECD, 2014, Table 7.8). An even more uniform and strong relationship is observed with job satisfaction. The ability to participate in decision making at school is significantly related to a strong improvement in teachers' job satisfaction across all countries (OECD, 2014, Table 7.9).

There are four take-away points from the analyses of TALIS data. First, in-school relations are important for teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Second, school leaders should try to focus on encouraging collaborative relationships among teachers and positive relationships between teachers and students in their schools. Third, school leaders who work to provide school staff with opportunities to share in decision making may gain returns in the realm of higher job satisfaction. And fourth, there is little evidence that instructional leadership is associated with higher self-efficacy or job satisfaction among teachers.

### Box 2.1. Promoting teacher leadership in the United States

Teach to Lead is an effort co-led by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Speaking at the annual Teaching and Learning conference in March 2014, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the initiative, aimed at advancing student outcomes by expanding opportunities for teacher leadership – particularly those that allow teachers to stay in the classroom and in the profession they love.

Since December 2014, Teach to Lead has held a series of regional Teacher Leadership Summits to spotlight and advance innovative, teacher-led work in states, districts and schools. The goal of the summits is to bring together educators from across the country to spur meaningful advances in teacher leadership. Educators submitted proposals via [Commit to Lead](#), the online community of Teach to Lead. The proposals could entail scaling existing programmes, creating new programmes or spearheading supportive policies that give teachers more opportunities to lead, particularly while continuing to teach. In these working meetings, participants and supporter organisations (including the Hope Street Group, the National Network of State Teachers of the Year and Teach Plus) have shared resources and collaborated to create action plans in order to realise their leadership ideas. In addition to the summits, Commit to Lead is designed to allow educators to share and collaborate on promising ideas that advance teacher leadership and address pressing problems in education.

Secretary Duncan will report back on the year's work and next steps at the 2015 Teaching and Learning Summit in March.

Source: U.S. Department of Education.

TALIS 2018 provides a wealth of information about the role of principals as school leaders. It also provides some data about the extent to which leadership is distributed in schools, and teachers are given the opportunity to participate in school decisions. However, much of the analysis from TALIS, to date, has focused on principals, which is reflected in this chapter.



The TALIS 2013 survey found that:

- Principals in countries and economies that participated in TALIS have a demanding set of responsibilities. On average, principals spend 41% of their time managing human and material resources, planning, reporting and adhering to regulations.
- In some countries, principals who show high levels of instructional leadership are more likely to report that they use student performance and student evaluation results to develop the school's education goals and programmes, and to report that they have a professional development plan for their school.
- Principals who provide more instructional leadership tend to spend more time on curriculum and teaching-related tasks; in most countries they are more likely to directly observe classroom teaching as part of the formal appraisal of teachers' work.
- Principals who report that leadership is well distributed and who frequently provide instructional leadership also report greater job satisfaction; by contrast, principals who report heavier workloads and a lack of shared work and decision making report less job satisfaction.
- On average across TALIS-participating countries and economies, school principals have 21 years of teaching experience.
- Principals across the countries and economies that participated in TALIS are well educated. Most have completed formal education at the tertiary level, including programmes in school administration, principal training, teacher preparation and/or instructional leadership.

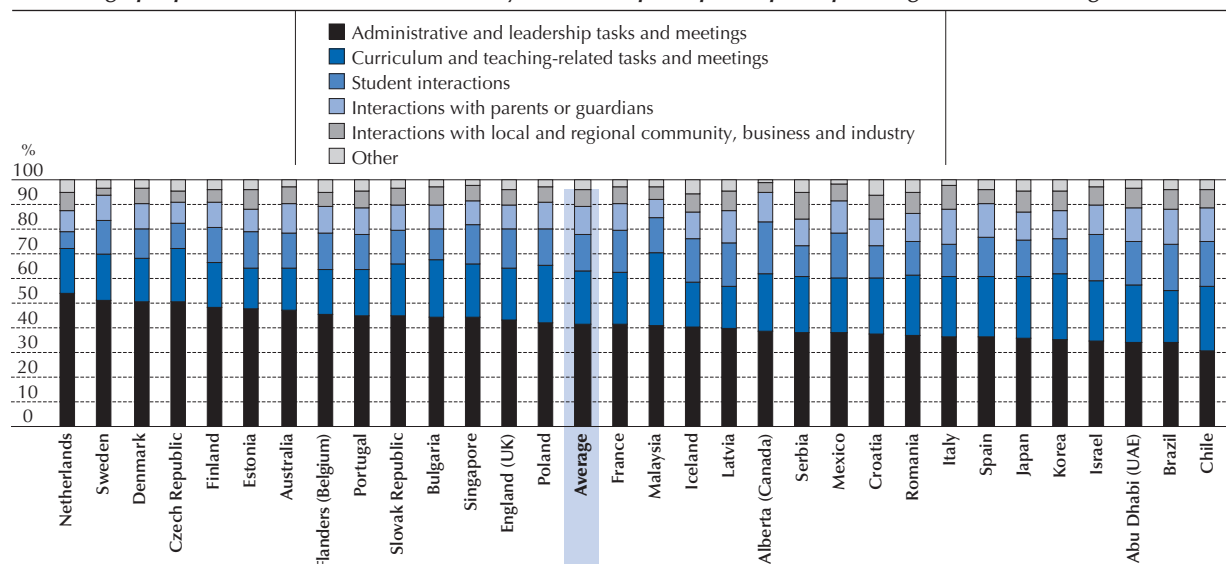
### WHAT SCHOOL PRINCIPALS DO

A strong school leader establishes a climate conducive to teaching and learning and fosters community support for the efforts of the teaching staff. In many countries, concern about improving student achievement results has made strong school leadership a priority (Pont et al., 2008; Branch et al., 2013). The literature devoted to principal leadership is replete with examples of the ways that principals exert leadership, including: defining the school's goals and programme (Grissom et al., 2013) and its professional development plan (OECD, 2013); collaborating with teachers to solve classroom discipline problems (MacNeil and Prater, 1999); observing instruction (Veenman et al., 1998); encouraging teachers to take responsibility for improving their teaching and for student learning; and providing parents or guardians with information about the school and about student performance (Jeynes, 2011).

Figure 2.1

### Principals' working time

Average proportion of time lower secondary education principals report spending on the following activities



Countries are ranked in descending order, based on the percentage of time principals spend on administrative and leadership tasks and meetings.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 3.1.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041231>



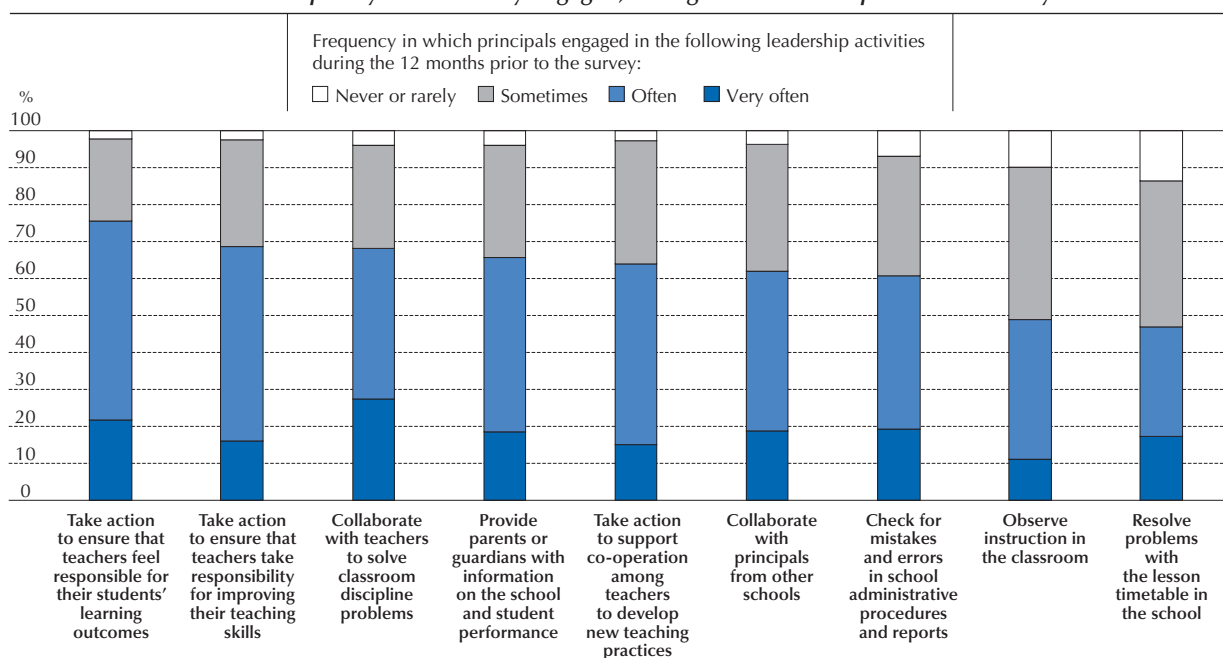
School principals who participated in the TALIS 2013 survey were asked how they distribute their work time. As Figure 2.1 indicates, on average, principals reported that they devote 41% of their time to administrative and leadership tasks and meetings; 21% of their time to curriculum and teaching-related tasks and meetings; 15% to interactions with students; 11% to interactions with parents or guardians; and 7% to interactions with local and regional community, businesses and industries (OECD, 2014, Table 3.1). While the time spent on each of these tasks varies considerably among countries, Figure 2.1 shows that nearly two-thirds of principals' time, on average, is spent on administrative and leadership tasks and on curriculum and teaching-related tasks and meetings. While this can be seen as the main business of the school and main responsibility for principals, it leaves very little time for principals to carry out other tasks.

The TALIS survey asked principals about the leadership activities in which they were engaged during the preceding 12 months. Figure 2.2 presents data about the proportion of principals who reported that they engaged "frequently" in specific leadership activities.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2.2

### Principals' leadership

Percentage of lower secondary education principals who report having engaged in the following leadership activities, and the frequency in which they engaged, during the 12 months prior to the survey



Leadership activities are ranked in descending order, based on the percentage of principals who engaged "often" or "very often" in a specific leadership activity during the 12 months prior to the survey.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Tables 3.2 and 3.2.Web.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041250>

Among the most challenging of a teacher's responsibilities is maintaining a productive and orderly environment in which he or she can teach and students can learn (see, for example, MacNeil and Prater, 1999). Students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach if students are unruly. In fact, results from PISA show that classroom climate is closely related to student learning outcomes.

Collaboration between principals and teachers to solve classroom discipline problems varies significantly across countries. Malaysia and Romania are on one end of the spectrum: in these countries, more than 90% of principals reported frequent collaboration with teachers to solve disciplinary problems. Australia, Estonia, Iceland, Japan, the Netherlands and England (United Kingdom) are at the other end of the spectrum, where more than half of principals (58%-72%) reported infrequent collaboration with teachers to solve classroom discipline problems (OECD, 2014, Table 3.2). The patterns reported here may reflect differences in disciplinary issues among countries rather than differences in the degree to which principals focus on disciplinary matters.



In addition to the help principals may provide in solving disciplinary problems in the classroom, principals observe instruction and give teachers feedback based on their observations. On average, nearly half (49%) of school leaders reported that they frequently observe instruction in the classroom. Based on evidence from a programme for training Dutch principals in coaching skills, Veenman et al. (1998) show, among other things, that principal coaching helped to strengthen teacher autonomy, enabling teachers to assess the effectiveness of their own teaching and to formulate plans for improving it. The result of better teaching is better student learning.

Teachers must also keep their knowledge and practice up to date. By encouraging teachers to learn from one another, principals help teachers to remain current in their practice and to develop more collaborative practices with their colleagues at school. Principals were asked about taking action to encourage co-operation among teachers to develop new teaching practices. As Figure 2.2 indicates, 64% of principals reported taking such action frequently (ranging from 34% in Japan to 98% in Malaysia), on average (see also Table 3.2.Web). The largest proportions of principals (between 80% and 98%) who reported that they frequently encourage such co-operation among their teachers are observed in Chile, Malaysia, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic and Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates). By contrast, in Denmark, Estonia, Japan, the Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium), more than half of principals reported that they never, rarely or only sometimes encourage such co-operation. It would be interesting to learn whether this is simply a lack of action on the part of principals in these countries or whether such action is simply unnecessary because teachers in these schools already enjoy a culture of co-operation.

Students' achievement depends on the experience and skills of their teachers (Jepsen and Rivkin, 2009; Huang and Moon, 2009; Biniaminov and Glasman, 1983; Veldman and Brophy, 1974). Principals can play an important part in ensuring that teachers assume responsibility for improving their teaching skills. Figure 2.2 shows that, on average, most principals (69%) do so (OECD, 2014, Table 3.2). This proportion ranges from 39% in Japan to 95% in Malaysia. The largest proportions are found in Bulgaria (88%), Chile (88%), Malaysia (95%), Romania (85%), Serbia (82%), Singapore (84%) and Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) (93%). More than half of principals in Finland (60%), Japan (61%), Norway (53%), Sweden (56%) and Flanders (Belgium) (59%) reported that they never, rarely or only sometimes ensure that teachers assume responsibility for improving their teaching skills.

Many principals also remind teachers about the importance of taking responsibility for what their students learn. On average, 76% of principals (ranging from 33% in Japan to 100% in Malaysia) reported they frequently take such action (OECD, 2014, Table 3.2).

Student success is enhanced when teachers' efforts are complemented by support from parents (Jeynes, 2011). Parents play an important role in supporting the school and the success of their children; but to do so effectively, they must have accurate information from and about the school. The responsibility for providing parents or guardians with information about the school and student performance sometimes rests with the principal. As seen in Figure 2.2, two-thirds of principals, on average, reported that they provide this information frequently.

Identifying and correcting errors in administrative procedures or reports and resolving problems with the school's schedule of lessons are two of the many administrative tasks that principals perform. On average, 61% of principals said that they check frequently for mistakes and errors in school administrative procedures and reports. On average, slightly less than half of principals (47%) said that they frequently resolve problems with the lesson schedule in the school. Both of these administrative tasks are important, yet in some countries principals are freed from this administrative burden. It would be interesting to learn how and whether these tasks are distributed to other members of the school staff in these countries.

Principals can learn from and support one another through collaboration. On average, 62% of principals reported that they frequently collaborate with their peers in other schools (OECD, 2014, Table 3.2). Large proportions of principals in Finland (82%), Malaysia (89%), the Netherlands (86%), Romania (87%) and Serbia (96%) reported that they frequently collaborate with principals from other schools. In contrast, significant proportions of principals in Brazil (10%), Chile (18%), Israel (8%) and Spain (9%) reported that they never or rarely collaborate with principals in other schools.

### SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES

Principals are increasingly responsible for such disparate tasks as appointing, hiring, suspending and dismissing teachers; determining the allocation of school resources; approving student admission; establishing the school's disciplinary and assessment policies; and determining which courses the school offers, course content, and instructional resources.



Precisely because principals' work has become so complex, some of these responsibilities should be more broadly shared with others, both inside and outside the school (Schleicher, 2012). And as TALIS shows, teachers tend to report a greater sense of self-efficacy and more job satisfaction when they are given the opportunity to participate in decision making at school.

TALIS calculates the percentage of principals who have significant responsibility for such tasks and who also reported that they share some of these responsibilities with others (OECD, 2014, Table 3.4). When a principal reports that the responsibility for a task is shared, this means that the principal and other members of the school management team, teachers who are not part of the school management team, a school's governing board, or a local or national authority participate in decision making.

The data reveal a wide variation among countries in the extent to which principals share responsibility for various tasks (OECD, 2014, Table 3.4). For example, 75% of principals or more in Croatia, Denmark, and the Netherlands reported that they share responsibility for appointing teachers while 20% of principals or less in Bulgaria, France, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Mexico so reported (the average across countries is 39%). More than half of the principals in Croatia, Denmark, the Netherlands, Serbia and England (United Kingdom) reported that they share responsibility for dismissing or suspending teachers from employment; but in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, Spain and Sweden, 20% of principals or less so reported (the average across countries is 29%). Far smaller proportions of principals reported that they share responsibility for establishing teachers' salaries and pay scales (14% on average) or for determining teachers' salary increases (18% on average). Only in Latvia and England (United Kingdom) did more than half of principals indicate that they share responsibility for establishing teachers' salaries and pay scales. Similarly, only in Estonia, Latvia and England (United Kingdom) did more than half of principals report that they share responsibility for determining salary increases for teachers.

On average, nearly half of principals (47%) reported that they share responsibility for deciding on budget allocations within the school. In Chile, Korea, Mexico, Romania and Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), however, fewer than one in four principals reported this. In contrast, more than three in four principals in Denmark and Latvia reported that they share this responsibility.

In general, the majority of principals reported sharing responsibility with regard to managing student discipline policies (61% on average) and assessment policies (52% on average). Many principals reported sharing responsibility for tasks related to choosing which learning materials are used (45%), determining course content (35%) and deciding which courses are offered (52%).

The variations in the extent to which particular responsibilities are shared are likely to reflect both the policy contexts in which principals work and principals' individual decisions about how they delegate responsibility. Schools may have autonomy in some areas but not in others. For example, teachers may be appointed by principals in some contexts, but salaries and salary increases may be determined by collective agreements negotiated outside the local school.

More than one in three principals (37%) reported sharing responsibility for approving students for admission to the school. This is especially common in the Netherlands, where more than 80% of principals reported so, while less than 20% of principals in Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Poland and Sweden did.

### **Distributed leadership**

In addition to looking at the tasks that a principal may or may not share with colleagues, TALIS 2013 also asked principals about whether there was a collaborative culture in the school for making decisions. When school decisions involve not only the principal but others in the school who do not occupy the formal post of principal, including other members of the school's management team, vice-principals, and classroom teachers, this can be referred to as *distributed leadership* or *distributed decision making* (see, for example, Harris, 2008; Harris, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2009; Smylie et al., 2007).

Figure 2.3 shows how principals responded to statements that describe the collaborative culture in their schools (some of which were used to create an index of distributed leadership; see Box 2.2 below). On average across the countries and economies that participated in TALIS, more than nine in ten principals agreed that there is a collaborative culture in their schools, which is characterised by mutual support, or that the school provides staff with opportunities to participate in decision making. Along the same lines, only about one in three principals agreed that they make important decisions on their own. This would indicate that, according to school leaders, most schools in TALIS-participating countries and economies enjoy some level of distributed leadership for decision making.

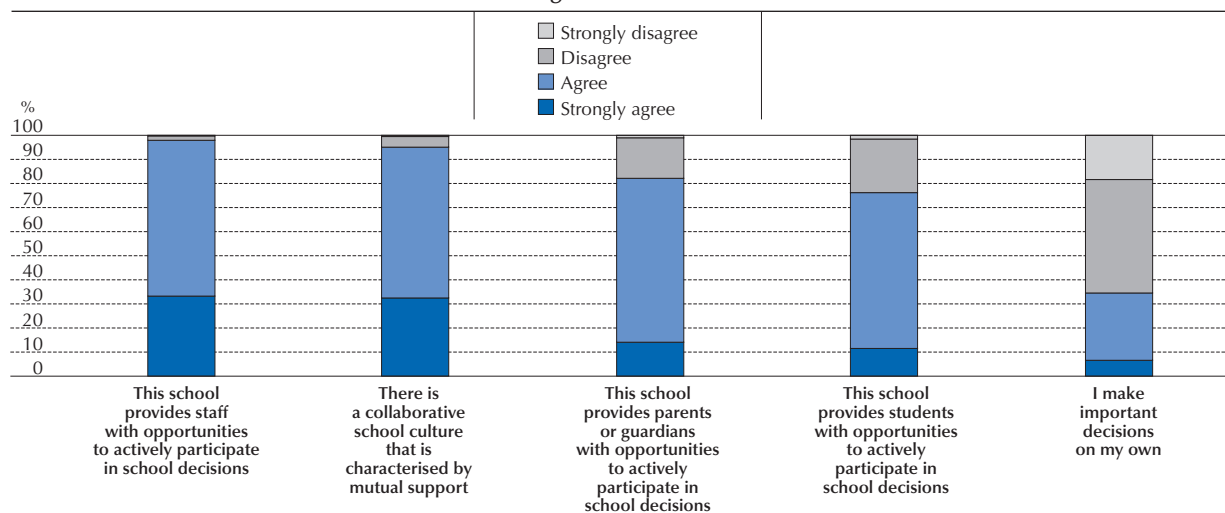




Figure 2.3


### School decisions and collaborative school culture

Percentage of lower secondary education principals who “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree” or “strongly agree” with the following statement about their school



Items are ranked in descending order, based on the percentage of principals who “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement about their school.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 3.35.Web.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041288>

#### Box 2.2. Description of the principal distributed leadership index

To measure distributed leadership, TALIS asked principals how strongly they agreed or disagreed with these statements regarding decision-making responsibilities at their school:

- This school provides staff with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions.
- This school provides parents or guardians with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions.
- This school provides students with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions.

Source: OECD (2014), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en>.

TALIS finds a consistent relationship between distributed leadership and school climate. Principals in 23 countries reported using more distributed leadership when working in schools with a positive school climate, characterised by mutual respect, openness and sharing among colleagues (OECD, 2014, Table 3.7). Sharing decision-making responsibilities might be easier in such a climate or, conversely, might help to develop such a school climate; TALIS data do not suggest the direction of the relationship. Moreover, in just over half (17) of TALIS countries, principals who reported more distributed leadership also tended to report greater job satisfaction (OECD, 2014, Table 3.19). If governments – and school principals themselves – want to see greater job satisfaction among principals, then they might encourage more distribution of leadership in schools.

The TALIS data confirm that the job of principal encompasses a wide range of complex tasks and responsibilities. When comparing the data across countries, the extent of principals’ participation in various administrative and leadership activities is found to differ significantly, either by choice, circumstance or authority. However, most principals in all countries work to develop their school’s education goals and programmes; in some countries, virtually all principals do. A smaller proportion – but still sizable in many countries – works to prepare their schools’ professional development plans. Principals are aided in both of these endeavours by the increasing availability of student performance and evaluation data. The extent to which principals share responsibility for tasks or decisions also varies by country as well as by the nature of the specific task or decision. TALIS data could be used to support the development of standards for the profession and to help identify the kinds of initial training or professional development activities that might be required for prospective and current principals.



## DEFINING SCHOOL GOALS, PROGRAMMES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

With greater availability of and access to data concerning schools' and students' performance come growing demands for accountability (Vanhoof et al., 2014). Today, more than at any time in the past, principals are responsible for developing their school's education goals and programmes, and for using student performance and results of student evaluations to develop those goals and programmes.

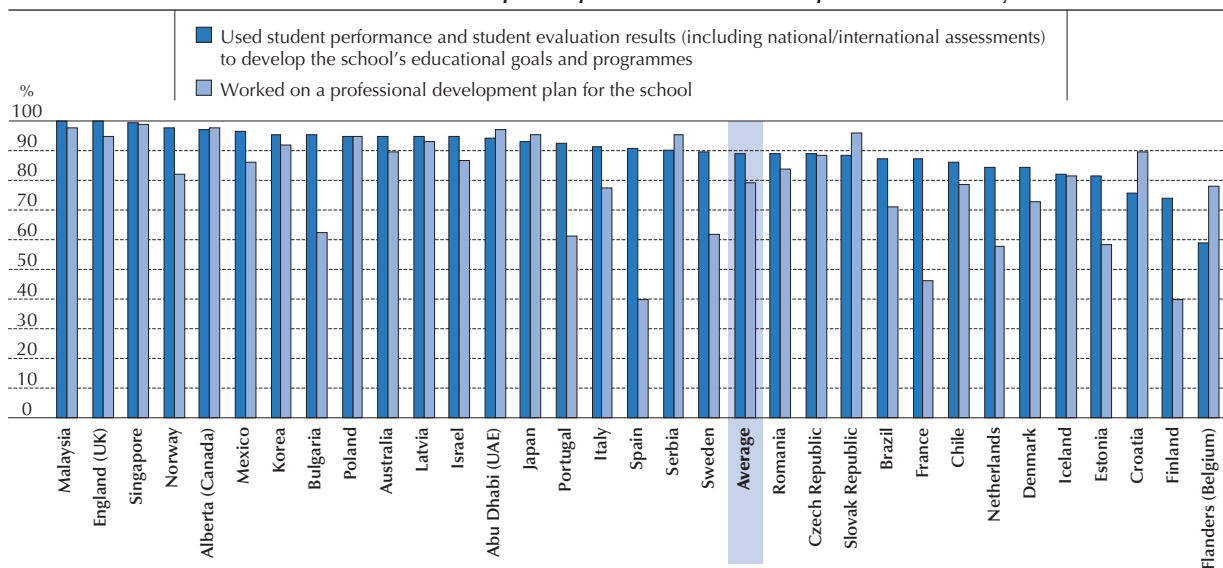
Data about principals' participation in activities related to school development plans appear in Figure 2.4 (OECD, 2014, Table 3.3). Nearly nine in ten principals, on average across TALIS-participating countries and economies, reported using student performance and student evaluation results, including national or international assessments, to develop the school's education goals and programmes.

In addition to developing their school's goals and programmes, principals are increasingly responsible for establishing a professional development plan for their school. Although developing this plan is an important facet of a principal's work, the proportion of principals who reported that they work on such a plan (79%) is nearly 10 percentage points smaller, on average, than the proportion of principals who reported that they use student performance and student evaluation results to develop their school's education goals and programmes. Figure 2.4 shows that this pattern is found in most countries.

Figure 2.4

### Principals' participation in a school development plan

Percentage of lower secondary education principals who report having engaged in the following activities related to a school development plan in the 12 months prior to the survey



Countries are ranked in descending order, based on the percentage of principals who used student performance and student evaluation results (including national/international assessments) to develop the school's educational goals and programmes.

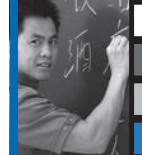
Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 3.3.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041269>

## PROVIDING DIRECTION TO THE SCHOOL AND SUPPORTING TEACHERS: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Schools have multiple responsibilities, the most important of which is to equip students with the knowledge and dispositions they need to assume the responsibilities that come with adult citizenship. Improving student achievement, while always an important goal of schooling, has become more prominent as adults are now required to compete in a global economy. Instructional leadership is evident in much of the work that principals do, including ensuring that the goals of the school are well articulated, that the school's environment is one that is safe and conducive to learning, and that teachers' efforts are focused on instruction and on improving their own practice. Box 2.3 discusses how instructional leadership is measured in TALIS.





### Box 2.3. Description of the instructional leadership index

To measure instructional leadership, TALIS asked principals to indicate how frequently they engaged in the following activities in their school during the 12 months prior to the survey. Response options ranged from “never or rarely” to “very often”.

- I took actions to support co-operation among teachers to develop new teaching practices.
- I took actions to ensure that teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching skills.
- I took actions to ensure that teachers feel responsible for their students’ learning outcomes.

**Source:** OECD (2014), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en>.

Principals are required to provide direction for the school and ensure that teachers’ appraisals give teachers the tools with which they can be effective teachers. Principals can fulfil these responsibilities in part by using student performance and evaluation results to develop education goals and programmes and by working on a professional development plan for the school. The former is about establishing the school’s focus and aligning its programme with those goals; the latter is concerned with ensuring that the school’s staff has the capacity to reach the goals by implementing the school’s programmes.

Principals can also ensure that the outcomes of teacher appraisals are meaningful. In six countries, principals who reported high levels of instructional leadership tended to be more likely to report that they use student performance and student evaluation results to develop the school’s education goals and programmes (OECD, 2014, Table 3.16). Similarly, in 13 countries, principals who reported higher levels of instructional leadership are more likely to have reported that they are working on a professional development plan for their school. In addition, in Australia, Denmark, Israel, the Netherlands, Sweden and Flanders [Belgium], principals who reported higher levels of instructional leadership tended to report that they spend more time on curriculum and teaching-related tasks (OECD, 2014, Table 3.17). And in 20 countries, principals who reported higher levels of instructional leadership were more likely to report that they directly observe classroom teaching as part of the formal appraisal of teachers’ work (OECD, 2014, Table 3.16). What this shows is that principals who reported higher levels of instructional leadership also reported that they spend more time on tasks directly related to teaching, learning and the development of their teachers’ practices.

TALIS data also indicate that instructional leadership is related to some of the actions taken following teacher appraisal. Principals have a range of actions they can take following an appraisal of a teacher’s performance, including developing a plan for improvement, appointing a mentor or imposing negative sanctions.

In nine countries, principals who reported higher levels of instructional leadership more frequently reported that a development or training plan is created for teachers following an appraisal (OECD, 2014, Table 3.16). Similarly, in ten countries, the association between instructional leadership and appointing a mentor to help the teacher improve is positive.

Higher levels of instructional leadership do not appear to be related to the likelihood of imposing material sanctions, such as reducing a teacher’s salary, after teacher appraisals. In only five countries is instructional leadership related to the likelihood of making a change in a teacher’s work responsibilities after the teacher is appraised (OECD, 2014, Table 3.16).

In six countries, higher levels of instructional leadership are associated with changes in the likelihood of a teacher’s career advancement after the teacher is appraised. Only in Bulgaria, Malaysia and Spain is the dismissal of a teacher or non-renewal of a contract following a teacher appraisal more likely to be reported by principals who also reported higher levels of instructional leadership; the reverse is observed in Chile (OECD, 2014, Table 3.16).

### **Instructional leadership and school climate**

In most countries and economies that participated in TALIS, the majority of teachers work in environments with a positive professional climate. Data from the principal questionnaire indicate that principals share this feeling of a positive climate. TALIS examines the relationship between instructional leadership and principals’ reports on the factors that contribute to school climate, such as shortages of school resources (materials and personnel), delinquency in the school, the degree of mutual respect, and the proportion of administrative and support staff in the school (OECD, 2014, Table 3.18).



In 17 countries, principals who reported higher levels of instructional leadership tended to report that they work in schools that have more positive school climates, characterised by high levels of mutual respect. As was noted earlier, this could mean either that the climate of mutual respect already existing in a school makes instructional leadership easier or that the instructional leadership exerted by the principals promotes a climate of mutual respect. Either way, the school benefits. The other school climate variables examined do not appear to have consistent relationships with principals' instructional leadership.

### PRINCIPALS' WORK EXPERIENCE

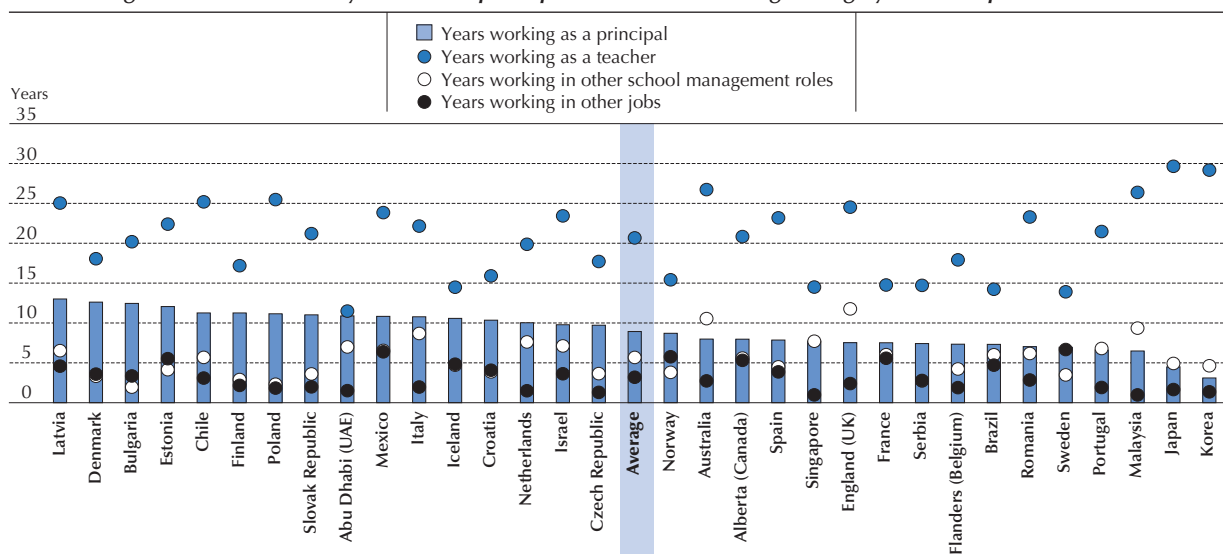
Regardless of the level or type of education that a principal might have attained, there is sometimes no substitute for experience. No amount of formal education can prepare a person for some of the situations that might be encountered in school, and these experiences can shape a principal's behaviour and actions.

Figure 2.5 provides evidence about the work experience that principals bring to their responsibilities (OECD, 2014, Table 3.12). The data indicate that across TALIS-participating countries and economies, school principals have an average of 9 years of experience in the role, ranging from an average of 3 years in Korea to 13 years in Denmark and Latvia. Comparatively large proportions of the principals in Korea (47%) and Portugal (39%) have less than 3 years of experience in the role. Bulgaria, Chile, Estonia and Italy are at the other end of the spectrum, with approximately one in five of their principals having more than 20 years of experience as principal.

Figure 2.5

### Work experience of principals

Percentage of lower secondary education principals with the following average years of experience in each role



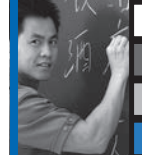
Countries are ranked in descending order, based on the years of working experience as a principal.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 3.12.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041364>

School principals bring a variety of prior experiences to their roles as principal, including working in other school-management roles, working as teachers and experience in other jobs. On average, lower secondary school principals have spent 6 years in other management roles, ranging from 2 years (Bulgaria and Poland) to 12 years (England [United Kingdom]). TALIS data confirm that experience as a principal is typically built upon a foundation of teaching experience. On average, principals have 21 years of teaching experience.

Leading and teaching are both demanding responsibilities, and principals' teaching obligations vary widely among countries (OECD, 2014, Table 3.13). At one end of the spectrum are nine countries in which more than 90% of principals are employed full time (90% of their time) as principals and have no teaching responsibilities. At the other end are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Malaysia, and the Slovak Republic, where 90% or more of full-time principals must balance their work as both principals and teachers. While principals who must also work as teachers have many extra tasks to accomplish, retaining some teaching responsibilities also keeps them closer to the core job of the school.



These principals are able to maintain a different kind of relationship with students – and possibly with the teaching staff – and can even test some of the policies they are trying to enact at the wider school level.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PRINCIPALS

The application of specialised knowledge is one of the hallmarks of professionalism (Goode, 1969; Larson, 1977; Epstein and Hundert, 2002; Gerrard, 2012). School leaders, as professionals, acknowledge their need for further development of their skills and actively engage in such activities. Figure 2.6 provides data about the percentage of principals who participated in a professional network, mentoring or research activity; courses, conferences or observation visits; or other types of professional development activities in the 12 months prior to the survey (OECD, 2014, Table 3.14). On average across the countries and economies that participated in TALIS, principals spent 20 days participating in a professional network, mentoring or research activity; 13 days in courses, conferences or observation visits; and 10 days in other types of professional development activities.

Figure 2.6


#### Principals' recent professional development

Participation rates and average number of days of professional development reported to be undertaken by lower secondary education principals in the 12 months prior to the survey

	Percentage of principals who participated in the following professional development activities in the 12 months prior to the survey	Average number of days of participation among those who participated
Percentage of principals who participated in courses, conferences or observation visits	83%	13
Percentage of principals who participated in a professional network, mentoring or research activity	51%	20
Percentage of principals who participated in other types of professional development activities	34%	10

Items are ranked in descending order, based on the percentage of principals participating in professional development activities in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 3.14.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041383>

As a consequence of school-improvement efforts, it is increasingly common for professionals in education to participate in collaborative professional learning activities, where professionals work together to examine their practice and acquire new knowledge (DuFour, 2004). The proportions of principals across TALIS-participating countries and economies who have engaged in professional networks, mentoring or research activities during the 12 months prior to the survey and the average numbers of days spent by those who participated vary considerably. Small proportions of principals in the Czech Republic (28%), Portugal (11%), Romania (29%), Serbia (21%) and Spain (28%) reported that they had participated in a professional network, mentoring or research activity during the preceding 12 months, in contrast to the large proportions of principals in Australia (84%), the Netherlands (87%) and Singapore (93%) who reported the same.

The amount of time spent on these activities varies as well. For example, in 11 countries, principals spent fewer than 10 days on such activities. However, the proportions of principals in these 11 countries who were engaged in these activities – even for a short amount of time – ranged from 42% in Sweden to 84% in Australia.

Australia provides an interesting example of how to develop a standard for the role of principal that takes into account the overarching goals of schooling and the cultural context in which schooling occurs (Box 2.4). Adopting such a standard could, over time, help to elevate the status of the principal and provide guidance on principals' preparation, conduct and professional development.

The percentages of principals who participated in courses, conferences or observation visits ranged from 54% in France to 99% in Singapore. For other types of professional development activities, percentages ranged from 15% in Bulgaria to 58% in Malaysia. The range of the average number of days spent in each activity was modest, from an average of 4 days (France) to 37 days (Brazil) in courses, conferences or observation visits, and from 4 days (Australia, Croatia, Finland, Japan and England [United Kingdom]) to 37 days (Mexico) for other types of professional development activities. While participation in professional development is generally supported for school leaders and teachers alike, spending 37 days away from school each year attending courses or conferences or making observation visits may prove to be excessive, given a principal's busy schedule.

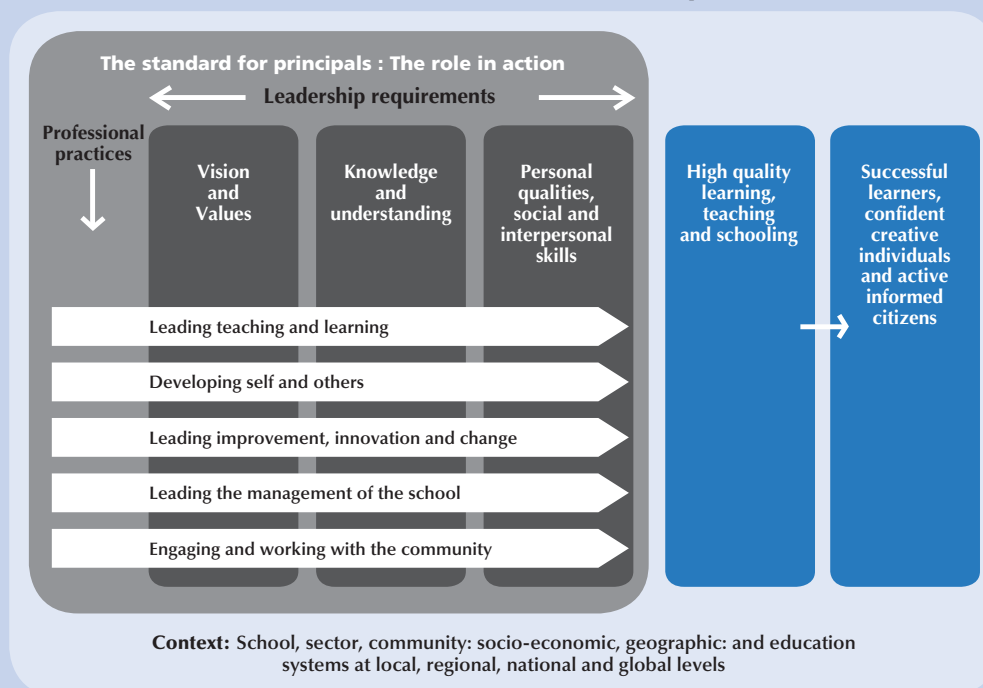


### Box 2.4. Australia's approach to school leadership and its National Professional Standard for Principals

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership was created in 2010 to promote excellence in the teaching and school leadership profession. A public, independent institution supported by the Ministry of Education, its role is to develop and maintain national professional standards for teaching and school leadership, implement an agreed system of national accreditation of teachers based on those standards, and foster high-quality professional development for teachers and school leaders.

The National Professional Standard for Principals, introduced in July 2011, is based on three requirements for leadership: vision and values; knowledge and comprehension; and personal qualities, and social and communication skills. These are made manifest in five areas of professional practice: leading teaching-learning processes; developing self and others; leading improvement, innovation and change; leading school management; and engaging and working with the community.

#### Excellence in school leadership



Source: Adapted from Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2011).

Participation in professional development activities depends upon a variety of factors, including the availability of opportunities that are perceived to be relevant, the availability of time and other resources that would permit someone to take advantage of those opportunities, employers who are supportive, and the necessary qualifications to be able to benefit from the opportunities available. Figure 2.7 looks at the barriers to participating in professional development activities, according to principals' reports.

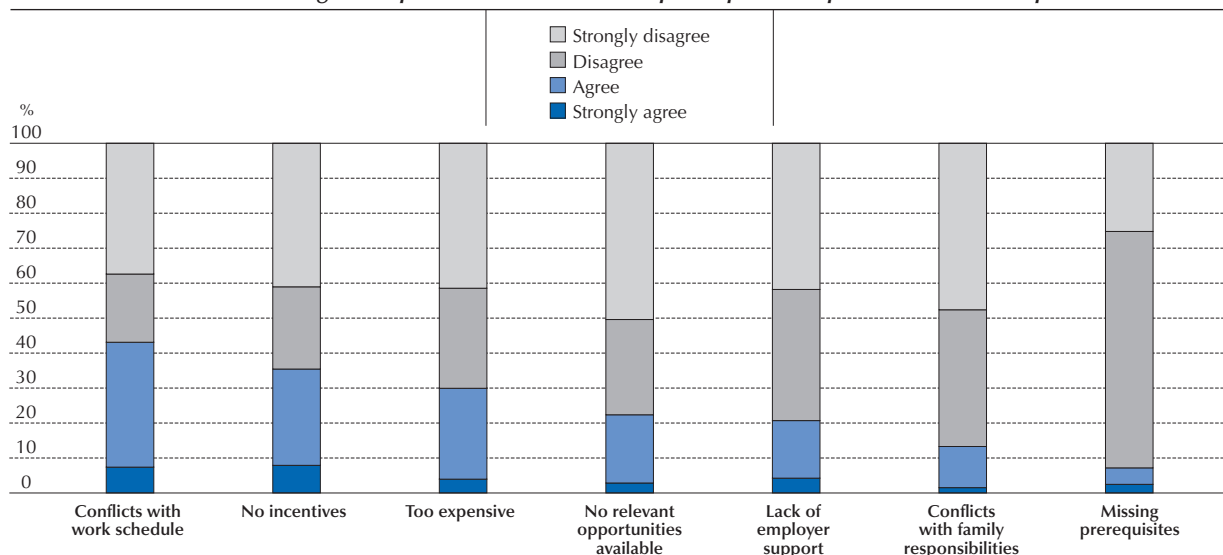
In 13 countries, more than half of school leaders agreed that their work schedule conflicted with opportunities for professional development. Among these countries, in Australia, Japan, Korea, Sweden and Alberta (Canada), more than 60% of school leaders agreed with this statement. On average across all participating countries and economies, 43% of principals reported that "conflicts with work schedule" prevent them from participating in professional development activities, while 13% reported that "conflicts with family responsibilities" prevent them from doing so.



Figure 2.7

### Barriers to principals' participation in professional development

Percentage of lower secondary education principals who “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree” or “strongly agree” that the following items present barriers to their participation in professional development



Items are ranked in descending order, based on the percentage of principals in lower secondary education who “strongly agree” or “agree” that the item presents a barrier to their participation in professional development.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Tables 3.15 and 3.15.Web.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041402>

Principals' engagement in professional development activities is an indicator of the value principals, and the people who employ principals, place on maintaining and developing professional knowledge. As mentioned earlier, because principals can have an impact on student achievement, improving the quality of school leadership is more important than improving the quality of a single teacher's practice (Branch et al., 2013). It is thus important to stimulate interest in and opportunities for continuing professional development for principals and to remove the personal and professional barriers to participating in those activities.

### PRINCIPALS' JOB SATISFACTION

Two aspects related to principals' job satisfaction were measured in TALIS: one is their satisfaction with their current work environment; the second is their satisfaction with the profession. Because the two were highly correlated, analyses were performed using the overall measure of principal job satisfaction, which combined these two aspects. Box 2.5 describes how TALIS measures job satisfaction.

Figure 2.8 looks at principals' reported levels of job satisfaction by country and, as indicated in Box 2.5, divides the responses in terms of principals' satisfaction with the profession as compared with their satisfaction with their current work environment (see also OECD, 2014, Table 3.26.Web). It is interesting to note that, across countries, there is more variation in principals' feelings about their profession than in their reported satisfaction with their schools. Across countries, around nine in ten principals are satisfied with their jobs overall and generally feel positive about their work environment at school. Moreover, when questioned about the profession of principal, in general, more than 80% of principals in all countries feel confident in their choice of career and do not regret having become a principal.

TALIS data were analysed to determine the relationship between instructional leadership and distributed leadership and principals' job satisfaction (OECD, 2014, Table 3.19). In 20 countries, principals who reported higher levels of instructional leadership tended to report that they are more satisfied with their job, while in 17 countries, principals who reported higher levels of distributed leadership tended to report that they are more satisfied with their jobs.

Additional factors affecting principals' job satisfaction were explored using multiple regression analyses with principals' job satisfaction as the dependent variable and demographic background (OECD, 2014, Table 3.20) and school background (OECD, 2014, Table 3.21) as independent variables.





### Box 2.5. Description of the principal job satisfaction indices

Two aspects of principals' job satisfaction were measured in TALIS: satisfaction with the current work environment and satisfaction with the profession. Specifically, principals were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the following statements as applied to their job. Response options ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The first aspect (satisfaction with the current work environment) was measured with the following statements:

- I enjoy working at this school.
- I would recommend my school as a good place to work.
- I am satisfied with my performance in this school.
- All in all, I am satisfied with my job.

The second aspect (satisfaction with the profession) was measured with the following statements:

- The advantages of this profession clearly outweigh the disadvantages.
- If I could decide again, I would still choose this job/position.
- I regret that I decided to become a principal.

Note that because these two aspects of job satisfaction are highly related to each other and perhaps overlap (see OECD, 2014, Table 3.37.Web), the overall job satisfaction scores are used in the analyses rather than the scores for each construct separately.

**Source:** OECD (2014), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en>.

TALIS examines the relationship between job satisfaction and school characteristics, such as school locality, school type (public/private, source of funding), school size (number of staff and number of students) and student composition (percentage of students whose first language is different from the language of instruction, percentage of students with special needs, and percentage of students from socio-economically disadvantaged homes) (OECD, 2014, Table 3.21). While in most countries these variables were not related to job satisfaction, in a few countries some relationships emerged. For example, in Estonia, Alberta (Canada) and England (United Kingdom), principals working in schools with larger proportions of students with special needs tended to report less job satisfaction. The reverse is true in Australia and the Czech Republic. Furthermore, in Australia, principals working in schools with larger proportions of students from disadvantaged homes reported less job satisfaction. Policy makers in these countries might want to consider the support that they are providing to principals in these more challenging schools.

Analyses were also conducted to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and principals' reports of shortages of school resources (materials and personnel), delinquency in the school, the degree to which the school climate is characterised by mutual respect, and the proportion of administrative and support staff in the school (OECD, 2014, Table 3.22). The most pronounced relationship found was between having a school climate of mutual respect and principals' job satisfaction. Mutual respect is positively associated with principals' job satisfaction in all TALIS-participating countries and economies except Iceland, Latvia and Sweden. This means that principals tend to be satisfied with their job when there is a high level of mutual respect in school.

Given that between one in five and one in two principals reported resource shortages in the schools in which they work, it was surprising that, in many countries, those needs are not related to principals' job satisfaction.

The data allow for a further examination of the relationship between principals' job satisfaction and nine potential barriers to a principal's effectiveness (OECD, 2014, Table 3.23). These barriers include inadequate school budget and resources, government regulations and policy, teachers' absences, lack of parent involvement, teachers' career-based wage system, a lack of opportunities and support for principals' professional development, a lack of opportunities and support for teachers' professional development, a heavy workload and high level of responsibility, and a lack of shared leadership with other school staff members.

The one factor most commonly related to principals' job satisfaction is a heavy workload and high level of responsibility. In 14 countries, principals who identified heavier workloads as a barrier to their effectiveness also reported less job satisfaction. In nine countries, those principals who reported less distributed leadership among other school staff members also reported less job satisfaction.

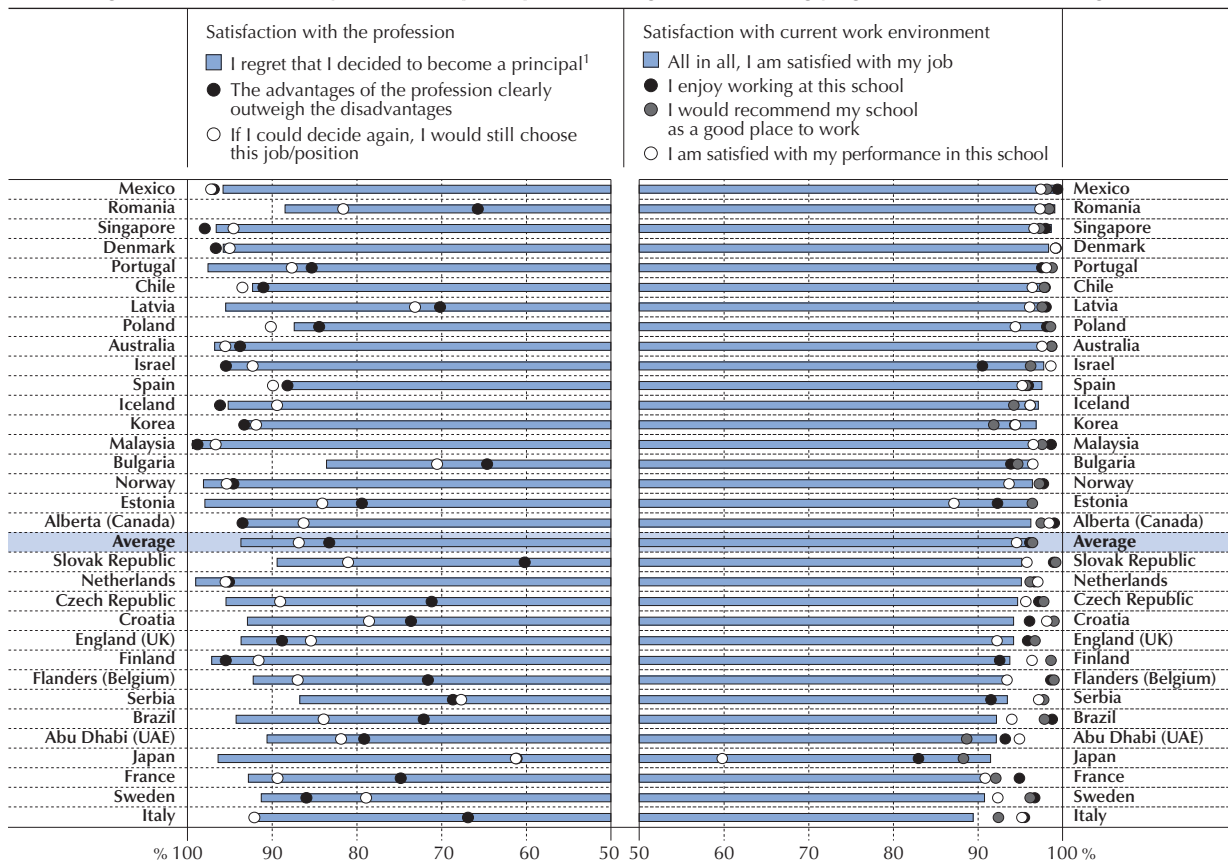




Figure 2.8

## Principals' job satisfaction

Percentage of lower secondary education principals who "agree" or "strongly agree" with the following statements



1. For the item "I regret that I decided to become a principal", the percentage represents the principals who answered "strongly disagree" or "disagree" because of the nature of the question.

Countries are ranked in descending order, based on the percentage of principals who "agree" or "strongly agree" that all in all, they are satisfied with their job.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 3.26.Web.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041421>

Few factors are consistently related to principals' job satisfaction across countries. One that is, however, is an atmosphere of mutual respect within the school. The most common factor affecting job satisfaction is, not surprisingly, a heavy workload. It is difficult to report with confidence which other factors are most strongly related to principals' job satisfaction when, for instance, larger proportions of students from disadvantaged homes or of students with special needs correlate with greater job satisfaction for some and less job satisfaction for others. Further investigation into the reasons behind these inconsistent attitudes might reveal significant differences in the support principals receive in more challenging circumstances.

### WHO ARE TODAY'S SCHOOL LEADERS?

Who are the individuals who assume responsibility for such an extensive and significant range of tasks? What formal preparation and experience have they had? What do they do to grow or develop their professional practice? By learning more about the background, skills and experience of school leaders and examining the tasks that are required of them, countries can better understand where gaps in skills or experience might lie.

### Age and gender of principals

The profile of school principals is relatively consistent across countries (Figure 2.9). Although principals are often former teachers – a profession in which, on average across TALIS-participating countries and economies, 68% of all teachers are female – the proportion of female principals is generally smaller than the proportion of male principals. Countries vary considerably, however, in how their principals are initially trained and how they later develop their professional skills.

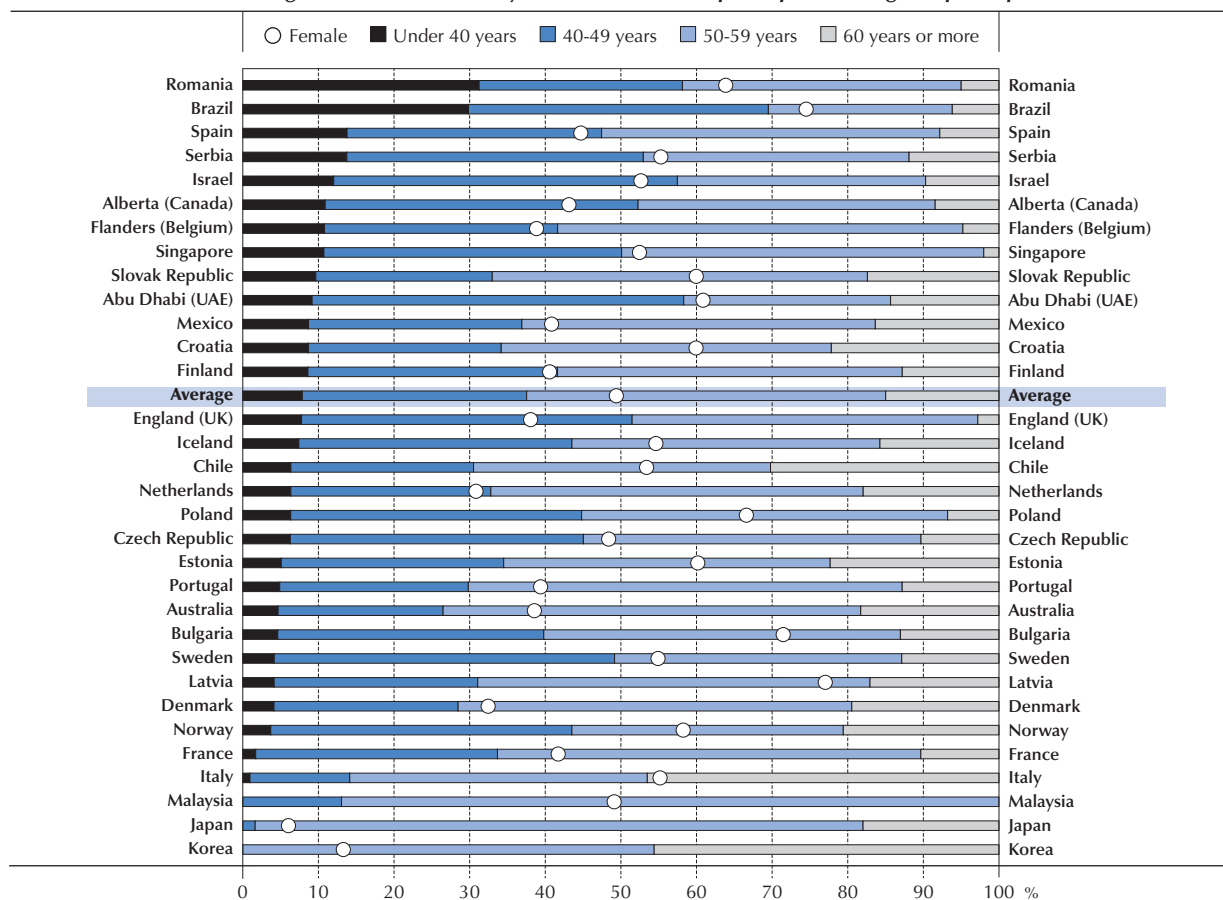


In some countries, many principals reported that they were offered little, no or weak preparation for assuming their role as school leaders. In addition, in many countries, because of a lack of opportunity, interest, time, prerequisites, incentives or encouragement, few principals participate in professional networks, mentoring or research activities. Principals also spend relatively little time in courses, conferences or observation visits. Given the importance of school leadership, countries may want to focus more on the preparation offered to prospective principals and on continuing professional development once individuals are appointed as principals.

Figure 2.9

### Gender and age distribution of principals

Percentage of lower secondary education female principals and age of principals



Countries are ranked in descending order, based on the percentage of principals who are under 40 years old.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 3.8.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041307>

### Formal education of school principals

In the same way that the knowledge and skills students acquire from their schooling is influenced by the quality of the preparation and the conduct of teachers, the quality of a nation's schools depends on the preparation and conduct of its school leaders. Branch et al. (2013) argue that because school leaders have an impact on the achievement of all the students in a school, improving the quality of school leadership is more important than improving the quality of a *single* teacher's practice.

Given the complexity of their role and the fact that most principals typically begin their careers as teachers, it is not surprising that most principals (92% on average) are tertiary educated (ISCED level 5A, which typically includes Bachelor's degrees and Master's degrees from universities or equivalent institutions) (OECD, 2014, Table 3.9). In some countries, there are relatively large proportions of principals who have qualifications from a shorter, practically oriented tertiary programme (ISCED level 5B): Chile (25%), Croatia (18%), France (13%) and Flanders (Belgium) (40%).

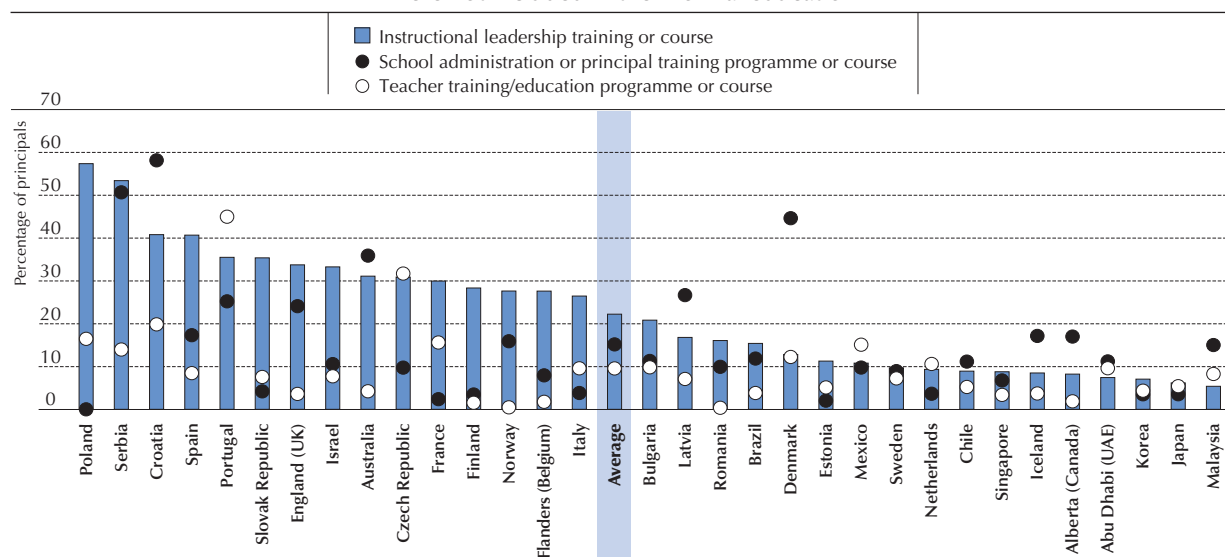


TALIS 2013 also asked school leaders to report on their participation in school administration or principal-training programmes or courses, teacher-preparation programmes or courses and instructional-leadership training or courses (OECD, 2014, Table 3.10). Although one might assume that principal preparation would typically include these types of programmes or courses, one of the most striking findings, as shown in Figure 2.10, is the large proportion of school leaders in some countries who reported that their preparation did not include any of these.

Figure 2.10

### Elements not included in principals' formal education

Percentage of lower secondary education principals who report that the following elements were not included in their formal education



Countries are ranked in descending order, based on the percentage of principals for whom instructional leadership training or course were not included in their formal education.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 3.10.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041326>

On average across countries and economies that participated in TALIS, one in four principals reported that he or she had participated in a school administration programme or course before becoming principal, 37% reported that they had participated in such a programme after being appointed to the position, and 22% reported that they began such preparation prior to assuming their post and continued the preparation after being assigned as principal. However, in Croatia and Serbia, at least half of school principals reported that they had never participated in a school administration or principal-training programme or course.

### Box 2.6. Sampling school leadership in Denmark

Denmark is introducing a “taster” course for aspiring school leaders. Danish teachers who may want to have a leadership position can begin to understand the different components of becoming a school leader through a “taster” course offered by local school districts or municipalities. Participants take part in one or more modules of a Leadership Diploma of Education. The course consists of theoretical assignments, case studies, personal reflections, discussions with a mentor about career opportunities, personal strengths and areas for development, and networking. Participants must also conduct a project in their own school. Those who want to continue can attend a two-year Diploma in Leadership course that includes seminars on economy, personal leadership, coaching, strategy implementation, change-management and problem-solving. The programme is managed by School Leadership Development, but is organised by the Local Government Training and Development Denmark, which is the centre for training and development for all of the country's municipalities and regions.

Source: Moos, L. (2011), “Educating Danish school leaders to meet new expectations?”.



The data indicate that typical principal preparation includes participation in a teacher training or education programme (OECD, 2014, Table 3.10). Most principals participate in these programmes prior to assuming their responsibilities as principal. A substantial proportion of individuals participate in some formal preparation as teachers after they assume the principal's position (8%) or both before and after assuming that position (18%). However, 32% of the principals in the Czech Republic and 45% of the principals in Portugal reported that they had never participated in a teacher-training programme or course.

Similarly, principal preparation typically includes programmes in instructional leadership. On average, 24% of principals reported that they participated in such preparation prior to assuming the position, 31% reported participating after being appointed to the position, and 23% reported that they began such preparation prior to assuming their role as principal and continued the preparation after becoming principal. However, more than half of the principals in Poland and Serbia reported they had never participated in such preparation.

TALIS also measures the level or intensity of the leadership training in which principals had participated during in their formal education. Figure 2.11 shows the percentages of principals who reported that they received no, weak, average or strong leadership training as part of their formal education (OECD, 2014, Table 3.11). The level of leadership training is measured using the leadership training index, explained in Box 2.7.

### Box 2.7. Construction of the leadership training index

The leadership training index presented in Table 3.11 was constructed from the question asking whether a principal's formal education included the following elements and whether this was before or after taking up duty as principal:

- school administration or principal training programme or course
- teacher training/education programme or course
- instructional leadership training or course

Responses indicating "never" were coded as zero (0), and responses indicating that the training had occurred "before", "after" or "before and after" were coded as one (1). Each respondent's codes were totalled to produce the following categories:

- 0 (no training)
- 1 (weak leadership training)
- 2 (average leadership training)
- 3 (strong leadership training)

Source: OECD (2014), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en>.

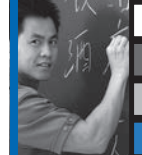
### Box 2.8. Selecting and training school leaders in Singapore

To ensure that Singapore has the best school leaders, young teachers are continuously assessed for their leadership potential and are given the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity. Future school leaders are chosen from successful teachers already in the education system. Moreover, all education leadership positions are part of the teaching-career structure. Potential school leaders can serve on committees, be promoted to middle-level leadership positions (e.g. head of department), and be transferred to the ministry for a period.

Successful potential school leaders are selected to attend the Management and Leadership in Schools programme at Singapore's National Institute for Education, based on interviews and leadership-situation exercises. Once accepted, aspiring school leaders can attend the four-month executive leadership training. Potential vice-principals attend a six-month Leaders in Education programme. Candidates in both programmes are paid during their training. Only 35 people are selected for the executive leadership training each year.

More experienced school leaders mentor recently appointed leaders; and principals are periodically transferred among schools as part of Singapore's continuous improvement strategy. Experienced school leaders are offered the opportunity to become Cluster Superintendents, which is the first step towards a system-level leadership role.

Source: Mourshed, M., C. Chijioke and M. Barber (2010), "How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better", McKinsey and Company.



More than 80% of principals in Chile, Estonia, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands and Singapore reported that they had strong leadership preparation as part of their formal education. The smallest proportions of principals who reported strong leadership preparation are found in Croatia (32%), Denmark (43%), Poland (41%), Portugal (40%) and Serbia (36%), including a number of principals who reported that they had received no formal administrative or principal-training preparation as part of their formal education.

### Box 2.9. Leadership-preparation programmes in Finland and Norway

**Finland** started a programme in 2010 in 76 education networks to re-design the country's school leadership-development model. The main objective of the programme is to give greater responsibility to schools to implement staff-development activities that meet the individual or organisational needs of the school and its personnel. It also empowers teachers to create and implement their own professional-development programme. The programme initially targeted school leaders, teaching staff over 55 years of age, and persons who had not participated in professional-development activities in recent years. The programme encourages collaboration and the use of innovative learning methods and institutionalises professional development within the school.

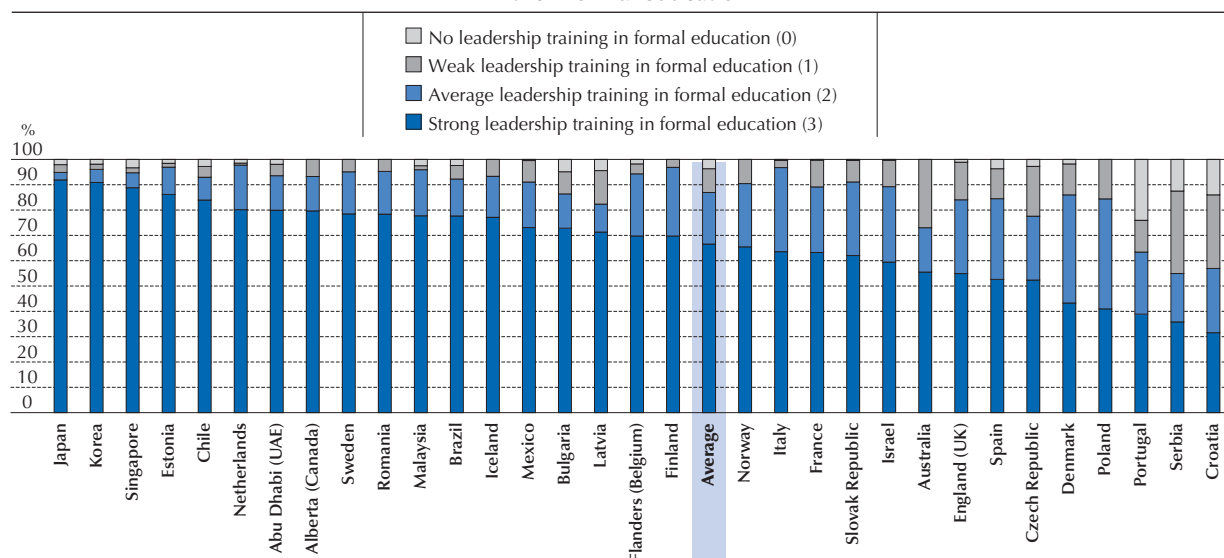
In 2009, **Norway's** central authorities introduced a new two-year programme to develop instructional leadership skills for school principals. The programme covers student learning outcomes and environment; management and administration; collaboration and organisation; guidance of teachers; development and change; and leadership identity. It was initially offered to new school principals with less than two years of experience, and will eventually be offered to more experienced school leaders as well.

**Source:** Hamalainen, K., K. Hamalainen and J. Kangasniemi (2011), "2011 Annual Conference of the Association for Teacher Education in Europe", 24-28 August 2011; 12 December 2011, "Osaava verme", 3 July 2011, <http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/verme/osaavaverme>; and OECD (2011).

Figure 2.11

### Principals' formal education, including leadership training

Percentage of lower secondary education principals who report having received leadership training in their formal education<sup>1</sup>



1. Leadership training index was constructed from the following variables: *i*) school administration or principal training programme or course; *ii*) teacher training/education programme or course; and *iii*) instructional leadership training or course. Responses indicating "never" were coded as zero (0) and responses indicating that the training had occurred "before", "after", or "before and after" were coded as one (1). Each respondent's codes were summed to produce the following categories: 0 (no training), 1 (weak leadership training), 2 (average leadership training) and 3 (strong leadership training).

Countries are ranked in descending order, based on the percentage of principals who received a strong leadership training in formal education.

**Source:** OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 3.11.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041345>



While there is merit in fostering different pathways to the goal of excellence in principal preparation, policy makers should look at exemplary programmes for guidance in developing such programmes. The Stanford Educational Leadership Institute study of exemplary programmes for the development of strong leaders has identified some characteristics common to exemplary programmes (Box 2.10).

### **Box 2.10. Characteristics of exemplary leadership programmes**

Commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, a study by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute examined eight exemplary pre-service and in-service programme models that develop strong educational leaders. All of the programmes of initial preparation that were characterised as exemplary shared the following characteristics:

- a comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned with professional standards
- a philosophy and curriculum that explicitly focus on instructional leadership and school improvement
- student-centred instruction that integrates theory and practice and stimulates reflection
- faculty knowledgeable about their subject areas and experienced in school administration
- social and professional support in the form of a cohort structure and formalised mentoring and advising by expert principals
- vigorous, targeted recruitment and selection to seek out expert teachers with leadership potential
- well-designed and supervised administrative internships under the guidance of expert veterans.

Source: Darling-Hammond et al. (2007).

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

It is difficult to imagine that one person could have the expertise in all areas needed to successfully run a school, especially as some school systems continue to devolve and schools become more independent. School leaders must be visionary leaders who can inspire, motivate and develop their staff. They must be experts in the latest teaching, learning and assessment practices, and sensitive and adept human-resource managers who are able to provide feedback to staff that encourages them to grow. In addition, today's school principal must be able to bring together parents, community stakeholders, students, teachers and support staff into a community dedicated to the well-being of the school's students. In some cases, they may even be required to be a savvy businessperson, able to use the school's funds creatively for the most efficient and effective outcomes. Countries must consider how to train and develop people to be successful in such a challenging role; and school leaders themselves must try to find the right balance among their various responsibilities.

### ***Empower teachers to play a role in decision making at the school level***

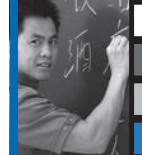
Teacher leadership is important for many reasons. In all countries and economies that participated in TALIS, teachers who reported that they are given opportunities to participate in decision making at school also reported greater job satisfaction; in most countries, these teachers also reported greater confidence in their own ability to teach (self-efficacy). In addition, in almost all countries and economies, the extent to which teachers can participate in decision making was shown to have a strong, positive association with the likelihood that teachers reported that society values teaching as a profession.

Distributed leadership is not only important for helping to alleviate some of the burden imposed on school leaders, but it can be beneficial to teachers as well. Teachers are uniquely placed to participate in school-level decision making because they might be closer to students and parents, more familiar with how curriculum is implemented, and more knowledgeable about student assessments and results than their school principals might be. Policy makers should thus consider providing guidance on distributed leadership and distributed decision making at the system level.

### ***Encourage the practice of distributed leadership***

Given a principal's importance to the school's operations and a principal's impact on instruction, it is important that being a principal is, and remains, satisfying work. Principals who feel that there is a climate of mutual respect in their schools reported greater job satisfaction. Through their work and the relationships they establish with teachers, staff and students, principals can help to create a positive, mutually supportive climate that, in turn, contributes to their satisfaction.





This is likely why successful professional practice is also dependent on personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills. But these personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills must be complemented by vision and values, as well as by knowledge and understanding, and be put to the service of learning and teaching, the professional development of oneself and others, improving and innovating, managing the school, and engaging and working with the community.

### ***Develop formal programmes to prepare school leaders to enter the profession***

The responsibilities of principals are many and complex; yet there is wide variation within countries in the degree to which school principals participate in school-administration or principal-training programmes or courses, teacher-preparation programmes or courses, and instructional-leadership training or courses. Many principals reported that their preparation did not include these experiences. Over time, countries are likely to reap enormous benefits, in terms of school improvement and student achievement, from developing quality professional-preparation programmes for their school principals.

### ***Provide opportunities for, and remove barriers to, continuing professional development for principals***

Keeping one's professional knowledge and practice up-to-date is affected by many different factors, including the opportunities that are available, and having the time and qualifications necessary to take advantage of the opportunities provided. The proportions of principals who reported that they had engaged in collaborative professional development activities during the 12 months prior to the survey, and the average number of days spent by those who participated, vary considerably. In many countries, large proportions of principals reported that there were no relevant opportunities available for professional development and no incentives to participate. In more than a dozen countries, principals said their work schedules conflicted with opportunities for professional development. Countries should strive to minimise obstacles to professional development for principals, align state-supported opportunities with the country's long-term education goals (OECD, 2013), and set standards for high-quality professional learning. Since what principals do affects the achievement of all the students in a school, principals must make improving their practice a priority and must take advantage of the opportunities available.

There are several high-priority areas for professional development. For example, instructional leadership can improve student achievement by:

- establishing the school outcomes that are essential for all students
- ensuring that these outcomes are expressed clearly in the curriculum and are supported with appropriate instructional material
- holding students, parents and teachers accountable for those outcomes
- encouraging and coaching teachers' use of teaching strategies that improve learning outcomes for all students
- assessing student progress in the areas of importance at different times over their school careers (Ungerleider, 2006; Ungerleider, 2003; Willms, 2000; Willms, 1998; Woessman 2001).

### ***Ensure that principals receive training in, and have opportunities to assume, instructional leadership***

It could be said that instructional leadership – focusing on the teaching and learning that take place in school – is the most important of all principals' tasks. TALIS data show that when principals reported higher levels of instructional leadership, they were also more likely to develop a professional-development plan for their school (13 countries), observe teaching in the classroom as part of a teacher's formal appraisal (20 countries), and report that there is high level of mutual respect among colleagues at the school (17 countries). Principals who reported higher levels of instructional leadership also tended to spend more time on curriculum and teaching-related tasks and reported greater job satisfaction.

Yet, more than one in five (22%) principals reported that they had never participated in instructional training, and 31% reported that they had participated in such training only after they became a principal.

Countries need to review instructional leadership training for principals and how principals actually assume that leadership role at school. While more instructional leadership training is needed, principals also need to be made aware of its importance and be offered this training during their initial principal training as well.



## Notes

1. In the analyses, the categories “often” and “very often” were collapsed into one category, called “frequently”. The categories “never or rarely” and “sometimes” were combined into one category, called “infrequently”.

### Note regarding Israel

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

## References

- Biniaminov, I.** and **N.S. Glasman** (1983), “School determinants of student achievement in secondary education”, *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 20/2, pp. 251-268.
- Branch, G.F., E.A. Hanushek** and **S.G. Rivkin** (2013), “School leaders matter: Measuring the impact of effective principals”, *Education Next*, Vol. 13/1, pp. 63-69.
- Darling-Hammond, L.** et al. (2007), *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs*, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.
- DuFour, R.** (2004), “What is a professional learning community?”, *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 61/8, pp. 6-11.
- Epstein, R.M.** and **E.M. Hundert** (2002), “Defining and assessing professional competence”, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 287/2, pp. 226-235.
- Gerrard, S.** (2012), “A response to raven”, *The Psychology of Education Review*, Vol. 36/1, pp. 27-30.
- Goode, W.J.** (1969), “The theoretical limits of professionalism”, in A. Etzioni (ed.), *The Semi-Professions and Their Organizations: Teachers, Nurses, and Social Workers*, Free Press, New York, NY.
- Grissom, J.A., S. Loeb** and **B. Master** (2013), “Effective instructional time use for school leaders: Longitudinal evidence from observations of principals”, *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 42/8, pp. 433-444.
- Harris, A.** (2012), “Distributed leadership: Implications for the role of the principal”, *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 31/1, pp. 7-17.
- Harris, A.** (2008), *Distributed Leadership: Developing Tomorrow’s Leaders*, Routledge, London.
- Huang, F.L.** and **T.R. Moon** (2009), “Is experience the best teacher? A multilevel analysis of teacher characteristics and student achievement in low performing schools”, *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, Vol. 21, pp. 209-234.
- Jepsen, C.** and **S. Rivkin** (2009), “Class size reduction and student achievement: The potential tradeoff between teacher quality and class size”, *Journal of Human Resources*, Vol. 44/1, pp. 223-250.
- Jeynes, W.H.** (2011), *Parental Involvement and Academic Success*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Larson, M.S.** (1977), *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.
- Leithwood, K., B. Mascal** and **T. Strauss** (2009), *Distributed Leadership According to the Evidence*, Routledge, London.
- Lieberman, A.** and **L. Miller** (2004), *Teacher Leadership*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.
- MacNeil, A.J.** and **D. Prater** (1999), “Teachers and principals differ on the seriousness of school discipline: A national perspective”, *National Forum of Applied Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 12/3, pp. 1-7.
- Moos, L.** (2011), “Educating Danish school leaders to meet new expectations?”, *School Leadership & Management*, Vol. 31, Issue 2.
- Mourshed, M., C. Chijioko** and **M. Barber** (2010), “How the world’s most improved school systems keep getting better”, McKinsey and Company.
- OECD** (2014), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en>.
- OECD** (2013), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education. Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264190658-en>.



**Pont, B., D. Nusche and H. Moorman** (2008), *Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264044715-en>.

**Schleicher, A. (ed.)** (2012), *Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century: Lessons from around the World*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264174559-en>.

**Smylie, M.A. et al.** (2007), "Trust and the development of distributed leadership", *Journal of School Leadership*, Vol. 17/4, pp. 469-503.

**Ungerleider, C.S.** (2006), "Reflections on the use of large-scale student assessment for improving student success", *Canadian Journal of Education*, Vol. 29/3, pp. 873-888.

**Ungerleider, C.S.** (2003), "Large-scale student assessment: Guidelines for policy-makers", *International Journal of Testing*, Vol. 3/2, pp. 119-128.

**Vanhoof, J. et al.** (2014), "Data use by Flemish school principals: Impact of attitude, self-efficacy and external expectations", *Educational Studies*, Vol. 40/1, pp. 48-62.

**Veenman, S., Y. Visser and N. Wijkamp** (1998), "Implementation effects of a program for the training of coaching skills with school principals", *School Effectiveness and School Improvement: An International Journal of Research, Policy and Practice*, Vol. 9/2, pp. 135-156.

**Veldman, D.J. and J.E. Brophy** (1974), "Measuring teacher effects on pupil achievement", *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 66/3, pp. 319-324.

**Willms, J.D.** (2000), "Monitoring school performance for 'standards-based reform'", *Evaluation and Research in Education*, Vol. 14/3 and 14/4, pp. 237-253.

**Willms, J.D.** (1998), "Assessment strategies for Title I of the improving America's Schools Act", report prepared for the Committee on Title I Testing and Assessment of the National Academy of Sciences.

**Woessmann, L.** (2001), *Schooling, Resources, Educational Institutions, and Student Performance: The International Evidence*, Kiel Institute of World Economics, Kiel.

## Further reading

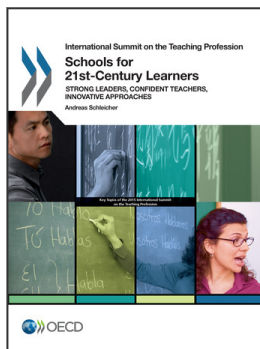
**Bangs, J. and D. Frost** (2012), "Teacher self-efficacy, voice and leadership: Towards a policy framework for Education International", University of Cambridge, Cambridge.

**Burns, D. and L. Darling-Hammond** (2014), *Teaching Around the World: What Can TALIS Tell Us?*, Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, Stanford, CA.

**Frost, D.** (2011), *Supporting Teacher Leadership in 15 Countries: The International Teacher Leadership project, Phase 1 – A report*, Leadership for Learning University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

**Lieberman, A. and L. Miller** (2004), *Teacher Leadership*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.





**From:**  
**Schools for 21st-Century Learners**  
Strong Leaders, Confident Teachers, Innovative Approaches

**Access the complete publication at:**  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264231191-en>

**Please cite this chapter as:**

Schleicher, Andreas (2015), "Promoting effective school leadership", in *Schools for 21st-Century Learners: Strong Leaders, Confident Teachers, Innovative Approaches*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264231191-4-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to [rights@oecd.org](mailto:rights@oecd.org). Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at [info@copyright.com](mailto:info@copyright.com) or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at [contact@cfcopies.com](mailto:contact@cfcopies.com).